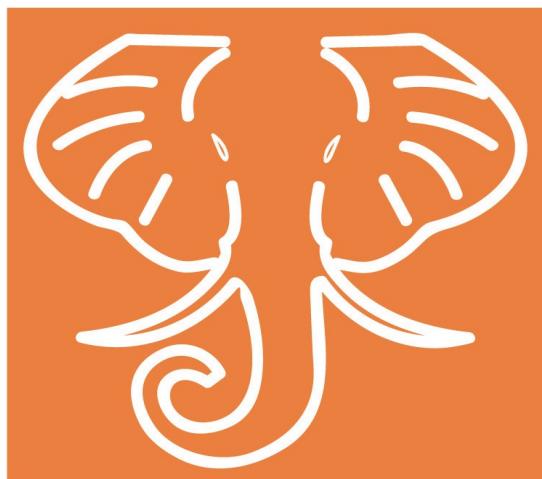


**A thesis on the construction, significance, and historical reality  
of the Mosaic Tabernacle / by Benjamin Thomas.**

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A Thesis on The Construction, Significance and Historical  
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-by-

BENJAMIN THOMAS,

Submitted, May, 1899.

*for the degree of M. S.*

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1.

THE CONSTRUCTION, SIGNIFICANCE AND HISTORICAL REALITY  
OF THE MOSAIC TABERNACLE.

Moses, the great leader of the Israelites, had a very difficult problem to solve when he undertook the religious training of his people. To solve it, required greater genius than any human intellect possessed. The Hebrews had just left Egypt, where they were in the midst of polytheism, and they were familiar with idolatry in its grossest forms. How could such a people be taught that there is but one God? That He is a Spirit, holy, just and merciful? Happily, Moses had divine aid to help him in the solution of the problem. Moses was called up by God into the mount, where he tarried for forty days and forty nights. There the whole divine plan as to Israel's religious education, and as to how the worship should be perpetuated, was made known to Moses even to the minutest details. The carrying of these directions into execution was frustrated for a time because on Moses' return he found that the people had broken the covenant by the sin of the golden calf; but after the renewal of the covenant, and his return from the summit of Sinai the second time, the first thing that



Moses did was to execute the commands given by him by God in regard to the building of a structure variously termed, "tent of meeting," "tent of the testimony," and "dwelling of the testimony."

In the meantime Moses caused a temporary structure, also called the "tent of meeting," to be pitched at a distance without the camp (Ex. 33:7). The purpose of this was two-fold: To furnish a place of worship until the completion of the tabernacle, and to provide a place where the people could come to ask counsel of Moses. Joshua had charge of this "tent of meeting." We must carefully keep in mind the distinction between the temporary "tent of meeting," and the permanent one of which we shall now speak.

The tabernacle was constructed according to the pattern shown to Moses in the mount. Whether God exhibited a model of the tabernacle before Moses' eyes or not, we do not know. At any rate God communicated to the mind of Moses a clear and perfect idea of the tabernacle, so that he could accurately reproduce it.

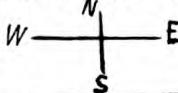
The materials for the construction of the sanctuary were voluntarily contributed by the people themselves. Great enthusiasm was manifested in the matter, so that more was contributed than was required, although the estimated cost of the structure is about a million and a quarter dollars. Two men, Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan, supervised



3.

the work. These two men were qualified by God, and designated by him for this work; while "every wise-hearted man, in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom" assisted in the work now begun.

See Exodus 31: 1-6; 36: 2-4.



PLAN SHOWING POSITION OF TABERNACLE AND FURNITURE

WITH REFERENCE TO THE COURT.

The dwelling place (  $\text{לְכֹדֶן}$  ) was rectangular in form, 30 cubits long by 10 wide. The height was equal to the width. It consisted of 48 boards made of acacia wood (  $\text{לִבְנָה}$  *A.V. shittim* ) each 10 cubits long, by 1 1/2 wide and overlaid with gold. The boards stood upright side by side. The lower end of each board had two tenons, one opposite the other, so made as to fit into two corresponding sockets. These sockets were made of silver, each a talent in weight. Each side consisted of 20 boards, and the rear had 8 boards. The two end boards of the sides met the two end boards



of the rear in such a way as to form an angle. By the term "board" we are to understand something resembling a plank or a pillar. It is not known how thick these boards were. Some have supposed them to be a cubit in thickness, while others have said 1/2 cubit. Acacia wood is yellow in color, but gradually becomes nearly black; it is very hard, durable and at the same time light in weight. It is possible that in the olden times, acacias could be found large enough so that boards a cubit and a half wide could be made from them. If however, the acacias were not capable of furnishing boards of such width, they could easily be made by joining together several pieces.

Golden rings were attached to the outside of the walls, probably three to each board. Crossbars made of acacia wood were passed through these rings. The purpose of this, no doubt, was to fasten the boards together in such a way as to render the walls more stable. The text gives the number of bars as five for each of the two sides and the rear. Of the middle bar only, is it said that it extended from end to end. So it has been thought that the four other bars were equivalent to two bars like the middle one. In reality then, the five bars would be equivalent to three bars for the entire length.



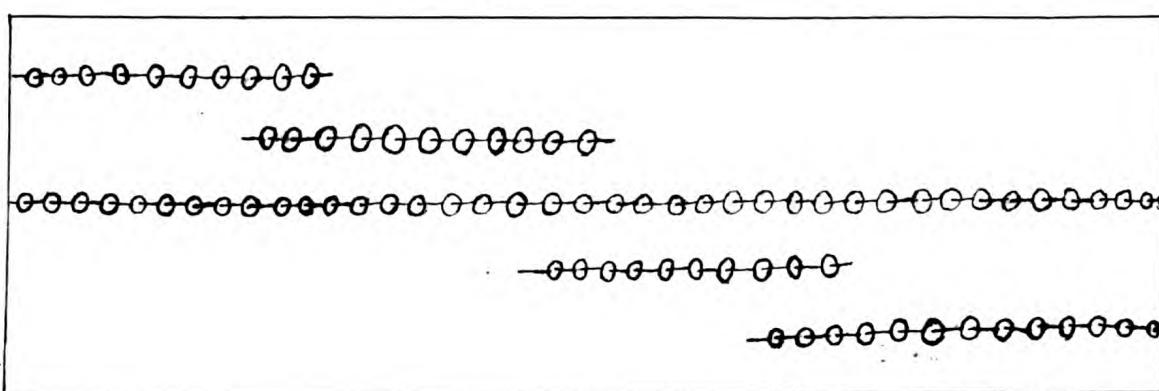


Diagram of one side of the tabernacle showing the supposed arrangement of the crossbars.

The front part of the tabernacle remains to be described.

This was the entrance to the dwelling place and consisted of a suspended curtain (  $\text{יְדָה}$  ). This curtain was hung upon five pillars made of acacia wood which together with their capitals were overlaid with gold. The pillars were set into sockets of brass. At the top they had golden hooks (  $\text{וְעַל}$  ) attached, in which poles were inserted to which the curtain was fastened.

This structure which we have described was divided into two compartments by means of a curtain (  $\text{מִזְבֵּחַ}$  ). The curtain was hung with hooks of gold on four golden pillars which were set into sockets of silver. The rear of the dwelling-place thus divided was called the holy of holies (  $\text{הַקֹּדֶשׁ הַקֹּדֶשׁ}$  ) and it was a cube measuring 10 cubits. The front part was called the holy place (  $\text{הַמִּזְבֵּחַ}$  ) and was of the same dimensions as the



holy of holies except that it was twice as long. The two curtains or veils to which we have referred, the one at the entrance of the sanctuary, the other in front of the holy of holies, were each made of one piece 10 cubits square, and made from fine linen thread ( $\gamma \tau \psi \beta \psi \psi$  byssus) or perhaps to be more exact from twisted thread of cotton material, white in color; woven in with the above mentioned threads were other threads dyed blue, purple and scarlet. The inner veil differed from the outer veil in this respect at least, in that figures of cherubim were embroidered in it (Ex.26:31)

On top of the framework was a covering which consisted of two curtains laid one upon the other. The lowermost curtain was called the "dwelling place" and it was like the inner veil in texture and pattern. It consisted of ten separate pieces, each piece 28 cubits by 4. Five of the pieces were sewed together so as to form one sheet 28 cubits by 20. The remaining five pieces were sewed in the same way, making in all two sheets each 28 cubits by 20. They were placed over the framework crosswise so that the joining would lie right over the inner veil. The edges which were 28 cubits long were provided with 50 loops and fastened with clasps attached to the loops. As the tabernacle was only 10 cubits wide, there would be 18 cubits to spare, so the curtain hung down 9 cubits on each side; and as the tabernacle was only



30 cubits long, there were ten cubits to spare which hung down at the rear. It is almost certain that the curtain hung down on the side of the wall rather than on the outside, so that the term "dwelling place" seems to be appropriate for it.

