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The Link

NORTH ROAD CHAPEL

BIDEFORD

THE TABERNACLE OF GOD

Part 14

“And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy. And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place” (Exodus 26:31-34).

The subject of this article is the **veil**¹ – a magnificent curtain which hung on four pillars within the Tabernacle and divided the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. The Holy of Holies, with the Ark and the Mercy Seat, was the place where God deigned to dwell. By virtue of the position of the veil, its measurements were a perfect cube, being ten cubits (approximately 15 feet) in length, width and height. It was within this square enclosure that the Shekinah Glory resided.

The writer of the Hebrew Epistle makes frequent reference to the Tabernacle and Old Testament offerings, and says that they are all **patterns** of things in the heavens (cf Hebrews 9:23). There is a similar ‘pattern’ in the cubic measurement of the Most Holy Place where it is said God dwelt, and the glorious eternal city of the future. Approximately 1600 years transpired between the days of Moses and of John, but consider these words: *“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down*

¹ Note – for consistency, the more contemporary spelling of ‘veil’ has been adopted throughout, except in Old Testament Scripture quotations.

from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God... And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal” (Revelation 21:1-3, 16).

From these Scriptures in Exodus and Revelation it is evident that the dwelling place of God is characterised by symmetry and equity. There must be no irregularities; all must harmonise. What a sobering thought for the Church, the Lord’s spiritual people! When they assemble in His Name, He promises to be in their midst; but let this lesson be learned – where He is, there must be ‘symmetry’. No inconsistency in life, practice or Church order; all must be in agreement with the teaching of Holy Scripture, and in concord with one another. For God does not dwell where His truth is not held in balance, nor where there is distortion in doctrine, a disregard for Biblical order, or where discord among brethren persists. Such is the pertinent symbolism of the cubic measurements of the Holy of Holies.

The veil itself was supported on four pillars and divided the inner sanctuary from the ‘Holy Place’. The Holy Spirit leaves no room for doubt whatsoever regarding the typology of the veil: it is Christ the Mediator; the Man Christ Jesus. The New Testament declares: “*the veil, that is to say, His flesh*” (Hebrews 10:20); the body of the Lord Jesus, ‘God manifested in flesh’ is the great mystery of godliness (cf 1 Timothy 3:16).

The passage describes the material and design: “*And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made*” (Exodus 26:31). Upon the groundwork of fine white linen were these colours displayed. So was it through the

humanity of Christ that the Glory of God was revealed, for He was the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person (cf Hebrews 1:3). Again: "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth... No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him*" (John 1:14, 18).

In its fabrication and appearance the veil was alike to the curtains which ceiled the Tabernacle enclosure. These were described in a previous article (April – June 2014). The symbolism of the colours may be summarised by means of the following reference: "...*Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" (Philippians 2:6-11). "*In the form of God*" – **blue** – the heavenly aspect of His being; "*found in fashion as a man*" – **fine linen** – His spotless, humble humanity; "*became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*" – **scarlet** – His sacrificial death; "*God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name*", to which in a coming day all will subscribe, and every knee throughout the universe will bow – **purple** – His majestic sovereignty.

As with the inner covering curtains, so here in the veil, cherubim are very prominent. These are angels, mighty spirit beings, and executors of Divine justice. The first mention of such creatures in Holy Scripture is this: "*So He [that is, God] drove out the man; and He placed at the east*

of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24). They were placed as guards, with a flaming sword to prevent man from ever returning to that earthly Paradise. For fallen humanity, there was henceforth no fellowship with God, no entry into His presence. A thrice-holy God can no longer commune with His creatures, and so He places the cherubim between, armed with weapons of wrath. The angels woven into the fabric of the veil bear testimony then to the terrible fact that fallen man is cut off from God, and Divine justice prohibits any approach. That was the prime message of the veil, as it hung in the Tabernacle, across the entrance to the Holy of Holies.

However, there is more to learn here. As has already been substantiated from Hebrews 10, the veil speaks of Christ. Consider how the world of angels was involved at His coming to this earth – from His birth, right through to His return again to Heaven. The announcement of His conception came through the archangel Gabriel (cf Luke 1:26-28). Those who proclaimed His birth were a multitude of the heavenly host (cf Luke 2:8-15). When Christ was alone with Satan in the wilderness, angels came and ministered unto Him (cf Matthew 4:11). In the agony of Gethsemane an angel from Heaven appeared to strengthen Him (cf Luke 22:43). Angels were also present at the Lord’s resurrection (cf Luke 24:4), and when He ultimately ascended into Heaven, two angels immediately appeared to announce His second advent (cf Acts 1:10-11).

