

The Three Courts

The Tabernacle was a typical structure. We shall treat it more at length when we come to speak of the typical teaching of the Old Testament, but there are some features of it that should always be before us, particularly the fact that it was made in three Courts,—an outer Court, an inner Court (the holy place), and an inmost Court (the Holiest of all). That to which we now specially advert is the fact that each of these three courts was lit by a different means. The outer court was open to the sky, and was lit by the sunlight. The inner court, which was enclosed, and had neither door nor window, was lit by the golden candlestick. And the inmost court was lit by the Shechinah fire, the uncreated fire of God.

These three courts may represent to us three courts that we meet in the holy scriptures. There is the outer court of Natural Truth, lit up by natural light, and perfectly apprehensible to the natural mind. There is the inner court, lit up by the Word of God itself, and demanding a comparison of scripture with scripture in order to understand its mystery. But there is still an inmost shrine, lit up by the uncreated Shechinah fire, where few ever venture, but which is the sublimest sphere of divine revelation. It is in this inmost shrine and sphere that the disciple finds the impregnable confidence and assurance that he is dealing directly with God. The mysteries of spiritual illumination are, like all other mysteries of God, inscrutable to any human mind, but however inexplicable, they are explorable by the humblest and lowliest disciple...

Our Lord's only favorites are the most humble-minded, childlike, teachable pupils; and those who are willing to become as little children,—to reverse the natural order—which is to advance from childhood to manhood—and go back from manhood to childhood, will find themselves able to enter into the holiest of all, and there enjoy the illumination that comes only from the Holy Ghost.

(The Bible and Spiritual Criticism—Being the Second Series of Exeter Hall Lectures on the Bible by Arthur T. Pierson, New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1905, 26-27)