The other curtain was of goats' hair and consisted of eleven separate pieces, each 30 cubits by 4. Five of the pieces were sewed together, making a large piece 30 cubits by 20. In like manner the remaining six pieces were sewed together making a still larger piece 30 cubits by 24. These two large pieces were fastened together by means of 50 loops and 50 brass clasps. The curtain thus made, measured 30 cubits by 44. It was spread over the framework in the same manner, as the curtain previously described, but in such a way as to have the part where the two large pieces joined together a little farther to the rear, and so it would not be right above the place of the joining of the two large parts of the curtain underneath it. As this curtain had an extra piece in it, a part of this was used as a sort of projection in the front, and the remaining portion hung in the rear. (cf. Ex. 26: 9 with 12.) The extra 20 cubits in length hung down 10 cubits on each side, which nearly touched the ground. The distance from the ground of course being equal to the thickness of the boards. Above these two curtains were yet other two coverings, the lower one made of rams' skins dyed red, the upper of badgers' ( W I S J )



perhaps porpoise) skins. This completed the roof of the tabernacle. The sacred record does not further describe the outer coverings. They probably did not hang down flat upon the walls but were stretched out in a slanting direction, and fastened by pegs of brass driven into the ground. We have taken for granted that the roof was flat, though some are of the opinion that the roof coverings were suspended on a ridge-pole similiar to the covering of an ordinary tent. To the objection that rain or snow, and especially the latter, would accumulate in such quantity as to break through the roof, Josephus informs us that such would not be the case, and his opinion ought to carry great weight as to the point in question.

The court inside of which the dwelling place stood, was a space of ground, rectangular in form, 100 cubits by 50. Along its outer edge were arranged a series of pillars 60 in number, 5 cubits in height and 5 cubits apart. Each side had 20 of these pillars and each end 10. The top part of each pillar was of silver, and the bottom of brass. The hangings which were suspended upon the pillars was of fine cotton (byssus) or as some think, linen. They were suspended by means of silver rods placed into silver hooks attached to the pillars. In front and directly in the middle was a space of 20 cubits for an entrance and thus the hangings came to a distance of 15 cubits from each of the two sides.



Over the entrance was hung upon four pillars a curtain of fine cotton with varigated strips of purple, blue, and crimson.

(Ex. 27: 9-18; 38: 9-20)

The position of the court and the dwelling place with reference to the points of the compass was as follows: The front faced the east, the rear was toward the west, and the two sides looked toward the north and south respectively.

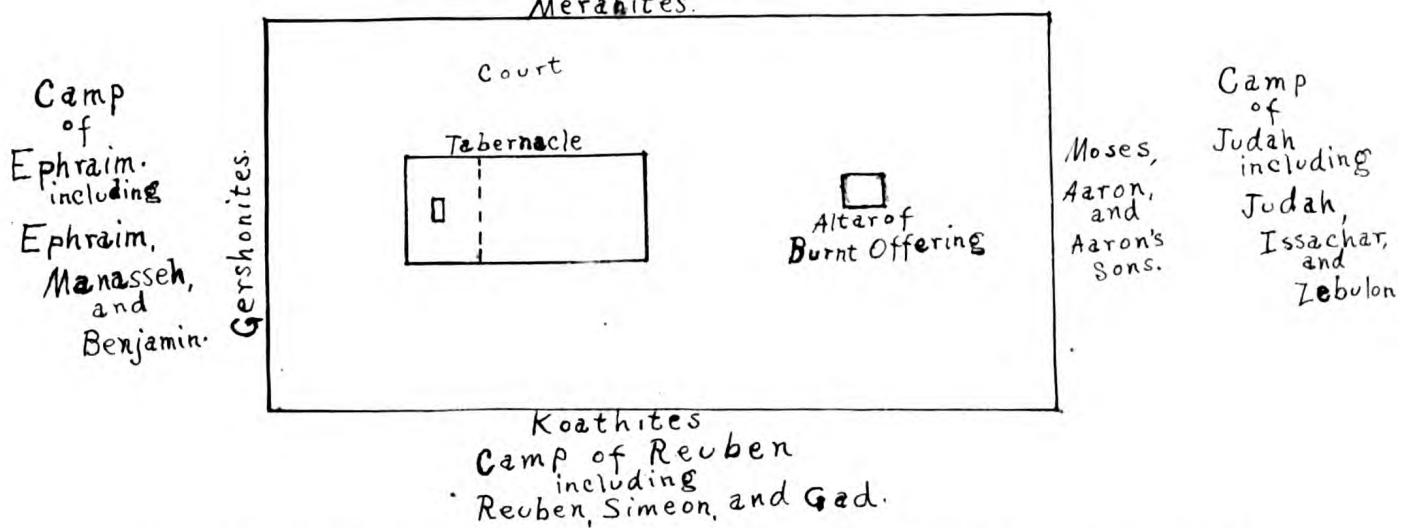
(Ex. 26: 18-22; 27: 9-13; 36: 23-27; 38: 10-13 cf. Num. 3: 38.)

It is probable that the dwelling place stood a little back of the middle of the court so as to leave a square space in front of 50 cubits by 50.

The several tribes were encamped about the court of the tabernacle. On the east, facing the entrance were Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon; and between them and the court were the tents of Moses and Aaron and Aaron's sons; on the north were Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, and between them and the court were the Merarites; on the west were Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin with the Gershonites between them and the enclosure; on the south were Reuben, Gad, and Simeon with the Koathites intervening between them and the western end of the enclosure.



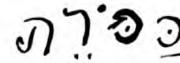
Camp of Dan including  
Dan, Asher, and Naphtali.  
Meranites.



The two compartments of the tabernacle were provided with furniture. In the holy of holies was the ark with the mercy seat. The holy place had three articles of furniture; the altar of incense, the candlestick for the lamps, and the table for the show-bread. The altar for burnt - offerings and the laver were in the court in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, but the laver was between the altar of burnt - offering and the tabernacle.  
(Ex. 30:6; 40: 22-26, 29, 30)

If we were to single out any one of these articles of furniture, it would undoubtedly be the ark. The description given to us in the second record begins with the ark and not as we have done with the structure wherein the ark rested. The ark of the covenant or ark of the testimony (יְהִיא כָּבֵד תְּהִלָּתָךְ וְתַּחֲנֹן יְהִיא כָּבֵד תְּהִלָּתָךְ) was therefore the central object of the tabernacle. It was in the form of a box or chest made of acacia wood, 2 1/2 cubits long,



1 1/2 cubits wide, and 1 1/2 cubits deep. It was overlaid within and without with pure gold. It had a rim or moulding (  ) made of gold round about the four sides at the top. Its feet, one for every corner, had each a golden ring through which were passed two poles (one for each of the two sides) made of acacia wood, covered with gold, for the purpose of carrying the ark. These wooden poles or staves were required to remain in the rings at all times and not to be taken out. Inside of the ark was placed the testimony, that is, the two tables of stone, upon which were written the ten words (decalogue or commandments) which Moses brought with him from the mount. Upon the ark lay a plate of the same length and width as the ark, made of pure gold, and called the mercy-seat or according to the Hebrew  (Capporeth). At the two ends of the mercy-seat were two cherubim, made of gold, beaten or embossed work, and of one piece with it, which covered the mercy-seat with their outstretched wings. They faced each other, and their faces were directed towards the mercy-seat (cf. 1 Peter, 1: 12b.) The mercy seat was a part of the ark, and covered the testimony placed within it; and yet we are not to look upon the mercy seat as a mere lid. It was a place where God was enthroned and where he communicated to Moses in regard to the children of Israel. (Ex. 25: 10-22; 37: 1-9; Deut. 4: 13; 10: 1, 2.)



