

CHAPTER 30

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 30

This chapter treats of the altar of incense, its form and use, (^{<0201>}Exodus 30:1-10) of the ransom of the Israelites, with the half shekel when numbered, (^{<0201>}Exodus 30:11-16) of the laver for the priests to wash their hands and feet at before service, (^{<0207>}Exodus 30:17-21) of the anointing oil, the ingredients of it, and what was to be done with it, (^{<0202>}Exodus 30:22-33), and of the perfume, the composition and use of it, (^{<0204>}Exodus 30:34-38).

Ver. 1. *And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon*, etc.] The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call it incense of spices, properly enough, for it was made of various spices; of which (see ^{<0204>}Exodus 30:34) and this was necessary on a natural and civil account, to remove those ill smells from the sanctuary, occasioned by the number of beasts continually slain in it; but chiefly on a religions account, to denote the acceptableness of the service of the sanctuary to God:

of shittim wood shall thou make it: of the same that the altar of burnt offering was made, which was covered with brass, but this with gold, as after related; of this sort of wood, ((see Gill on "^{<0205>}Exodus 25:5")) as this altar was a type of Christ, the shittim wood may respect his human nature; which wood, though it sprung out of the earth, was not common, but choice and excellent, and very strong durable, and incorruptible; and so Christ, though he was man made of an earthly woman in his human nature, yet was chosen out of the people, is the chiefest among ten thousand, and excellent as the cedars, the man of God's right hand, whom he made strong for himself; and though he died in it, he saw no corruption, he now lives, and will live for evermore; in which nature he acts the part of a Mediator, and intercedes for his people, and offers up their prayers, perfumed with the much incense of his mediation, to which this altar has a special respect.

Ver. 2. *A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, four square shall it be*, etc.] It was one Jewish square cubit, which is in surface, according to Bishop Cumberland, three English square feet,

and about forty seven square inches; which may denote the solidity, perfection, and extensiveness of Christ's priesthood, it being unchangeable, firm, and lasting; and which passes not from one to another, and the which makes something perfect, which the law and priesthood of Aaron could not, even perfects for ever them that are sanctified; and is very extensive; the virtue of it reaches to all the elect of God, from the beginning of the world to the end of it; not his sacrifice only, but his intercession, which is principally respected; that is made for all the people of God, in all places, and in all ages, and for all things for them, both for this life, and that which is to come:

and two cubits shall be the height thereof; so that it was as high again as it was long and broad: Christ, our interceding high priest, is made higher than the heavens:

the horns thereof shall be of the same; of the same wood the altar itself was made: these were a sort of spires that rose up at the four corners of the altar; and the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the words,

“and of it its horns shall be erect;”

which were chiefly for decoration and ornament; and may denote the honour and glory of Christ, as well as his power and ability to save, to the uttermost, all that come to God by him, or lay hold upon him, since he ever lives to make intercession.

Ver. 3. *And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold*, etc.] Hence this altar is sometimes called the golden altar, (^{<G001>}Numbers 4:11 ^{<G003>}Revelation 8:3) this may figure the deity of Christ, whose head is as the most fine gold, and is in the divine nature, in the form of God, and is the brightness of his glory, and possessed of the same perfections; or rather the glorification of his human nature in heaven, where he is highly exalted, and the preciousness of his intercession, which is always powerful and prevalent, and the duration of it:

the top thereof, and the sides thereof, round about, and the horns thereof: all and each of them were covered with gold; this altar had a top, when the altar of burnt offering had none, but its hollow place was filled up with earth at every encampment; so Jarchi observes: this was not a grate, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, for here were neither blood nor ashes to be let through; but it was a flat covering like the roof of a house, as the word signifies, on which was set a golden dish, with live coals and incense

burning on them; and which, when burnt, was carried away: and the sides are the four sides of the frame, it being a square, or the two sides and two ends of it; and the horns, the four horns at each corner, all were covered with plates of gold; so that this altar was a richer and more excellent one than that of burnt offering; and may signify the superior excellency of Christ's state of exaltation to that of his humiliation: in the latter, which the altar of burnt offering respected, he was made of no reputation, and became obedient to the death of the cross, yea, was made sin, and a curse for his people; but in the former, which the altar of incense respected, he was raised from the dead, and had glory given him; he was raised for the justification of his people, and was himself justified in the Spirit, ascended on high, was received into glory, sat down at the right hand of God, making continual intercession for his saints:

and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about; which was partly to keep from slipping what was put upon it, but chiefly for ornament; and plainly points at the exaltation of Christ in our nature in heaven, as our interceding high priest, where he is a priest upon his throne; and is crowned with glory and honour.

