

THE STUDY OF THE TYPES

BY

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CHAPTER 11

Typical Colors and Substances

THOSE who have made any study of the types will not doubt that there was a meaning in the colours which Moses and the children of Israel were commanded to use in the construction of the Tabernacle. Where GOD told them to use blue, and purple, and scarlet, there was some significance in those shades; and green and yellow would not have answered the same purpose.

The embroidered curtains really formed the Tabernacle itself. Beneath were the "**boards of the tabernacle**," above were the goats' hair curtains forming "**the tent**," which was "**spread abroad over the Tabernacle**"; and they evidently speak of the glories of the Lord JESUS CHRIST under different aspects.

The meanings of the colours are not clearly stated; so that with regard to some of them there is a slight difference of opinion. All however seem to agree that the blue speaks of Heaven, and here refers to the heavenly character of our Lord - the One who came from Heaven, has gone back into Heaven, but who was, even when here on earth, the heavenly One.

Some think that the scarlet refers to suffering; others that this is represented by the red in the "**rams' skins dyed red**," and that the scarlet in the embroidered curtains refers to earthly glory, the glory of a worm; for it was obtained from the worm, and the Hebrew word is the same (Psalm 22:6; Job 25:6).

Others again think it speaks of earthly glory in connection with Israel, scarlet representing the national colour. Those who hold this view, take the purple to represent His Kingly glory, especially as Son of Man, over the whole world. Several passages bear out this interpretation. Purple is often mentioned in connection with the trade and wealth of Gentile powers: Lydia was a seller of purple; and the robes in which Daniel and Mordecai were arrayed were purple robes.

The scarlet line from Rahab's window may have represented the national colour of Israel; and we are told that the scapegoat, when it bare away into the wilderness the guilt of the nation, had a piece of scarlet tied to one of its horns. Only one piece of Tabernacle furniture had a covering of scarlet when carried from place to place, viz., the table of shewbread; the one which had so clearly a reference to Israel in the twelve loaves that were laid upon it.

Only one had a purple covering, and that is equally suggestive. The brazen altar was not for Israel only, for the death of the Lord JESUS was for all the world. We do not read in John 3:16, "God so loved Israel that He gave His only begotten Son"; but, "**God so loved the world.**" The purple covering linked with the altar of Burnt-offering speaks to us of "**the sufferings of Christ and . . . the glory that shall be revealed.**" The world last saw Him as the suffering Man on the

Cross of Calvary; they will next see Him as the Son of Man coming in His glory.

The fine twined linen, of which the curtains were made, is interpreted for us in Revelation, where we are told that the fine linen, clean and white, in which the Lamb's wife is arrayed, is the righteousness of the saints. Here it would refer to the righteousness of the Lamb Himself.

If the above meanings are correct, we have a four-fold view of our Lord corresponding with the aspects which characterize the four Gospels.

Matthew tells us of the Son of David, symbolized by the scarlet.

Mark, the perfect Servant - by the fine linen.

Luke, the Son of Man - represented by the purple.

John, the Son of God - by the blue.

It is remarkable that in this Gospel the robe in which our Lord was arrayed is described as a scarlet robe.

Though we cannot be certain of the significance of these colours, we may be sure that there was some teaching in them; and that it is well for us to search, with the help of other Scriptures and the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT, into His object in thus making use of them. The same applies to many substances which evidently have a typical meaning, not a few of them being interpreted for us either directly or indirectly.

The minute instructions in connection with the Offerings, and the Tabernacle and Temple, indicate their importance. In the latter, the gold, silver, and brass had each its place. We have seen that gold represents the Divine. The silver used was the redemption money; and therefore we may conclude that silver speaks of redemption; and that thus the Tabernacle, on its sockets of silver, stood on "redemption ground."

The brass, or copper, is generally taken to represent judgment; for brass is that which can stand the fire. **"His feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace"** (Revelation 1:15). In the Tabernacle it surrounded everything, and was the basis for the whole; for all the outer court stood upon brazen sockets. The altar of burnt-offering and the laver were made of brass, and each of these is connected with the thought of judgment.