The representation of the cherubim occupied an important place in the sacred art of the Hebrews. We have already seen that figures of cherubim were embroidered into the veil which separated the holy of holies from the holy place, and also that two figures of cherubim were placed upon the mercy seat. In Solomon's temple there were in the holy of holies two cherubim of colossal size, being 10 cubits high. Cherubim were also carved in the woodwork of the walls, and doors of the temple (1 K. 6:23-35). The numerous views regarding the form and nature <sup>of the cherubim are quite different</sup> from one another and a discussion of them cannot be entered upon here. Unfortunately, no detailed account of their appearance is given. Some have inferred from that fact that the Israelites were more or less familiar with them. It seems to us that there cannot be much doubt but that they are real spiritual beings of a high order.

In Hebrews we read (9:4) that a golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded were in the ark, but it seems that we must interpret the passage in this way, namely: That the above mentioned articles were not really in the ark, but beside it. It is probable that the book of the law was also placed beside the ark. (Ex. 16:34; Num. 17: 10; Deut. 31: 26; Heb. 9:4.)

In the holy place were - 1. The altar of incense (*תְּמִימָה תְּמִימָה שְׁמִינִי תְּמִימָה* or *שְׁמִינִי תְּמִימָה*) which stood



in the middle near to and in front of the inner veil. It was a cubit square, and 2 cubits high, and made of acacia wood. It had a top (flat roof) that is, the upper part was flat with a border about the edges. There was a horn-like projection from each of the upper four corners and all of the altar was overlaid with gold, so that it might be called the golden-altar. Underneath the golden rim or moulding about the top, rings of gold were fastened through which gold-covered poles were placed, so that the altar might be transported when necessary. It was prohibited to use this altar for burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, and drink-offerings. The altar was to be used exclusively for burning (on it) sweet smelling incense (*אֶת בְּרִית מֹשֶׁה*) which was a compound of prescribed ingredients and was burnt daily. (Ex. 30: 1-6; 37: 25-28).

2. The table for the show-bread (*מִזְבֵּחַ הַלְּבָנָה* lit. "bread of the faces or presence.") was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It measured 2 cubits long, 1 cubit wide, and 1 1/2 cubits high. A border of a hand breadth in width was constructed round about it and surrounding this was a golden rim. The table was supported by four feet and through each foot close to the border was fastened a golden ring for the poles, by which it was transported. These poles like those belonging to the ark were made of acacia wood, and were overlaid with gold. (Ex. 25: 23-30; 37: 10-16).



The vessels or utensils belonging to the table were (1) the dishes ( $\text{גַּת}$  י  $\text{פ}$ ) (2) bowls ( $\text{גַּד}$ ) (3) cups ( $\text{גַּעֲד}$ ) (4) bowls for libations ( $\text{גַּיְבָּה}$ ). (1) and (2) were for the show-bread and incense, and (3) and (4) were for the wine used in drink offerings. All of the vessels were made of pure gold. Elsewhere we read (Lev. 24: 5-9) that the show-bread consisted of twelve cakes ( $\text{בְּשִׂיר}$ ) each cake containing one-fifth of an ephah of fine flower. The cakes were placed on the table (probably on plates) before the Lord in two piles or rows ( $\text{נְצָרֶת}$  י  $\text{פ}$ ), six cakes to each pile. Pure frankincense was put in each pile (probably placed in bowls beside the bread) "for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Every sabbath day he (Aaron) shall set it (showbread) in order before the Lord continually." Only the priests might partake of the showbread which had been taken away.

3. The candlestick ( $\text{מְלֵךְ}$  י  $\text{פ}$ ) one might think to be a stand for a candle. This particular candlestick however, was for lamps. It was made of pure gold of beaten or embossed work. It consisted of a base or pedestal ( $\text{מְלֵךְ}$  lit. thigh) and a shaft or stalk ( $\text{מְלֵךְ}$  י  $\text{פ}$ ) with six branches. The number of lamps which the candlestick supported was seven. Three branches projected on each side of the main stalk in curves, and were of the same height. The middle stalk had four cups made like almond blossoms with knobs and flowers. After the same manner each of the branches



had three cups. Right below where each pair of branches separated from the middle stalk a cup was arranged. The fourth cup was probably placed at the upper end just underneath the lamp which was placed upon it. It may be assumed that there was a similar arrangement in the case of the branches; that is, one cup under each of the lamps and other two cups equi-distant from each other along each branch. The knobs and flowers were close to the cups and in some way associated with them. The distance of the branches from each other is not stated, but it may be assumed that the branches were equi-distant. Neither are the dimensions of the candle-stick given, but the supposition is, that its height was  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  cubits, the same as the table; and that the distance between the lamps farthest apart was also  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  cubits. The above suppositions make the candlestick symmetrical with reference to itself and its surroundings. We may divide the middle stalk into three parts of  $\frac{1}{2}$  cubit each: The first part reaching up to the point where the first pair of branches separate; the second part between where the first pair of branches separate to the point where the uppermost pair of branches diverge; and the third part the remainder of the stalk. Continuing the application of symmetrical proportion, each of the seven lamps would be  $\frac{1}{4}$  cubit from each other. Pure olive oil was used in the lamps and the light burned



all night. Josephus says that three of the lamps burned by day.

The accessories of the candlestick were the snuffers (*וְנֶפֶל*) and the extinguisher bowls (*וְנֶמֶת*). The amount of gold of which the candlestick and its accessories was composed in one talent. (Ex. 25: 31-39; 37: 17-24; 27: 20; 21; 30: 7,8; 1s. 3:3.)



Drawing showing the candlestick with its seven lamps etc., as we suppose it to have been from the description given in the above references.

Outside of the tabernacle in the court stood the altar for burnt-offerings and the laver. The altar for burnt-offerings (*מִזְבֵּחַ עֲשֵׂה*) was placed directly in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, and was made of acacia wood in the form of a square hollow frame, 5 cubits long, 5 wide, and 3 high. This was filled with earth or stone, and it would be more proper to speak of the earth or stone as constituting the altar. From the four upper corners projected four horn-shaped prominences. The boards which composed the frame-work of the altar were covered with brass or perhaps copper. From this fact it was sometimes called the brazen



altar. Half-way up, or 1 1/2 cubits from the ground a ledge (לִסְעָדָה) was erected round about the altar, and from the outer edges of the ledge a network of brass (copper) reached to the ground. On the corners of this network and right underneath the ledge were fastened four brass rings to hold the poles that it might be transported from place to place. The purpose of the ledge undoubtedly was for the priest to stand on while officiating. The utensils belonging to this altar were (1) pots (נִזְבָּחָה) for the purpose of removing ashes, (2) shovels (מְלֵךְ) (3) basins or plates (נִזְבָּחָה) to catch the blood, (4) forks or flesh-hooks (נִזְבָּחָה) and (5) coal-pans (נִזְבָּחָה). All of these were made of brass or copper. (Ex. 27: 9-18; 38: 9-20).

The laver (לְבָנָה) stood between the altar of burnt-offering and the entrance to the tabernacle. It was a sort of hand-basin, made of brass or copper, and it is not further described. It was for the use of the priests in washing their hands, and their feet before they served at the altar or entered into the tabernacle. The laver rested on a stand (לְבָנָה), which was also made of brass. Both the stand and the laver were made from the mirrors of the women who served at the doors of the tabernacle. (Ex. 30: 17-21; 38:8)

It probably took nearly six months to get the materials and furniture for the dwelling place and court in readiness. On



New Year's day of the second year after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, the erection of the tabernacle and everything belonging to it took place. This was also the day of its dedication; and so the structure with all its furniture, also the laver and altar of burnt-offering which stood in the court, were consecrated by being ~~anointed~~ with oil. Now everything was ready and Moses had finished the work according to the pattern shown to him in the mount. (See Ex. 40.) "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." (Ex. 40: 34, 35.)