This pattern can be followed still further, for when Christ does return it will be ‘with His mighty angels’ (cf 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Then, when all things are put under Him, and all the redeemed of all ages are united before the throne of God and of the Lamb, all will join in one harmonious chorus of worship, angels included: *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every*

kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Revelation 5:9-13). Wherever Christ is, and His honour is concerned, angels are always present. See then the significance in that they were woven into the very fabric of the veil. What telling imagery this all is – patterns of the spiritual and heavenly in very truth!

Look further – this veil was held aloft by four pillars, and fastened by solid gold hooks. Throughout the Tabernacle, gold is indicative of Deity, and here is evidence that throughout His earthly course, Christ was supported and sustained from above. The veil was then stretched out between the four pillars. It did not hang in creases, or else the wondrous pattern would not have been so apparent. God ordered four pillars by virtue of which, the design could be more clearly seen. Is not this highly suggestive of the four Gospels? In those four books, written by men who were eye-witnesses of all that Jesus both said and did, there is ‘spread out’ to the believing reader all His amazing life. Each Evangelist gives a varied account, yet all converge into one full and flawless pattern. One, majoring upon the Lord as the Son of David, the king; another as the perfect servant; another laying emphasis upon His perfect humanity; the fourth ever stressing that He was none other than the Son of God.

The veil in the Tabernacle represented that which kept fallen man away from God’s presence. Similarly, so does the flawless life of Christ, as

presented in the Gospels. Since the Holy perfection that He accomplished can alone meet God's requirements, then humanity's case is a hopeless one. If His life is the standard, then mankind is forever cut off, because they can never attain unto it. Yes, the veil, that is to say His flesh – Christ's spotless humanity – only serves to reinforce the impassable barrier. Unless such a veil could be removed, mortal man will never be able to approach Almighty God. Yet its removal is an impossibility, because the cherubim, the executors of Divine justice, have their charge: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*" (Ezekiel 18:20). By no means will God admit, or acquit, the guilty (cf Exodus 34:7).

Whilst that veil could never be removed, yet it was **rent**. Herein is the glorious truth of the gospel: "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh*" (Hebrews 10:19-20). Whatever can have happened between Exodus 25 and Hebrews 10 to bring about such a radical alteration? There in the Old Testament, man dare not pass the veil. Now the New Testament speaks of entering with boldness the Holiest of all. There has been a new way made, **through the veil**. What is more, the writer speaks of the blood of Jesus, and His flesh. What mysterious language.

Christ, the anti-type and fulfilment of the Tabernacle's veil, has been smitten. The veil of His flesh has been rent. The sins of His people were imputed to Him, and He was made fully chargeable for them. As Surety, He became responsible in dread reality, and the sentence pronounced at Eden now applied to Him. As the substitute for sinners, Divine justice was now to be meted out upon Him, and the flaming sword which drove the first man out of Eden was wielded against the Second Adam, Christ. Jehovah speaks thus: "*Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts:*

smite the shepherd” (Zechariah 13:7). That Holy, peerless One, in whom men beheld the very glory of the Father, was made sin, put to grief, and the curse of a Holy God was visited upon Him. He was lifted up, and hung upon a tree.

What were the consequences when this occurred? Listen to the amazing words recorded by Matthew, one of the ‘four pillars’ by whom the wonders of Christ are held aloft and displayed: “*Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, **the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom**; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent*” (Matthew 27:45-51).

This is when and why the veil was rent: sin had been dealt with; Divine justice had been meted out; Christ was smitten in the sinner’s stead. Yes, He suffered the ultimate extremity, He died in the place of the guilty, and by this act, the claims of God’s Law were fully met. Consequently, those mighty guardians the cherubs now have no judicial function to perform against God’s elect, and so they withdraw. Note the wording of Matthew 27:51 – the veil was torn from the top, downwards. So it was with Christ Himself: men had their part, and the Devil did his worst, but it was a Holy God whose eternal counsel brought all these events about. ‘**H**e hath put Him to grief’, He bade the sword awake. It came from above, and was all ordained in Heaven.

