

No.
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"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE
RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

THE BOARDS OF THE TABERNACLE.

An Address (revised) at

Forest Gate, E. 7.

1st August, 1921.

by

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THE BOARDS OF THE TABERNACLE.

An Address by Mr. P. W. Howard,

(Primarily to young people).

At Forest Gate, E. 7.

1st August, 1921.

Some of you know, some of you may not know much about the tabernacle in the wilderness. If we look back to the early books of Scripture we find from the very beginning God gave beautiful pictures of the plan of salvation. Among those pictures we have the ark which Noah made. But very many of the pictures are found when God brought up the children of Israel from Egypt by the hand of Moses. God brought them OUT that He might bring them IN, and thus He made the people of Israel a picture of those who at every time and in every place are saved by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. THEY are brought out from a worse trouble than that of Egypt, and are brought into a better land than that of Canaan! So we have the picture teaching of the wilderness, that wild place, that land of pits, through which God led His people safely - And thus God was pleased to show how He will lead His people to-day in the midst of the world which is in reality a wilderness to any who have been saved by grace.

God said to Israel, or rather said to Moses concerning Israel, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, (that is, a holy place), that I may dwell, that I may tabernacle, among them"; and God said just ^{what} ~~which~~ was to be brought, and how it was to be used, and how every-

thing was to be done. because ALL was to give a wonderful picture of

the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the one way of salvation. The tabernacle was rightly to be in the MIDDLE of all their tents. The Lord must be in the midst, and this is a beautiful blessing for His people - that they are around Him. There was ONE tabernacle with ONE way in, and throughout we have the thought of "ONE" brought before us - yea, ONE way of salvation. I do not mean there are only one's; there are also two's, but not two ways of salvation; -another lesson is wrapped up in the number "two". Do you know, boys and girls, that every number in Scripture has a meaning, and a precious meaning? And do you know that if we were to start going through the numbers in Scripture to try and learn "much" of their meaning, well, - I do not think you would get away from the meeting till it was time for you to go back to your school again. Our meeting would go on for a very long time. We should need to have a meeting some weeks long. But we will not have such a meeting this afternoon, we will not try to go into all the passages which speak of the numbers in Scripture; nor will we even take the tabernacle numbers, for if we take the numbers in the tabernacle alone we have a very precious number of lessons. You have one's and two's and three's and four's and five's and six's and seven's and eight's, and so on right through, in the tabernacle. I expect some of our grown up friends, while I was speaking, were thinking to themselves HOW MANY one's and two's and three's they could remember which are found in that precious study. But how many could YOU remember, boys and girls? Perhaps you would have to answer "None". You have plenty of time -

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try and find out during your days without school. Read the chapters about the tabernacle, in Exodus 25 to 40. That will not take you long. Read through first, noticing all you can in what I may call a "general" way. Then read through again to see all the numbers that come before you. Read through again to see all the different materials that were used. Then read through again to notice just WHERE everything was put and the reference to the north and the south and the right and the left, and so forth; and then keep on finding out reasons for reading through, and you will find a good number of these.

But this afternoon, we will keep ourselves to one tiny part of the subject. No, I must not call it a TINY part of the subject. Do you know I have not yet found a tiny part of any of God's subjects? They are ALL large, they are ALL full of wonderful teaching. On the notice of our meeting, for these days, we have, The Tabernacle Boards. Will you come with me - those of you who have Bibles - to Exodus 26? (verses 15-25 read). Here we have brought before us the boards of the tabernacle. First of all, notice their material. They are made of wood. They are made of wood covered over with GOLD. Here we have some boards made glorious. Why should they be made glorious? They were God's dwelling-place, and God dwells in glory. But you have wood as a picture of those who have humble earthly bodies, Here therefore, we have a picture of one thing or another. We have either a picture of the life of the Lord Jesus or of God's people. Which is it? We notice a large number - we see twenty boards on one

side. Where we behold the Lord Jesus we rather expect to have ONE brought before us, as there was one table, one altar and so forth. So, if you find a large number, you expect there may be a reference to the people of the Lord Jesus Christ - those who have earthly bodies and so are to be humble, for shittim wood always suggests that - Those who are to live a wilderness-life in this world, and those who at the same time are viewed before God as glorious - Here is a beautiful description of God's people. They are a humble people who live an earthly life in the wilderness, but before God they are glorious.