Bearing in mind what has been said in regard to the construction of the tabernacle, which we have tried to make plain, it will be comparatively easy for us to understand its significance. At this point we will not enter into the discussion as to whether that portion of Exodus which treats of the tabernacle and its furniture belongs to Mosaic, post-Mosaic, exilic or post-exilic times. In the main, the significance of the tabernacle is identical with that of the Solomonic temple; so the controversy with criticism does not affect the question now in hand. Besides, the concluding portion of this thesis will deal with the above mentioned controversy.



That the tabernacle has significance is seen in New Testament passages and especially in the epistle to the Hebrews (9: 1-12) John in his *Apocalypse* speaks of "The tabernacle of God with men" (Rev. 21:3) and the allusion cannot be explained without reference to the significance of the tabernacle erected in the wilderness. And there can be no doubt that the tabernacle had its significance to every Hebrew. It was natural as well as necessary that symbols should be employed, because it was the way in which the Israelites could best understand religious truths. A true teacher descends to the level of his pupils and presents his thoughts in such language as they can understand. Symbolism was very largely employed by the Egyptians and in fact by all the ancient nations about which we know anything. It is certain that much of the written language of the Egyptians was pictorial. The monuments attest that a great deal of religious teaching was put in the form of external emblems. We must also remember that the Hebrew people were more like children, than the people of our day. They were not able to take into their minds deep and profound truths in regard to the nature and worship of God. They had a craving for something external. There was an eager desire on the part of the people to embody the Deity in a material form which could be seen, and hence the idolatry into which Israel lapsed time and



time again. It was necessary therefore, that some outward symbolism should be given to meet this strong desire and at the same time teach the people that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." Such symbolism was presented to the children of Israel in the tabernacle. It was intended to convey to their minds spiritual truth. Its typical significance rests upon its symbolical meaning. A type, as distinguished from a symbol, is prophetic. A type refers to something in the future and foreshadows it. The symbolical meaning, therefore, must be understood before we can see the typical. The principal thing that the Hebrew worshiper saw in the tabernacle was its symbolism, whereas the main thing that the Christian notices is its typical significance. This the Christian is enabled to do very largely because of the New Testament. The symbols of the tabernacle conveyed truth to the people of the time; but it was truth in the germ; in Jesus Christ we have the same truth in its fullness.

Now just what was the significance of the ~~sacred~~ tent? It seems to us well not to look for significance in the lesser details of the structure as it would lead to confusion and perhaps error. The rings, poles, loops, curtains, and boards were incidentals necessary to the various parts of the tabernacle. We may reasonably suppose that the two parts of the tent with their principal articles of furniture represent the chief ideas intended. Two of



the words used in describing the tabernacle suggest to us the underlying thought as to its significance. These words are: dwelling ( $\text{לֹא} \psi \text{ב}$ ). and tent ( $\text{שִׁיר}$ ). The Scripture passage which above all others, points out to us the fundamental idea is Exodus 29: 42-46. "It shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations at the door of the tent of meeting before Jehovah, where I will meet with you and speak unto thee there. And there will I meet with the sons of Israel.....And I will dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel, and I will be their God, and they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them." Evidently the fundamental thought is that of Jehovah meeting and dwelling with his people. It seems that Christ had this thought in mind as he offered that wonderful intercessory prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John, "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with me; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John 17: 22-24.)

We think then of the tabernacle as embodying the idea of God



dwelling with his people. The two parts of the tabernacle, the holy place and the holy of holies, stand for the true relation which existed between the people of Israel and God. The Infinite is represented as having fellowship with the finite. God has come to earth to hold communion with man so that man in the future world may hold communion with God. Christ said: "In my Father's house are many mansions (*μονάι*, dwellings or abiding places.)" What did Christ mean but that in heaven the fellowship we have had with God on earth will be more fully realized and perfected? In John's <sup>a</sup>apocalypse it is plainly stated that a fuller communion is to come of which the tabernacle was a type. The holy city, new Jerusalem, is represented as descending out of heaven from God. And a great voice said, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell (*σκηνώσει*, tabernacle) with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev. 21:3) The person of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Christian's tabernacle, in whom we are told "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9)" That God dwells with his people was symbolized in the sacred tent, but in Christ it was realized. One of the names given by the prophet Isaiah to Christ is Immanuel ( *יְהוָה יַעֲמֹד* ) — God with us. St John had the symbol in mind when he said: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt (*ἐσκήνωτεν*, tabernacled) among us (and we beheld his glory,



glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth (John 1: 14)"

In the tabernacle we see also a symbol of which the Christian church is the type. In 1 Peter 2:5 we read, "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." And Paul wrote to the Ephesians (2: 19-22) thus: "So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone in whom each several building (*ἐν ᾧ πᾶτα οἰκοδομή*, in whom every building), fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple (*ναὸν*) in whom ye also are builded together *into* (*εἰς* , into) a habitation of God in the Spirit.

The veil which separated the two apartments show us how closely man and God may come together in holy communion. It was a curtain and not a wall. The purpose of the veil was to conceal the most holy place from the ordinary gaze of man, and at the same time to provide an easy way of entrance on proper occasions. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews brings out the typical significance of the veil very beautifully: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus,



by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh (Heb. 10:19,20)".

In a certain sense then, our Lord's body is identified with the veil. The glory of our divine Master was veiled whilst he walked in the flesh, yet when he was put to death for the sin of mankind, and afterwards received by God into glory, he opened a way by which guilty sinners could approach unto the Father. By Christ's death the veil was rent and he "entered in once for all into the holy place (holy of holies), having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12)"

Although the tabernacle as a whole was God's dwelling place, yet it was the holy of holies which he regarded as his secret presence-chamber. The most holy place (holy of holies) and its furniture symbolized God's relations with his people, and it also showed how and on what terms God condescended to dwell with men. As the apartment was a perfect cube of 10 cubits, it symbolized the completeness and all-perfect character of the Being whose dwelling place it was. There was "the place of my (the Lord's) throne, and the place of the <sup>Soles</sup> souls of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel (Ez.43:7)". No doubt John had in mind the holy of holies in writing of the new Jerusalem: "the length and the breadth and the height thereof



are equal (Rev. 21:16)".

The ark, which contained the tables of the law and covered by the mercy-seat, was a symbol of the deepest mystery of the kingdom of grace. The tables of the law are sometimes called the testimony because they were God's witness against sin. The law indicated that he was a righteous Lord and Ruler. "Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of thy throne: Mercy and truth go before thy face (Ps. 89:14)." The mercy-seat was sprinkled with blood on the annual day of atonement. This rite signified that the life of the people, the loss of which they had merited because of their sins, was offered to God in the blood as the life of the victim, and thus God was appeased and their sins expiated. God's justice was upheld by sacrifice and he could forgive sin without tarnishing his honor. The rite proclaimed to the people in pictorial language that the Lord was "a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plentious in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty (Ex. 34:6,7a)." Christ besprinkled with his own blood, was truly that which the mercy-seat typified, that is, the sign and pledge of expiation. Paul said in writing to the Romans (3:24,25):"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom



God set forth ( $\pi\rho\varepsilon'\theta\varepsilon\tau\circ$ ) to be a propitiation ( $\iota\delta\alpha\tau\eta\rho\circ\circ$ ).  
ΙΧΘΥΣ lit. covering i. e. expiatory covering) through faith  
 by ( $\acute{\varepsilon}r$ , in) his blood."

The cherubim upon the mercy seat seem, as at the east of the garden of Eden, to be guardians. In the garden of Eden they protected the tree of life; upon the mercy-seat they guarded as it were, the approach unto God, and symbolized God's presence and at the same time that he was unapproachable. They no doubt had something to do with God's holiness. In the apocalypse<sup>2</sup> they are represented as saying: "Holy, holy, holy Lord" and that perhaps furnishes the key to the meaning of their symbolism.

The spirituality of God is suggested by the bright cloud above the ark. God showed forth his glory from between the cherubim. No image was suggested. The presence was visible but God himself was unseen.

