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THE HOUSE

OF GOD



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THE HOUSE OF GOD.

Evidence in the Pentateuch.

The house of a man is where he dwells, similarly the House of God is where God dwells. The term "house of a man" is used in various relations, prominent amongst these is the material structure, since man has a body. But God is a spirit, and as the martyr Stephen in his masterly arraignment of the Jewish leaders said, "the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7, 48). While the Apostle Paul in his address to the Athenian philosophers made a similar statement. That thought was even apprehended at the zenith of the era of material display by Solomon in the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron, ii., 6). Yet there are many illuminating passages in the Old Testament, throwing light on features of the New Testament doctrine of the House of God.

Since Genesis has been well termed "the seed-plot of the Bible," we are not surprised to find that the first intimation in Scripture of the subject appears in Gen. xxviii., 10-22, describing Jacob's dream. Therein he was transported outside his circumstances to witness the purpose of God as to the earth. Four prominent features of the doctrine to be unfolded later received emphasis, *viz.* (1) "Surely the Lord is in this place" (v. 16), *i.e.*, the presence of the Lord was apprehended. (2) "How dreadful is this place" (v. 17). He apprehended that entailed reverence in accord with its holy character. (3) "He beheld the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder, thus it was the gate of heaven" (v. 12-17). Hence the realisation of heavenly administration in the presence of God who is a consuming fire must impress fear on one who comes in contact with the House of God. That is easily understood. Our first parents after they had sinned hid themselves from God. The company of Christians (and most of all their company in a Gospel meeting) is disagreeable to anyone who has not come to know God as a Saviour. (4) "Jacob set up a

pillar and poured oil on the top of it" (v. 18). The pillar indicated testimony or witness (Gen. xxxi., 52). In this case the witness was to the unfailing faithfulness and mercy of God (the Lord God of Abraham, etc.). The oil was typical of the Holy Spirit who makes the House of God a living reality now. Jacob named the place Bethel or House of God, although no real house was then existing. Since that day many have sought to imitate Jacob's example by erecting houses and memorials of different kinds and have described them as relative to God, but without prophetic insight. So that the features of the real house have been obscured. Then Jacob sought to drive a bargain with God. If God would prosper his way then he would own God and would give back 10 per cent. of whatever God gave him. That showed splendid business instinct! A moiety of 50 per cent. would have been the lowest terms he could have offered to man with any hope of acceptance. Frequently people of God nowadays do not reach Jacob's modest standard, they take all from God without thanks or recognition of His interests. Twenty years of circumventing circumstances by his own cleverness brought Jacob to an extremity (Gen. xxxv., 1), and God said to him "Arise go up to Bethel and dwell there." Jacob realised that there was much in his house which was not consistent with the holiness of the House of God so he commanded his household to put away the strange gods and to be clean and change their garments. He hid the idols under the oak by Shechem (usually considered as typical of the significance of the cross of Christ). Behind all the circumstances was the hand of God in discipline. Expediency, hitherto the guiding principle of Jacob, would no longer serve. He would thenceforth have to act according to the righteousness of God. Living away from God inevitably leads to our contracting many associations which are not compatible with the holy character of the House of God. When Jacob got everything cleared up he erected another pillar at Bethel and anointed it in the same way as he had done 20 years before. He had returned to the testimony with which

he was connected at first. But he understood it in a much better way. The hard discipline throughout the 20 years had caused him to apprehend the perfect administration and the holiness of God.

In Genesis the idea of the House of God was only in embryo form since God wished to dwell in the midst of a people, and these did not appear until the record of Exodus was reached. The first eighteen chapters of the book are occupied mainly with the statement of what God did for the people notwithstanding their waywardness. The remainder of the book is more taken up with what man was to do for the Glory of God. In chapter iii., God appeared to Moses in a burning thorn bush which was not consumed. The love and grace of God (a consuming fire, nevertheless) were to be manifested amongst the people of Israel just as miraculously as the fire in the midst of the bush which did not consume it. Forty years before Moses had given up the people in disappointment. Since then God's dealings with him had disestablished his opinion and he had reached the point that he could serve God. Although Israel might be well described as a worthless thorn bush, when God as a consuming fire dwelt in the bush, then all was transformed. (As another has said, "for the first forty years of his life Moses was learning to be something, in the second forty years he was learning to be nothing, and in the last forty years he learned that God was everything"). The ground was holy. As God of Abraham, His will is paramount and unchallengeable. He consumes in discipline what is unsuited to His will, even as in abundant grace and mercy He moulds what is pleasing to Himself so that he can dwell amongst the people. Subsequently the display of Himself as Jehovah (*i.e.*, Lord, I am, the self-existing One), would come into view. Therefore in spite of Pharaoh's stubbornness God would have His people free to serve Him outside Egypt.

A two-fold action was necessary to attain that end:—(1) External power would be manifested to deliver them. (2) Their hearts had to be cleansed and unbelief displaced by

internal power. In the series of God's acts of power in Egypt, there was a distinction or separation made between the land of Goshen where God's people dwelt and the rest of Egypt. The various agencies of judgment on Egypt did not affect Goshen. The ninth plague of judgment was thick darkness which could be felt. For three days no one could stir, but the children of Israel had light in their rude dwellings while the ornate temples of Egypt were shrouded in a more complete blackout than a London night fog! (That is indicative of the spiritual darkness which envelops man's philosophy, while divine light fills the hearts of the people of God, because God is there). The tenth plague was the culmination of God's dealings in smiting the first born in every household in Egypt, from the greatest to the least. But the families of Israel were sheltered inside the houses with bloodstained lintels and sideposts (*i.e.*, the Passover, typical of the death of Christ in one of its aspects). The accompanying bitter herbs indicated self-judgment, wrought by the grace of God in the soul engrossed with the love that averted the judgment stroke of the angel. The unleavened bread showed the separate character to be sustained by the people of God. God could not tolerate in His people the leaven or evil he had to judge in Egypt (typical of the world). The Passover celebration indicated three prominent ideas (*a*) protection, (*b*) food, (*c*) exodus from Egypt. Redemption or deliverance by blood was not complete redemption. It was necessary that the people should be taken out of Egypt. When all hope seemed to vanish as they were hemmed in by the Red Sea in front and the Egyptian host behind, God intervened and they passed through the sea as on dry land. What was their salvation became the destruction of their enemies! Chapter xv. gives the redemption song (the first song in scriptural record). That was contingent not on safety from judgment through the blood of the Lamb but on complete separation from Egypt and the destruction of the enemy's power. The redeemed people then knew that God was for them: v. 2 sprung from thankful hearts who wished to

prepare a habitation for God; v. 17 speaks of the sanctuary and v. 13 of the abode of God's holiness. Chapter xix. introduced the thought of man's response towards God. In obeying the voice of God and keeping His Covenant they would be to Him a peculiar treasure above all people a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. (All the people were to form a royal priesthood. The special family ultimately honoured as priests came into function through the failure of the people).