Ver. 4. *And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it,* etc.] The crown was on the top of the altar, at the edge of it all around; and just underneath it were two rings of gold, two on each side:

by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make them; at each corner a ring, and at each side; the use of them follows:

and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal; these rings were for the staves to be put into when the altar was to be carried from place to place, as it was in the wilderness, during the travels of Israel there; and this signifies that Christ never leaves his people; when they are in the wilderness he is with them, interceding for them, providing all things necessary for their food, safety, and protection, (⁽⁶¹²⁴⁾ Revelation 12:14).

Ver. 5. *And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood,* etc.] Of the same wood the altar itself was made:

and overlay them with gold; as that was; these rings and staves may be an emblem of the precious ordinances of Christ, in which he grants his presence; and where he is held forth in different ages and places as the interceding high priest of his people, their advocate with the Father, pleading continually his propitiatory sacrifice in their favour.

Ver. 6. *Thou shalt put it before the vail*, etc.] That divides between the holy and the most holy place; not within the vail in the holy of holies, but before it at the holy place, for there the altar of incense stood: Josephus^{f880} says, between the candlestick and the table, i.e. of shewbread, stood the altar of incense; now the candlestick and shewbread were in the holy place; and with this account the Talmudists^{f881} agree, who say, that the table was in the north, distant from the wall two cubits and a half, and the candlestick on the south, distant from the wall two cubits and a half, and the altar was in the middle, and stood between them: and Maimonides^{f882} gives the like account of its situation, which is here further described:

that is by the ark of the testimony; which vail was by it, before which the altar was placed; the ark of the testimony was the chest or coffer in which the law was put, and which was the testimony of the will of God, from whence it had this name; and it stood in the most holy place; and not by it in the same place, but over against it, in the holy place stood the altar of incense:

before the mercy seat, that is over the testimony; the mercy seat that was over the ark, a lid or cover to it, where the testimony was; and towards this, before the face of it, was the altar of incense, where the priest officiating, looked directly towards it; having that in view for the acceptance of the people's prayers to God through Christ, which they were making while he was burning the incense:

where I will meet thee; as he had before promised, (⁽¹²⁵²⁾Exodus 25:22).

Ver. 7. *And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning*, etc.] This in later times was done by a common priest, who obtained this service by lots as we find in the times of Zacharias, (⁽¹¹⁰⁹⁾Luke 1:9) the incense was fetched out of the house of Abtines, where it was made, and burning coals were taken off of the altar of burnt offering in a vessel, and the incense was spread upon them and burnt: the Jewish canons about this matter run thus^{f883}; he that was worthy of, or allotted to, the incense, took a vessel that held three kabs, and a bowl in the midst of it, full and heaped up with incense, and took a silver censer, and went up to the top of the altar, and moved the coals to and fro, and took them and went down and poured them into a golden censer: and again^{f884}, he that was worthy of, or allotted to, a censer, gathered the coals upon the top of the altar, and spread them with the edges of the censer, and bowing himself went out; and he that was worthy of, or allotted to, the incense, took the bowl out of the midst of the

vessel, and gave it to his friend or neighbour: and he that burns the incense may not burn until the president says to him, burn; and if he was an high priest, the president says, lord high priest, burn; the people depart, and he burns the incense, and bows and goes away: the burning of the sweet incense was typical of the mediation and intercession of Christ; the burning coals typified his sufferings, which were painful to his body, and in which he endured the wrath of God in his soul, and both must be very distressing to him: the incense put upon these shows that Christ's mediation and intercession proceeds upon his sufferings and death, his bloodshed, satisfaction, and sacrifice; which mediation of his, like the sweet incense, is frequent, is pure and holy, though made for transgressors, and there is none like unto it; there is but one Mediator between God and man: likewise this was typical of the prayers of the saints; and at the same time that the incense was burnt the people were at prayer, which was set before the Lord as incense, (see ^{<BEB>}Psalm 141:3 ^{<BIO>}Luke 1:10), these go upwards to God, and come up with acceptance to him, from off the golden altar, being offered up to him by Christ, with his much incense, through his blood and righteousness, and are pure, holy, fervent, and fragrant, and called odours, (^{<BIB>}Revelation 5:8 8:3,4)

when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it; which he did every morning he went into the holy place, where the candlestick with its lamps was; these he trimmed and dressed, snuffed those that were ready to go out, lighted those that were gone out, supplied them with oil and wicks, and cleared the snuff dishes, and the like: now near to the candlestick stood the altar of incense, so that when the priest looked after the one, he did the service of the other; and hence we learn, that our intercessor and lamplighter is one and the same; he that was seen amidst the golden candlesticks dressing the lamps of them, appears at the golden altar with a golden censer, to offer up the prayers of his saints, (^{<BIB>}Revelation 1:13 8:3,4) and we learn also, that the light of the word and prayer should go together, as they do in faithful ministers and conscientious Christians, who give themselves up unto and employ themselves therein; the one to and in the ministry of the word and prayer, and the other to and in the reading and hearing of the word and prayer.