The holy place, with its furniture and ministering priests, represents the true relation of Israel to God. The twelve cakes of show-bread (so called because the bread always stood before the Lord, Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:6) symbolized the twelve tribes of Israel as a continual living sacrifice before God. This appears from the fact that pure incense was put on (or beside) each row. It is also described as an offering from the children of Israel by a



perpetual covenant. (Lev. 24: 7,8). The bread was to be presented with prayer (incense) and so meet the favor and blessing of heaven. Vessels are spoken of in connection with the table for the show-bread which no doubt (although not stated) were used to hold wine for a drink-offering. In return for God's continual care and blessing, the Israelites were to serve him by their lives; not that God needed anything from their hands or that he could be benefited by their service, but the chief end of the Israelites was to glorify God. To the Christian this lesson from the show-bread comes with greater force than it did to the Jew. The gifts which God bestows now are larger than they were in the ancient times, so that a corresponding amount of glory is God's due. The New Testament constantly urges fruitfulness in every good work. "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world." (Titus 2: 11, 12)

The candlestick with its seven lamps represent Israel (in the sense of the Old Testament Church) as the light towards which the world might look. John in his Revelation (1:20) says that the seven candlesticks (lamp-stands) which he saw are seven churches. The church of every age is the possessor and reflector



of the light which is in God. She is bound to give it forth in order to dispel the darkness. The apostle Paul in writing to the Christians (Eph. 5:8, 9) says: "Walk as children of the light (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth)." Our Lord in his sermon on the mount (Mt. 5: 14,16) says: "Ye are the light of the world##### Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Oil in the Scripture is uniformly taken for the symbol of the Holy Spirit. In Zechariah (4: 2-12) we are taught that spiritual light is derived from supernatural, invisible sources. The eye does not see the oil that burns. It is the Holy Spirit which supplies the Church with grace. It is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord." The number, seven, is a perfect and mystic number. The light of the Church ought, therefore, to be full, clear, and perfect.

The offering of the incense on the golden altar was the symbol of the prayers of the people. The Psalmist says: "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee (Ps. 141:2)" In Revelation (5:8) we read: "And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints." And another angel came and



stood over ( ἐπὶ ) the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add ( δῶσει, give) it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense with (or for) the prayers of the saints went up before God out of the angels' hand (Rev. 8:3,4)" From St. Luke (1:10) we learn that it was the custom of the people to pray without the holy place as the priest offered incense within. For us then the incense means to pray without ceasing. If we would be healthy and fruitful spiritually, we must have the spirit of devotion. Everything must be sanctified by prayer.

The altar of burnt offering and the laver which were in the court had their significance also. Offerings had to be made at the great altar in front of the tabernacle before anyone could approach unto God. Ere the priest could pass into the tabernacle, he had to be sprinkled with blood from off that altar. "And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him (Ex. 29:21)" From the altar were taken the live coals with which to burn incense before Jehovah. (Lev. 16:12) The altar constantly proclaimed that without the shedding of blood there is no remission



of sins. This is more fully brought out in the following passage: "For the life (ψ]<sup>o</sup>, soul) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life (ψ]<sup>o</sup> [I] (Lev. 17:11)" The word soul at the close of the verse refers to the word soul at the beginning. The sinner's guilt was atoned (covered) when the blood of the animal, i. e., its soul or life was poured upon the altar. Thus a covering was thrown between the all-seeing eye of God and the sinner's guilt. This arrangement however, was nothing but a temporary expedient. The slain animal could in no proper sense take away sin. It was only the symbolical representation of the higher satisfaction, which justice demanded from the sinner's guilt. In the eternal counsel of God, an adequate sacrifice had already been provided and in due time would become known to the world. Such a sacrifice is to be found in Jesus Christ -the Lamb of God- who was foreordained before the foundation of the world, and whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

The laver was used by the priest for the purpose of cleansing himself before entering the tabernacle or before he came near the altar to minister. "And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands



and their feet thereat (at the laver): when they go into the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire unto the Lord: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and his seed throughout their generations" (Ex.30:19-21)

The ablutions of the priests suggest that without cleansing no man can approach unto God. The priests washing at the laver was symbolical of inward purity. Those who would render service to God must be free from pollution. The Psalmist plainly indicates the meaning of the rite and shows that it was as applicable to himself as to the priest. "I will wash my hands in innocency; So will I compass thine altar, O Lord." (Ps. 26:6) From the whole tenor of the Psalm it is evident that it is the state of the heart to which the Psalmist refers. In another Psalm the true worshiper is described as one having clean hands and a pure heart (Ps. 24)

The sinner must be purified from the guilt and pollution of sin. In other words, he must be regenerated. Only those cleansed from the pollution of sin and having a new nature implanted within them, are Christ's true disciples. "Unto him that loveth us and loosed ( $\lambda\upsilon\tau\alpha\kappa\tau\iota$ ; some MSS. have  $\lambda\alpha\sigma\kappa\tau\iota$  from  $\lambda\alpha\omega$ , washed) us from our sins by ( $\dot{\epsilon}\nu$ , in) his blood, and he made us to be



a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father." (Rev. 1:5,6)

In a similar manner the whole Church is spoken of: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing ( $\lambda\alpha\cup\tau\rho\omega$ , laver, bath, baptism) of water with the word, that he might present the Church to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph.5:25-27).

It makes no difference what we cast our eye upon in the tabernacle, in every direction there is something which causes us to think of Christ.

"For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people, for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself. "(Heb.7:26,27). By studying the tabernacle and its significance, we have come to a larger and better view of the doctrines taught in the New Testament, and we have found that the same truths are presented, only in a different form.

We come now to the question, did the tabernacle ever have an existence? A school of modern critics, say, No. They claim



that the whole legislation in regard to the tabernacle and the worship connected with it, is a product chiefly of the exilic or post-exilic times. The tabernacle, they declare, is an unhistorical fancy picture, invented by unscrupulous priests and scribes. The picture was suggested to these men by the temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel. The object was, they say, to give more power and influence to the priests and to the kings who wished to bring about certain reforms in the nation. The ideas concerning the above mentioned temples were thrown back about a thousand years, to show the people that there had always been one place of worship. As the tabernacle with the laws referring to the conduct of worship therein, is one of the greatest difficulties which the critics encounter, they throw the force of their attack upon its existence, and seek to prove that it was simply priestly fiction. We will first present the facts as they appear in the Bible in regard to the history of the tabernacle, and then we will take up the chief arguments and objections of the critics.

The history of the tabernacle after its dedication runs parallel with the history of the Hebrews until they entered into the promised land. When the time came to leave Sinai, Aaron and his sons took the tabernacle apart; the furniture along with the inner curtain (which was used as a covering for the ark)



and the altar of burnt-offering were wrapped with blue cloths and badger skins (*וְנַעֲרָה* *תְּיִירָה*), and the sons of Kohath were instructed to carry the same upon their shoulders. The sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari looked after the framework, coverings, veils, and hangings of the tabernacle and the court. They were partly carried and partly placed in wagons for which purpose the heads of the tribes presented six wagons with a yoke of oxen for each.

No where in the Pentateuch however, if it stated that only the above number of wagons and oxen were used for transporting the tabernacle. The family of Merari numbered 3200, able-bodied men between the ages of 30 and 50 years. It seems that such a force would be sufficient for the work required. The sons of Gershon, and the sons of Merari re-erected the tabernacle from time to time as occasion required, during the march through the wilderness (Num. 4: 4-33; 7: 3-9; 10: 17,21).