Chapter xxv. records the instruction of God, "let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." All the material was to be given as a freewill offering by the people. That could not have taken place until redemption had been effected. The House of God or Tabernacle had walls of imperishable shittim wood, made up of 48 boards, 10 cubits high and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits broad, each with two tenons at the bottom fitting into two silver sockets (which were typical of divine grace by redemption in its two constituents, the death and resurrection of Christ). So that the components of the House of God were based on redemption. They did not touch the sands of the desert at any point! Moreover, the boards were bound together by bars and the corners were specially strengthened. Over all was a layer of gold, typical of the righteousness of God. The tabernacle or tent was completed by a covering, composed of ten curtains of fine twined linen and blue, purple and scarlet, with embroidered cherubim thereon (typical of the display of the varied glories of Christ). Over that was a goats' hair covering of eleven curtains (typical of the Holy Nazarite separation of Christ while here). Further coverings of rams' skins, dyed red (consecration unto death) and badgers' skins (holiness excluding evil) completed the roof of the tent. The oblong shaped tabernacle was divided into three compartments. (1) The outer court which was open above and surrounded by hangings 100 cubits long and 50 cubits broad supported by pillars and sockets of brass, while the connecting hooks and fillets were of silver. The brass was

indicative of the righteousness of God testing man in responsibility. So brass was prominent of the outside as gold was of the inside of the tabernacle. At the same time the connection with silver declared the value of the redemption of Christ then future. Man's need discovered by the test was at once met by redemption! The hangings as well as the curtains of entrance to the second chamber bore no cherubim which brought in the thought that although cherubim and a flaming sword kept man out from the tree of life in Eden, no such barrier would exist in the era of display of heavenly things of which the tabernacle was a type. (Christ would be the door and living way).

The brazen altar was for the burnt offering (indicating God's satisfaction in the death of Christ) and the brazen laver (between the altar and the entrance to the Holy place) was for the priests washing their hands (1 Tim. ii., 8), and feet with water (John xiii.) (2) The second chamber, the Holy Place, comprising two-thirds of the covered space (30 cubits long, 10 broad, 10 high), contained the table of shewbread, the pure gold candlestick and the golden altar of incense. The table of shittim wood overlaid with gold had an encircling border and both had crowns. The table bore the twelve loaves or pierced cakes (Lev. xxiv., 5), showing Israel before God maintained by Christ. (3) The third chamber, the Most Holy, consisting of the remaining one-third of the tent, was separated from the second chamber by a veil of the same figured fabric as the curtains forming the roof. The veil was supported by four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold and had four sockets of silver and furnished with gold hooks. The contents of the chamber were: the Ark of testimony ($2\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits) also of shittim wood overlaid with gold (type of the true Manhood and Divine Glory of Christ), and the gold lid of the Ark formed the Mercy Seat. On its two ends all in one piece were two gold cherubims with their faces looking down on the Mercy-Seat (witness of the perfect redemption in the blood of Jesus). In the Ark were to be subsequently put the golden pot with manna (God's treasure in memory of

Christ here but now Man in the Glory). Aaron's rod that budded (Christ's priesthood in power of an endless life), and the tables of the Covenant (all God's promises with His people secured in Christ). Everything was constructed according to the pattern shown to Moses in the Holy Mount, so that no detail was left to the fertile imagination of man. The Tabernacle of testimony was in relation to what was in the mind of God to be manifested publicly in the world to come.

At the end of Exodus we read that the tabernacle or tent of the congregation (literally "the tent of meeting") was covered with the cloud and filled with the Glory of the Lord which was the guide for the people in all their subsequent journeys. Exodus closes thus, and Leviticus commences with the Lord speaking to Moses from that centre. Leviticus is occupied with the description of the offerings and the offerers and the general service connected with the Tabernacle, the House of God. In Numbers, emphasis is put on the Levites bearing and taking charge of the tabernacle of testimony in its movement through the wilderness, also on the prominence of the tabernacle as the central feature of the camp. In Deuteronomy reference to the tabernacle is only made at the close of the book, when the Lord communicated to Moses the intelligence of his approaching death. Moses and Joshua were to appear before the tabernacle of the congregation and the Lord appeared in the pillar of cloud over the door of the tabernacle and spoke to Moses therefrom.

Subsequent evidence in the Old Testament.

In the Book of Joshua, reference is made:—(1) to the valuable part of the spoil of Jericho being put in the treasury of the House of the Lord (typical of what the triumph of Christ has secured for God's glory). (2) to the Gibeonites being condemned to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the House of God (teaches government). (3) after the land had been conquered the tabernacle of the congregation was set up at Shiloh. (4) when the 2½ tribes

were free from warfare returning to their lands beyond Jordan they built an altar at the passage of Jordan and were accused of seeking to break away. The whole congregation indicated the land of the possession of the Lord as wherein the Lord's tabernacle (His centre) dwelt. In the chaos marking the period of the Judges people paid little attention to the tabernacle. In only one instance is mention made when they sought to punish the tribe of Benjamin for an evil deed wrought amongst them. Israel went to the House of God, sought counsel and after their defeat, they returned, wept, sat before the Lord, fasted and presented burnt and peace offerings before the Lord.

In Samuel, his introduction to the House of the Lord and subsequent service and the calamity of the Ark being captured by the Philistines were prominent points in the early part of the book. Then interest was transferred from the Tabernacle to the Ark and God's holiness was vindicated amongst the Philistines, at Bethshemesh, at Kirjath-jearim and in the house of Obed-edom, until the Ark returned to its proper place after the absence of nearly a century. It would appear that Gibeon superseded Shiloh as the place of the Tabernacle. (1 Chron. xvi., 39). As soon as David was secure on the throne of all Israel, he essayed to build a house for the Lord, but he had to learn that however laudable might be his desire, the proposal was not according to the will of God. The acquiescence of the king in the decision was beautiful! He devoted himself with unabated zeal and love to finding a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob in spite of affliction. Although he was not permitted to build the temple he secured the place and found the material. God helped him marvellously in acquiring a vast treasure of gold, silver, etc. The temple or house could not be built until the kingdom was established. All the wealth and resources of the kingdom contributed to the grandeur of the house. The people were delivered from every foe. They dwelt safely under their vines and fig trees. God gave them rest on every side. Whereas in the tumultuous conditions in Judges every man did what was right in his own eyes since

