

## Leviticus 5: 14 - 14, Section 2.

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### Leviticus 5: 14 — Leviticus 6: 7.

These verses contain the doctrine of the trespass offering, of which there were two distinct kinds, namely, trespass against *God*, and trespass against *man*. "If a soul commit a trespass, and sin *through ignorance*, in the holy things of the Lord, then shall he bring for his trespass unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering." Here we have a case in which a positive wrong was done, in the holy things which pertained unto the Lord; and, albeit this was done "through ignorance," yet could it not be passed over. God can forgive all manner of trespass, but He cannot pass over a single jot or tittle. His grace is perfect, and therefore He can forgive all. His holiness is perfect, and therefore He cannot pass over anything. He cannot sanction iniquity, but He can blot it out, and that, moreover, according to the perfection of His grace, and according to the perfect claims of His holiness.

It is a very grave error to suppose that, provided a man acts up to the dictates of his conscience, he is all right and safe. The peace which rests upon such a foundation as this will be eternally destroyed when the light of the judgement-seat shines in upon the conscience. God could never lower His claim to such a level. The balances of the sanctuary are regulated by a very different scale from that afforded by the most sensitive conscience. We have had occasion to dwell upon this point before, in the notes on the sin offering. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon. There are two things involved in it. First, a just perception of what the holiness of God really is; and, secondly, a clear sense of the ground of a believer's peace, in the divine presence.

Whether it be a question of my condition or my conduct, my nature or my acts, God alone can be the Judge of what suits Himself, and of what befits His holy presence. Can human ignorance furnish a plea, when divine requirements are in question? God forbid. A wrong has been done "in the holy things of the Lord;" but man's conscience has not taken cognisance of it. What then? Is there to be nothing more about it? Are the claims of God to be thus lightly disposed of? Assuredly not. This would be subversive of every thing Like divine relationship. The righteous are called to give thanks at the remembrance of God's holiness. (Psalm 97: 12) How can they do this? Because their peace has been secured on the ground of the full vindication and perfect establishment of that holiness. Hence, the higher their sense of what that holiness is, the deeper and more settled must be their peace. This is a truth of the most precious nature. The unregenerate man could never rejoice in the divine holiness His aim would be to lower that holiness, if he could not ignore it altogether. Such an one will console himself with the thought that God is good, God is gracious, God is merciful; but you will never find him rejoicing in the thought that God is holy. He has unholy thoughts respecting God's goodness, His grace, and His mercy. He would fain find in those blessed attributes, an excuse for his continuing in sin.

On the contrary, the renewed man exults in the holiness of God. He sees The full expression thereof in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is that holiness which has laid the foundation of his peace; and, not only so, but he is made a partaker of it, and he delights in it, while he hates sin with a perfect hatred. The instincts of the divine nature shrink from it, and long after holiness. It would be impossible to enjoy true peace and liberty of heart, if one did not know that the claims connected with "the holy things of the Lord" had been perfectly met by our divine Trespass Offering;. There would ever be, springing up in the heart, the painful sense that those claims had been slighted, through our manifold infirmities and shortcomings. Our very best services, our holiest seasons, our most hallowed

exercises, may present something of trespass "in the holy things of the Lord" — "something that ought not to be done." How often are our seasons of public worship and private devotion infringed upon and marred by barrenness and distraction! Hence it is that we need the assurance that our trespasses have all been divinely met by the precious blood of Christ. Thus, in the ever-blessed Lord Jesus, we find One who has come down to the full measure of our necessities as sinners by nature, and trespassers in act. We find in Him the perfect answer to all the cravings of a guilty conscience, and to all the claims of infinite holiness, in reference to all our sins and all our trespasses; so that the believer can stand, with an uncondemning conscience and emancipated heart, in the full light of that holiness which is too pure to behold iniquity or look upon sin.

"And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him." (Lev. 5: 16) In the addition of "the fifth part," as here set forth, we have a feature of the true Trespass Offering, which, it is to be feared, is but little appreciated. When we think of all the wrong and all the trespass which we have done against the Lord; and, further, when we remember how God has been wronged of His rights in this wicked world, with what interest can we contemplate the work of the cross as that wherein God has not merely received back what was lost, but whereby He is an actual gainer. He has gained more by redemption than ever He lost by the fall. He reaps a richer harvest of glory, honour, and praise, in the fields of redemption, than ever He could have reaped from those of creation. "The sons of God" could raise a loftier song of praise around the empty tomb of Jesus than ever they raised in view of the Creator's accomplished work. The wrong has not only been perfectly atoned for, but an eternal advantage has been gained, by the work of the cross. "This is a stupendous truth. God is a gainer by the work of Calvary. Who could have conceived this? When we behold man, and the creation of which he was Lord, laid in ruins at the feet of the enemy, How could we conceive that, from amid those ruins, God should gather richer and nobler spoils than any which our unfallen world could have yielded. Blessed be the name of Jesus for all this. It is to Him we owe it all. It is by His precious cross that ever a truth so amazing, so divine, could be enunciated. Assuredly, that cross involves a mysterious wisdom "which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. 2: 8) No marvel, therefore, that round that cross, and round Him who was crucified thereon, the affections of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, have ever entwined themselves. No marvel that the Holy Ghost should have given forth that solemn but just decree, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." (1 Cor. 16: 22) Heaven and earth shall echo forth a loud and an eternal amen to this anathema. No marvel that it should be the fixed and immutable purpose of the divine mind, that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2: 10, 11)

The same law in reference to "the fifth part" obtained in the case of a trespass committed against a man, as we read, "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass *against the Lord*,\* and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or have deceived his neighbour, or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offerings) (Lev. 6: 2-5)

{\*There is a fine principle invoked in the expression, "against the Lord." Although the matter in question was a wrong done to one's neighbour, yet the Lord looked upon it as a trespass against himself. Everything must be viewed in reference to the Lord. It matters not who may be affected, Jehovah must get the first place. Thus, when David's conscience was pierced by the arrow of conviction, in reference to his treatment of Uriah, he exclaims, "I have sinned *against the Lord*." (2 Sam. 12: 13) This principle does not, in the least, interfere with the injured man's claim.}

Man, as well as God, is a positive gainer by the cross. The believer can say, as he gazes upon that cross, "Well, it matters not how I have been wronged, how I have been trespassed against, how I have been deceived, what ills have been done to me, I am a gainer by the cross. I have not merely received back all that was lost, but much more beside."

Thus, whether we think of the injured, or the injurer, in any given case, we are equally struck with the glorious triumphs of redemption, and the mighty practical results which flow from that gospel which fills the soul with the happy assurance, that "all trespasses" are "forgiven," And that the root from whence those trespasses have sprung, has been judged "The gospel of the glory of the blessed God" is that which alone can send forth a man into the midst of a scene which has been the witness of his sins, his trespasses, and his injurious ways — can send him back to all who, in anywise, have been sufferers by his evil doings, furnished with grace, not only to repair the wrongs, but, far more, to allow the full tide of practical benevolence to flow forth in all his ways, yea, to love his enemies, to do good to them that hate him, and to pray for them that despitefully use him and persecute him. Such is the precious grace of God, that acts in confession with our great Trespass Offering. — such are its rich, rare, and refreshing fruits!

What a triumphant answer to the caviller who could say, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Grace not merely cuts up sin by the roots, but transforms the sinner from a curse into a blessing; from a moral plague, into a channel of divine mercy; from an emissary of Satan, into a messenger of God; from a child of darkness, into a son of the light; from a self-indulgent pleasure-hunter, into a self-denying lover of God; from a slave of vile, selfish lusts, into a willing-hearted servant of Christ; from a cold, narrow-hearted miser, into a benevolent minister to the need of his fellow-man. Away, then, with the oft repeated taunts, "Are we to do nothing?" — "That is a marvellously easy way to be saved" — "According to this Gospel we may live as we list." Let all who utter such language behold yonder thief transformed into a liberal donor, and let them be silent for ever. (See Eph. 4: 28) They know not what grace means. They have never felt its sanctifying and elevating influences. They forget that, while the blood of the trespass offering cleanses the conscience, the law of that offering sends the trespasser back to the one whom he has wronged, with "the principal" and "the fifth" in his hand. Noble testimony this, both to the grace and righteousness of the God of Israel! Beauteous exhibition of the results of that marvellous scheme of redemption, whereby the injurer is forgiven, and the injured becomes the actual gainer! The conscience has been set to rights, by the blood of the cross, in reference to the claims of God, the conduct must be set to rights, by the holiness of the cross, in reference to the claims of practical righteousness. These things must never be separated. God has joined them together, and let not man put them asunder. The hallowed union will never be dissolved by any mind which is governed by pure gospel morality. Alas! it is easy to profess the principles of grace, while the practice and power thereof are completely denied. It is easy to talk of resting in the blood of the trespass offering, while "the principal" and "the fifth" are not forthcoming. This is vain, and worse than vain. "He that doeth not righteousness is not of God." (1 John 3: 10)

Nothing can be more dishonouring to the pure grace of the gospel than the supposition that a man may belong to God, while his conduct and character exhibit not the fair traces of practical holiness.