For a considerable period, the tabernacle seems to have remained at Gilgal, the headquarters of Joshua and the army of Israel (Josh. 4: 19; 5: 10; 9: 6; 10: 6; 14: 6). After the Israelites had reached Canaan and settled there, the tabernacle was set up in Shiloh where it continued to be the central place of worship until the time of Eli. "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled themselves together at Shiloh,



and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued  
(Josh. 18:1)  
before them." "And this man (Elkanah) went up out of his city from  
year to year, to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts  
in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas,  
priests unto the Lord were there." (1 S. 1:3) See Judges 18:31;  
1 S. 2: 12-16. In the reign of Saul, we find the tabernacle at  
Nob (1 S. 21). At the beginning of Solomon's reign the sacred  
tent was at Gibeon. "And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice  
there, for that was the great high place; a thousand burnt offerings  
did Solomon offer upon that altar (1 K. 3:4)" "So Solomon and  
all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at  
Gibeon; for there was the tent of meeting of God which Moses the  
servant of the Lord had made in the wilderness (2 Ch. 1:3)." The  
record does not tell us when or why the tabernacle was removed from  
Shiloh to Nob. (But See Judges 18: 20, 31.) From Nob the tent  
of meeting was taken to Gibeon probably, when Saul sacked Nob.  
(See 1 S. 22: 6-23.).

The tabernacle was taken from Gibeon to Jerusalem and placed  
in some room in the temple as a historic and sacred relic. "And they  
brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tent of meeting, and all  
the holy vessels that were in the Tent, even these did the priests  
and Levites bring up. (1 K. 8:4) " See also 2 Ch. 5:5.



The ark was often taken into battle by the Israelites. When the tribes warred against the children of Benjamin, the ark was at Bethel for a considerable time. An altar was built at Bethel upon which were offered burnt offerings and sacrifices. (Judges 20: 27; 21:4.) The ark fell into the hands of the Philistines in the time of Eli and ever afterwards the ark and the tabernacle remained separate. (1 S. 4:3-22.) The Philistines sent the ark from place to place, but everywhere the ark went it brought disaster to the people. Finally, after remaining in the land for about 7 months, they sent it back to Bethshemesh and it remained in the house of Abinadab the priest at Kirjath-jearim for 20 years. (1 S. 6:1; 7:2.) King David with a large procession of the representative people of Israel went up to Kirjath-jearim to bring the ark to Jerusalem. On the way Uzzah was killed because he touched the ark, and then David was afraid, and would not take it to the city, but left it at the house of Obed-Edom. Three months later the ark was taken to Jerusalem and placed in a tent which David had prepared for its reception. (2 S. 6; 1 Ch. 13; 15: 1.) A place of worship was established beside it. (1 Ch. 15;16.) Abiathar the high priest probably had charge of the service. We know that there were two priests, Abiathar and Zadok. See 2S. 8: 17; 20: 25; 1K. 2: 26-35. It appears that there were



two sanctuaries and therefore two centers of worship in Israel at this time. But we must remember that the worship was somewhat corrupt. Such a state of affairs was possible only during the transition through which Israel was now passing. It ceased during Solomon's reign, when Abiathar was deposed. (1K. 2: 26,27.) After the building and consecration of the temple, the ark was brought and placed within the holy of holies. (1K. 8: 3-21; 2 Ch. 5: 4-14.)

It would be a great gain for us if we could prove the unity of the pentateuch and that it was written by Moses. The pentateuch might all be true though its author were another than Moses and lived after his time. But if the writer lived during the time in which the events took place, and not only that, but was an actor and a leader in the varied scenes which he relates, then what he says would be received as coming from the greatest of authorities.

Wellhausen and those of his school claim that the oldest portions of the Pentateuch were written about the year 1000 B. C. However, they admit that the song of Deborah was written earlier. The basis of their claim is that a nation never writes a history of itself before it becomes conscious of itself as a nation. The song of Deborah according to the critics pictures the wildness of manners which prevailed at the time. Nations in their childhood



possess similar songs and ballads. Before 1000 B. C. then, Israel had no written history, but poems and stories were current before that time.

The Pentateuch expressly states that Moses wrote certain things contained in it. In Ex. 17:14, it is stated that he wrote an account of the battle with Amalek. Moses wrote an itinerary of the march of the children of Israel from Rameses in Egypt to the river Jordan opposite Jericho. (Num. 33: 1-49.) The Lord ordered Moses to prepare a didactic composition -a religious song- and to teach it to the children of Israel. He did so. (Deut. 31: 19, 22, 30; 32; 44.) The legal portion of the Pentateuch consists of three parts: 1. The book of the covenant. 2. The priest code. 3. The Deuteronomic code. The book of the covenant consists of the constitution and by-laws of the nation. (Ex. 20-23.) Moses is expressly said to have written this book. (Ex. 24:4) The priest code contains laws pertaining to the tabernacle and its services. (Ex. 25-31; 35-40; Leviticus; Num. 1-9) These laws are said again and again to have been revealed unto Moses. (Ex. 25: (et cetera) ) What is termed the Deuteronomic code is Moses' address to the people just before their entering into the promised land. The first part of the address pertains to history, the second part, to law, and the third part, to the blessing and



cursing. Moses wrote this address and delivered it unto the keeping of the Levites. 'Deut. 31: 9; 24-26.) Such are the claims of the Pentatauch itself as to its authorship. Moreover, the remainder of the Old Testament and the New Testament itself bears witness to the same fact. (Josh. 1: 7,8 Ezra 6: 18; Neh. 8: 1, 18; Jer. 7: 12-15; Mark 12: 19,26; Luke 24: 27,44; John 1: 17; 5: 46, 47.

Writing was known in Babylonia 2000 years before the time of Moses. It was an old art in Egypt when Moses lived at the court of Pharoah. Writing was also known in Canaan and Arabia before Moses' time. Now, the Bible does not represent any Hebrew as writing before Moses comes out of Egypt. The critics would have us believe that the Isrealites sojourned in the desert and crossed the Jordan in bands and a long time afterwards reduced their history to writing. The critics do not believe that any large number of the Hebrews were ever in Egypt. But the Hebrew people as a whole had a tradition deeply rooted in their consciousness that they had been in Egypt. It was not a tradition peculiar to one tribe, The people as a whole had endured cruel bondage in Egypt. (Isa. 11:16; Hos. 2:15; Amos 2:10.) Moses acquired literary habits and ideals in Egypt. Hymns written in praise of the gods have been found there. Laws also were placed on record. Nothing was more



common than to write an account of the events which had taken place. Rameses II and Meneptah have left such records. One of the Pharaohs <sup>4</sup> left a catalogue of kings and a record of wars and conquests. Nothing could be more natural for Moses than to write down the great events which had been handed down by oral and written tradition, and also the events of which he had been an eye-witness and the chief actor. It is only what we would expect from the thought of the times. In Babylon there was every sort of document. It was the habit of the Babylonians to put things in writing.

The critics are obliged to admit there is some foundation to a tradition. Men used to laugh at the idea of making Menes the first King of Egypt; but the tomb of Menes has been discovered. The point is this: men are bound to admit, that traditions have foundations. We do not need to particularize as to whether legends grew up or not. We should expect as a result of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage that ballads would be composed. In this period, Hebrew literature should begin to take some shape or form. Now the question is, when did Israel become conscious of itself as a nation? Critics say during the time of David and Solomon. It is true that the people were bound together at that time. They had a common religion, a strong form of government, and the memory of great and heroic deeds. But the nation was conscious of itself



before this time. The critics admit that Moses was a leader and that there was some form of eldership. There was at least a collection of tribes who called themselves the Sons of Israel. They were of the same blood and had a common language. A member of the tribe of Benjamin committed an outrageous act. The other tribes felt that wrath rested upon Israel because of the deed. They gathered themselves together as one man from Dan to Beersheba to wreak vengeance on Benjamin, because of the wrong which had been committed. In the song of Deborah (admittedly the oldest document in the Bible) a bitter curse is pronounced against certain ones because they didn't join hands with the others against a common foe. These events show that national feeling existed. The period of the Judges is not very far from the wilderness period. <sup>For the period of</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>A</sup> the preparation of the national sense we must go back farther still. It is plain that to some extent the Isrealites were conscious of themselves as a nation in the time of Moses. If so, it was natural that the nation's history should be written. We say it was done by Moses. No one of whom we know had better qualifications than he.