Ver. 8. *And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it*, etc.] In the evening the priest went into the holy place to light the lamps that were gone out, ((see Gill on "^{<BIB>}Exodus 27:20")) at the same time he burnt incense on the altar; and as the daily sacrifice was offered up

morning and evening, so the incense was burnt every morning and evening, and much about the same time: the Jews say ^{f885}, that the incense of the morning was offered between the blood (i.e. the sprinkling of the blood of the daily sacrifice) and the members, or the laying of the pieces on the altar; and the incense of the evening was between the pieces and the drink offering: and with this Philo agrees ^{f886}, who says, twice every day most fragrant odours were offered, at the sun rising and setting, before the morning and after the evening sacrifice:

a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations; thus Christ's mediation and intercession is constant and continual; as his sacrifice continually takes away the sin of the world, in which it was the antitype of the daily sacrifice; so his blood continually speaks for peace and pardon, and every blessing of grace for his people, in which it is the antitype of the morning and evening incense; for he ever lives to make intercession; and so the prayers of the saints are directed to God both morning and evening, and they cease not praying as long as they live.

Ver. 9. *Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon*, etc.] Which had not the same, but was made of other materials, or had more or fewer; whatever was not exactly the same was not to be offered; and so to make use of other mediators than Christ, whether angels or men, or to put up prayer to God for the sake of our own righteousness, pleading the merits of our works, and not the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, is to offer strange incense, unacceptable to God, and which will be of no avail to men:

nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; these were to be offered and burnt upon the altar of burnt offering;

neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon; as upon the other altar; everything in God's worship and service was to be done in the proper place and order; these offerings and sacrifices, though they were by divine appointment, yet must be offered on that altar which was peculiar for them.

Ver. 10. *And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year*, etc.] On the day of atonement, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra explain it; and the atonement here referred to seems to be an atonement for the altar itself, (see ^{<f818>}Leviticus 16:18,19) and as the altar of burnt offering was first expiated and then used, (^{<0298>}Exodus 29:36,37) so it seems the altar of incense had not only an atonement made on it, but for it: and this was done

with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; by sprinkling the blood of that offering upon the horns of it, as we learn from the afore mentioned place; and this shows that Christ's mediation and intercession is founded upon the virtue of his blood, and the efficacy of his atoning sacrifice, (see ^{<4011>}1 John 2:1,2)

once in the year shall he make atonement upon it, throughout your generations; which proves the insufficiency of all legal sacrifices of themselves to take away sin, since every year, as the apostle observes, there was a remembrance of it, (^{<5010>}Hebrews 10:3,4)

it is most holy unto the Lord; either the atonement made on the day of atonement, which was a most holy part of service, and pointed at the great atonement made by the most Holy One, the Son of God; or this altar thus expiated, and devoted to sacred use, was reckoned a most sacred one to the Lord, and so was to have nothing offered upon it but what he ordered; with which Jarchi agrees in his note,

“the altar is sanctified to these things only, and not to any other service.”

Ver. 11. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Continued his discourse; or, there being some intermission, reassumed it:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 12. *When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number*, etc.] An account of them, how many they are; which was sometimes done, and was proper to be done, especially in time of war; though the present case seems to be for the sake of raising money for the tabernacle and the service of it:

then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; which was not done yearly, nor was it perpetual; we have but two instances of it after this until the times of David, (^{<4010>}Numbers 1:2 26:2) yet it seems to have been a yearly tax or tribute, in the times of Christ, ((see Gill on ^{<4074>}Matthew 17:24")) ((see Gill on ^{<4012>}Matthew 21:12")); and in the Misnah is a whole treatise called “Shekalim”, in which an account is given of the time and manner of collecting this ransom money, and for what uses, and who were obliged to pay it, and who not; on the first of Adar (or February) they proclaimed concerning the payment of it, on the fifteenth the tables were set for that

purpose, and on the twenty fifth the proper persons sat in the sanctuary to receive it ^{f887}: this was typical of the ransom of souls by Christ, who are not all the world, for they are ransomed out of it, but Israelites, the whole mystical Israel of God, and are a numbered people; their names are written in the book of life, they are told into the hands of Christ, are exactly known by God and Christ; and these are many and even numberless to men:

that there be no plague amongst them when thou numberest them; as there was when David numbered them; which some have thought was owing to the non-payment of the ransom money after mentioned; the Septuagint version is, “no fall”, the ransom of souls by Christ preserves them from a total and final fall by sin into everlasting ruin and destruction; or, “no death” as the Targum of Onkelos, for redemption by Christ secures from the second death, and even from a corporeal death as a penal evil.