"known unto God are all his works," no double; but He has given us, in His holy word, those evidences by which we can discern those that belong to Him. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. 2: 19) We have no right to suppose that an evildoer belongs to God. The holy instincts of the divine nature are shocked by the mention of such a thing. People sometimes express much difficulty in accounting for such and such evil practices on the part of those whom they cannot help regarding in the light of Christians. The word of God settles the matter so clearly and so authoritatively, as to leave no possible ground for any such difficulty. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.' It is well to remember this, in this day of laxity and self-indulgence. There is a fearful amount of easy, uninfluential profession abroad, against which the genuine Christian is called upon to make a firm stand, and bear a severe testimony — a testimony resulting from the steady exhibition of "the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God." It is most deplorable to see so many going along the beaten path — the well-trodden highway of religious profession, and yet manifesting not a trace of love or holiness in their conduct. Christian reader, let us be faithful. Let us rebuke, by a life of self-denial and genuine benevolence, the self-indulgence and culpable inactivity of evangelical yet worldly profession. May God grant unto all His true-hearted people abundant grace for these things!

Let us now proceed to compare the two classes of trespass offering; namely, the offering on account of trespass "in the holy things of the Lord," and that which had reference to a trespass committed in the common transactions and relations of human life. In so doing, we shall find one or two points which demand our attentive consideration.

And, first, the expression, "if a soul sin through ignorance," which occurs in the former, is omitted in the latter. The reason of this is obvious. The claims which stand connected with the holy things of the Lord, must pass, infinitely, beyond the reach of the most elevated human sensibility. Those claims may be, continually, interfered with — continually trespassed upon, and the trespasser not be aware of the fact. A man's consciousness can never be the regulator in the sanctuary of God. This is an unspeakable mercy. God's holiness alone must fix the standard, when God's rights are in question.

Oh the other hand, the human conscience can readily grasp the full amount of a human claim, and can readily take cognisance of any interference with such claim. How often may we have wronged God, in His holy things, without ever taking a note of it in the tablet of conscience — yea without having the competency to detect it. (See Mal. 3: 8) Not so, however, when man's rights are in question. The wrong which the human eye can see, and the human heart feel, the human conscience can take notice of. A man, "through ignorance" of the laws which governed the sanctuary of old, might commit a trespass against those laws, without being aware of it, until a higher light had shone in upon his conscience. But a man could not, "through ignorance," tell a lie, swear falsely, commit an act of violence, deceive his neighbour, or find a lost thing and deny it. These were all plain and palpable acts, lying within the range of the most sluggish sensibility. Hence it is that the expression, "through ignorance" is introduced, in reference to "the holy things of the Lord," and omitted, in reference to the common affairs of men. How blessed it is to know that the precious blood of Christ has settled all questions whether with respect to God or man — our sins of ignorance or our known sins! Here lies the deep and settled foundation of the believer's peace. The cross has divinely met ALL.

Again, when it was a question of trespass "in the holy things of the Lord," the unblemished sacrifice was first introduced; and, afterward "the principal" and "the fifth." This order was reversed when it was a question of the common affairs of life. (Comp. Lev. 5: 15, 16 with Lev. 6: 4-7) The

reason of this is equally obvious. When the divine rights were infringed, the blood of atonement was made the great prominent matter. Whereas, when human rights were interfered with, restitution would naturally assume the leading place in the mind. But, inasmuch as the latter involved the question of the soul's relation with God, as well as the former, therefore the sacrifice is introduced, though it be last in order. If I wrong my fellow man, that wrong will, undoubtedly, interfere with my communion with God; and that communion can only be restored on the ground of atonement. Mere restitution would not avail. It might satisfy the injured man, but it could not form the basis of restored communion with God. I might restore "the principal" and add "the fifth," ten thousand times over, and yet my sin remain, for "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22) Still, if it be a question of injury done to my neighbour, then restitution must first be made. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. 5: 23, 24)\*

{\*From a comparison of Matt. 5.23, 24 with Matt. 18. 21, 22, we may learn a fine principle, as to the way in which wrongs and injuries are to be settled between two brothers. The injurer is sent back from the altar, in order to have his matters set straight with the injured one; for there can be no communion with the Father so long as my brother "hath ought against me" But, then, mark the beautiful way in which the injured one is taught to receive the injurer. "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, *until seventy times seven.*" Such is the divine mode of settling all questions between brethren. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. (Col 3: 13)}

There is far more involved in the divine order prescribed in the trespass offering, than might, at first sight, appear. The claims which arise out of our human relations must not be disregarded. They must ever get their proper place in the heart. This is distinctly taught in the trespass offering. When an Israelite had, by an act of trespass, deranged his relation with Jehovah, the order was, sacrifice and restitution. When he had, by an act of trespass, deranged his relation with his neighbour, the order was, restitution and sacrifice. Will any one undertake to say this is a distinction without a difference? Does the change of the order not convey its own appropriate, because divinely appointed, lesson? Unquestionably. Every point is pregnant with meaning, if we will but allow the Holy Ghost to convey that meaning to our hearts, and not seek to grasp it by the aid of our poor vain imaginings. Each offering conveys its own characteristic view of the Lord Jesus, and His work; and each is presented in its own characteristic order; and we may safely say, it is, at once, the business and the delight of the spiritual mind to apprehend both the one and the other. The very same character of mind which would seek to make nothing of the peculiar order of each offering, would also set aside the idea of a peculiar phase of Christ in each. It would defy the existence of any difference between the burnt offering and the sin offering; and between the sin offering and the trespass offering; and between any or all of these and the meat offering or the peace offering. Hence, it would follow that the first seven chapters of the Book of Leviticus are all a vain repetition, each successive chapter going over the same thing. Who could cede ought so monstrous as this? What Christian mind could suffer such an insult to be offered to the sacred page? A German rationalist or theologian may put forth such vain and detestable notions; but those who have been divinely taught that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," will be led to regard the various types, in their specific order, as so many variously-shaped caskets, in which the Holy Ghost has treasured up, for the people of God, "the unsearchable riches of Christ." There is no tedious repetition, no redundancy. All is rich, divine, heavenly variety; and all we need is to be personally acquainted with the great Antitype, in order to enter into the beauties and seize the delicate touches of each type. Directly the heart lays hold of the fact that it is Christ we have, in each type, it can hang,

With spiritual interest, over the most minute details. It sees meaning and beauty in everything — it finds Christ in all. As, in the kingdom of nature, the telescope and the microscope present to the eye their own special wonders, so with the word of God. Whether we look at it as a whole, or scrutinise each clause, we find that which elicits the worship and thanksgiving of our hearts.

Christian reader, may the name of the Lord Jesus ever be more precious to our hearts! Then shall we value everything that speaks of Him everything that sets Him forth — everything according a fresh insight into His peculiar excellency and matchless beauty.

NOTE — The remainder of Lev. 6, together with the whole of Lev. 7, is occupied with the law of the various offerings to which reference has already been made. There are, however, some points presented in the law of the sin offering and the trespass offering which may be noticed ere we leave this copious section of our book.

In none of the offerings is Christ's personal holiness more strikingly presented than in the sin offering. "Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering. in the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord: *it is most holy* . . . . .Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof *shall be holy*...All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: *it is most holy.*" (Lev. 6: 25- 29) So also in speaking of the meat offering, "it is most holy, *as is the sin offering*, and as the trespass offering." This is most marked and striking. The Holy Ghost did not need to guard with such jealousy, the personal holiness of Christ in the burnt offering; but lest the soul should, by any means, lose sight of that holiness, while contemplating the place which the Blessed One took in the sin offering, we are, again and again, reminded of it by the words, "it is most holy." Truly edifying and refreshing it is to behold the divine and essential holiness of the Person of Christ shining forth in the midst of Calvary's profound and awful gloom The same point is observable in "the law of the trespass offering. (See Lev. 7: 1, 6) Never was the Lord Jesus more fully seen to be "the Holy One of God" than when He was "made sin" upon the cursed tree. The vileness and blackness of that with which He stood identified on the cross, only served to show out more clearly that He was "most holy." Though a sin-bearer, He was sinless. Though enduring the wrath of God, He was the *Father's* delight. Though deprived of the light of *God's* countenance, He dwelt in the *Father's* bosom. precious mystery! Who can sound its mighty depths How wonderful to find it so accurately shadowed forth in "the law of the sin offering ""

Again, my reader should seek to apprehend the meaning of the expression, "all the males among the priests shall eat thereof." The ceremonial act of eating the sin offering, or the trespass offering, was expressive of full identification. But, to eat the sin offering — to make another's sin one's own, demanded a higher degree of priestly energy, such as was expressed in all the *males* among the priests." "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings, of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and *to thy sons*, by an ordinance for ever. This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, shall be most holy for thee and for *thy sons*. In the most Holy place shalt thou eat it; *every male* shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee. and this is thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to *thy daughters* with thee, by a statute for ever: *every one that is clean* in thy house shall eat of it." (Num. 18: 8-11)

It demanded a larger measure of priestly energy to eat of the sin or trespass offering, than merely to partake of the heave and wave offerings of gift. The "daughters" of Aaron could eat of the latter.

None but the "sons" could eat of the former. In general, "the male," expresses a thing according to the divine Idea: "the female," according to human development. The former gives you the thing in full energy; the latter, in its imperfection. How few of us have sufficient priestly energy to enable us to make another's sin or trespass our own! The blessed Lord Jesus did this perfectly. He made His people's sins His own, and bore the judgement thereof, on the cross. He fully identified Himself with us, so that we may know, in full and blessed certainty, that the whole question of sin and trespass has been divinely settled. If Christ's identification was perfect, then, the settlement was perfect, likewise; and that it was perfect, the scene enacted at Calvary declares. All is accomplished. The sin, the trespasses, the claims of God, the claims of man — all have been eternally settled; and, now, perfect peace is the portion of all who, by grace, accept as true the record of God. It is as simple as God could make it, and the soul that believes it is made happy. The peace and happiness of the believer depend wholly upon the perfection of Christ's sacrifice. It is not a question of his mode of receiving it, his thoughts about it, or his feelings respecting it. It is simply a question of his crediting, by faith, the testimony of God, as to the value of the sacrifice. The Lord be praised for His own simple and perfect way of peace! May many troubled souls be led by the Holy Spirit into an understanding thereof!