Luke, another of the ‘pillars’ adds a further detail: “*And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent **in the midst***” (Luke 23:45).

The veil was rent in the middle, as well as from top to bottom; not an inch left unorn, and ripped down the very centre. What lay behind the veil in the Holiest of All? It was the location of the Mercy Seat, and the dwelling place of God. This was fully revealed, not by a round-about way, or side entrance, but straight through. This is how the matter stands for believers to this day. They have **direct access** unto God the Father, through the Son. For as soon as Christ died, that which was once a barrier immediately became an entrance. *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised)”* (Hebrews 10:19-23). May the Lord bless to every reader these wondrous truths concerning Himself.

W. H. Molland (1920 – 2012)

“The veil is rent! Lo! Jesus stands
Before the throne of grace;
And clouds of incense from His hands
Fill all that glorious place.

“‘Tis finished!” Here our souls can rest,
His work can never fail;
By Him, our Sacrifice and Priest
We enter through the veil.

Within the holiest of all,
Cleansed by His precious blood,
Before Thy throne Thy children fall,
And worship Thee, our God.”

J. G. Deck

THROUGH THE VEIL

Hebrews 10:20

The means whereby... we may come to the Most Holy Place, which is Heaven, is here styled "*through the veil*". In this metaphor the apostle alludeth to the divisions of the Tabernacle, which were by veils. By a veil the Most Holy Place was divided from the Holy Place, and to that veil the apostle hath here especial reference.

The veil is distinctly described (cf Exodus 26:31-33). If the matter whereof it was made, the curious workmanship thereof, the pillars and hooks whereon it hung, be duly weighed, we shall find it to be a precious and fair ornament. Well, consider the other parts of the Tabernacle, yea, and of the Temple, and the types that were in them, and they will appear to be very glorious: never was there any external thing like them.

This was not in regard of any delight that God simply took in the external things: "*Hath God eyes of flesh; or seeth as man seeth?*" (Job 10:4). "*Man looketh on the outward appearance*" (1 Samuel 16:7). So doth not God. God ordaineth them in general, because man hath an high esteem of such things, and delighteth in them. More particularly, God appointed such precious and glorious types under the Law:

1. To try if men would willingly part with their precious things for His service, as the people in the wilderness did upon making the Tabernacle (cf Exodus 36:5); and in David's time towards the Temple and the things appertaining thereunto (cf 1 Chronicles 29:67).
2. That thereby, the excellency of truth might be more lively typified. The world affords not anything that could to the life, and to the full, set out the truths of the types; therefore choice was made of

the choicest things that the world had, as silks, silver, gold, pearls and precious stones.

Herein appears the wisdom of God, who deals with people according to their state and condition. When the church was in the childhood thereof, and when it needed external types, the Lord made choice of the fittest and fairest. Thus deal men with their children. But after the truth was exhibited, because such external things would afterwards obscure it, He clean removed them, and setteth out those truths in a more spiritual manner.

That the apostle's mind in this metaphor of the veil might be better discerned, he explains himself in this phrase: "*that is to say*", whereby he sheweth that the types are to be explained. So are other metaphors, parables and obscure words or sentences... More particularly, by this phrase is declared that legal types have their evangelical truths...

The particular truth typified by the foresaid veil is here said to be the flesh of Christ. Flesh is here put for the whole body of Christ, yea, for the whole human nature of Christ. For Christ, by assuming His human nature to the unity of His Divine nature, became a fit Mediator betwixt God and man; otherwise men could have no access to God, or entrance into Heaven...

By the type of a veil, we may learn how to reap the benefits of Christ's incarnation, namely:

1. By beholding the glory of God, and of His attributes; even His wisdom, power, truth, justice and mercy, in Christ incarnate.
2. By resting on Christ made man for entering into Heaven, and there enjoying everlasting communion with Christ Himself, and with His and our Father.