Now, further showing us that this pictures the people of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will notice that the boards of the tabernacle are said to be standing up. The thought is that they are those who are standing up with a NEW life. This is true of those who are saved. God's people are mad to stand up. They are raised up from the death of sin, a wonderful change has been brought into their life; and these twenty boards and twenty boards and eight boards, making the forty-eight boards, give us a picture of God's people - but not from the standpoint that ALL God's people are brought together AS ONE in the Lord Jesus Christ, though that is true. Where we have all God's people brought together AS ONE we are not as a rule told the "measurement". Where we have brought before us God's people separately or in companies of God's people, we may be told the measurement. So here we are told the measurement - ten cubits by a cubit and a half, so that we find each of these boards of the same measure - fifteen square cubits. Now

fifteen is an interesting number in God's Word. Fifteen is five added to five added to five, and five in Scripture is often God's use of little things. That idea is common in the Scripture. And furthermore, have you noticed in the book of Psalms how we have from Psalm 120 to Psalm 134 FIFTEEN Psalms which are called "The Songs of Degrees" or "The Songs of Going Up"? referring to the going up into the house of the Lord, and the fifteen steps. Here then we have brought before us that which I think the boards would also show. God's people - little things in themselves - are used in His own wonderful love; they are part of His very house. That is the thought, for God's people are made His very house. These boards were put together to make God's own house, and God delights to live in His people. It is a wonderful thought. God delights to dwell in His people. Do not misunderstand me. Though they were God's house, there was one part of the house they could not be, or I ought to say two parts of the house they could not be. They could not be the original foundation, and they could not be the door. Christ is the Door, and Christ is the First Foundation, and His people become the house joined with Him, so that God is pleased - wonderful thought! - God, though so great, is pleased to live in His people, and they make His house, and these forty-eight boards bring before us God's people. The number forty-eight has, I suppose, a number of lessons wrapped up in it. We think of six and we multiply it by eight. Now the meaning in Scripture of six multiplied by seven, and six multiplied by eight, is quite different. Six and eight together bring before us God's work

finished and a glorious resurrection. Here then we have the six brought before us multiplied by the eight, in order that there might be the showing forth of those who are raised up from the dead, that they might be God's house. They are God's house now, in one sense, and when their bodies too are raised up from the dead, how beautifully the Lord will live in His people! These boards were all standing up and those who are saved are all caused to stand up.

But on what did they stand? Each board stood on the same foundation, and that foundation was silver. Now silver in Scripture often brings before us the thought of redemption. Our very English word "redemption" means "buying", and "silver" not only in Scripture language but in other languages, specially has the thought of "buying". It is not at all strange to find a silver coin mentioned when one is speaking of money, because silver and money are viewed as the same thing - so much silver is used for money. These foundations of silver picture "buying". Buying is redemption, the work of the Lord Jesus - better than silver - buying His people. Hence saved ones are said to be bought, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. And each board stood up in the same way - there was not one board which could step forward and say, I am different from all the others, I can stand up by myself. They all NEEDED sockets of silver. Indeed, this silver was redemption money, as another chapter of Exodus shows. The money that was brought when God said there was to be redemption, that was the money that made the foundation, and

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every child of God stands on the same resting-place - the finished work of the Lord Jesus. No one can go to heaven except by the blood of the Lord Jesus. There is no other resting-place. Nowhere in the world can we find anything on which to stand except the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. All that glorifies God, all that makes a house for God, is because of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, the boards all stood the same way, and the youngest Christian and the oldest Christian stand the same way, and if you are brought to be saved you will have this one resting place - the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But how did they stand? We are told that each board had two tenons. Do you know what tenons are? You reply, "They must have been feet of a certain kind, that came out from the board and fixed in these strong, firm, heavy sockets of silver". By the way these WERE strong heavy sockets - each weighed a number of pounds, about 100, to show how fixed the work of Christ is. Yes, I agree with you the tenons were feet, but yet the word that is used is the word "hands". Why were the feet hands? I think there is a wonderful reason. I STAND on my feet, I HOLD with my hands, and those who rest on the work of the Lord Jesus also hold it with their hands, or rather the hands of their heart. They not only rest on it, but they delight to HOLD the work that holds them; and God brings that before us by putting the tenons down underneath the hands as feet but calling them "hands", and therefore by calling the feet hands God does not make a mistake, but gives us TWO lessons instead of one. Those who are saved by grace rest on the

Lord Jesus. Those who are saved, by grace, with the hands of their heart lay hold of the finished work of the Lord Jesus, and say, I like to spend my strength in knowing more of what that work means and holding that which holds me. If we have a socket into which we place anything, we say that the tenon or piece of wood that sticks out from the wood "holds well", but if anyone take away the socket it does not hold very well, it falls over. I think we ought to say the SOCKET holds well. The tenon simply holds, AS it fits in to what is made ready for it; and the mark of God's people is not they hold themselves up but they are brought by God's love to fit into that which holds them up, and they beautifully agree with the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, we find that these boards of the tabernacle were all fitted together, the same shape, all with one object. There was not one board which could come forward and say, I make the tabernacle. There was not one board which said, I have a little tabernacle of my own. They were brought together, and joined together, to make ONE tabernacle. Do you know, boys and girls, God saves with one object, only one:- God saves to bring all His people, saved in the same way, with the same new life, resting on the same Lord Jesus, to be the one company in the midst of which He will dwell! How delightful is the thought that God saves those of all nations and of all ages with one object, to make one people in the midst of which He will dwell. THAT is God's purpose.