there was no king, everyone in David's kingdom was controlled according to the will of God. All these features are beautiful types of what would come to light in the spiritual house of the following era. In the Psalms the aspirations and the exercises of the soul of the Psalmist relative to the House of God are shown in a remarkable way. The desire for and communication of instruction were prominent features relative to the Temple, *e.g.*, beholding the beauty of the Lord and enquiring in His Temple (Ps. xxvii., 4), also therein every whit spoke of His glory (Ps. xxix., 9). The usage "House of God" is more comprehensive and more frequent than "the Temple" in the Psalms, especially with relation to dwelling therein and going thereto, and His appreciation of even such an external connection as being a doorkeeper, rather than dwelling in the tents of wickedness (Ps. lxxxiv.). But in his exercises the Psalmist did not dwell altogether in the future, his thoughts were constantly recurring to the tabernacle, *e.g.*, in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me and the offering of sacrifices of joy (Ps. xxvii.); and worship in the tabernacle (Ps. cxxxii., 7). Those showed the prophetic bearing of the passages, as the Psalmist could not have access to the Tabernacle then existent, since he was not a priest! Holiness was the prime feature. "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever" (Ps. cxiii., 5).

At length the desire of David was consummated in the early part of the reign of his son Solomon, the King of Peace, The structure of the Temple in the main followed the lines of the Tabernacle. In the fourth year of his reign Solomon began to build the House of the Lord, in Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father and in the place David had prepared at the threshing floor of Ornan where God's grace and mercy intervened on the ground of the acceptance of the burnt offering. In the temple the dimensions of the tabernacle were doubled, both as to length and breadth. In addition there were extra features such as a magnificent porch and two gigantic pillars, *viz.*,

Jachin (meaning "beauty or established") and Boaz (meaning "strength"), each 60 feet high, said to have contained about 300 tons of stone and 900 tons of brass, then a molten sea was borne by twelve oxen besides a large brazen altar and ten lavers were in the outer court. In the Holy Place there were 100 bowls of gold, 10 golden candlesticks and 10 tables with 12 loaves on each and in the middle between was the golden altar of incense. In the Most Holy Place (20 cubits square) stood the Ark containing the two tables of stone. (Apparently Aaron's rod and the golden pot of manna had disappeared!) Solomon made two new cherubim of olive tree, their faces looked towards the house as the witness of blessing for the earth in the day of glory to come secured through redemption by blood. These overshadowed the two small golden cherubim forming part of the ark. The wings of the former stretched across the width of the House. The walls of the Temple consisted of fine cedarwood and hewn stone (polished marble). The inside was carved with figures of cherubim and palms and the whole was overlaid with gold. No light was admitted to the Holiest, but the larger external chamber had narrow windows. The two chambers were separated by the veil. In the Tabernacle there was no room for the priests dwelling, not even a seat for resting, but in the sides of the Temple were 90 chambers hence the House was not only for approach to God but a place for the priests dwelling, so beautifully indicated in the Psalms. (In the Lord's closing ministry in John xiv., he made analogous reference "In My Father's house are many abodes or rest rooms.") In the Tabernacle there was no singing, but in the Temple certain families of Levites whose primary function was bearing the burdens of the House of God came under instruction in the use of musical instruments for the service of the House of God; that was typical of the day of glory yet to come, and also significant of the Spirit's Day when those who by grace partake of the resources and gladness of the House of God are praising people. The temple was seven years in building and near the end of the eighth year just before "the feast

of tabernacles " the Ark and other furniture were transferred from the Tabernacle to the Temple and Solomon dedicated it with a transcendent prayer. Just as he finished fire from heaven consumed the burnt offering and the glory of the Lord filled the House so that the priests could not enter. Then the king made a vast peace offering of oxen and sheep, and kept a seven days feast. After that the people were sent away with glad hearts due to the goodness of the Lord. (The tabernacle was the pattern of things in the heavens and was anointed with oil. The temple was neither!) The fact that God should dwell on earth with men was prominent in all Solomon's arrangements (2 Chron. vi., 2, 18). The result was blessing to man and its reflex action praise to God.

The first twenty years of Solomon's reign were occupied with the building of the House of the Lord and his own house (which took thirteen years), and many other works and his way was prospered greatly. The Queen of Sheba, attracted by the fame of Solomon from distant Ethiopia, tested his incomparable wisdom and viewed his resources and works, but the coperstone of wonder was reached when she beheld the ascent by which he went up to the House of the Lord, her heart was completely captured and she broke out into a majestic panegyric! Solomon's unparalleled success seemed to have made him careless, so that in the latter half of his reign he sadly belied the principles of the House of God, getting a multitude of horses from Egypt and taking many foreign wives who turned his heart from the Lord so that he built high places and offered sacrifices to the gods of the nations around. His example induced the people to imitate his practice.

Shortly after the accession of Rehoboam the son of Solomon as king, the kingdom was divided by rebellion. A little later Shishak, king of Egypt, robbed the Temple of many of its choice golden treasures, so that the Temple only lasted about 30 years in its pristine grandeur. Under later wicked kings the Temple fell into decay, although repaired by Joash, Hezekiah and Josiah successively. The

kings in general used the treasures for mercenary purposes. Indeed Manasseh raised altars to the heathen gods in the sacred courts of the Temple. Uzziah usurped the place of a priest and was smitten with leprosy and cut off from the House of the Lord. On that occasion Isaiah was witness of the majesty and holiness of the Lord in the Temple. The features of recovery in Hezekiah's day are instructive: (1) the altar and table with their vessels were cleansed, prepared and sanctified (2 Chr. xxix., 18-19); offerings were made for *all Israel* (although ten-twelfths had disappeared); the Levites and their instruments were set in the house of the Lord according to the command of David, Gad and Nathan (although these worthies had been dead for 250 years). Nothing new was introduced; all details in worship and praise were arranged according to the word of God. The feast of unleavened bread was revived in the pristine purity of its institution and that became a logical antecedent to the revival of the passover feast a century later. At the later date, Hilkiah found the book of the law in the House of the Lord and the reading of it to King Josiah affected the king so greatly that it led to a revival such as had not been seen since the days of Samuel. In the closing years of the kingdom in the brief reigns of the sons of godly Josiah, the chief priests polluted the House of the Lord. The Lord sent His prophets with messages having compassion on the people and His dwelling place, but they mocked and misused them, despised His word until there was no remedy and the wrath of the Lord arose against them. Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem, took away the treasures and demolished the temple and city.

Ezekiel had a vision of the glory of the Lord (1) going up from the cherub, (2) departing off the threshold of the House, (3) going up from the midst of the city, (4) standing over the mountain on the east of the city, successively as if reluctant to leave (evidence of God's long-suffering).