We shall here close our meditations upon one of the richest sections in the whole canon of inspiration. It is but little we have been enabled to glean from it. We have hardly penetrated below the surface of an exhaustless mine. If, however, the reader has, for the first time, been led to view the offerings as so many varied exhibitions of the great Sacrifice, and if he is led to cast himself at the feet of the great Teacher, to learn more of the living depths of these things, I cannot but feel that an end has been gained for which we may well feel deeply thankful.

#### **Leviticus 8, 9.**

Having considered the doctrine of sacrifice, as unfolded in the first seven chapters of this book, we now approach the subject of priesthood. The two subjects are intimately connected. The Sinner needs a *sacrifice*; the believer needs a *priest*. We have both the one and the other in Christ, who, having offered Himself, without spot, to God, entered upon the sphere of His priestly ministry, in the sanctuary above. We need no other sacrifice, no other priest. Jesus is divinely sufficient. He imparts the dignity and worth of His own Person to every office He sustains, and to every work He performs. When we see Him as a sacrifice, we know that we have in Him all that a perfect sacrifice could be; and, when we see Him as a priest, we know that every function of the priesthood is perfectly discharged by Him. As a sacrifice, He introduces His people into a settled relationship with God; and, as a priest, He maintains them therein, according to the perfectness of what He is. Priesthood is designed for those who already stand in a certain relationship with God. As sinners, by nature and by practice, we are all brought nigh to God by the blood of the cross." We are brought into an established relationship with Him. We stand before Him as the fruit of His own work. He has put away our sins, in such a manner as suits Himself, so that we might be before Him, to the praise of His name, as the exhibition of what He can accomplish through the power of death and resurrection.

But, though so fully delivered from every thing that could be against us; though so perfectly accepted in the Beloved; though so complete in Christ; though so highly exalted, yet are we, in ourselves, while down here, poor feeble creatures, ever prone to wander, ready to stumble, exposed to manifold temptations, trials, and snares. As such, we need the ceaseless ministry of our "Great High Priest," whose very presence, in the sanctuary above, maintains us, in the full integrity of that place and relationship in which, through grace, we stand, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. 7: 25) We could not stand, for a moment, down here, if He were not living for us, up there. "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14: 19) "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by

the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. 5: 10) The "death" and the "life" are inseparably connected, in the economy of grace. But, be it observed, the life comes after the death. It is Christ's life as risen from the dead, and not His life down here, that the apostle refers to, in the last-quoted passage. This distinction is eminently worthy of my reader's attention. The life of our blessed Lord Jesus, while down here, was, I need hardly remark, infinitely precious; but He did not enter upon His sphere of priestly service until He had accomplished the work of redemption. Nor could He have done so, inasmuch as "it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." (Heb. 7: 14) "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." (Heb. 8: 3, 4) "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption . . . . For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9: 11, 12, 24)

Heaven, not earth, is the sphere of Christ's Priestly ministry; and on that sphere He entered when He had offered Himself without spot to God. He never appeared as a priest in the temple below. He oftentimes went up to the temple to teach, but never to sacrifice or burn incense. There never was any one ordained of God to discharge the functions of the priestly office on earth, save Aaron and his sons. "If he were on earth, he should not be a priest." This is a point of much interest and value, in connection with the doctrine of priesthood. Heaven is the sphere, and accomplished redemption the basis, of Christ's priesthood. Save in the sense that all Believers are priests, (1 Peter 2: 5) there is no such thing as a priest upon earth. Unless a man can show his descent from Aaron, unless he can trace his pedigree up to that ancient source, he has no right to exercise the priestly office. Apostolic succession itself, could it be proved, would be of no possible value here, inasmuch as the Apostles themselves were not priests, save in the sense above referred to. The feeblest member of the household of faith is as much a priest as the Apostle Peter himself. He is a spiritual priest; he worships in a spiritual temple; he stands at a spiritual altar; he offers a spiritual sacrifice; he is clad in spiritual vestments. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2: 5) "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. 13: 15, 16)

If one of the direct descendants of the house of Aaron were converted to Christ, he would enter upon an entirely new character and ground of priestly service. And be it observed, that the passages just quoted present the two great classes of spiritual sacrifice which the spiritual priest is privileged to offer. There is the sacrifice of praise to God, and the sacrifice of benevolence to man. There is a double stream continually going forth from the believer who is living in the realisation of his priestly place — a stream of grateful praise ascending to the throne of God, and a stream of active benevolence flowing forth to a needy world. The spiritual priest stands with one hand lifted up to God, in the presentation of the incense of grateful praise; and the other opened wide to minister, in genuine beneficence, to every form of human need. Were these things more distinctly apprehended, what hallowed elevation, and what moral grace, would they not impart to the Christian character! Elevation, inasmuch as the heart would ever be lifted up to the infinite Source of all that is capable of elevating — moral grace, inasmuch as the heart would ever be kept open to all demands upon its sympathies. The two things are inseparable. Immediate occupation of heart with God must, of necessity, elevate and enlarge. But, on

the other hand, if one walks at a distance from God, the heart will become grovelling and contracted. Intimacy of communion with God — the habitual realisation of our priestly dignity, is the only effectual remedy for the downward and selfish tendencies of the old nature.

Having said thus much on the subject of priesthood in general, both as to its primary and secondary aspects, we shall proceed to examine the contents of the eighth and ninth chapters of the Book of Leviticus.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." There is special grace unfolded here. The whole assembly is convened at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, in order that all might have the privilege of beholding the one who was about to be entrusted with the charge of their most important interests. In Ex 28 and 29 we are taught the same general truth with respect to the vestments and sacrifices connected with the priestly office; but, in Leviticus, the congregation is introduced, and allowed to look on at every movement in the solemn and impressive Service of consecration. The humblest member of the assembly had his own place. Each one, the lowest as well as the highest, was permitted to gaze upon the person of the high priest, upon the sacrifice which he offered, and upon the robes which he wore. Each one had his own peculiar need, and the God of Israel would have each to see and know that his need was fully provided for by the varied qualifications of the high priest who stood before him. Of these qualifications the priestly robes were the apt typical expression. Each portion of the dress was designed and adapted to put forth some special qualification in which the assembly as a whole, and each individual member, would, of necessity, be deeply interested. The coat, the girdle, the robe, the ephod, the breastplate, the Urim and the Thummim, the mitre, the holy crown — all told out the varied virtues, qualifications, and functions of the one who was to represent the congregation and maintain the interests thereof in the divine presence.

Thus it is the believer can, with the eye of faith, behold his great High Priest, in the heavens, and see in Him the divine realities of which the Aaronic vestments were but the shadows. The Lord Jesus Christ is the holy One, the anointed One, the mitred One, the girded One. He is all these, not in virtue of outward garments to be put on or off, but in virtue of the divine and eternal graces of His Person, the changeless efficacy of His work, and the imperishable virtue of His sacred offices. This is the special value of studying the types of the Mosaic economy. The enlightened eye sees Christ in all. The blood of the sacrifice and the robe of the high priest both point to Him — both were designed of God to set Him forth. If it be a question of conscience, the blood of the sacrifice meets it, according to the just claims of the sanctuary. Grace has met the demand of holiness. And, then, if it be a question of the need connected with the believer's position down here, he can see it all divinely answered in the official robes of the high priest.

And, here, let me say, there are two ways in which to contemplate the believer's position — two ways in which that position is presented in the word, which must be taken into account ere the true idea of priesthood can be intelligently laid hold of. The believer is represented as being part of a body of which Christ is the Head. This body, with Christ its Head, is spoken of as forming one man, complete, in every respect. It was quickened with Christ, raised with Christ, and seated with Christ, in the heavens. It is one with Him, complete in Him, accepted in Him, possessing His life, and standing in His favour, before God. All trespasses are blotted out. There is no spot. All is fair and lovely beneath the eye of God. (See 1 Cor. 12: 12, 13; Eph. 2: 5-10; Col. 2: 6-15; 1 John 4: 17)

Then, again, the believer is contemplated as in the place of need, meekness, and dependence, down here, in this world. He is ever exposed to temptation; prone to wander, liable to stumble and fall. As such, he, continually, stands in need of the perfect sympathy and powerful ministrations of the High Priest, who ever appears in the presence of God, in the full value of His Person and work, and who represents the believer and maintains His cause before the throne.

Now my reader should ponder both these aspects of the believer, in order that he may see, not only what a highly exalted and privileged place he occupies with Christ on high, but also what ample provision there is for him, in reference to his every need and weakness, here below. This distinction might, further, be developed, in this way. The believer is represented as being *of the church*, and in the *kingdom*. As the former, heaven is his place, his home, his portion, the seat of his affections. As the latter, he is on earth, in the place of trial, responsibility, and conflict. Hence, therefore, priesthood is a divine provision for those who though being of the Church, and belonging to heaven, are, nevertheless, in the kingdom, and walking on the earth. This distinction is a very simple one, and, when apprehended, explains a vast number of passages of Scripture in which many minds encounter considerable difficulty.\*

{\*A comparison of the Epistle to the Ephesians with the First Epistle of Peter will furnish the reader with much valuable instruction in reference to the double aspect of the believer's position, The former shows him as seated in heaven; the latter, as a pilgrim and a sufferer, on earth.}

In looking into the contents of the chapters which lie open before us, we may remark three things put prominently forward, namely, the authority of the word, the value of the blood, the power of the Spirit. These are weighty matters — matters of unspeakable importance — matters which must be regarded, by every Christian, as, unquestionably, vital and fundamental.