The principal objections that used to be urged against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch are certain anachronisms. But we think every case of that sort can be satisfactorily explained. In modern times, however, the objections against Moses being the



author are based upon two grounds. One is known as the document hypothesis, and the other, the development hypothesis. Each is distinct and independent of the other, and has to do with different parts of the Pentateuch. The development hypothesis attaches itself to the document hypothesis, and deals with the law portion of the Pentateuch, while the document hypothesis deals with the historical portion. According to the latter hypothesis, the Pentateuch can be partitioned into different documents upon the following grounds: 1. The alternate use of the divine names Elohim and Jehovah. 2. The continuity of each of the partitioned sections when taken separately. 3. Parallel sections. 4. Diversity of diction and ideas. The development hypothesis applies the principles of development. The simplest laws were enacted first, as the nation grew, the laws were multiplied and became more and more complex.

It is supposed that there are four principal documents in the Pentateuch: 1. Elohistic, usually known as P because its author is supposed to have been a priest who lived towards the close of the exile. 2&3. Jehovistic and a second Elohistic. They are closely related and known as J & E respectively. They are regarded as the oldest and are usually dated about 1000 B. C. 4. The Deuteronomist or D the author of which is supposed to have



written the major portion of Deuteronomy in the reign of King Josiah (B. C. 639-608). According to one hypothesis the Pentateuch is composed of documents, and according to the other, the principle of development as applied so that each document has an approximate date, and that would according to Wellhausen bring P later than

D. To date J E D and P so late does not give enough time for certain truths enunciated in the Pentateuch to develop. In the later books of the Old Testament the truths that are given in germ in the Pentateuch appear in a developed form. That fact alone would show that the writer of the Pentateuch lived in an early age. In the writings of the early prophets, numerous references to the Deuteronomic and priestly documents are found. This would prove that the laws and institutions (spoken of in the Pentateuch were observed at least as early as the eighth century B. C. But the critics say that R (redactor, editor) inserted those references when he edited the writings of the prophets. It would seem, if we accept the theory of the critics, that the Old Testament narrative is not to be relied upon. It is not what on its face it pretends to be.

Having shown that it seems reasonable that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch as a whole, and that the arguments which the critics use to prove the contrary are not sound, we will now examine



the arguments which the critics use against the existence of the tabernacle.

The critics make a great deal out of the following passage. We will examine it somewhat:

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, Depart, go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land of which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: and I will send an angel before thee: and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: unto a land flowing with milk and honey; (for I will not go up into the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way.) And when the people heard these (evil) tidings, they mourned; and no man did put on him his ornaments. And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, (Ye are a stiff necked people; if I go up into the midst of thee for one moment, I shall consume thee) (therefore now) put off thy ornaments from thee, (that I may know what to do unto thee). And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb onward."

(The critics say that R has omitted the account of the making of the tabernacle and ark which they say stood between verses



45.

six and seven, for in verse seven the tent of meeting is already made.)

" Now Moses used to take the tent and to pitch it without the camp, afar off from the camp; and he called it, "The tent of meeting. And it came to pass, that everyone which sought the Lord, went out unto the tent of meeting, which was without the camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went unto the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the Tent. And it came to pass, when Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent; and (the Lord) spake with Moses. And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the TENT: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp; but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent." Exodus (33: 1-11) Document E- According to the critics.

The portions enclosed in brackets ( ) are, say the critics, interpolations by R. The passage thus doctored is set against P's account of the same event and many discrepancies appear.



One of the great arguments of the critics is drawn from the conflicting accounts of the tabernacle, as to when it was built, where it was located, the persons who had charge of it, why it was built, and as to its character.

According to Dillman , the purpose for which the children of Israel tarried at Sinai was to receive the constitution and by-laws (Ex. 20-23). These they received and were now ready to resume the march according to the command given in Ex. 33: 1. In order to get this meaning out of the passage, all references to the sin of the golden calf in verses 3, 4 & 5, are regarded as interpolations by R. In verse 2 Jehovah said that he would send his angel before Moses. In verses 3 & 5, it is said that God would not go with his people. This the critics say, is a discrepancy. In Ex. 23: 20-22 God's angel is equivalent to God himself. The answer we make is that a distinction is made between the angels in the two passages. The angel spoken of in Ex. 33: 2, is of a different rank than the one referred to in Ex. 23: 20-22.

According to E (Ex. 33: 1-11) Israel after tarrying about two months at Sinai, set forward towards Canaan. According to P (Num. 10; 11) they do not depart before very nearly a year. P, who wrote the remainder of Exodus, the book of Leviticus and first nine chapters of Numbers, is not taken into account. The



only laws which E knows about are those recorded in Ex. 20-33.

E in Ex. 33:7, says that the tabernacle was already constructed. P in Ex. 34:28, says that Moses was up in the mount a second time for forty days and forty nights before work was begun on the tabernacle; then we gather from what P says that it took several months to build.

In E (Ex. 33:7) the tent was pitched afar off from the camp. It is claimed that this was the custom during all the journeyings. In P (Ex. 25:8) the Lord dwelt in the midst of his people; and P in another place (Num. 2) says that the tabernacle was ordered to be pitched in the centre of the camp.

E (Ex. 33:11) says that Joshua had charge of the tent. P (Num. 3: 10,38) always claims that the Levites had exclusive charge of the services of the sanctuary.

E (Ex. 33:11) would have us believe that the tabernacle was simply a place for divine revelation while P (Lev 1:3) represents it to be a place of sacrifice as well.

E represents the tabernacle as a simple tent, whereas P (Ex 35-40) does just the contrary.

The critics very often create the discrepancies. If at one's pleasure a passage be taken out of its connection words and clauses thrown out, and new ideas introduced, then the passage can



be made to yield just the opposite of the original intention.

The passage (Ex. 33: 1-11) which we are considering is closely connected with what precedes and with what follows, and the charge that it contradicts statements made elsewhere cannot be proven. Israel had broken the covenant by the sin of the golden calf. Moses pleads very earnestly with God in behalf of the people (Ex. 32:11). God had threatened to withdraw his presence from the people and so they mourn. That is the reason why they lay aside their ornaments. The critics say that the ornaments were the material given by the people to build the tabernacle. The original document told about the rearing of the tabernacle but the redactor left out the account. But God couldn't receive anything from the hands of the people while they were in a state of alienation from him. The cause of the grief was sin, and the ornaments were laid aside to show that the repentance was sincere. The critics would have us believe that the people grieved because they were commanded to leave Siani. But that cannot be, for their objective point was Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. In the passage which we are considering "the tent" is the provisional tabernacle. The statement made regarding it, is, that Moses took the tent" and called it "the tent of meeting (Ex. 33:7)." It is not stated what tent of meeting (Ex. 33:7)," It is not stated what



tent it was, but the article shows that it was some definite one which the writer had in mind, and to which a new name was given. It stood for the idea which the future tabernacle would represent—a place where God dwelt. The structure was pitched afar off from the camp to show the people that the relations between them and God were strained on account of their sin.

The location of the tent without the camp continued only during the estrangement of the Israelites from Jehovah. This provisional tent of meeting is only referred to once again (Ex. 34: 34,35). There are passages in the book of Numbers (11: 26; 12:4,5) which have been thought to refer to the tabernacle as being without the camp. But as we have pointed out at the beginning of this thesis, the camp surrounded the tent of meeting in the form of a hollow square, and thus a considerable space intervened between where the Israelites dwelt, and the tabernacle. In going from the camp to the tabernacle or vice versa this space had to be traversed.

Joshua had charge of this provisional tent because the house of Aaron and the tribe of Levi had not yet been set apart for the tabernacle service. It was a place of revelation rather than sacrifice, because the sacrificial system had not yet been inaugurated. It is true that there are passages where the tabernacle proper is spoken of as a place of revelation without any reference to its being a place of sacrifice. The tabernacle proper was



intended for both uses. One aspect and then the other, are mentioned according as the writer has occasion to speak. The fact that the book of Deuteronomy contains no allusion to the tabernacle as a place of sacrifice, does not prove that the Mosaic tabernacle did not exist at the time the book was written.

It is very probable that the provisional tent was much simpler than the tabernacle proper. The one is distinct from the other, so there can be no discrepancy.