Ver. 13. *This they shall give, everyone that passeth among them that are numbered*, etc.] And their number, according to Jarchi, was known by what was paid; for he says the sum was taken not by heads, but everyone gave the half shekel, and by counting them the number was known, as follows:

half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary; that is, after the standard of a shekel kept in the sanctuary as a rule for all; and so Jarchi paraphrases it,

“according to the weight of a shekel, which I have fixed for thee to weigh, the shekel of the sanctuary.”

It was about fourteen pence: a shekel is twenty gerahs; a gerah being the twentieth part of a shekel, it was not quite three halfpence of our money:

an half shekel [shall be] the offering of the Lord; which was to be offered to him for the ransom of souls, whose lives were forfeited by sin; and of the redemption of which this was an acknowledgment; and was typical of the ransom price of souls by Christ, which is not silver or gold, but his precious blood, his life, himself, which is given as an offering and sacrifice to God, in the room and stead of his people; and which is given to God, against whom sin is committed, the lawgiver, whose law is broken, the Judge, whose justice must be satisfied, and the creditor, to whom the price must be paid.

Ver. 14. *Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above*, etc.] Even Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and servants freed, but not women, bond servants, or children ^{f888}:

shall give an offering to the Lord; the half shekel before mentioned.

Ver. 15. *The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel*, etc.] Which shows that the Israelites were alike in the esteem of God, their worldly circumstances making no difference; their souls being alike, the same ransom price was given for them; and that they were all to have an equal share in the service and sanctuary of God, and the price was set so low, that the poorest man might be able to pay it: and even Maimonides ^{f889} says, if he lived on alms, he was to beg it of others, or sell his clothes from off his back to pay it. This shows the equality of the redeemed and ransomed of the Lord; for though some sins and sinners are greater than others, and some are redeemed from more sins than others, yet all sins being infinite, as committed against an infinite God, but one price is paid for all, and that is the precious blood of Christ, the Son of God, an infinite and divine Person; hence all the ransomed ones have the same faith, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life:

when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make atonement for your souls; which have sinned, are liable to death for it, are the more excellent part of men, and require a great price for the redemption and ransom of them; and hence it is so great a blessing to be ransomed, because it is the ransom of the soul: and such is the efficacy of Christ's ransom, that it is a full atonement for the souls of men, and their sins, and completely delivers from sin, Satan, the law, death, and hell.

Ver. 16. *And thou shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel*, etc.] The half shekel, the ransom of their souls:

and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; for the building of the tabernacle, for the repairs of it, and for the sacrifices offered in it; particularly we find that this first collection this way was appropriated to the silver sockets of the sanctuary, and the vail, for the silver hooks, and for the pillars, (^{<EX27>}Exodus 38:27,28):

that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls; to put them in mind that they were sinners, that their lives were forfeited, that a ransom price was given and accepted of God, that hereby atonement, in a typical sense, was made for

them; and this was before the Lord, as a token of their gratitude to him, and of their acknowledgment of the favour.

Ver. 17. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Again, at another time, and upon another subject:

saying, as follows.

Ver. 18. *Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash [withal]*, etc.] For Aaron, and his sons, and the priests in succession, to wash at before their entrance on their ministry; and denotes in general the necessity of purity, in order to minister in the priestly office; and which was in its perfection in Christ, who being holy and harmless, was an high priest becoming us, and suitable to us, qualified to offer himself without spot to God, and to take away sin; of which purity his baptism in water might be a symbol, which he submitted to before he entered publicly on the execution of his office as a prophet and priest; and as this may respect the ministers of the Gospel, it shows that they should be pure and holy in their lives and conversations, and be examples in purity of conversation to others: and as this may chiefly respect all the saints who are priests unto God; it may be either typical of the laver of regeneration, in which grace, comparable to water, is given, and in which a clean heart is created; and which has an influence on purity of life and conversation, and secures from death: or rather of the blood of Christ, the laver and fountain to wash in for sin and uncleanness; which is large and capacious for all the priests of the Lord, and stands open and uncovered for all to come unto; and as this was made of brass, and that brass the looking glasses of the women, (⁽¹²³⁰⁸⁾Exodus 38:8) as it may respect the laver of regeneration, may denote the durableness of that grace, which is an immortal seed, a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life, and was a clear evidence of election of God, and redemption by Christ; and as it may be an emblem of the blood of Christ, it signifies the duration and continued virtue of that blood to cleanse from all sin; and that such who are washed in it, and cleansed by it, are not only beheld as clean and pure by the Lord, but in their own sight also, God having caused their iniquities to pass from them, and justified them from them by his blood:

and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar; that is, the altar of burnt offering, which was by the door of the tabernacle; and between that and the tabernacle or tent of the congregation stood the laver for the priests to wash in, just as they entered into the

tabernacle, (^{<1812>}Exodus 40:29-32) it stood inclining to one of the sides, as Aben Ezra says; a little on the south side, as Jarchi observes:

and thou shall put water therein; or order it to be put in for the use next mentioned.