Yet Ezekiel did not close his prophecy until he saw the glory of the Lord coming back to the House by the east gate and then filling the House (Ezek. ch. x., xi. and xliii). In

Ezekiel xl.-xlvii. we get remarkable details of the house in its latter glory. Everything is divinely measured, from the details of the wall and the gates to the inheritance of each tribe. The wall sets forth that all evil will be excluded; the gates that there is access for God's people. From the house there issue the living waters for the blessing of the land; and the trees of the river shall be for food and the leaves for medicine. In Ezekiel xliii., 10-12 the pattern and law (or principle) of administration of the house are referred to tersely "most holy"! The last verse of Ezekiel states the privilege of the house, *viz.*, "the Lord is there."

After 70 years of the captivity, the Lord stirred the spirit of Cyrus, the king of Persia, to invite volunteers in exile to return to Jerusalem and erect a house to the Lord God of heaven. So a remnant under Zerubbabel returned to Jerusalem. Their first act was to erect an altar on which they offered burnt offerings to the Lord. Although the city was in ruins and the wall not rebuilt, enemies around and the bulk of the people still in exile, they clung to the word of God and offered for all Israel. The adversaries in the land sought to help in the building of the house but on their offer being emphatically declined they sought the aid of friends at the Persian court to hinder the building and they succeeded in getting an interdict which lasted a few years until another king arose who was favourably disposed to the building of the house. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah stirred up the people in Jerusalem to renew building. In spite of many hindrances, the work was finished in about 20 years from the start and dedicated to the service of the Lord. The rebuilt temple lacked the Ark and associated furniture, the Shekinah glory of the Lord, the holy fire and the Urim and Thummim (oracle). The old men who had seen the grandeur of the former house wept, but the young men who had not seen anything better shouted for joy, nevertheless all praised the Lord. Haggai in the word of the Lord of Hosts encouraged them by saying that the latter glory of this House shall be greater than the

former (Haggai ii., 9). About 80 years after the first return of the exiles, Ezra of Aaron's priestly family requested the king to be allowed to go to Jerusalem with a band of volunteers. At Jerusalem they found that separation had become largely a lapsed principle! Ezra proclaimed a fast, assembled the people, prayed and confessed the general sin before the House of God. The people wept, repented and decided to cut their wrong associations. The recovery of Ezra's remnant has marks similar to that of Hezekiah's. Their worship, as presented in the altar was "as written in the law of Moses the man of God" (iii., 2). Their praises were "after the ordinance of David, King of Israel" (ii., 10). Every activity in God's house must have the sanction of His word.

About ten years later Nehemiah, who had attained to high position in the Persian court, heard of the sad plight of the remnant in Jerusalem. He wept, fasted and prayed before God. His sorrowful countenance led the king to enquire the reason, with a result that Nehemiah got leave of absence and in due course arrived in Jerusalem. He successfully exhorted the priests to rebuild the walls and gates which had been destroyed. The stubborn proud nobles shrank from the humiliation of manual labour! The powerful enemies were angry, ridiculing the work and even threatening to use force in restraining the builders. When they saw that these tactics were unsuccessful, they tried to entice Nehemiah to leave the work and meet them in an outside village. But Nehemiah was a man of unswerving purpose. Then a false friend suggested that Nehemiah should seek seclusion in the temple in case he should be assassinated. The suggestion was met beautifully in the words "should such a man as I flee to the temple to save his life? I will not go in." Immediately he perceived that the suggestion was not of God and that the enemies had hired the counsellor. In 52 days the wall was rebuilt which is one of the greatest feats in history. Nehemiah committed the charge of the gates to faithful men. The people were gathered together and heard Ezra read the Law and the people bowed their

heads and worshipped the Lord. They kept the feast of tabernacles, dwelling in booths, in a way they had not done since the days of Joshua. They kept the feast for seven days and on the eighth was a solemn assembly with fasting and repentance, the Levites confessing the goodness of God and their own sins. Throughout the proceedings the attention paid to the word of God was an important feature. The result was separation from what was inconsistent with the principles of the House of God. A grandson of the High Priest had married a daughter of the chief opponent of the work. Nehemiah chased him away. It has been said that the youth ultimately became High Priest in Samaria where a spurious imitation of the ritual at Jerusalem was instituted!

Four centuries later, Herod, to win the support of the Jews and foster his own vanity, built a new temple which took 46 years to erect. The building did not follow the pattern of the original. It was sought to eclipse its grandeur and magnitude. The front, composed of white polished marble, was specially beautiful. The enclosure, over 200 yards square, was surrounded by a wall of huge stones on the verge of a precipice over the valley 600 ft. deep. At the top of the precipice were wonderful galleries supported by marble pillars. Solomon's porch, called "Beautiful," was at the East Gate. The gates were 50 ft. by 25 ft. The roof, covered with gold, had a glorious appearance in the sunshine. That was the temple when the Lord came in lowly grace. It existed less than 70 years, serving as a fort in the famous siege by the Romans, when to the great sorrow of Titus, the Roman General and contrary to his command, it was accidentally burned by one of his own soldiers. Two subsequent attempts to rebuild the temple ended disastrously. These were in defiance of the words of the One greater than the Temple Who said, "there shall not be left here one stone upon another." Could anyone gainsay that dictum? A Moslem mosque now occupies the position of the former Holy Place!

Evidence in the Gospels.

In the New Testament, the doctrine of what has been presented previously in a material or typical way is unfolded. There was nothing real or living in either tabernacle or temple. It was all symbolical but in the gospels Christ entered and that infused life into the types. The House of God was only in a representative way in the Old Testament and could not be formed in reality until redemption was accomplished. Therefore we are not disappointed to find in the Lord's own ministry the main features of the House of God. In Matt. Ch. xvi. we have its divine foundation and constitution contingent on Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." The Lord answered "Thou art Peter (a stone) upon this rock (what Peter's confession set forth) I will build my Church and the gates of hell (the administration of the authority of darkness) shall not prevail against it." No human organisation has a place there in spite of the way in which the scripture has been perverted to prove the opposite contention. The complete revelation of God is declared in Christ, the Son of the Living God, *i.e.*, the foundation of the church, the intrinsic element of the House of God. What purported to be the House of God was full of dead ritual. But "Christianity is Christ," and that is living. The Holy Spirit stimulates fresh exercises of soul and thus the expression in true prayer and praise will never be formal. May we be delivered from mere correct recitation, which springs from the exercises of yesterday!