William Gouge (1575 – 1653)

THE RENDING OF THE VEIL

The Symbolic Veil

...The veil was a thing which a child's hand could draw aside; and it was hung just where we should have expected a gate of brass or a wall of granite – at the entrance into the holiest of all – to guard against the possibility of intrusion. Its frail texture in the midst of so much that was strong and massive, said that it was but a temporary barrier – a screen – in due time to be removed. The worshipper in the outer court, as he looked towards it from the outer entrance of the holy place, would see something of its workmanship, and might perhaps get some glimpses of the glory within shining through its folds. He would learn this much, at least, that the way into the holiest was not fully opened; yet it was only stopped by a veil, no more. He would conclude within himself, that though shut out now he would one day be allowed to enter and worship at the mercy-seat, or at something better than that mercy-seat, at the heavenly throne, in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man, when the High Priest of good things to come should arrive, and as his forerunner, lead him into the very presence of that Invisible Jehovah who was now by symbols showing how He was to be approached and worshipped.

The veil! It hid God from man; for till that should be done which would make “*grace reign through righteousness*” (Romans 5:21), man could not be allowed to see God face to face. It hid man from God; for till this ‘righteousness’ was established by the substitution of the just for the unjust, God could not directly look upon man. It hid the glory of God from man; it hid the shame of man from God. It so veiled or shaded both the shame and the glory, that it was possible for God to be near man, and yet not to repel him; and it was possible for man to be near God and yet not to be consumed.

The veil! It was let down from above, it did not spring up from below. It originated in God, and not in man. It was not man hiding himself from God, but God hiding Himself from man, as His holiness required, until it should become a right for a holy God and unholy man to meet each other in peace and love...

The True Veil

All man's thoughts regarding the true meaning of the veil have been set at rest by that brief parenthesis of the Apostle Paul: "*the veil, that is to say, His flesh*" (Hebrews 10:20). The Holy Spirit has interpreted the symbol for us, and saved us a world of speculation and uncertainty. We now know that the veil meant the body of Jesus. Thus Christ is seen in every part of the tabernacle; and everywhere it is the riches of His grace that we see. Here 'Christ is all and in all'. The whole fabric is Christ. Each separate part is Christ. The altar is Christ the sacrifice. The laver is Christ filled with the Spirit for us. The curtains speak of Him. The entrances all speak of Him. Candlestick, and table, and golden altar speak of Him. The Ark of the Covenant, the mercy-seat, the glory, all embody and reveal Him. Everything here says, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29).

But the veil is 'His flesh' – His body, His humanity. As the lamb was to be without blemish, and without spot, in order to set forth His perfection; so the veil was perfect in all its parts, finely wrought and beautiful to the eye, to exhibit the excellency of Him who is fairer than the children of men. As the veil was composed of the things of earth, so was His body; not only bone of our bone and flesh of His flesh, but nourished in all its parts by the things of earth, fed by the things which grew out of the soil, as we are fed. Christ's flesh was perfect, though earthly: without sin, though of the substance of a sinful woman; unblemished in every part, yet sensitive to all our sinful infirmities. Through the veil the glory shone, so through the body of Christ the Godhead shone...

The antitype of the unrent veil might be said to have been held before Israel's eyes from the time that the Son of God took our flesh. It is the unrent veil that we find at Bethlehem; it is the unrent veil that we find at Nazareth, and all the life long of the Christ of God. The miracles of grace wrought during His ministry were like the waving of the folds of that veil before men's eyes, and letting some of the rays of the inner majesty shine through. So were His words of grace from day to day. Men were compelled to look and to admire. "*They wondered at the gracious words proceeding out of His mouth*" (Luke 4:22)... "*Never man spake like this man*" (John 7:46); "*He hath done all things well*" (Mark 7:37); what were these things but the expressions of admiration at the unrent veil? It was so beautiful, so perfect! Men gazed at it and wondered. It was marvellously attractive; and it was meant to be so.

Hence many were drawn to the person of Christ by His attractive grace without fully understanding either His fulness or their own great need. What they saw in a living Christ won their hearts; they acknowledged Him as the Saviour without fully understanding how He was to be such. The disciples would not admit any necessity for His dying. The unrent veil seemed to them enough. "*That be far from Thee, Lord*", were the words of Peter, repudiating the very idea of His Lord's death. He was content with a living Saviour. Death seemed altogether inconsistent with the character of Messiah...