There is no reason to believe that the children of Israel actually left Siani at the time spoken of in Ex. 33. Everything points to the contrary. After the people were forgiven and reconciled to God, the building of the tabernacle was at once begun. Soon after its completion the children of Israel set forward on their journey as stated in Num. 10:11.

We have already presented the history of the tabernacle as we find it recorded in the Bible. The critics strive to nullify those statements by the argument from silence. They admit that the sacred tent is mentioned in the books of Joshua, and the Chronicles. As for Joshua, the kind of criticism which is applied also to it. <sup>to the Pentateuch, is applied</sup> Chronicles were written at a late date - after the exile - and the critics make out that the Chronicler took for granted that the tabernacle existed until the time that the Solomonic temple was built. In other words, he was careless



as to his sources of information. But if the internal evidence of the Chronicles amount to anything, we must certainly give the Chronicler credit for being careful to mention the sources whence he derived his knowledge. He often appeals to what appear to be well-accredited histories (1 Ch. 9: 29; 2 Ch. 9:27; 12: 15; 16: 11; 24:27). The Chronicles were written at a time when much interest was taken in the restoration of the worship and the ways of the forefathers. And it would be very natural to suppose that special attention would be paid to the gathering of the facts relating to the subject of worship which the other books of the Bible had not recorded, because they were written for a different purpose. The argument from silence hasn't much weight because the writer might not have occasion to mention the matter in question.

We turn now to the passages quoted in some of the other books. In Judges 18: 31, we read of the house of the God in Shiloh. We notice at once the definite article. The house of God is set in contrast to the worship of the graven image of the children of Dan. In the next chapter (Judg. 19:18) the house of the Lord is mentioned. These references together with others found in 1 Samuel ( 1:7,24; 3:15) are said not to refer to the Mosaic Tabernacle, but to a stationary structure. It had door-posts (1 S. 1:9) and doors (1 S. 3:15), but we know the tabernacle had no doors.



The tabernacle entrance was hid from view by a veil. Samuel is said to have slept in the temple of the Lord (1 S. 3:3).

If we examine other Scripture passages, we find that the phrase "house of God" has not the restricted meaning which the critics place upon it. The Lord appeared unto Jacob (Gen. 28:17) and he called the place the House of God although it was out under the open sky and the pillow upon which Jacob ~~slept~~ <sup>slept</sup> was a stone. Just before the tabernacle was built, it was referred to as "the house of the Lord thy God." (Ex. 34: 26) So also after it was built (Deut. 23:18; Josh. 6:24.) The Chronicler uses the expression "The House of the Lord" for both the Solomonic temple and the Mosaic tabernacle (1 Ch. 6: 31,32.) In Psalm 27:4, the house of the Lord and his temple are phrases which in verses 5 and 6 of the same Psalm are denominated tabernacle or tent. In view of these facts, it seems to us that the critics have not established their claims.

We have already noticed that the tabernacle remained at Shiloh for a long time. It is very natural so suppose that during this time contiguous structures, for the accommodation of priests and attendants of the sanctuary, and also to receive the tithes and offerings of the people, were built on the outside and in close proximity to the court. It is highly probable that



in a general way, this complex structure was sometimes referred to as the tabernacle itself. In one of the rooms of this structure Samuel slept, and not in the sanctuary.

The critics say that the sanctuary was a fixed structure because the points of the compass, north, south, east, and west are used in describing its four sides, and that the term used in describing the south side is נֶגֶב, toward the south, dry place.)

נֶגֶב (neghebh) was a term often used to describe a district in southern Palestine and shows that the writer employed a term appropriate only for that country. But, (1) the tabernacle was always pitched with reference to the points of the compass.

(2) נֶגֶב had the meaning "south" as well as a district in southern Palestine.

It is said that if there were a tabernacle, the ark would have been placed in it when it was sent back from the land of the Philistines, instead of in the house of Abinadab in Kirjath-jearim. But God allowed the ark to be captured to show the people that he had forsaken the tabernacle, and them as well, on account of their sins (Ps. 78: 56-64). When the ark returned the people were not ready to receive it. They did <sup>not</sup> feel the need of God's presence and they had not repented of their sins.

The critics say that David would not have built a tent



to receive the ark if the tabernacle were in existence. But David saw that the time had come for the erection of a permanent "dwelling-place" and that the capital of the nation was the proper location for it. Accordingly, David made preparations for the building of a temple, but God told him that his son Solomon would be the one to actually build it. The tent which David erected was simply a temporary place for the ark. To take the ark back to the old tabernacle, would seem like going back to the old order of things. Mt. Zion was the place chosen by God for the "dwelling-place."

It is thought that the tabernacle was not in existence because Solomon ordered new vessels to be made for the temple. But the reason why the old tabernacle vessels were not used in the new temple, is that the new building required new furnishings so that a proper harmony and proportion would be manifested.

The critics raise a difficulty in regard to the altar of burnt-offering. In Ex. 20: 24, 25, we are told that the altar was to be built of earth or unhewn stone; whereas, in Ex. 27: 1, we read that it was to be square, hollow frame of wood covered with brass. But the two passages are not mutually exclusive; they are supplementary. The hollow frame held the stone or earth in place.

The critics also find the law of one altar in conflict



with Ex. 20:24, which permitted the erection of an altar in all places where the Lord records his name. The law given in Ex. 20:24, is a general statute. It does not say that altars could be built anywhere. They could be built only where God's presence was manifested. Ordinarily, God manifested himself in the tabernacle. If God revealed himself at any other place, then an altar could be built. It is true that mention is made of a sanctuary at Shechem (Josh. 24:26), but it is not said that sacrifice was offered there.

An oak is spoken of as being there, but no building. The place is probably called a sanctuary because of some hallowed associations connected with the history of the patriarchs. In Gen. 35:4, Jacob is said to have hidden strange gods and earrings under an oak. The two oaks, may have been identical. After the capture of the ark by the Philistines, and the Lord had forsaken Shiloh, the people under the lead of Samuel, sacrificed on high places. (1 K. 3:2) Things now were as before the tabernacle was built. In this exceptional period, sacrifices were offered at various places because the law of the one altar was virtually repealed. Another exceptional period occurred after the division of the kingdom.

The godly people of the northern kingdom were prevented



from coming to Jerusalem to worship and hence they sacrificed on high places. The law in Israel was the unity of the sanctuary and the unity of the altar except under extraordinary circumstances.

Objections have been raised against the elaborate furnishings of the tabernacle, and the magnificence of the worship established in the wilderness. But the question is, Was not the wilderness period the proper time for that? The people of Egypt at this time had ideas in regard to the proper worship due to the gods. The Egyptians possessed a priesthood, a temple, a ritual and rich ceremonies. Babylonia had a priesthood and a ritual that was pompous. Moses directed by God, prepared a scheme of worship which outshone any heathen worship with which the Hebrews were acquainted.

We believe in the historical reality of the Mosaic tabernacle. There is reason to believe that Moses, directed by God, ordered it to be built. Traces of its existence are scattered here and there in the historical books down to the time of Solomon. At last the presumption is in our favor, and there is no good reason to doubt the trustworthiness of the record which we have in the Scriptures.

In general, we have shown that the critical method is unfair and that the critics have not sufficient ground upon which to base



their arguments. In particular we have shown that there is no discrepancy between the so-called E and P documents in regard to the tabernacle. We have also made it evident that the later books of the Bible are not altogether silent in regard to the Mosaic tabernacle. Then we have answered many objections which are brought forward against the existence of the tabernacle.

We have shown how minutely the tabernacle is described. The two architects are named and their genealogy given. The day upon which the tabernacle was completed is mentioned. The exact position of each tribe in reference to the tabernacle is made known. The persons charged with taking down and setting up the sacred tent are indicated.

We have made it plain that the tabernacle and temple were built after the same general plan. That the tabernacle existed first, and that the temple was a more elaborate reproduction of it, is easily seen from its history which we have traced from the time of Moses to that of Solomon.



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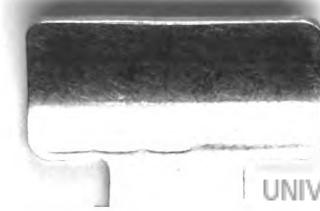




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