Ver. 19. *For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat.*] Not in it, but at it; the laver had mouths or spouts, as Ben Melech says, from whence the water flowed when the priests washed their hands and feet at it; and so Bartenora says ^{f890} they did not wash out of the laver, but from water flowing out of it; it is said “out of it”, not in it; it seems at first there were but two of these spouts; for it is said ^{f891} Ben Katin made twelve spouts or cocks, which had but two before; so that twelve priests could wash their hands and feet at one time, and which they could do at once, presently, by putting the right hand on the top of the right foot, and the left hand upon the left foot, as both Jarchi and Ben Melech relate: and now the hands being the instruments of action, and the feet of walking, this shows that the actions of good men, the priests of the Lord, and their walk and conversation, are not without sin, and that these need washing in the laver of Christ’s blood, to which there must be daily application, (see ^{<3131>}Zechariah 13:1 ^{<1714>}Revelation 7:14). Our Lord seems to have reference to this ceremony, (^{<6130>}John 13:10) the Egyptian priests washed twice every day in cold water, and twice every night ^{f892}.

Ver. 20. *When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water*, etc.] The laver standing near the door of the tabernacle, they washed at it as soon as they entered; and no man, we are told ^{f893}, entered into the court before he washed, even though he was clean; though he had contracted no filthiness, and even though he had washed his hands and feet at home, he was obliged to do it when he went into the tabernacle, before he attempted to perform any service. This intimates to us the necessity as of pure hearts, so of pure hands, in order to compass the altar of God, to attend public worship, and particularly prayer, in which holy hands should be lifted up, (^{<4118>}1 Timothy 2:8 ^{<1216>}Psalms 26:6):

that they die not: sin exposes to death, eternal death; that is the wages of it, and it is only the blood of Christ, and being washed in that, that can secure from it:

or when they come near to the altar to minister; to the altar of burnt offering to minister there, by laying on the wood and the pieces in order, and burning them on it, as follows:

to burn offering made by fire to the Lord; no man was fit for this service, or might be admitted to it, until he was washed; and it was usual among other nations to wash before they entered on religious service ^{f894}; even in the East Indies, the priests do not sacrifice to their idols before they wash in water that is about the temple ^{f895}; which seems to be a satanical imitation of this practice among the Jews.

Ver. 21. *So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not*, etc.] By the immediate hand of God, who would so greatly resent such a neglect of his command; and by how much easier it was to perform it, by so much the more were they inexcusable, and to be treated with greater severity; and this is repeated, that they might carefully observe it, lest they perish:

and it shall be a statute for ever to them, [even] to him and to his seed, throughout their generations; to be observed by Aaron and his descendants in all ages, as long as their priesthood lasted, until the Messiah should come, and wash all his people, his priests, with his own blood, from all their sins, (~~Exodus~~ Revelation 1:5,6).

Ver. 22. *Moreover, the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Some little time afterwards, while he was yet with him on the mount:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 23. *Take thou also unto thee principal spices*, etc.] To make the anointing oil with, and are as follow:

of pure myrrh five hundred shekels; it is strange that Saadiah, and so Maimonides ^{f896}, should take this for musk, which comes from a beast, and is confuted by Aben Ezra from (~~Exodus~~ Song of Solomon 5:1) from whence it plainly appears to be what comes from a tree; and the word “mor”, here used, gives the tree the name of myrrh almost in all languages. And it is justly mentioned first among the chief of spices; since, as Pliny ^{f897} says, none is preferred unto the stacte or liquor that flows from it, that which is pure myrrh, unmixed, unadulterated; or “myrrh of freedom” ^{f898}, which flows freely, either of itself, or, when cut, which is the best; and this was fitly used as a principal ingredient in the anointing oil, since oil was made

out of it itself, called oil of myrrh, (^{<1702>}Esther 2:12) and as a shekel is generally supposed to weigh half an ounce, the quantity of this to be taken was two hundred and fifty ounces:

and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty [shekels]; or one hundred twenty five ounces: it is here called sweet cinnamon, to distinguish it from that which was not sweet; so Jarchi observes,

“there is one sort that has a good smell and taste, another that has not, but is as wood (common wood), therefore it was necessary to say sweet cinnamon.”