And, first, as to the authority of the word, it is of the deepest interest to see that, in the consecration of the priests, as well as in the entire range of the sacrifices, we are brought immediately under the authority of the word of God. "And Moses said unto the congregation, *This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done.*" (Lev. 8: 5) And, again, "Moses said, *This is the thing which the Lord commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you.*" (Lev. 9: 6) Let these words sink down into our ears. Let them be carefully and prayerfully pondered. They are priceless words. "*This is the thing which the Lord commanded.*" He did not say, "This is the thing which is expedient, agreeable, or suitable." Neither did He say, "This is the thing which has been arranged by the voice of the fathers, the decree of the elders, or the opinion of the doctors." Moses knew nothing of such sources of authority. To him there was one holy, elevated, paramount source of authority, and that was, the word of Jehovah, and he would bring every member of the assembly into direct contact with that blessed source. This gave assurance to the heart, and fixedness to all the thoughts. There was no room left for tradition, with its uncertain sound, or for man, with his doubtful disputations. All was clear, conclusive, and authoritative. Jehovah had spoken; and all that was needed was to hear what He had said, and obey. Neither tradition nor expediency has any place in the heart that has learnt to prize, to reverence, and to obey the word of God.

And what was to be the result of this strict adherence to the word of God? A truly blessed result, indeed. "The glory of the Lord shall appear unto you." Had the word been disregarded, the glory would not have appeared. The two things were intimately connected. The slightest deviation from "thus saith Jehovah" would have prevented the beams of the divine glory from appearing to the congregation of Israel. Had there been the introduction of a single rite or ceremony not enjoined by the word, or had there been the omission of ought which that word commanded, Jehovah would not have manifested His

glory. He could not sanction by the glory of His presence the neglect or rejection of His word. He can bear with ignorance and infirmity, but He cannot sanction neglect or disobedience.

Oh! that all this were more solemnly considered, in this day of tradition and expediency. I would, in earnest affection, and in the deep sense of personal responsibility to my reader, exhort him to give diligent heed to the importance of close — I had almost said severe — adherence and reverent subjection to the word of God. Let him try everything by that standard, and reject all that comes not up to it; let him weigh everything in that balance, and cast aside all that is not full weight; let him measure everything by that rule, and refuse all deviation. If I could only be the means of awakening one soul to a proper sense of the place which belongs to the word of God, I should feel I had not written my book for nought or in vain.

Reader, pause, and, in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, ask yourself this plain, pointed question, "Am I sanctioning by my presence, or adopting in my practice, any departure from, or neglect of, the word of God?" Make this a solemn, personal matter before the Lord. Be assured of it, it is of the very deepest moment, the very last importance. If you find that you have been, in any wise, connected with, or involved in, ought that wears not the distinct stamp of divine sanction, reject it at once and for ever. Yes, reject it, though arrayed in the imposing vestments of antiquity, accredited by the voice of tradition, and putting forward the almost irresistible plea of expediency. If you cannot say, in reference to everything with which you stand connected, "this is the thing which the Lord hath commanded," then away with it unhesitatingly, away with it for ever. Remember these words, "as he hath done this day, so the Lord hath commanded to do." Yes, remember the "as" and the "so;" see that you are connecting them in your ways and associations, and let them never be separated.

"So Aaron and his sons did *all things which the Lord commanded* by the hand of Moses." (Lev. 8: 36) "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle, of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which, when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces." (Lev. 9: 23, 24) Here we have an "eighth day" scene — a scene of resurrection-glory. Aaron, having offered the sacrifice, lifted up his hands in priestly benediction upon the people; and then Moses and Aaron retire into the tabernacle, and disappear, while the whole assembly is seen in waiting outside. Finally, Moses and Aaron, representing Christ in His double character as Priest and King, come forth, and bless the people; the glory appears in all its splendour, the fire consumes the sacrifice, and the entire congregation falls prostrate in worship before the presence of the Lord of all the earth.

Now, all this was literally enacted at the consecration of Aaron and his sons. And, moreover, all this was the result of strict adherence to the word of Jehovah. But, ere I turn from this branch of the subject, let me remind the reader, that all that these chapters contain is but the shadow of good things to come." This, indeed, holds good in reference to the entire Mosaic economy. (Heb 10: 1) Aaron and his sons, together, represent Christ and His priestly house. Aaron alone represents Christ in His sacrificial and intercessory functions. Moses and Aaron, together, represent Christ as King and Priest. "The eighth day" represents the day of resurrection-glory, when the congregation of Israel shall see the Messiah, seated as Royal Priest upon His throne, and when the glory of Jehovah shall fill the whole earth, as the waters cover the sea. these sublime truths are largely unfolded in the word, they glitter like gems of celestial brilliancy, all along the inspired page; but, lest they should, to any reader, wear the suspicious aspect of novelty, I shall refer him to the following direct scripture proofs; viz., Num. 14: 21; Isa. 9: 6, 7; Isa. 11; Isa. 25: 6-12; Isa. 32: 1, 2; Isa. 35; Isa. 37: 31, 32; Isa. 40: 1-5; Isa. 54; Isa. 59: 16-21; Isa. 60 - 66; passim. Jer. 23: 5-8; Jer. 30: 10-24; Jer. 33: 6-22; Ezra 48: 35; Dan. 7: 13, 14; Hosea 14: 4-9;

Zeph. 3: 14-20; Zech. 3: 8-10; Zech. 6: 12, 13; Zech. 14.

Let us, now, consider the second point presented in our section, namely, the efficacy of the blood. This is unfolded with great fullness, and put forward in great prominence. Whether we contemplate the doctrine of sacrifice or the doctrine of priesthood, we find the shedding of blood gets the same important place. "And he brought the bullock for the sin offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin offering. And he slew it; and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it" (Lev. 8: 14, 15) "And he brought the ram for the burnt offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. And he killed it; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about." (Ver. 18, 19) "and he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. And he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about." (Ver. 22-24)

The import of the various sacrifices has been, in some degree, developed in the opening chapters of this volume; but the passages just quoted serve to show the prominent place which the blood occupies in the consecration of the priests. A blood-stained *ear* was needed to hearken to the divine communications; a blood-stained *hand* was needed to execute the services of the sanctuary; and a blood-stained *foot* was needed to tread the courts of the Lord's house. All this is perfect in its way. The shedding of blood was the grand foundation of all sacrifice for sin; and it stood connected with all the vessels of the ministry, and with all the functions of the priesthood. Throughout the entire range of Levitical service, we observe the value, the efficacy, the power, and the wide application of the blood. "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood." (Heb. 9: 22) Christ has entered, by His own blood, into heaven itself. He appears on the throne of the majesty in the heavens, in the value of all that He has accomplished on the cross. His presence on the throne attests the worth and acceptableness of His atoning blood. He is there for us. Blessed assurance! He ever liveth. He never changeth; and we are in Him, and as He is. He presents us to the Father, in His own eternal perfectness; and the Father delights in us, as thus presented, even as He delights in the One who presents us. This identification is typically set forth in "Aaron and his sons" laying their hands upon the head of each of the sacrifices. They all stood before God, in the value of the same sacrifice. Whether it were the "bullock for the sin offering," "the ram for the burnt offering," or "the ram of consecration," they jointly laid their hands on all. True, Aaron alone was anointed before the blood was shed. He was clad in his robes of office, and anointed with the holy oil, before ever his sons were clothed or anointed. The reason of this is obvious. Aaron, when spoken of by himself, typifies Christ in His own peerless excellency and dignity; And, as we know, Christ appeared in all His own personal worth and was anointed by the Holy Ghost, previous to the accomplishment of His atoning work. In all things He has the pre-eminence. (Col. 1) Still, there is the fullest identification, afterwards, between Aaron and his sons, as there is the fullest identification between Christ and His people. "The sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one." (Heb 2) The personal distinctness enhances the value of the mystic oneness.

This truth of the distinctness and yet oneness of the Head and members leads us, naturally, to our third and last point, namely, the power of the Spirit. We may remark how much takes place between the anointing of Aaron and the anointing of his sons with him. The blood is shed, the fat consumed on the altar, and the breast waved before the Lord. In other words, the sacrifice is perfected, the sweet odour

thereof ascends to God, and the One who offered it ascends in the power of resurrection, and takes His place on high. All this comes in between the anointing of the Head and the anointing of the members. Let us quote and compare the passages. First, as to Aaron alone, we read, "And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith. And he put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim. And he put the mitre upon his head: and upon the mitre, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the Lord commanded Moses. And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him." (Lev. 8: 7-12)

Here we have Aaron presented alone. The anointing oil is poured upon his head, and that, too, in immediate connection with the anointing of all the vessels of the tabernacle. The whole assembly was permitted to behold the high priest clothed in his official robes, mitred and anointed; and not only so, but as each garment was put on, as each act was performed, as each ceremony was enacted, it was seen to be immediately founded upon the authority of the word. There was nothing vague, nothing arbitrary, nothing imaginative. All was divinely stable. The need of the congregation was fully met, and met in such a way as that it could be said, "This is the thing which Jehovah commended to be done."

Now, in Aaron anointed, alone, previous to the shedding of the blood, we have a type of Christ who, until He offered Himself upon the cross, stood entirely alone. There could be no union between Him and His people, save on the ground of death and resurrection. This all-important truth has already been referred to, and, in some measure, developed in connection with the subject of sacrifice; but it adds force and interest to it to see it so distinctly presented in connection with the question of priesthood. Without shedding of blood there was no remission — the sacrifice was not completed. So, also, without shedding of blood Aaron and his sons could not be anointed together. Let the reader note this fact. Let him be assured of it, it is worthy of his deepest attention. We must ever beware of passing lightly over any circumstance in the Levitical economy. Everything has its own specific voice and meaning; and the One who designed and developed the order can expound to the heart and understanding what that order means.