In all the gospels the record occurs of the Lord's cleansing the temple and driving out those who had so grossly misrepresented God therein. Shortly after the start of His ministry, in John Ch. ii., He recognises it as His Father's House in which as a house of merchandise they had prostituted its purity for material profit, while the other gospels refer to the incident near the close of His ministry of similar character. While still referring to it as the House of God which should have been maintained for prayer for all people (one of the initial aspects presented in Gen.

xxviii. as "the gate of heaven") the leaders of the people had made it a den of thieves. A little later in His ministry He disowned the house as of God and called it "*your* house shall be left unto you desolate." The two-fold aspect had been apparent from the outset but so long as the Lord was on earth it was God's centre for those who feared the Lord and thought upon His name. So there were those like the widow who bestowed all their possessions (even two mites) in the treasury of the house irrespective of what base gain others might be extracting from contact with the temple. There had been at the birth of the Lord antiquated people like Simeon and Anna, but intelligent as to the mind of God, who clung to the temple (blind to its blemishes) not in a vague sentimental way but positively waiting for the consolation of Israel and looking for its counterpart, *viz.*, redemption in Jerusalem. Although the Jewish leaders had given a false impression, the true character of the house was unchanged and the Lord could speak of it as "My Father's house." In John Ch. i. we have the record that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among the disciples. That is the true idea of the Tabernacle and in the next chapter the thought of Christ's body as the Temple is expressed definitely. The mind of man was so absorbed with the grandeur of Herod's temple that it failed to see that the Lord's words implied a vastly greater work than that conception implied. In John i., 38, 39, the two disciples said, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" He answered, "Come and see." Their seeing Him at home must have affected them greatly! God was revealed as dwelling in Jesus. In Ch. xiv., He was going away to prepare a place for His own. In the interval till His return, the Comforter was to be here and abide with them. God would dwell here in consequence. The Son dwells in the Father's love; we dwell in His love and He dwells in our love. In John Ch. xx. administrative forgiveness in the assembly or House of God (but not in a public way) has reference in the words "whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted, etc," which is analogous to the commission to Peter in Matthew xvi. In spite of the fact that the hands of

the people were imbrued with the blood of the Lord of Glory the Holy Spirit could speak of Jerusalem as "the Holy City" at the moment! (Matt. xxviii., 53). In the great supper of Luke xiv., 16-24, it is shown that all who are brought into the house come by receiving the Kingdom (*viz.*, by the compulsion or sway of grace). The thought of the House of God is contiguous to that of the Kingdom of God in the passage. The latter is individual, the former collective in bearing and is consequent on the individual's reception of the kingdom by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, accepting God's testimony of accomplished righteousness.

Evidence in the Acts.

Although the term "House of God" is not mentioned in the Acts except as referring to the material temple, nevertheless its more visible features are prominent throughout the book. Indeed the prime cause of the formation of the spiritual house is seen in the second chapter, ten days after the ascension of Christ, when the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles and filled the house where they were sitting. So what is set forth doctrinally elsewhere is exhibited practically in the Acts, consequent upon redemption having been accomplished. The death, resurrection and ascension of Christ had taken place and the Holy Spirit had come down to earth in consequence. There is a man in the Glory of God and He is Lord of all! The third person of the Godhead came down to earth to testify to the glory of the Lord. The One who came down is as great as the One who went up! Therefore He is able to reveal the precious things of heaven to our souls. The coming of the Holy Spirit was not confined to the twelve disciples but fell upon the whole 120 gathered in one house. That was the proximate fulfilment of the prophetic word in John Ch. xi., that the scattered children of God should be gathered together in one. That was the institution of the House of God in an entirely new character. The people of God on earth became the dwelling of God. Hence the presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost became prominent. The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost who empowered them to

act, gave them right words and utterance, crushed opposition by spiritual power, excluded fleshly considerations, *e.g.*, in Ch. v., deceitful reputation was summarily annulled by death. In Ch. vi., murmuring was disarmed. In Ch. vii., Stephen met persecution to death by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Ch. viii., Philip was guided by the Holy Spirit. Every possible contingency was met by the same power. Subsequently, the lapse in Christian progress has been due to the gradual loss of appreciation of the significance and presence of the Holy Ghost. Ecclesiastical organisation can never make up for spiritual enablement which is entirely due to giving the Holy Spirit His rightful place!

Then the House of God is where His love towards all men is known. What unsurpassable love was manifested in the fact that God proclaimed an amnesty to the murderers of His Son in the very place where He was murdered. That offer included Pilate (the unjust judge), the religious leaders, the wicked accusers, the jeering mob, even the brutal ruffian who drove his spear into the side of the dead Christ after his fellows had done their worst while their victim was alive. The injunction of Peter to all was "repent and be baptised" without qualification, and obedience to that command would entail the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost to each. That magnificent good news went forth from the House of God! The testimony that emanated therefrom was God's message and sent forth in His way by His selected messengers. They were not philosophers nor men of renown nor of noble origin. They were simple fishermen and rustics from despised Galilee! They were erstwhile illiterate people, yet on that day of Pentecost there was not a language under heaven but received recognition. The confusion of Babel which had been introduced by the power of God was neutralised for the time being by the same means.

The prophetic word in the message of the Apostle was "the promise is unto you and your children" (Acts ii., 39). To win over the vacillating governor Pilate, the people had lightly said, "His blood be upon us and our children"

(Matt. xxvii., 25), now the proclamation annulled the vow for the repentant Jews and their children. The latter were admitted to a place of privilege on earth, *viz.*, the House of God. The promise was to the very people who had so flagrantly abused God's approach to man in Christ. The external sign was in baptism. "They that gladly received his word were baptised." That suggests the thought of separation from the world which crucified Christ. In Matthew Ch. xvi., Peter received the keys of administration. In Acts Ch. ii., he opened the door to the Jew and in Acts Ch. x., to the Gentile in Cornelius and his house. In Acts Ch. xvi., the households of Lydia and the Philippian jailer entered into the new sphere of life in separation from the sphere of death in the world. They came under the authority of the Lord. It is quite likely that however different had been the features which marked those households previous to the conversion of the heads, subsequently they agreed in the essential character of being run under the same management, *viz.*, that of the Lord. Nowadays the promiscuous association of christians and worldlings in what is described as "the House of God" shows the grave slump in appreciation of the relative divine principles!

The converts continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine or instruction. The House of God is where intelligence as to the mind of the Lord is manifested. Therefore, it is a prime necessity that a premium should be put on collective reading of the scriptures because therein is enshrined the doctrine which is not affected by the flow of time and the changing fashions of men. The next feature was that they continued in fellowship, *i.e.*, in consequence of the enlightenment from the Apostle's doctrine. They owned the one Lord and partook in the community of interest of His administration. He is the bond of the partnership. The practical expression of that fellowship was in the breaking of bread! The concluding element of the manifestation of the House of God was in prayers. That is where we express our need of the help of God, first as to the needs in the work of the Gospel and then as to the interests of the people of God.