There were five substances mentioned in connection with the meal-offering. Three were commanded, and two were forbidden. Oil, frankincense, and salt, accompanied the sacrifice; but leaven and honey were not to be presented.

Oil had to be poured on all the meal-offerings, telling of the presence and power of the HOLY SPIRIT, so constantly spoken of in connection with the life of our Lord (see Matthew 1:20; Isaiah 11:2; Luke 1:35; 3:22; 4:1, 14; Acts 10:38; Psalm 45:7; 89:19, 20; Isaiah 41:1).

We, too, need the oil in every part of our lives. We need it on our head as the anointing oil; on our ears, hands, and feet, consecrating us to His service; in our hands in worship, as we bring the meal-offering to GOD; on our feet, the feet dipped in oil (Deuteronomy 33:24), that our walk may show that we are indeed guided by the HOLY SPIRIT (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:16, 25);

and we need the oil for our wounds, to comfort and to heal.

"There is treasure to be desired, and oil in the dwelling of the wise," we read in Proverbs 21:20; and in many other places in the Word we may learn lessons from the oil as a type of the HOLY SPIRIT, as to the conditions for the filling of the Spirit, **"empty vessels,"** etc. (II Kings 4:3), and the result, beauty (Hosea 14:6), and honour (Judges 9:9).

The frankincense in the meal-offering was all burned upon the altar; it all belonged to GOD, and speaks to us of the preciousness of Him whose **"Name is as ointment poured forth,"** and of whom it is written, **"All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia."**

Salt was to be present in the meal-offering; for while leaven and honey cause corruption, salt is that which prevents it, and may therefore be looked upon as typifying judgment upon and testimony against sin.

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt," would thus mean that though we are to be gracious and kind, it is not to be at the expense of faithfulness. We are not to wink at sin, but to reprove it. It is often easier to take no notice of what is said in our presence; but there is to be salt as well as grace, and this was always noticeable in our Lord's life and conversation. **"Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another,"** was the Lord's command; and if, as one has said, we judge ourselves, we shall be less likely to see faults in others.

Leaven evidently denotes evil, and so could not be present in that which represented Him who was **"in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."** There was to be no leaven in the house of the Israelite at the passover (Exodus 12:15; Deuteronomy 16:4); and probably this is the reason that in John 18:28, we read that the priests and the Pharisees would not go into the judgment hall lest they should be defiled, for the house of a Gentile would contain leaven.

CHRIST speaks again and again of the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians (Matthew 16:6, 11, 12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1); and in Matthew 13:33, He compares the kingdom of Heaven to three measures of meal, into which leaven has been cast till the whole has been leavened.

This is often taken to represent the power of the Gospel working in the world till the whole is converted; but by comparing the passage with the other mentions of leaven it is very evident that it refers to the working of an evil principle, such as we read of in II Thessalonians 2:7, which has so permeated the whole of Christendom that it is impossible to divide between the good and the evil: **"The mystery of iniquity doth already work."** The Apostle Paul adopts the same simile, and twice says, **"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"**; referring in I Corinthians 5:6, to evil walk, and in Galatians 5:9, to evil doctrine.

Leviticus 2:12 tells us that the oblation of the firstfruits was not to be burned on the altar; and this is explained by Leviticus 23:17, which states that leaven was present.

Two offerings of firstfruits were to be brought and waved before the Lord: the one mentioned in verses 10, 11; the second, after fifty days, in verse 17; and these two were evidently typical of **"Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's, at His coming"** - the sheaf referring

to the Lord's resurrection, and the two wave-loaves, baked with leaven, to "**them that are CHRIST's at His coming**" (I Corinthians 15:23).

Hence the presence of the leaven, which is met by the sin-offering in verse 19. The sheaf of the firstfruits required no sin-offering, because there was no leaven. There is one mention of leaven in connection with the peace-offering (Leviticus 7:13, 14), in the thanksgiving sacrifice, teaching that even our holiest things are mixed with sin; and here again the leaven is met by blood.