Now, when the boards were standing up and fitting together nicely, we are told in verse 26 how they were finished off.

Verses 26-30 might be read. Here we have therefore God's clear teaching that the boards must be the proper wood, and standing up. Then they must be brought together resting on the same sockets. Then the next thing is that there were bars to bind together. Do you not see the wonderful lesson? We have first brought before us God's people raised up from the death of sin, caused to be resting on the finished work of the Lord Jesus, made a company for God to dwell in the midst; and then we have the bars to show how God delights to bring His people together. The five bars would not do instead of sockets. Suppose anyone had said, "If we have the five bars, one of the boards need not have any sockets, two of the boards need not have any sockets, the bars will hold up without the sockets". - No, there MUST be the sockets. Do you know, boys and girls, if anyone is brought to know something OF God's grace, simply being with other Christians, being with those who know the Name of the Lord Jesus - that will not make it all right. There must be something more than a head knowledge, there must be a personal resting on the death of the Lord Jesus, a personal knowledge of what it is to have that socket of redemption, the silver of the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

Furthermore, what about these five bars afterwards? Four bars could be seen outwardly, one bar went through the middle from end to end. I am not told whether the other bars went from end to end. They may have done. They were the outward marks that all the bars were together. Now, I am sure of this,

that God's people ought to have outward marks that they are all together, but God does not tell us that the outward bars did go from end to end, because He would remind us that sometimes you cannot see all God's people together, but the inward bar went from end to end. The bar that went right in the middle went from one end to the other end. God's inside work is from end to end. We have seen in these bars five, five, five, again. I suppose the fulness of their meaning we shall not understand, but we can learn something of it. I like to notice the four bars outside - four bars outside each way. We have brought before us not only God's world-wide work, as we have north, south, east and west (the four points of the compass as we say), but there are further lessons. When you have the binding together of God's people in the book of Acts, you find they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers. So it was marked outside before others that they had a delight in being together in the things which pleased God; and the four bars outside give that picture. The one bar inside has, I suppose, a double beautiful thought. The fact it contained shittim wood fittingly refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Lord Jesus Christ has gone back into glory. Though He said to His people very lovingly, "Lo, I am with you all the days" and though He put it thus, "Where two or three are gathered together into My Name there am I in the midst", He also specially reminds us that the Holy Spirit is working among those who are the people of God, and I suppose the inner bar which goes from end to end

pictures the work of the Holy Spirit applying the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, binding together God's people in an inside way that they are one people before Him. So the tabernacle was finished. So God's dwelling place was reared up, and a day is coming when God will have a better dwelling place than a picture, a better dwelling place than wood and gold - a dwelling place of His Own people, His Own living stone, His Own living boards, those who are saved by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus.

And, therefore, boys and girls, we think of you. You have heard of the picture, you have understood something that has been said to you. I wonder where you are this afternoon. I wonder what you are this afternoon before God. There are some of us who feel that we have been made to stand up with a new life, we know it. There are some of us who can truthfully say that we should fall over at once, but for the fact that the redemption of the Lord Jesus keeps us and will keep us, and so we shall NOT fall over. We are so glad to be resting on the finished work of Christ. There are some of us who can say that this finished work of the Lord Jesus is that which we hold because it holds us, and we rejoice in resting on Him, and therefore we love to be with other Christians. The boards of the tabernacle had a family mark about them; they all looked the same, and their usefulness was when they were together. So with God's dear people - they are all saved in one way, and they delight or should delight, to be together that there may be the building up of something for God. Boys and girls, I wonder about you, whether you really can

say that you rest on the death of the Lord Jesus for you. You know about it. It is a very different thing to feel the burden of sin and to come to that precious Saviour and to know Him as our very own; a very different thing, but it is a glorious fact. And salvation is possible for boys and girls, and then such, even though little, are brought together that they may become not only now, but in the future, those in whom God delights. Is it not wonderful that God should delight in His people? But it is true, and God will live in His people. Would not you like to have this true of you, that you might know the joy of resting upon the precious Saviour as your own Saviour, and the joy of being joined with others when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back, in that big company of saved ones, to be God's own dwelling place? Salvation is so precious; earthly life is so short, its pleasures are so small, the things of this world are so weak; and God's anger in the future is so great. When we think of YOU, we long that some might be saved. When we think of the death of the Lord Jesus we long for HIS glory in the salvation of sinners for whom He died. Ah, boys and girls, God has brought you again to hear His Word this afternoon. Do not think that it is enjoyable to hear it and then forget all about it. I want you to go away asking yourself the question, shall I be part of God's house when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back, or shall I be thrown aside as no use to Him? It is delightful to know the Lord Jesus as our very own, but do YOU know Him thus? You know ABOUT Him, but oh that the word "about" might be removed and that you might indeed and in Truth know HIM -

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receiving God's gift of life eternal and becoming a new creation
in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5. 17).