"And Moses took of the anointing *oil*, and of the *blood* which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments *with him*"; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments *with Him*." (Lev. 8: 30) Why were not Aaron's sons anointed with him at verse 12? Simply because the blood had not been shed. When "the blood" and "the oil" could be connected together, then Aaron and his sons could be "anointed" and "sanctified" together; but not until then. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John 17: 19) The reader who could lightly pass over so marked a circumstance, or say it meant nothing, has yet to learn to value aright the types of the Old Testament Scriptures — "the shadows of good things to come." And, on the other hand, the one who admits that it does mean something, but yet refuses to enquire and understand what that something is, is doing serious damage to his own soul, and manifesting but little interest in the precious oracles of God.

"And Moses said unto Aaron and to his sons, Boil the flesh at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and there eat it with the bread that is in the basket of consecrations, as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it. And that which remaineth of the flesh and of the bread shall ye burn with fire. And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end: for seven days shall he consecrate you. As he hath

done this day, so the Lord hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you. Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night seven days, and keep the charge of the Lord, that ye die not: for so I am commanded." (Ver. 31-35) These verses furnish a fine type of Christ and His people feeding together upon the results of accomplished atonement. Aaron and his sons, having been anointed together, on the ground of the shed blood, are here presented to our view as shut in within the precincts of the tabernacle during "seven days." A striking figure of the present position of Christ and His members, during the entire of this dispensation, shut in with God, and waiting for the manifestation of the glory. Blessed position! Blessed portion! Blessed hope! To be associated with Christ, shut in with God, waiting for the day of glory, and, while waiting for the glory, feeding upon the riches of divine grace, in the power of holiness, are blessings of the most precious nature, privileges of the very highest order. Oh! for a capacity to take them in, a heart to enjoy them, a deeper sense of their magnitude. May our hearts be withdrawn from all that pertains to this present evil world, so that we may feed upon the contents of "the basket of consecrations," which is our proper food as priests in the sanctuary of God.

"And it came to pass *on the eighth day*, that Moses called Aaron, and his sons, and *the elders of Israel*. And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the Lord. And unto *the children of Israel* thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering; also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the Lord; and a meat offering mingled with oil; for TODAY THE LORD WILL APPEAR UNTO YOU." (Lev. 9: 1-4)

The "seven days" being over, during which Aaron and his sons were shut in in the retirement of the tabernacle, the whole congregation is now introduced, and the glory of Jehovah unfolds itself. This gives great completeness to the whole scene. The shadows of good things to come are here passing before us, in their divine order. "The eighth day" is a shadow of that bright millennial morning which is about to dawn upon this earth, when the congregation of Israel shall behold the True Priest coming forth from the sanctuary-, where He is now, hidden from the eyes of men, and with Him a company of priests, the companions of His retirement, and the happy participators of His manifested glory. In short, nothing, as a type or shadow, could be more complete. In the first place, Aaron and his sons washed with water — a type of Christ and His people, as viewed in God's eternal decree, sanctified together, in purpose. (Lev. 8: 6) Then we have the mode and order in which this purpose was to be carried out. Aaron, in solitude, is robed and anointed — a type of Christ as sanctified and sent into the world, and anointed by the Holy Ghost. (Ver. 7-12; comp. Luke 3: 21, 22; John 10: 36; John 12: 24) Then, we have the presentation and acceptance of the sacrifice, in virtue of which Aaron and his sons were anointed and sanctified together, (ver. 14 - 29) a type of the cross, in its application to those who now constitute Christ's priestly household, who are united to Him, anointed with Him, hidden with Him, and expecting with Him "the eighth day," when He with them shall be manifested in all the brightness of that glory which belongs to Him in the eternal purpose of God. (John 14: 19; Acts; 2: 33; 19: 1-7; Col. 3: 1-4.) Finally, we have Israel brought into the full enjoyment of the results of accomplished atonement. They are gathered before the Lord:" And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and Peace offerings." (See Lev. 9: 1-22.)

What, now, we may legitimately enquire, remains to be done? Simply that the topstone should be brought forth with shoutings of victory and hymns of praise. "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: *and the glory of the Lord*

*appeared unto all the people.* And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, THEY SHOUTED, AND FELL ON THEIR FACES." (ver. 23, 24) This was the shout of victory — the prostration of worship. All was complete. The sacrifice — the robed and mitred priest — the Priestly family associated with their Head in priestly benediction — the appearance of the King and Priest — in short, nothing was lacking, and therefore the divine glory appeared, and the whole assembly fell prostrate, in adoring worship. It is, altogether, a truly magnificent scene — a marvellously beautiful shadow of good things to come. And, be it remembered, that all which is here shadowed forth will, ere long, be fully actualised. Our great High Priest has passed into the heavens, in the full value and power of accomplished atonement. He is hidden there, now and, with Him, all the members of His priestly family but when the "seven days" have run their course, and "the eighth day" casts its beams upon the earth, then shall the remnant of Israel — a repentant and an expectant people — hail, with a shout of victory, the manifested presence of the Royal Priest; and, in immediate association with Him, shall be seen a company of worshippers occupying the most exalted position. These are "the good things to come" things, surely, well worth waiting for — things worthy of God to give — things in which He shall be eternally glorified, and His people eternally blessed.

### **Leviticus 10.**

The page of human history has ever been a sadly blotted one. It is a record of failure, from first to last. Amid all the delights of Eden, man hearkened to the tempter's lie. (Gen. 3) When preserved from judgement, by the hand of electing love, and introduced into a restored earth, he was guilty of the sin of intemperance. (Gen. 9) When conducted, by Jehovah's outstretched arm, into the land of Canaan, he "forsook; the Lord, and served Baal and Ashteroth." (Judges 2: 13) When placed at the very summit of earthly power and glory, with untold wealth at his feet, and all the resources of the world at his command, he gave his heart to the uncircumcised stranger. (1 Kings 11) No sooner had the blessings of the gospel been promulgated than it became needful for the Holy Ghost to prophesy Concerning "grievous wolves," "apostasy," and all manner of failure. (Acts 20: 29; 1 Tim. 4: 1-3; 2 Tim. 3: 1-5; 2 Peter 3; Jude) And, to crown all, we have the prophetic record of human apostasy from amid all the splendours of millennial glory. (Rev. 20: 7-10)

Thus, man spoils everything. Place him in a position of highest dignity, and he will degrade himself. Endow him with the most ample privileges, and he will abuse them. Scatter blessings around him, in richest profusion, and he will prove ungrateful. Place him in the midst of the most impressive institutions, and he will corrupt them. Such is man! Such is nature, in its fairest forms, and under the most favourable circumstances!

Hence, therefore, we are, in a measure, prepared for the words with which our chapter opens. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord which he commanded them not." What a contrast to the scene with which our last section closed! There all was done "as the Lord commanded," and the result was, manifested glory. Here something is done which the Lord commanded them not," and the result is judgement, hardly had the echo of the shout of victory died away ere the elements of a spurious worship were prepared. Hardly had the divine position been assured ere it was deliberately abandoned, through neglect of the divine commandment. No sooner were those priests inaugurated, than they grievously failed in the discharge of their priestly functions.

And in what did their failure consist? Were they spurious priests? Were they mere pretenders? By no means. They were genuine sons of Aaron — true members of the priestly family — duly appointed

priests. Their vessels of ministry and their priestly garments, too, would seem to have been alright. What, then, was their sin? Did they stain the curtains of the tabernacle with human blood, or pollute the sacred precincts with some crime which shocks the moral sense? We have no proof of their having done so. Their sin was this: "They offered strange fire before the Lord which he commanded them not." Here was their sin. They departed in their worship from the plain word of Jehovah, who had fully and plainly instructed them as to the mode of their worship. We have already alluded to the divine fullness and sufficiency of the word of the Lord, in reference to every branch of priestly service. There was no room left for man to introduce what he might deem desirable or expedient. "This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded" was quite sufficient. It made all very plain and very simple. Nothing was needed, on man's part, save a spirit of implicit obedience to the divine command. But, herein, they failed. Man has always proved himself ill-disposed to walk in the narrow path of strict adherence to the plain word of God. The by-path has ever seemed to present resistless charms to the poor human heart. "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." (Prov. 9: 17) Such is the enemy's language; but the lowly, obedient heart knows full well that the path of subjection to the word of God is the only one that leads to "waters" that are really "sweet," or to "bread" that can rightly be called "pleasant." Nadab and Abihu might have deemed one kind of "fire" as good as another; but it was not their province to decide as to that. They should have acted according to the word of the Lord; but, instead of this, they took their own way, and reaped the awful fruits thereof "He knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell."

"And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord." How deeply Solemn! Jehovah was dwelling in the midst of His people, to govern, to judge, and to act, according to the claims of His nature. At the close of Lev. 9 we read, "And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat." This was Jehovah's acceptance of a true sacrifice. But, in Lev. 10 it is His judgement upon erring priests. It is a double action of the same fire. The burnt offering went up as a sweet odour; the "strange fire" was rejected as an abomination. The Lord was glorified in the former; but it would have been a dishonour to accept the latter. Divine grace accepted and delighted in that which was a type of Christ's most precious sacrifice; divine holiness rejected that which was the fruit of man's corrupt will — a will never more hideous and abominable than when active in the things of God.

"Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified." The dignity and glory of the entire economy depended upon the strict maintenance of Jehovah's righteous claims. If these were to be trifled with, all was forfeited. If man were permitted to defile the sanctuary of the divine presence by "strange fire," there was an end to everything. Nothing could be permitted to ascend from the priestly censer but the pure fire, kindled from off the altar of God, and fed by the "pure incense beaten small." Beautiful type of true saintly worship, of which the Father is the object, Christ the material, and the Holy Ghost the power. Man must not be allowed to introduce his devices into the worship of God. All his efforts can only issue in the presentation of "strange fire" — unhallowed incense — false worship. His very best attempts are an absolute abomination in the sight of God.

I speak not, here, of the honest struggles of earnest spirits searching after peace with God — of the sincere efforts of upright, though unenlightened, consciences, to attain to a knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, by works of law or the ordinances of systematic religion. All such will, doubtless, issue, through the exceeding goodness of God, in the clear light of a known and an enjoyed salvation. They prove, very clearly, that peace is earnestly sought; though, at the same time, they prove, just as clearly, that peace has not yet been found. There never yet was one, who honestly followed the faintest

glimmerings of light which fell upon his understanding, who did not, in due time, receive more. "To him that hath shall more be given." And again, "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

All this is as plain as it is encouraging; but it leaves wholly untouched the question of the human will, and its impious workings in connection with the service and worship of God. All such workings must, inevitably, call down, sooner or later, the solemn judgement of a righteous God who cannot suffer His claims to be trifled with. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. Men will be dealt with according to their profession. If men are honestly seeking, they will, assuredly, find; but, when men approach as worshippers, they are no longer to be regarded as seekers, but as those who profess to have found; and, then, if their priestly censer smokes with unhallowed fire, if they offer unto God the elements of a spurious worship, if they profess to tread His courts, unwashed, unsanctified, unsubdued, if they place on His altar the workings of their own corrupt will, what must be the result? Judgement! Yes, sooner or later, judgement must come. It may linger; but it will come. It could not be otherwise. And not only must judgement come, at last; but there is, in every case, the immediate rejection, on the part of Heaven, of all worship which has not the Father for its object, Christ for its material, and the Holy Ghost for its power. God's holiness is as quick; to reject all "strange fire" as His grace is ready to accept the faintest, feeblest breathings of a true heart. He must pour out His righteous judgement upon all false worship, though He will never "quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed," The thought of this is most solemnising, when one calls to mind the thousands of censers smoking with strange fire throughout the wide domain of Christendom. May the Lord, in His rich grace, add to the number of true worshippers who worship the Father in spirit and in truth. (John 4) It is infinitely happier to think of the true worship ascending, from honest hearts, to the throne of God, than to contemplate, even for a moment, the spurious worship on which the divine judgements must, ere long, be poured out. Every one who knows, through grace, the pardon of his sins, through the atoning blood of Jesus, can worship the Father, in spirit and in truth. He knows the proper ground, the proper object, the proper title, the proper capacity of worship. These things can only be known in a divine way. They do not belong to nature or to earth. They are spiritual and heavenly. Very much of that which passes among men for the worship of God is but "strange fire "after all. There is neither the pure fire nor the pure incense, and, therefore, Heaven accepts it not; and, albeit the divine judgement is not seen to fall upon those who present such worship, as it fell upon Nadab and Abihu, of old, this is only because "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." It is not because the worship is acceptable to God, but because God is gracious. The time, however, is rapidly approaching when the strange fire will be quenched for ever, when the throne of God shall no longer be insulted by clouds of impure incense ascending from unpurged worshippers; when all that is spurious shall be abolished, and the whole universe shall be as one vast and magnificent temple, in which the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall be worshipped throughout the everlasting ages.

Grateful incense this, ascending  
Ever to the Father's throne;  
Every knee to Jesus bending,  
All the mind in heaven is one.  
All the Father's counsels claiming  
Equal honours to the Son,

All the Son's effulgence beaming,  
Makes the Father's glory known.  
By the Spirit all pervading,  
Hosts unnumbered round the Lamb,  
Crowned with light and joy unfading  
Hail Him as the great "I AM."

For this the redeemed are waiting; and, blessed be God, it is but a little while when all their longing desires shall be fully met, and met for ever — yea met, after such a fashion, as to elicit from each and all the touching confession of Sheba's queen, that "the half was not told me." May the Lord hasten the happy time!

We must, now, return to our solemn chapter, and, lingering a little longer over it, endeavour to gather up and bear away with us some of its salutary teaching, for truly salutary it is, in an age like the present, when there is so much "strange fire" abroad.

There is something unusually arresting and impressive in the way in which Aaron received the heavy stroke of divine judgement. "*Aaron held his peace.*" It was a solemn scene. His two sons struck dead at his aide, smitten down by the fire of divine judgement.\* He had but just seen them clothed in their garments of glory and beauty — washed, robed, and anointed. They had stood with him, before the Lord, to be inaugurated into the priestly office. They had offered, in company with him, the appointed sacrifices. They had seen the beams of the divine glory darting from the shekinah, they had seen the fire of Jehovah fall upon the sacrifice and consume it. They had heard the shout of triumph issuing from an assembly of adoring worshippers. All this had but recently passed before him; and now, alas! his two sons lie at his side, in the grasp of death. The fire of the Lord which so recently fed upon an acceptable sacrifice, had, now, fallen in judgement upon them, and what could he say? Nothing. "Aaron held his peace." "I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." It was the hand of God; and although it might, in the judgement of flesh and blood, seem to be a very heavy hand, yet he had only to bow his head, in silent awe and reverent acquiescence. "*I was dumb . . . because thou didst it.*" This was the suited attitude, in the presence of the divine visitation. Aaron, doubtless, felt that the very pillars of his house were shaken by the thunder of divine judgement; and he could only stand, in silent amazement, in the midst of the soul subduing scene. A father bereaved of his two sons, and, in such a manner, and under such circumstances, was no ordinary case. It furnished a deeply-impressive commentary upon the words of the Psalmist, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." (Psalm 89) "Who would not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" May we learn to walk softly in the divine presence — to tread Jehovah's courts with unshod foot and reverent spirit. May our priestly censer ever bear upon it the one material, the beaten incense of Christ's manifold perfections, and may the power of the Spirit kindle up the hallowed flame. All else is not only worthless, but vile. Everything that springs from nature's energy, everything produced by the actings of the human will, the most fragrant incense of man's devising, the most intense ardour of natural devotion, will all issue in "strange fire" and evoke the solemn judgement of the Lord God Almighty. Oh! for a thoroughly truthful heart, and worshipping spirit, in the presence of our God and Father, continually!

{\*Lest any reader should be troubled with a difficulty in reference to the souls of Nadab, and Abihu, I would say that no such question ought ever to be raised. In such cases as Nadab and Abihu, in Leviticus 10; Korah and his company, in Numbers 16; the whole congregation, Joshua and Caleb

excepted, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, Numbers 14 and Hebrews 3; Achan and his family, Joshua 7; Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5; those who were judged for abuses at the Lord's table, 1 Cor. 11. In all such cases, the question of the soul's salvation is never raised. We are simply called to see, in them, the solemn actings of God, in government in the midst of His people. This relieves the mind from all difficulty. Jehovah dwelt, of old, between the Cherubim, to judge His people in everything; and God the Holy Ghost dwells, now, in the church, to order and govern, according to the perfection of His presence. He was so really and personally present that Ananias and Sapphira could lie to Him, and He could execute judgement upon them. It was as positive and as immediate an exhibition of His actings in government as we have in the matter of Nadab and Abihu, or Achan, or any other.

This is a great truth to get hold of. God is not only for His people, but with them, and in them. He is to be counted upon, for everything, whether it be great or small. He is present to comfort and help. He is there to chasten and judge. He is there "for exigence of every hour. He is sufficient. Let faith count upon Him. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I." (Matt. 18: 20) And, assuredly, where He is, we want no more. }

But let not any upright, though timid, heart be discouraged or alarmed. It is too often the case that those who really ought to be alarmed take no heed; while those for whom the Spirit of grace would only design a word of comfort and encouragement, apply to themselves, in a wrong way, the startling warnings of Holy Scripture. No doubt, the meek and contrite heart that trembles at the word of the Lord, is in a safe condition; but then we should remember that a father warns his child, not because he does not regard him as his child, but because he does; and one of the happiest proofs of the relationship is the disposition to receive and profit by the warning. The parental voice, even though its tone be that of solemn admonition, will reach the child's heart, but, certainly, not to raise, in that heart, a question as to its relationship with the one who speaks. If a son were to question his sonship whenever his father warns, it would be a poor affair indeed. The judgement which had just fallen upon Aaron's house did not make him doubt that he was really a priest. It merely had the effect of teaching him how to conduct himself in that high and holy position.

"And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people; but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses."

Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar, were to remain unmoved in their elevated place — their holy dignity — their position of priestly sanctity. Neither the failure, nor yet the judgement consequent thereon, was to be allowed to interfere with those who wore the priestly robes, and were anointed with "the oil of the Lord." That holy oil had placed them in a sacred enclosure where the influences of sin, of death, and of judgement could not reach them. Those who were outside, who were at a distance from the sanctuary, who were not in the position of priests, they might "bewail the burning;" but as for Aaron and his sons, they were to go on in the discharge of their hallowed functions, as though nothing had happened. Priests in the sanctuary were not to bewail, but to worship. They were not to weep, as in the presence of death, but to bow their anointed heads, in presence of the divine visitation. "The fire of the Lord" might act, and do its solemn work of judgement; but, to a true priest, it mattered not what that "fire" had come to do, whether to express the divine approval, by consuming a sacrifice, or the divine displeasure, by consuming the offerers of "strange fire," he had but to Worship. That "fire was a well-known manifestation of the divine presence, in Israel of old, and whether it acted in "mercy or in judgement," the business of all true priests was to worship. "I will sing of mercy and of judgement; unto thee, O

Lord, will I sing."