So Pliny^{f899} speaks of two sorts of it, one whiter, and another blacker; sometimes the white is preferred, and sometimes the black is commended. The cinnamon tree grows in great plenty in the island of Zeilon in India (Ceylon or called Srilanka today, Editor), as Vartomanus^{f900} relates, who says it is not much unlike a bay tree, especially the leaves; it beareth berries as does the bay tree, but less and white; it is doubtless no other than the bark of a tree, and gathered in this manner; every third year they cut the branches of the tree--when it is first gathered it is not yet so sweet, but a month after, when it waxeth dry; and with this Pliny^{f901} agrees, who says it is not odorous while it is green. Pancirollus^{f902} reckons cinnamon among the things that are lost; and says, that we have no knowledge of the true cinnamon; and reports from Galen, that in his time it was so scarce, that it was rarely found but in the cabinets of emperors. Pliny^{f903} makes mention of it, as used in ointments:

and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty [shekels]; or one hundred and twenty five ounces; and this is called sweet, because there is a calamus that is not sweet, as Jarchi; this is the same with the sweet cane from a far country, (^{<2061>}Jeremiah 6:20) from India, as is generally thought; but rather perhaps from Sheba, or some part of Arabia; it must be nearer at hand than India, from whence the Israelites had these spices; and Moses is bid to take them, as if they were near indeed; and Pliny speaks of myrrh, and of sweet calamus, as growing in many places of Arabia, and of cinnamon in Syria^{f904}; and Dionysius Periegetes^{f905} mentions calamus along with frankincense, myrrh, and cassia, and calls it sweet smelling calamus; and so Strabo^{f906} speaks of cassia and cinnamon as in Arabia Felix; and Diodorus Siculus^{f907} makes mention of all these in Arabia, and of cassia that follows.

Ver. 24. *And of cassia five hundred [shekels],* etc.] Or two hundred and fifty ounces:

after the shekel of the sanctuary; according to the standard weight kept there. This “cassia” was not the “cassia solutiva”, which is of a purgative nature, and now in use in physic, but the “cassia odorata”, or the sweet smelling “cassia”: which, Pancirollus^{f908} says, some take to be the nard, out of which a most sweet oil is pressed; and Servius^{f909} says, that cassia is an herb of a most sweet smell. Pliny^{f910} speaks of it along with cinnamon; and Galen says, when cinnamon was wanting, it was usual to put in its stead a double quantity of cassia^{f911}; Leo Africanus speaks of trees in Africa bearing cassia, and which chiefly grew in Egypt^{f912};

and of oil olive an hin; containing twelve logs: according to Godwin^{f913}, it was of our measure three quarts; but, as Bishop Cumberland has more exactly calculated it, it held a wine gallon, a quart, and a little more: this was the purest and best of oil, and most fit and proper to be a part of this holy anointing oil.

Ver. 25. *And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment,* etc.] All the above spices and oil being put together, an ointment was to be made out of them, not thick, as ointments usually are, but a liquid to be poured, and therefore called an “oil of ointment”, and “holy”, because devoted only to sacred uses:

an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: or confectioner; the spices bruised, and pounded, and mixed together, and boiled or distilled, and so an oil or ointment extracted from them:

it shall be an holy anointing oil; for the uses next mentioned: it signified the Holy Spirit of God, and his graces, that oil of gladness with which Christ and his people are anointed; and is that anointing which teacheth all things, (see ^{<1980>}Psalm 45:7 ^{<2600>}Isaiah 61:1,3 ^{<4008>}Acts 10:38) (^{<6121>}1 John 2:20,27) comparable to these several spices, and oil olive, for their sweet smell, cheering and reviving nature, and supplying quality, and for their valuableness and preciousness, and of which there was a certain weight and measure; for though Christ received this unction without measure, yet there is a certain measure of grace and gifts bestowed upon his people, and by which they are made holy and fit for their master’s use.

Ver. 26. *And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith,* etc.] It cannot be thought the whole of it should be anointed all

over, but only a part of it for the whole; and this was either typical of the human nature of Christ, the true tabernacle God pitched, and not man, and which was anointed with the Holy Ghost; or of the church and people of God, who are an holy tabernacle or temple of the Lord, and who receive the unction from the Holy One:

and the ark of the testimony; the chest where the law was, and stood in the most holy place of the tabernacle; and was a type of the Messiah, the anointed One, in whose heart the law was, and who is the fulfilling end of it for righteousness.

Ver. 27. *And the table, and all his vessels*, etc.] The shewbread table, with all things appertaining to it, rings, staves, dishes, spoons, bowls, etc. all were anointed; which had respect to Christ, and the communion of his people with him, feeding on him, that food which endures for ever, whom God the Father has sealed and sanctified:

and the candlestick and his vessels; an emblem of the church, and of the light of the word held forth in it, which being accompanied with the grace of the Spirit of God, is the savour of life unto life:

and the altar of incense; on which the odours, the prayers of the saints, come up before God through the mediation of Christ.