There was to be no honey in the offerings. Honey seems generally to typify the sweetness of human nature, and could not be acceptable to GOD. Proverbs 25:27 says, "**It is not good to eat much honey; so for men to search their own glory is not glory**"; and Proverbs 27:7 tells us that "**the full soul loatheth an honeycomb**" (marg., treadeth under foot); and it well describes the attitude of the heart that is satisfied with CHRIST, towards worldly amusements, pleasures, glory, etc. We are often asked if this or that is wrong; but the question is rather, Are we satisfied with CHRIST? If so, the other is distasteful to us; we do not want it.

There are two things lying all around us in our pathway - the manna and the honey - and we must stoop to pick up the one, and trample under foot the other. The manna was just as sweet as the honey, for "**the taste of it was like wafers made with honey**" (Exodus 16:31): and so the Word is said to be "**sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb**"; and again the Psalmist says, "**How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.**"

There are some things which have various meanings; and care must be taken to notice the connection in order to ascertain what the meaning is. This has already been referred to in the case of water, which, we have seen, sometimes symbolizes the Word, sometimes the HOLY SPIRIT; or again may tell of death and judgment, the weakness of man, or the unrest and turmoil of the nations - according to the different qualities to which reference is made.

In the same way fire has many applications. It represents GOD's presence, as on Mount Horeb, in the burning bush, and at the giving of the law, and as in the pillar of fire which guided Israel through the wilderness. When fire fell upon a sacrifice it denoted acceptance. It was probably by fire that GOD testified to Abel's gift, and it fell on the altar of burnt-offering, in Leviticus 9:24, and also on the offerings of Gideon, David, Solomon, and Elijah. The fire that consumed what was placed on the altar of burnt-offering, as well as the fire which was taken from it to the golden altar, did not speak of judgment, but of favour; for the sacrifices on both rose to GOD as a sweet smelling savour.

The thought of judgment is in the fire that consumed the sin-offering outside the camp. The words used for burning are different; for while the one referring to the altar of burnt-offering means burning as incense, the other denotes consuming in wrath - see Leviticus 4:19, 21.

(1) Here therefore we have the fire of judgment on the substitute, as also probably in the paschal lamb that was roast with fire.

(2) Fire fell in judgment on the wicked - on Sodom; on Egypt in Exodus 9:23, 24; on Nadab and Abihu; on the camp of Israel in Numbers 11:1, and at Korah's rebellion; and upon Ahaziah's messengers to Elijah. The difference between these two kinds of fire is clearly shown in

Leviticus 9:24, and 10:2. In both cases we read, "**there came**" or "**went a fire out from before the Lord**"; but in the one it was as a mark of favour and acceptance of the burnt-offering, in the other it was a terrible visitation of judgment.

(3) Israel will have to pass through the fire of judgment (Zechariah 13:6-9; Isaiah 4:4; and Matthew 3:11, 12). We read in the last passage, "**He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**"

The baptism of fire in the one verse is probably explained in the following. He will purge His floor by the wind, and consume the chaff with the fire. To baptize with the HOLY GHOST and with fire, cannot mean one and the same thing; and in the beginning of Acts 1, the fire is omitted. "**Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.**" The baptism of fire is still future for Israel.

(4) The fire of judgment will fall on His enemies at the Lord's coming to the earth (II Thessalonians 1:8; Isaiah 10:16, 17; and Isaiah 66:15, 16).

(5) It will destroy those who are incited to rebellion by Satan after the Millennium.

(6) We read of the fire of eternal judgment.

There are, however, still several things which are symbolized by fire. "**God's Word is as a fire,**" as we are told three times in Jeremiah 5:14; 20:9; 23:29; then there is the refining fire of trial, Malachi 3:2; I Peter 1:7, by means of which GOD can "**take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer**"; and, lastly, there is the fire which shall test believers' works at the judgment seat of CHRIST, when everything shall be tried by fire, and when only that which "**may abide the fire**" will be preserved.

"**The cloven tongues like as of fire**" may have symbolized the HOLY SPIRIT; but there do not seem to be other passages which distinctly state that fire is typical of the Spirit, though it is through His indwelling that GOD's presence is a reality, and through His influence that GOD's Word becomes as fire, and trial does its refining work.

It is not, however, safe to take all the above mentions of fire and refer them indiscriminately to the work of the HOLY SPIRIT. This is sometimes done, and thus passages are made to teach something quite different from their primary meaning.

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