The Evidence in Paul's Writings.

In the Corinthian First Epistle, essentially setting forth the principles of local responsibility, we are not surprised to find at the beginning "to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling," *i.e.*, the inner aspect indwelt by the Spirit of God. Holiness is the first principle of God dwelling in His temple, *i.e.*, the saints collectively, even as righteousness should mark them individually. Therefore that corresponds to the inner shrine or *naos* of the Temple from which perfect illumination or instruction was derived and grace and light diffused, but immediately the Apostle proceeded to refer to the outer aspect in the words "with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord" (I Cor. i., 2). That statement indicates profession, *i.e.*, the aspect to which reference is usually made in the New Testament under the term "House of God." In Ch. i.-iv. the prominent thought is the resources of the House of God. In Corinthians the main aspect of doctrine which receives emphasis is that the Church building is by the instrumentality of man who may build what is valuable or defective or detrimental. Nevertheless although mainly viewed in human responsibility it takes character from the truth, *e.g.*, "We are workers (or labourers) together with (or under) God, ye are God's husbandry (or masterpiece), God's building." The resources are four-fold (1) Christ as wisdom (i., 30); (2) Holy Ghost (ii.); (3) the Temple (iii.); (4) the ministry of the Apostles (iv.). From Ch. v. onwards the responsibilities receive emphasis. The responsibilities have also a 4-fold aspect (*a*) purity (Ch. v.); (*b*) fellowship (Ch. x.); (*c*) unity (Ch. xii.); (*d*) service (Ch. xiv.). "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God" (I Cor. iii., 9, 16). The Corinthians possessed that character although not composing the whole entity, therefore they were responsible to conduct themselves in view of that intelligence and dignity. That they failed miserably did not change their responsibility! God does not reduce his standard according to the measure of attainment existing. In the same chapter there is presented that no other

foundation can man lay than Jesus Christ. The Apostle on that foundation was fellow worker with (*i.e.*, under direction) God! In New Testament doctrine the heavenly aspect of the Church is presented under the figure of the "One Body," but the correlated idea of the "House of God" appertains entirely to earth. It has been put in the responsibility of man where failure and defection occur. In 1 Cor. iii. various materials are built in the local assembly and are tested, but only what is of God will remain, such as gold (indicating divine righteousness) silver (divine grace) and precious stones (features of Christ), wood (deposit of the first man), grass (man's prosperity), stubble (what resembles food but has no nourishing quality). Then there is also present what corrupts, *e.g.*, deceitful workers (1 Cor. xi., 13) who introduce defiling teaching, subversive of the truth. 1 Cor. vi. shows the believer's body as the temple of the Holy Ghost, which involves individual holiness. 1 Cor. xii., 28 gives a summary of the constitution and service of the House of God, while in Ch. xiv. the Holy Spirit will direct oral ministry in the local assembly. That tends to prevent clericalism.

On receiving the Holy Ghost, we belong to the House of God where He dwells! Therein we receive divine instruction and take up responsibilities in the place of testimony. These can only be discharged satisfactorily as the instruction is obeyed. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and heard His word (Luke x., 39). The testimony depends on revelation relative to the future day of display. We are responsible to maintain every Scriptural principle, irrespective of the conditions ruling in society or in the profession of Christ's name. Responsibility does not alter with the times! Relative to fellowship, all should rally to the support (and in the love) of the Christian company. There is protection from the influences of evil there! The Jewish altar, the Christian fellowship and the table of demons were severally exclusive of each other. The spirit of division mars the testimony! The service of the House is to be maintained through unceasing exercise, interest and

instruction. We are responsible to demonstrate the unity by maintaining peace and love among ourselves.

2 Cor. vi., 14-18 expands the idea of holiness required and involves a complete separation from contact with the defilement of the world. Thus the truth as to the House of God will exclude evil associations which will compromise its holy character, even as in 1 Cor. v. evil persons are excluded.

In the Ephesian Epistle in its main outline of doctrine the Church is presented according to the purpose of God in her essential constitution relative to the purpose of God, whereas the Corinthian epistle was more taken up with man's responsibility. The Church is the fulness or complement of Him who fills all in all. That is the result through all eternity, but that has not yet emerged to view. Meanwhile all the building is growing into a Holy Temple in the Lord (Eph. ii., 21). "He is our peace who has made both (Jew and Gentile) one, who has abolished the enmity to make in Himself of the twain one new man that he might reconcile both unto God in one body for through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. ii., 14-18). In Eph., Ch. ii., 20, God alone builds on the foundation of the teaching of the New Testament apostles and prophets who unfold the glories and person of the Son of God and the building is for His glory. The building of God is growing into a Holy Temple. His authority is its controlling principle and holiness its character. Although incomplete now, it will be the eternal dwelling place of God. But the Holy Spirit has already taken possession! The stone foundation is compared with the rock foundation of Matt. xvi. and 1 Cor. iii. All the parts and lines of the structure of the House of God converge on Christ as the corner stone. Man could not fit that stone anywhere in his conception of the structure, even as the dihedral angle stone could only fit the top of the pyramid. In Him can be seen and apprehended all God's thoughts and purpose (Zech. iii., 9). Ephesians treats of the growth and glory of the House. The Holy Temple in the Lord indicates the administration of the glory in the future,

meanwhile it is God's dwelling place by or in the Spirit (ii., 22). In Acts ii., the apostles did not apprehend that the new entity included anyone outside the house of Israel Peter's eyes were cleared from that fallacy in Acts x. But the Jew and Gentile cease to be such when they become incorporated as "one new man" in Himself. No mere fusion of interests and characteristics would do! All these are obliterated in the new entity, the House of God, in which God can dwell in the Spirit. All the saints on earth as indwelt by the Spirit are builded together so that God can have a dwelling on earth. His grace and qualities are apprehended there and shine forth in testimony. The House is filled with heavenly light to be transmitted in gracious blessing to mankind. The saints on earth at any moment form only part of the final entity in which the Lord will be admired by a wondering universe in the Day of Glory (2 Thess. i., 10). Hence in this further aspect the building is growing and at any moment may be completed by the coming of the Lord! (1 Thess. iv.).

Then in Ch. iii. there is the further communication "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." He is the source and dynamic power through the Holy Spirit of all true expression of godliness in our lives. Apart from that we could only exhibit what would be a spurious imitation in sanctimoniousness! In Ch. iv., the character befitting those in such intimacy with God is set forth, *viz.*, walking worthy of the calling with all lowliness as to ourselves, meekness as to others, in general, longsuffering as to our brethren, even if requiring "forbearing" (*i.e.*, suffering gladly) one another in love; being diligent to demonstrate the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace which would be evident in the local company of Christians with whom we have the privilege to be associated!