Ver. 28. *And the altar of burnt offering, with all its vessels*, etc.] Pans, shovels, basins, etc. and this altar particularly was sprinkled with it seven times, (⁴⁸⁸⁰Leviticus 8:10,11):

and the laver, and his foot; the laver of brass for the priests to wash their hands and feet in, and the foot or base of it on which it stood, (see ⁴²⁰⁸Exodus 30:18).

Ver. 29. *And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy*, etc.] By anointing them, and so be set apart for sacred uses only; as by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the people of God, the vessels of mercy, are really sanctified, and made meet for the master's use; and therefore it is called the sanctification of the Spirit, which is true holiness, in opposition to typical or ceremonial holiness, here intended; and if this holy anointing oil made those things most holy that were anointed with it, how much more must the grace of the Spirit those who partake of it; and though it is at present imperfect, it will be perfected, and become complete holiness, without which no man can see the Lord:

whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy; as is said of the most holy altar, ((see Gill on “¹⁰²⁸⁷Exodus 29:37”)). The Targum of Jonathan interprets it of persons that approach these holy places, and things so anointed and sanctified, paraphrasing the words thus;

“whosoever cometh unto them of the priests shall be holy, but of the rest of the tribes shall be burnt with flaming fire before the Lord.”

Ver. 30. *And thou shall anoint Aaron and his sons*, etc.] Them alone, and not others, as Aben Ezra, who were typical of Christ anointed with the Spirit of God without measure, to his various offices of prophet, priest and King; and also of all the saints, who are anointed priests to God, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ:

and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office; by anointing them, and by other rites mentioned in the preceding chapter; whereby they were set apart for that office, and were qualified for it, and had authority to exercise it.

Ver. 31. *And thou shall speak unto the children of Israel*, etc.] When he was come down from the mount, and gave the instructions about the making and using of this oil:

saying, this shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations; Abarbinel, and other Jewish writers, conclude from hence, that this same oil, which was made by Moses, lasted throughout the generations to the times of Josiah, when it was hid with other things; but this, notion is justly exploded by Aben Ezra; it is not probable, that so small a quantity that was now made, which is supposed by some to be no more than a gallon and a half of wine measure, should suffice so long: it does not seem to be more than what was sufficient for present use; for the anointing of so many persons, and things as were anointed, and much less to be sufficient for the anointing of priests and kings in after times, until that period. This cannot be supposed without a miraculous interposition, to which the Talmudists ^{f914} fly, and observe, that there were many miracles in this affair; but there is no need to have recourse to them, since, for aught that is said, it might be made again in like manner for sacred uses, which is meant by the phrase “unto me”; though it might not be made for any other use, private or profane.

Ver. 32. *Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured*, etc.] That is, not upon common men, or on men's flesh in common, as was usual at feasts and entertainments in the eastern countries, (see ^{<1926>}Psalm 23:5 ^{<1946>}Luke 7:46) but this was not to be used on such occasions, otherwise it was poured on the flesh of some men, as Aaron and his sons, on whose head it was poured and ran down to the beard:

neither shall ye make [any other] like it, after the composition of it; for private uses:

it [is] holy, [and] it shall be holy unto you; it was set apart for sacred use by the Lord, and so it was to be reckoned by them, and not to be used in any way, or for any other purpose than he had directed: all which shows, that the grace of the Spirit belongs to the Lord's people, his priests; other men are carnal, and have no lot or part in this matter, and are not to be admitted to holy ordinances, as if they were holy persons; nor is fellowship in holy things to be allowed them; nor is counterfeit grace of any avail, which, though it may bear a likeness to true grace, is not that, nor to be so accounted, nor rested on, as feigned faith, the hypocrite's hope, dissembled love, and pretended humility.

Ver. 33. *Whosoever compoundeth any like it*, etc.] For his own use, or for any other than what God appointed it for: or

whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger; meaning not a Gentile, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; though Japhet interprets it of such a stranger who was not of the children of Israel; this Aben Ezra says is not right, but he says it means one that is not of the seed of Aaron; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

“upon a profane person (or a common person, a laic) that is not of the sons of Aaron:”

though the kings of Israel seem to be an exception to this, which might be by a special order from the Lord; yet it is a question whether it was with this, or with common oil, that they were anointed: indeed, the oil with which Solomon was anointed was taken out of the tabernacle, (^{<1003>}1 Kings 1:39)

shall even be cut off from his people; either by death, by the immediate hand of God inflicting some disease upon him, or by excommunication

from the congregation of Israel, or by not favouring him with any posterity, to keep up his name in the nation.