There is a deep and holy lesson for the soul in all this. Those who are brought nigh to God, in the power of the blood, and by the anointing of the Holy Ghost, must move in a sphere beyond the range of nature's influences. Priestly nearness to God gives the soul such an insight into all His ways, such a sense of the rightness of all His dispensations, that one is enabled to worship in His presence, even though the stroke of His hand has removed from us the object of tender affection. It may be asked, Are we to be stoics? I ask, were Aaron and his sons stoics? Nay, they were priests. Did they not feel as men? Yes; but they worshipped as priests. This is profound. It opens up a region of thought, feeling, and experience, in which nature can never move — a region of which, with all its boasted refinement and sentimentality, nature knows absolutely nothing. We must tread the sanctuary of God, in true priestly energy, in order to enter into the depth, meaning, and power of such holy mysteries.

The Prophet Ezekiel was called, in his duty, to sit down to this difficult lesson. "Also the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of *men* . . . . And I did in the morning as I was commanded." (Ezek. 24: 16-18) It will be said that all this was as "a sign" to Israel. True; but it proves that in prophetic testimony, as well as in priestly worship, we must rise superior to all the claims and influences of nature and of earth. Aaron's sons and Ezekiel's wife were cut down with a stroke; and, yet, neither the priest nor the prophet was to uncover his head or shed a tear.

Oh! my reader, how far have you and I progressed in this profound lesson? No doubt, both reader and writer have to make the same humiliating confession. Too often, alas! we "Walk as men" and "eat the bread of men." Too often are we robbed of our high priestly privileges by the workings of nature and the influences of earth. These things must be watched against. Nothing save realised priestly nearness to God can ever preserve the heart from the power of evil, or maintain its spiritual tone. All believers are priests unto God, and nothing can possibly deprive them of their position as such. But though they cannot lose their position, they may grievously fail in the discharge of their functions. These things are not sufficiently distinguished. Some there are who, while looking at the precious truth of the believer's security, forget the possibility of his failing in the discharge of his priestly functions. Others, on the contrary, looking at the failure, venture to call in question the security.

Now, I desire that my reader should keep clear of both the above errors. He should be fully established in the divine doctrine of the eternal security of every member of the true priestly house; but he should also bear in mind the possibility of failure, and the constant need of watchfulness and prayer, lest he should fail. May all those who have been brought to know the hallowed elevation of priests unto God be preserved, by His heavenly grace, from every species of failure, whether it be personal defilement, or the presentation of any of the varied forms of "strange fire" which abound so in the professing church.

"And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations; and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." (Ver. 8-11)

The effect of wine is to excite nature, and all natural excitement hinders that calm, well-balanced condition of soul which is essential to the proper discharge of the priestly office. So far from using any

means to excite nature, we should treat it as a thing having no existence. Thus only shall we be in a moral condition to serve in the sanctuary, to form a dispassionate judgement between clean and unclean, and to expound and communicate the mind of God. It devolves upon each one to judge, for himself, what, in his special case, would act as "wine or strong drink."\* The things which excite mere nature are manifold indeed — wealth, ambition, politics, the varied objects of emulation around us in the world. All these things act, with exciting power, upon nature, and entirely unfit us for every department of priestly service. If the heart be swollen with feelings of pride, covetousness, or emulation, it is utterly impossible that the pure air of the sanctuary can be enjoyed, or the sacred functions of priestly ministry discharged. Men speak of the versatility of genius, or a capacity to turn quickly from one thing to another. But the most versatile genius that was ever possessed could not enable a man to pass from an unhallowed arena of literary, commercial, or political competition, into the holy retirement of the sanctuary of the divine presence; nor could it ever adjust the eye that had become dimmed by the influence of such scenes, so as to enable it to discern, with priestly accuracy, the difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean." No, my reader, God's priests must keep themselves apart from "wine and strong drink." Theirs is a path of holy separation and abstraction. They are to be raised far above the influence of earthly joy as well as earthly Sorrow. If they have ought to do with "strong wine," it is only that it may be poured unto the Lord for a drink offering, in the holy place." (Num. 28: 7) In other words, the joy of God's priests is not the joy of earth, but the joy of heaven, the joy of the sanctuary. "The joy of the Lord is their strength."

{\*Some have thought that, owing to the special place which this direction about wine occupies, Nadab and Abihu must have been under the influence of strong drink, when they offered the "strange fire." But, be this as it may, we have to be thankful for a most valuable principle, in reference to our conduct, as spiritual priests. We are to refrain from everything which would produce the same effect upon our spiritual man, as strong drink produces upon the physical man.

It needs hardly to be remarked that the Christian should be *most jealous* over himself as to the use of wine or strong drink. Timothy, as we know, needed an apostolic recommendation to induce him even to touch it, for his health's sake. (1 Tim. 5) A beautiful proof of Timothy's habitual self-denial, and of the thoughtful love of the Spirit, in the apostle. I must confess that one's moral sense is offended by seeing Christians making use of strong drink in cases where it is, very manifestly, not medicinal. I rarely, if ever, see a spiritual person indulge in such a thing. One trembles to see a Christian the mere slave of a habit, whatever that habit may be. It proves that he is not keeping his body in subjection, and he is in great danger of being "disapproved." (1 Cor. 9: 27)}

Would that all this holy instruction were more deeply pondered by us! We, surely, stand much in need of it. If our priestly responsibilities are not duly attended to, all must be deranged. When we contemplate the camp of Israel, we may observe three circles, and the innermost of these circles had its centre in the sanctuary. There was first the circle of men of war. (Num. 1, 2) Then the circle of Levites round about the tabernacle. (Num. 3, 4) And, lastly, the innermost circle of priests, ministering in the holy place. Now, let it be remembered that the believer is called to move in all those circles. He enters into conflict, as a man of war. (Eph. 6: 11-17; 1 Tim. 1: 18; 1 Tim. 6: 12; 2 Tim. 4: 7) He serves, as a Levite, in the midst of his brethren, according to his measure and sphere. (Matt. 14: 14, 15; Luke 19: 12, 13.) Finally, he sacrifices and worships, as a priest, in the holy place. (Heb. 13: 15, 16; 1 Peter 2: 5, 9) The last of these shall endure for ever. And, moreover, it is as we are enabled, now, to move aright in that holy circle, that all other relations and responsibilities are rightly discharged. Hence, every thing that incapacitates us for our priestly functions — every thing that draws us off from the centre of that innermost circle, in which it is our privilege to move — every thing, in short, that tends to derange our

priestly relation, or dim our priestly vision, must, of necessity, unfit us for the service which we are called to render, and for the warfare which we are called to wage.

These are weighty considerations. Let us dwell upon them. The heart must be kept right — the conscience pure — the eye single — the spiritual vision undimmed. The soul's business in the holy place must be faithfully and diligently attended to, else we shall go all wrong. Private communion with God must be kept up, else we shall be fruitless, as servants, and defeated, as men of war. It is vain for us to bustle about, and run hither and thither, in what we call service, or indulge in vapid words about Christian armour and Christian warfare. If we are not keeping our priestly garments unspotted, and if we are not keeping ourselves free from all that would excite nature, we shall, assuredly, break down. The *priest* must keep his heart with all diligence, else the *Levite* will fail, and the *warrior* will be defeated.

It is, let me repeat it, the business of each one to be fully aware of what it is that to him proves to be "wine and strong drink" — what it is that produces excitement — that blunts his spiritual perception, or dims his priestly vision. It may be an auction mart, a cattle-show, a newspaper. It may be the merest trifle. But no matter what it is, if it tends to excite, it will disqualify us for priestly ministry; and if we are disqualified as priests, we are unfit for everything, inasmuch as our success in every department and in every sphere must ever depend upon our cultivating a spirit of worship.

Let us, then, exercise a spirit of self-judgement — a spirit of watchfulness over our habits, our ways, and our associations; and when we, by grace, discover ought that tends, in the smallest degree, to unfit us for the elevated exercises of the sanctuary, let us put it away from us, cost what it may. Let us not suffer ourselves to be the slaves of a habit. Communion with God should be dearer to our hearts than all beside; and just in proportion as we prize that communion, shall we watch and pray against anything that would rob us of it — everything that would excite, ruffle, or unhinge.\*

{\*Some, perhaps, may think that the warning of Lev. 10: 9 affords a warrant for *occasional* indulgence in those things which tend to excite the natural mind, inasmuch as it is said, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink . . . . when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation." To this we may reply, that the sanctuary is not a place which the Christian is, *occasionally*, to visit, but a place in which he is, *habitually*, to serve and worship. It is the sphere in which he should "live, and more, and have his being." The more we live in the presence of God, the less can we bear to be out of it; and no one who knows the deep joy of being there could lightly indulge in ought that would take or keep him Hence. There is not that object within the compass of earth which would, in the judgement of a spiritual mind, be an equivalent for one hour's fellowship with God.}

"And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar; for it is most holy: and ye shall eat it in the holy place, because it is thy due, and thy sons' due, of the sacrifices of the Lord made by fire; for so I am commanded." (Ver. 12, 13)

There are few things in which we are more prone to fail than in the maintenance of the divine standard, when human failure has set in. Like David, when the Lord made a breach upon Uzza, because of his failure in putting his hand to the ark, "He was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?" (1 Chr. 13: 12) It is exceedingly difficult to bow to the divine judgement, and, at the same time, to hold fast the divine ground. The temptation is to lower the standard, to come down from the lofty elevation, to take human ground. We must ever carefully guard against this evil, which is all the more dangerous as wearing the garb of modesty, self-distrust, and humility. Aaron and his sons, notwithstanding all that had occurred, were to eat the meat offering in the holy place. They

were to do so, not because all had gone on in perfect order, but "because it is thy due," and "so I am commanded." Though there had been failure, yet their place was in the tabernacle; and those who were there had certain "dues" founded upon the divine commandment. Though man had failed ten thousand times over, the word of the Lord could not fail; and that word had secured certain privileges for all true priests, which it was their place to enjoy. Were God's priests to have nothing to eat, no priestly food, because failure had set in? Were those that were left to be allowed to starve, because Nadab and Abihu had offered "strange fire?" This would never do. God is faithful, and He can never allow any one to be empty in His blessed presence. The prodigal may wander, and squander, and come to poverty; but it must ever hold good that "in my Father's house is bread enough and to spare."