That veil then, unrent as it was, proclaimed the glad tidings; though it could not, so long as it was unrent, reveal the whole grace, or at least the way in which grace is to reach the sinner. That grace can flow out only by means of death. It is death that opens the pent-up fulness of love, and sends out the life contained in the 'spring shut up, the fountain sealed'. It is the rod upon the substitute, the cross of the sin-bearer that smites the rock, in order that the waters may gush forth.

The Rent Veil

The following are the words of the evangelist: "*Behold the veil of the*

temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Matthew 27:51). In considering them we must endeavour to realise the scene of which this is a part. The passage transports us to Jerusalem; it sets us down upon Moriah; it takes us into the old temple at the hour of evening sacrifice... to the grey slopes of Olivet, where thousands, gathered for the great Paschal Sacrifice, are wandering; it shows us the holy chambers with their varied furniture of marble and cedar and gold; it brings us into the midst of the ministering priests, all robed for service. Then suddenly, as through the opened sky, it lifts us up and carries us from the earthly into the heavenly places, from the mortal into the immortal Jerusalem...

The rending of the veil. This was a new thing in its history, and quite a thing fitted to make Israel gaze and wonder, and ask, what meaneth this? Is Jehovah about to forsake His dwelling?

1. It was rent, not consumed by fire. For not its mere removal, still less its entire destruction, was to be signified; but its being transformed from being a barrier into a gate of entrance. Through it the way into the holiest was to pass; the new and living way; over a pavement sprinkled with blood.

2. It was rent while the temple stood. Had the earthquake which rent the rocks and opened graves, struck down the temple or shattered its walls, men might have said that it was this that rent the veil. But now was it made manifest that it was no earthly hand, nor natural convulsion, that was thus throwing open the mercy-seat, and making its long-barred chamber as entirely accessible as the wide court without, which all might enter, and where all might worship.

3. It was rent in twain. It did not fall to pieces, nor was it torn in pieces. The rent was a clean and straight one, made by some invisible hand; and the exact division into two parts might well figure the

separation of Christ's soul and body, while each part remained connected with the temple, as both body and soul remained in union with the Godhead; as well as resemble the throwing open of the great folding door between earth and heaven, and the complete restoration of the fellowship between God and man.

4. It was rent from the top to the bottom. Not from side to side, nor from the bottom to the top: which might have been man's doing; but from the top to the bottom, showing that the power which rent it was from above, not from beneath; that the rending was not of man but of God. It was man, no doubt, that dealt the blow of death to the Son of God, but, "*it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put him to grief*" (Isaiah 53:10). Beginning with the roof and ending with the floor, the rent was complete; for God, out of His own heaven, had done it. And as from roof to floor there remained not one fragment of the old veil; so from heaven to earth, from the throne of God, down to the dwelling of man, there exists not one remnant nor particle of a barrier between the sinner and God. He who openeth and no man shutteth has, with His own hand, and in His own boundless love, thrown wide open to the chief of sinners, the innermost recesses of His own glorious heaven! Let us go in: let us draw near.

5. It was rent in the presence of the priests. They were in the holy place, outside the veil, of course, officiating, lighting the lamps, or placing incense on the golden altar, or ordering the shewbread on the golden table. They saw the solemn rending of the veil, and were no doubt overwhelmed with amazement; ready to flee out of the place, or to cover their eyes lest they should see the hidden glories of that awful chamber which only one was permitted to behold. "*Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts*" (Isaiah 6:5). They were witnesses of what was done. They had not done it themselves; they felt that no mortal hand had done it; and what could they say but

that God Himself had thrown open His gates, that they might enter in to precincts from which they had been so long debarred?

6. It was rent that it might disclose the [place of the] mercy-seat, and the cherubim, and the glory. These were no longer to be hidden, and known only as the mysterious occupants of a chamber from which they might not go out, and into which no man might enter. It was no longer profanity to handle the uncovered vessels of the inner shrine; to gaze upon the golden floor and walls all stained with sacrificial blood; nay, to... sit down beneath the very shadow of the glory. Formerly it was blasphemy even to speak of entering in; now the invitation seemed all at once to go forth, "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace*" (Hebrews 4:16). The safest, as well as the most blessed place, is beneath the shadow of the glory.