The first Epistle of Timothy deals with the order and administration of the House of God, and the important feature of the glory of the blessed God and its Gospel. In Ch. i. the Commandment or the law of the house (*i.e.*, its principle of administration) shows the great end or object to be secured by those who form the house of unfeigned faith.

Holiness is the great mark of the house (Ps. xciii., Ezek. xl.iii.). In Ch. ii. the Christians are exhorted to display the true dependent character of the House of God, making prayers and giving thanks for all men because that is God's disposition for all that all may be saved. The testimony of God is in the house (I Tim. ii., 4-6). Then the importance of prayer receives emphasis, "I will that men (not merely clergy) pray everywhere and lifting up holy hands" and that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel and sobriety not with ornament conspicuous in the world but what God works, as women professing godliness. The good words of the men are in beautiful harmony with the good works of the women. The House of God is marked by godliness and becoming manner! The activity of the men and the passivity of the women illustrate the character of the House in accord with subjection to authority. God is made manifest in a way intelligible to those around, so giving God His true advertisement is incumbent on Christians. It is in the House of God that God makes contact with all men. The man Christ Jesus is the mediator between God and men. In the House, prayer is offered for all, even for those who do not pray for themselves! The House of God has an abiding character as the Church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth. God dwells there by His Spirit. (I Tim. iii., 15).

Ch. iii. refers to service in the House of God which has a much wider scope than while we are together in local assembly. It enters into the most minute detail of our daily lives. Hence behaviour is to be suited to its character as the witness and support of the truth. Bishopric or oversight is exercised as to the advancement of the soul. Deaconship or care refers to the needs of the body. These features are not evinced by culture or pagan ideals in the world. Dignity in the House of God is shown in man being taken from his state of alienation by nature and restored to the true knowledge of God and communion with Him. These features were perfectly seen in the mystery of godliness displayed in Christ. Moreover the people of God are the

dispensers of God's blessing to mankind! Ch. iv.-vi. set forth the details of conduct in the House of God, commencing with the Spirit speaking expressly or like an orator who cannot brook opposition and cannot be withstood, thus the living voice of God in His house. A man is qualified for administration in the House of God according as he acts rightly in his own house. In the former, light is received from God and testimony goes out therefrom. Holiness, dependence, obedience and care are manifested. Oversight for souls and ministry for the bodies show the perfection of the order of the House of God. From the Old Testament scriptures we see that Israel failed in admitting strangers with worldly principles who flouted the holy character of the House of God, thus they used the House for their own interest. The same features have been manifest in the history of the people of God in this era.

In II. Timothy unmistakable instructions are issued relative to the ruinous condition consequent on man's failure. Ch. i. shows that everything vital depends on God's sovereignty and promise, yet there is a divine deposit to keep by the Spirit in spite of the external failure. Ch. ii. begins with an exhortation to be strong in the grace in Christ Jesus, since all is secured in the resurrection of Christ. The failure indicated in I. Cor. iii. results in the likeness to a great house with vessels to honour and dishonour; although the house may no longer evince the true character of God, the only safeguard for the individual is in maintaining separation from evil teaching of systems and people, and preserving association with good which will fit him for the Master's service. The unsatisfactory state does not change the essential character of the house, the foundations of which stand sure. The individual should follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who manifest the essential principle of the House of God, *viz.*, calling on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart, *i.e.*, without ulterior motives and thus marked by transparent honesty. Therefore the path of separation will not involve monastic seclusion. There will be others who have kindred charact-

eristics with whom we can associate. The issue of the process will make for peace. That will not be tolerant laxity or peace at any price involving compromise with a world filled with evil, faithlessness and hatred, but will be the result of righteousness, faith and love! Such a course will call for patience and meekness, with those who will raise foolish questions. It will be necessary to instruct those who oppose which is usually the condition manifested at first, so that God may use the instruction to cause them to bow to the truth! Ch. iii. sets forth that the mass of christendom has lapsed into a state which manifests pagan characteristics, persecuting the godly, but the Christian's resource is in the truth of God enshrined in the Scriptures. Ch. iv. shows the work and attitude of the service of the Lord, when the truth will not be tolerated by Christendom at large. The House of God refers to profession in general and never to a local company of Christians, still less to the building where they meet periodically! The Epistle to Titus issues instructions for God's steward (ch. i., 7), and the teaching of grace (ch. ii., 11-14).

Evidence in Hebrews.

In Hebrews the analogy of the House of God with the Old Testament types relates entirely to the Tabernacle, which was the pattern of things in the heavens. Christ is the builder of the House because "He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the House hath more honour than the House" (Heb. iii., 3). But in the Spirit's power the building grows! There are certain leading thoughts relative to this subject in the epistle, *viz.*, (1) Christ, is Son over God's house (Ch. iii., 6). Moses was only a servant therein. The House is also where the Holy Ghost speaks (v. 7). (2) "We are God's House *if* we hold fast the confidence and joy of the hope (or prospect)." Profession may retain the name of God's House and lose its character. If we lapse into worldly practice and associations the question may be well asked, what real value attaches to our profession of the Lord's name? We shall simply be innocuous or harmless, indistinguishable from the world. That recognises the christian

profession as the sphere of privilege. (3) In another aspect the whole universe is the House of God (Ch. iii., 4, also I. Kings viii., 27), *i.e.*, in the ultimate issue Christ is over the whole system for blessing. (4) Christ is the Great Priest over the House of God (Ch. x., 21), as well as the Apostle thereof. The apostle introduces; the priest carries on! Under the head of the priesthood, Christ is (a) the Offering Priest (vii., 27): (b) the Intercessory Priest living in the power of an endless life, since His priesthood is intransmissible there is no discontinuity in person or function as in the old era (viii., 3); (c) Minister of the Holy Places (viii., 1-2). In spite of defection, God in mercy dwells amongst His people on the ground of Redemption, also in relation to Government and Priesthood. The House of God is the place of privilege but of responsibility as well. In scripture, possession and profession are not put in contrast as is so often declared in current preaching, but they run parallel with each other. The only one who has title to profess is the one who possesses! If people take Christian ground, they are responsible to walk as on such. Time will prove the merits of their profession before men. Hence they are warned of consequences of unreality. The "day" will reveal matters as to eternity!