Ver. 34. *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] In a continued discourse, or some time after the former, though more probably at the same time; since it concerns the incense to be offered on the altar of incense, about which directions are given in the former part of the chapter:

take unto thee sweet spices: which are as follow, “stacte”, “onycha”, and “galbanum”; the former of these has its name from dropping; and of the same signification is the Hebrew word “Nataph”, here used. Pancirollus says ^{f915}, myrrh is a drop or tear distilling from a tree in Arabia Felix; and stacte is a drop of myrrh, which is extracted from it, and yields a most precious liquor: and so Pliny ^{f916} relates, that myrrh trees sweat out of their own accord, before they are cut, what is called stacte, to which nothing is preferable: though some naturalists, as Theophrastus and Dioscorides ^{f917} speak of this as flowing from it when it is cut; however, all agree it is a liquor that drops from myrrh; though the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret it “balsam” or “rosin”; as does Jarchi on the place, and Maimonides ^{f918}: the second of these, “onycha”, has its name from being of the colour of a man’s nail, as the onyx stone is, and is the same with the “unguis odorata” or “blatta byzantia”. Jarchi says it is the root of a spice, smooth and shining like a man’s nail. It is by some

“understood of “laudanum” or “balellium”; but the greatest part of commentators explain it by the “onyx”, or the odoriferous shell, which is a shell like to that of the shell fish called “purpura”: the onyx is fished for in watery places of the Indies, where grows the “spica nardi”, which is the food of this fish, and what makes its shell so aromatic: they go to gather these shells when the heat has dried up the marshes. The best onyx is found in the Red sea, and is white and large, the Babylonian is black and smaller; this is what Dioscorides says of it ^{f919}.”

And the best being found in the Red sea, it may be reasonably supposed it was what Moses was bid to take. In all India, it is the principal thing in all perfumes, as the aloe is in pills ^{f920}; the Targum of Jonathan interprets it by “costus”; and the Jerusalem Targum by spike of myrrh, meaning perhaps spikenard. The last of these, “galbanum”, what now goes by that name, is of a very ill smell, and therefore cannot be thought to be one of these sweet spices; but another is meant, and which, by its name “Chelbanah”, was of a

fat and unctuous nature; though Jarchi says, galbanum, whose smell is ill, is put among the spices; and Maimonides^{f921} and Kimchi^{f922} describe it like black honey, and of an offensive smell; but it must be something odoriferous, and therefore most likely to be the galbanum Pliny^{f923} speaks of as growing on Mount Areanus in Syria, which he mentions along with several sorts of balsams, and as a sort of frankincense; and the Vulgate Latin version, to distinguish it, calls it “galbanum” of a “good smell”:

[these] sweet spices with pure frankincense; for which Sabaea in Arabia Felix was very famous, and was called the thuriferous country, as Pliny^{f924} says; who observes that there were in it two times of gathering the frankincense, the one in autumn, that which was white, and the purest, the other in the spring, which was reddish, and not to be compared with the former:

of each shall there be a like weight; just as much of one as of the other: in the Hebrew text it is, “alone by alone”; and the sense may be, that each spice was beaten alone, and after that mixed, as Aben Ezra, or weighed alone, and then put together.

Ver. 35. *And thou shalt make it a perfume*, etc.] By mixing the above spices together:

a confection after the art of the apothecary; in the manner they beat, compound, and mix several ingredients together:

tempered together; or “salted”^{f925}, with salt of Sodom, as Aben Ezra interprets it; and Maimonides^{f926} says, there was a fourth part of a kab of salt of Sodom put into it: and whether this incense or perfume respects the intercession of Christ or the prayers of his people, they are both savoury and acceptable to God, the latter on account of the former; in all sacrifices salt was used, and every spiritual sacrifice of ours should be seasoned with grace:

pure and holy; such should be the prayers of the saints, and such most certainly is the mediation of Christ, which is his much incense.

Ver. 36. *And thou shall beat some of it very small*, etc.] Or every one of the spices; for this does not seem to respect any different usage of some part of the incense from the rest; but it was all to be beat very small, that it might mix together the better, and be easier spread upon the coals, and the smoke thereof go up the sooner:

and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation; that is, upon the altar of incense, which was placed there, (^{Exodus} 30:6) and here it was to be put in order to be burnt, not to be kept, either to be looked at, or smelled to:

where I will meet with thee; ((see Gill on “^{Exodus} 30:6”))

it shall be unto you most holy; reckoned by them most sacred, and not to be put to any private or profane uses.

Ver. 37. *And [as] for the perfume which thou shalt make,* etc.] As above directed:

ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof; that is, for their own use, for the scenting of their rooms, or to snuff up, or smell to, as in the next verse:

it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord; separated entirely for his service, to be burned upon his altar, and to be no otherwise used.

Ver. 38. *Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto,* etc.] A man might make a perfume of the same ingredients, and of the same weight, and exactly like it, but not to burn for his own delight and pleasure; but if he made it and sold it to the congregation, as Jarchi observes, he was not guilty; but if it was for his own private use and pleasure, then he

shall even be cut off from his people; ((see Gill on “^{Exodus} 30:33”)).