7. It was rent at the time of the evening sacrifice. About three o'clock the lamb was slain, and laid upon the brazen altar. Just at the moment when its blood was shed, and the smoke arose from the fire that was consuming it, the veil was rent in twain. There was an unseen link between the altar and the veil, between the sacrifice and the rending, between the blood-shedding and the removal of the barrier. It was blood that had done the work. It was blood that had rent the veil and thrown open the mercy-seat: the blood of 'the Lamb, without blemish, and without spot'.

8. It was rent at the moment when the Son of God died on the cross. His death, then, had done it! Nay, more, that rending and that death were one thing; the one a symbol, the other a reality; but both containing one lesson, that **life** was the screen which stood between us and God, and death the removal of the screen; that it was His death that made His incarnation available for sinners; that it was from the cross of Golgotha that the cradle of Bethlehem derived all its value and its virtue; that the Rock of Ages, like the rock of Rephidim, must be

smitten before it can become a fountain of living waters. That death was like the touching of the electric wire between Calvary and Moriah, setting loose suddenly the divine power that for a thousand years had been lying in wait to rend the veil and cast down the barrier. It was from the cross that the power emanated which rent the veil. From that place of weakness and shame and agony, came forth the omnipotent command, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors". The "It is finished" upon Golgotha was the appointed signal, and the instantaneous response was the rending of the veil...

The broken body and shed blood of the Lord had at length opened the sinner's way into the holiest. And these were the tokens not merely of grace, but of righteousness. That rending was no act either of mere power or of mere grace. Righteousness had done it. Righteousness had rolled away the stone. Righteousness had burst the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. It was a righteous removal of the barrier; it was a righteous entrance that had been secured for the unrighteous; it was a righteous welcome for the chief of sinners that was now proclaimed.

Long had the blood of bulls and goats striven to rend the veil, but in vain. Long had they knocked at the awful gate, demanding entrance for the sinner; long had they striven to quench the flaming sword, and unclasp the fiery belt that girdled paradise; long had they demanded entrance for the sinner, but in vain. But now the better blood has come; it knocks but once, and the gate flies open; it but once touches the sword of fire, and it is quenched. Not a moment is lost. The fulness of the time has come. God delays not, but unbars the door at once. He throws open His mercy-seat to the sinner, and makes haste to receive the banished one; more glad even than the wanderer himself that the distance, and the exclusion, and the terror are at an end for ever.

O wondrous power of the cross of Christ! To exalt the low, and to abase the high; to cast down and to build up; to unlink and to link; to save and to destroy; to kill and to make alive; to shut out and to let in; to curse and to bless. O wondrous virtue of the saving cross, which saves in crucifying, and crucifies in saving! For four thousand years has paradise been closed, but Thou hast opened it. For ages and generations the presence of God has been denied to the sinner, but Thou hast given entrance – and that not timid, and uncertain, and costly, and hazardous; but bold, and blessed, and safe, and free.

The veil, then, has been rent in twain from the top to the bottom. The way is open, the blood is sprinkled, the mercy-seat is accessible to all, and the voice of the High Priest, seated on that mercy-seat, summons us to enter, and to enter without fear. *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith”* (Hebrews 10:19-23). The message is, ‘Go in, go in’. Let us respond to the message, and at once draw near. To stand afar off, or even upon the threshold, is to deny and dishonour the provision made for our entrance, as well as to incur the awful peril of remaining outside the one place of safety or blessedness. To enter in is our only security and our only joy.

But we must go in in a spirit and attitude becoming the provision made for us. If that provision has been insufficient, we must come hesitatingly, doubtfully, as men who can only venture on an uncertain hope of being welcomed. If the veil be not wholly rent, if the blood be not thoroughly sprinkled, or be in itself insufficient, if the mercy-seat be not wholly what its name implies – a seat of mercy, a throne of grace; if the High Priest be not sufficiently compassionate and loving, or if there be not sufficient evidence that these things are so, the sinner may come doubtfully and uncertainly. But if the veil be fully rent, and

the blood be of divine value and potency, and the mercy-seat be really the place of grace, and the High Priest full of love to the sinner, then every shadow of a reason for doubt is swept utterly away. Not to come with the boldness is the sin. Not to come in the full assurance of faith is the presumption. To draw near with an 'evil conscience' is to declare our belief that the blood of the Lamb is not of itself enough to give the sinner a good conscience and a fearless access...