In Ch. xii., the discipline of the House of God is described. However much we may have to lament the paucity of oral ministry we can be thankful that the ministry in the way of discipline is perfect! Every element in our lives is in perfect adjustment with every other element, so that we are set in the best circumstances to learn the sympathy and help of our Great Priest. The pressure of circumstances curbs the development of fleshly ambition and the desire for the world. Discipline operates so that we may be partakers of the holiness of God, emptying our hearts of self and worldly interests, making room for Christ who cannot brook a rival in our hearts. Discipline may be (1) *punitive* (if we sow to the flesh we can only reap corruption therefrom), but in that aspect restoration is in view; (2) *preservative*, we may find our course blocked by an insurmountable obstacle which

prevents us from going wrong, *i.e.*, evidence of the rich mercy of God; (3) *promotive*, all discipline has the object in view that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Most of our discipline is private so that we may not require to come under public discipline by our associates! God will not let us have our own way. In His house we come under His influence and care. He loves His children and chastens them so that they may be kept in accordance with His love and will. So we do well to meditate on our privileges.

Evidence in Peter's Writings.

In Peter's first epistle, Ch. i. shows the origin and incorruptible nature of the material with which Christ builds. Moreover the material is living with a living hope (or prospect) on account of the resurrection of Christ, meanwhile preservation is by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The apprehension of the living character of the house relieves from mere dead religion and brings into loving one another with a pure heart fervently (or expansively) in contrast to the dead formality of Israel's ritual. Ch. ii. presents the privileges and responsibilities peculiar to the House of God: offering up spiritual sacrifices and evincing the excellent qualities of God and Christ in a world of darkness, thus it corresponds to the approach to the Gate of Heaven (the Godward aspect) and the testimony of the pillar anointed with oil (the manward aspect) of Genesis xxviii. The spiritual house composed of living stones emerges to view, wherein a holy priesthood can offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; but on the outside of the house there are displayed the royal priests who advertise the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. The stones have no responsibility for their position, they are put in the building. "Coming to Christ as Living Stone" is contingent on having tasted or tested His goodness and His value as Lord in relation to our need. Then we leave the responsible sphere and apprehend Him as Living Stone in His sphere which is filled with His things—"things of mine" of John

16. That conveys all that He is as man Godward in relation to the purpose of God. We are then brought to know the Father. The living stones are kindred to Christ and have their origin in the purpose of God, the Father. Christ draws our hearts away from what is in man's world and we become "living stones" characteristically, *i.e.*, not merely in an abstract sense. As living stones we apprehend and appreciate His love and we love in response to that appreciation. We are under His influence as abiding in Christ. The House of God must declare the character of God. But in order that this may be effected practically the features of that House must be maintained. The breakdown in man's responsibility involves that judgment will begin at the House of God, which is the most valuable spot on earth, so that the glory of God may be vindicated (iv., 17). Public judgment is left till the Lord's appearing. Peter was a sample stone (not the rock). Although his confession was wonderful he had subsequently to apprehend in his soul's history what depths of meaning were concealed therein! Spiritual good of what comes to us as light from God is only afforded later by the work of God in the soul. We cannot understand the principles of the House of God if we fail to recognise that the Lord Jesus Christ is rejected here. The religious leaders threw away the "corner (or angle) stone" as unsuitable for their use. He is nevertheless the copestone of the pyramid in God's architecture. He is precious to God and thus so to those who believe.

Evidence in John's Epistles.

In John's epistles the term "House of God" does not occur, but it is implied by the constant recurrence of the reciprocal statement of our dwelling in God and God dwelling in us (I. John iv.). In John's gospel it was shown that Christ dwelt in God and that God was in Him and in the epistles we see the same home features attributed to what is normal in the Christian. As indwelt by the Holy Spirit we are instructed in obedience and love peculiar to that home circle. Great as indeed that feature is it takes second place to its counterpart that God should dwell in us.

The results are that we love because first loved; we trust God so that our prayers are effectual; we bear testimony to the world; we lend a helping hand to our fellows; we are not deceived by Satan's emissaries who have been let loose in the world. The love of God can only be appreciated in the death of Christ and as a consequence of that apprehension we lay down our lives for the brethren (I. John iii., 16). The House of God is the home circle of the family of God; its atmosphere is love. The new nature is invigorated and cherished by its warmth. In the 19th century a great religious teacher wrote a book on love as "the greatest thing in the world." But although his essay was freely interspersed with references to Scripture texts, he did not touch the fringe of the subject of love as of God. He treated really of human love ignoring that the antecedent of these references is to the love of God which is radically different!

Evidence in the Revelation.

Although the term "House of God" does not occur in the Revelation the whole history of the Church in its features relative to the earth, *i.e.*, appertaining to the House of God, passes in brief review before the prophetic vision, in seven short letters to representative local assemblies in Asia Minor. The features in the responsibility of man receive emphasis, such as the danger of lapses from faithfulness, but here and there the loyalty of those who maintain true remnant character emerges to view (Rev. i.-iii.). In the complex condition evinced, there is seen unmistakably the mind of the Lord on the points under review, just as the Urim and Thummim formed the oracles for Israel. That is not now in public display, so sets forth the thought of the temple.

Christendom will be the scene of unparalleled judgments. The responsibility is proportioned to the light rejected! The history of Babylon shows the character of the fearful judgments which will fall on a Christless church from which the Holy Ghost has departed and which has been spued out of Christ's mouth as nauseous!

Later in the book, the seat of heavenly light or instruction and of administration is clearly presented in the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem. The foundations are furnished with all manner of precious stones manifesting distinction by refracted and reflected light. The gates of the City showing its completeness and perfection are twelve pearls involving distinction in perfect harmony. (The prophet Haggai predicted that in the millennial age the latter glory of the House would eclipse all the splendour of the former glory). It is the temple (the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb) which is mentioned in connection with millennial display, as appropriate to the idea of the Kingdom (Rev. xxi., 22). There the Temple and the City ideas coalesce. The glory of God and the Lamb will be the light thereof and the saved nations will walk in that light, *i.e.*, in perfect intelligence of the mind of God.

Beyond the changes of time are presented the new heaven and the new earth, heralded by a great voice from heaven making the statement, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men" (Rev. xxi., 3). That is not with a chosen nation nor in the selection of grace. In the final emergence to view of the ways of God, the whole universe will manifest the features of the House of God. God will dwell with men in keeping with His eternal characters of constancy and consistency. There will be no question of distinction between light and darkness. There will be no possibility of the intrusion of contrary elements. So the oracular manifestations peculiar to the thought of the temple will be unnecessary. No shrine is seen, for the glory of God shines from every atom of its constitution. There is no Holy place nor Holy of Holies, for every part of it is New Creation, wherein righteousness is static! That will be the consummation of the eternal purpose of God in grace. We trace through the dispensations God's dwelling on earth as the temple displaced the tabernacle and in turn was superseded by the church, embodying both ideas in a living way; the temple will again emerge in the millennium and finally on the new earth the tabernacle of God will be with men!

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