The rent veil is liberty of access. Will you linger still? The sprinkled blood is boldness – boldness for the sinner, for any sinner, for every sinner. Will you still hesitate, tampering and dallying with uncertainty and doubt, and an evil conscience? O, take that blood for what it is and gives, and go in. Take that rent veil for what it indicates, and go in... For every sinner, without exception, that veil has a voice, that blood a voice, that mercy-seat a voice. They say, 'Come in'. They say, 'Be ye reconciled to God'. They say, 'Draw near'. They say, 'Seek the Lord while He may be found'. To the wandering prodigal, the lover of pleasure, the drinker of earth's maddening cup, the dreamer of earth's vain dreams, they say, 'there is bread enough in your Father's house, and love enough in your Father's heart, and to spare – return, return'. To each banished child of Adam, exiles from the paradise which their first father lost, these symbols, with united voice, proclaim the extinction of the fiery sword, the re-opening of the long-barred gate, with a free and abundant entrance into a more glorious paradise, a paradise that was never lost.

The sacrifice is o'er,
The veil is rent in twain,
The mercy-seat is red
With blood of Victim slain;
Why stand ye then without, in fear?
The blood divine invites us near.

The gate is open wide;
The new and living way
Is clear and free and bright
With love and peace and day.
Into the holiest now we come,
Our present and our endless home.

Excerpted from '*The Rent Veil*', Horatius Bonar (1808 – 1889)

EDITORIAL

Throughout the pages of Holy Scripture numerous occasions are found when God made provision for His people's deliverance and security. Yet those provisions were only effective to such as **entered in** to them. For example, Genesis describes the building of a great Ark, concerning which Noah was commanded, and into which he and his family entered (cf Genesis 7:1, 5, Luke 17:27). Several generations later, the Lord spared the little town of Zoar from the destruction visited upon the cities of the plain, and Lot was required to enter therein for his survival (cf Genesis 19:22-24).

Under the Levitical system, certain 'cities of refuge' were established throughout the land of Canaan, where persons guilty of manslaughter might claim immunity from retribution. The mere existence of the towns availed nothing – only those who fled unto them and reached 'the entering in of the gate' proved their saving merits (cf Joshua 20:4). Failure to enter in could be fatal. The negative aspects of this truth are well illustrated by the case of Canaan itself, unto whose very borders the Lord unerringly brought the people of Israel. But at the first opportunity of access, they 'entered not in because of unbelief', and instead perished in the wilderness (cf Hebrews 3:16-4:11).

In the New Testament age, God continues to make provision for His people, in a yet more glorious and spiritual way. But still the timeless commandment remains: "**Strive to enter in**" (Luke 13:24). The place of human responsibility has to be acknowledged. The awakened sinner must **enter in** to the way of salvation, and "*lay hold on eternal life*" (cf 1 Timothy 6:12), for access into the kingdom of heaven 'suffers' (demands) such 'violence' (exertion) as this (cf Matthew 11:12). The saints likewise are to be always '**entering in**', in such matters as prayer and worship, fellowship with God, communion with the saints

and attendance at His house. The true child of God will never be content with a carnal, earth-bound religion, but constantly drawing nigh to Him in faith and full assurance.

Behold however, the goodness of Lord, in making the way of admission so simple and so free. He makes the mountains low, the valleys shallow, the rough places smooth (cf Isaiah 40:4); if there be a veil, it is torn through, and wherever a door exists, it stands open, and will yield to the faintest knock (cf Revelation 3:8, Luke 11:9-10). The poorest enquirer is admitted; the least and feeblest of efforts receives an eternal reward. We do but “watch a moment, to secure an everlasting rest”.

Observe the blessed sovereignty of God in these matters also. For it was He who ‘shut in’ Noah; and He who by the hand of angels propelled Lot upon his way; and He who declares concerning the true promised land: ‘they shall enter in’. As the token and earnest of these things, Christ has already gone that way, and opened it up on behalf of His people: “*which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus*” (Hebrews 6:19-20). Where He has gone, His redeemed ones must follow. Access is henceforth theirs by right, and granted to them as a free gift. “...so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:11).

Preliminary Announcement

ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION

Saturday 6th & Lord’s Day 7th June 2015 D.V.

Preacher : Mr P. Mehrshahi