"And the wave breast and the heave shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place; thou, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee: for they be thy due, and thy sons' due, which are *given* out of the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel . . . .by a statute for ever; as the Lord hath commanded." (Ver. 14, 15.) What strength and stability we have here! All the members of the priestly family, "daughters" as well as "sons" — all, whatever be the measure of energy or capacity, are to feed upon "the breast" and "the shoulder," the affections and the strength of the true Peace Offering, as raised from the dead, and presented, in resurrection, before God. This precious privilege is theirs as, "given, by a statute for ever, as the Lord hath commanded." This makes all "sure and steadfast," come what may. Men may fail, and come short; strange fire may be offered, but God's priestly family must never be deprived of the rich and gracious portion which divine love has provided, and divine faithfulness secured, "by a statute for ever."

However, we must distinguish between those privileges which belonged to all the members of Aaron's family, "daughters" as well as "sons," and those which could only be enjoyed by the male portion of the family. This point has already been referred to, in the notes on the offerings. There are certain blessings which are the common portion of all believers, simply as such; and there are those which demand a higher measure of spiritual attainment and priestly energy to apprehend and enjoy. Now, it is worse than vain, yea, it is impious, to set up for the enjoyment of this higher measure, when we really have it not. It is one thing to hold fast the privileges which are "given" of God, and ran never be taken away, and quite another to assume a measure of spiritual capacity to which we have never attained. No doubt, we ought to desire earnestly the very highest measure of priestly communion, the most elevated order of priestly privilege. But, then, desiring a thing, and assuming to have it, are very different.

This thought will throw light upon the closing paragraph of our chapter. "And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left, saying, Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it to you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord? Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold, this day have they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord; and such things have befallen me; and if I had eaten the sin offering today, should it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord And when Moses heard that, he was content."

The "daughters" of Aaron were not permitted to eat of "the sin offering." This high privilege belonged only to the "sons," and it was a type of the most elevated form of priestly service. To eat of the sin offering was the expression of full identification with the offerer, and this demanded an amount of priestly capacity and energy which found its type in "the sons of Aaron." On the occasion before us, however, it is very evident that Aaron and his sons were not in a condition to rise to this high and holy

ground. They ought to have been, but they were not. "Such things have befallen me," said Aaron. This, no doubt, was to be deplored; but, yet, "when Moses heard it, he was content." It is far better to be real in the confession of our failure and shortcoming, than to put forth pretensions to spiritual power which are wholly without foundation.

Thus, then, Leviticus 10 opens with positive sin, and closes with negative failure. Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire;" and Eleazar and Ithamar were unable to eat the sin offering. The former was met by divine judgement; the latter, by divine forbearance. There could be no allowance for "strange fire." It was positively flying in the face of God's plain commandment. There is, obviously, a wide difference between a deliberate rejection of a plain command, and mere inability to rise to the height of a divine privilege. The former is open dishonour done to God; the latter is a forfeiture of one's own blessing. There should be neither the one nor the other, but the difference between the two is easily traced.

May the Lord, in His infinite grace, ever keep us abiding in the secret retirement of His holy presence, abiding in His love, and feeding upon His truth. Thus shall we be preserved from "strange fire," and "strong drink" — from false worship of every kind, and fleshly excitement, in all its forms. Thus, too, shall we be enabled to carry ourselves aright in every department of priestly ministrations, and to enjoy all the privileges of our priestly position. The communion of a Christian is like a sensitive plant. It is easily hurt by the rude influences of an evil world. It will expand beneath the genial action of the air of heaven; but must firmly shut itself up from the chilling breath of time and sense. Let us remember these things, and ever seek to keep close within the sacred precincts of the divine presence. There, all is pure, safe, and happy.

Far from a world of grief and sin,

With God eternally shut in.

### **Leviticus 11.**

The Book of Leviticus may be termed "the priest's guide book." This is very much its character. It is full of principles for the guidance of such as desire to live in the enjoyment of priestly nearness to God. Had Israel gone on with Jehovah, according to the grace in which He had brought them up, out of the land of Egypt, they should have been to Him "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex. 19: 6) This, however, they failed to do. They put themselves at a distance. They got under law and failed to keep it. Hence, Jehovah had to take up a certain tribe, and from that tribe a certain family, and from that family a certain man, and to him and to his house, was granted the high privilege of drawing nigh, as priests unto God.

Now, the privileges of such a position were immense; but it had its heavy responsibilities, likewise. There would be the ever-recurring demand for the exercise of a discerning mind. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 2: 7) The priest was not only to bear the judgement of the congregation, before the Lord, but also to expound the ordinances of the Lord to the congregation. He was to be the ever-ready medium of communication between Jehovah and the assembly. He was not merely to know the mind of God, for himself, but be able also to interpret that mind to the people. All this would demand, of necessity, constant watching, constant waiting, constant hanging over the page of inspiration, that he might drink in, to his very soul, all the precepts, the judgements, the statutes, the laws, the commandments, and the ordinances of the God of Israel, so as to be able to instruct the congregation, in reference to "those things which ought to be done."

There was no room left for the play of fancy, the working of imagination, the introduction of man's plausible inferences, or the cunning devices of human expediency. Everything was laid down, with the divine precision and commanding authority of a "thus saith the Lord." Minute and elaborate as was the detail of sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies, nothing was left for man's brain to originate. He was not even permitted to decide upon the kind of sacrifice to be offered, upon any given occasion; nor yet as to the mode in which such sacrifice was to be presented. Jehovah took care of everything. Neither the congregation nor the priest had any authority whatsoever, to decree, enact, or suggest so much as a single item throughout all the vast array of ordinances in the Mosaic economy. *The word of the Lord settled all.* Man had *only to obey.*

This, to an obedient heart, was nothing short of an unspeakable mercy. It is quite impossible to overestimate the privilege of being permitted to betake oneself to the oracles of God, and there find the most ample, guidance as to all the details of one's faith and service, day by day. All that we need is a broken will, a mortified mind, a single eye. The divine guide book is as full as we can possibly desire. We want no more. To imagine, for a moment, that ought is left for man's wisdom to supply, must be regarded as a flagrant insult offered to the sacred canon. No one can read the Book of Leviticus, and not be struck with the extraordinary painstaking, on the part of Israel's God, to furnish His people with the most minute instruction upon every point connected with His service and worship. The most cursory reader of the book might, at least, bear away with him this touching and interesting lesson.

And, truly, if ever there was a time when this self-same lesson needed to be read out in the ears of the professing church, this is the time. On all hands, the divine sufficiency of Holy Scripture is called in question; In some cases this is openly and deliberately done; in others it is, with less frankness, hinted, insinuated, implied, and inferred. The Christian mariner is told, directly, or indirectly, that the divine chart is insufficient for all the intricate details of his voyage that such changes have taken place in the ocean of life, since that chart was made, that, in many cases, it is entirely deficient for the purposes of modern navigation. He is told that the currents, tides, coasts, strands, and shores of that ocean are quite different, now, from what they were from centuries ago, and that, as a necessary consequence, he must have recourse to the aids which modern navigation supplies, in order to make up for the deficiencies in the old chart, which is, as a matter of course, admitted to have been perfect at the time it was made.

Now, I earnestly desire that the Christian reader should be able, with clearness and decision, to meet this grievous dishonour done to the precious volume of inspiration, every line of which comes to him fresh from his Father's bosom, through the pen of God the Holy Ghost. I desire that he should meet it, whether it comes before him in the shape of a bold and blasphemous statement, or a learned and plausible inference. Whatever garb it wears, it owes its origin to the enemy of Christ, the enemy of the Bible, the enemy of the soul. If, indeed, the Word of God be not sufficient, then where are we? or whither shall we turn? To whom shall we betake ourselves for aid, if our Father's book be, in any respect, defective? God says that His book can "furnish us *thoroughly to all* good works." (2 Tim. 3: 17) Man says, no; there are many things about which the Bible is silent, which, nevertheless, we need to know. Whom am I to believe? God or man? Our reply to any one who questions the divine sufficiency of Scripture, is just this, "either you are not a 'man of God,' or else that for which you want a warrant is not 'a good work,'" This is plain. No one can possibly think otherwise, with his eye resting on 2 Timothy 3: 17.

Oh! for a deeper sense of the fullness, majesty, and authority of the Word of God! We very much need to be braced up on this point. We want such a deep, bold, vigorous, influential, and abiding sense of the supreme authority of the divine canon, and of its absolute completeness for every age, every clime, every position, every department — personal, social, and ecclesiastical, as shall enable us to

withstand every attempt of the enemy to depreciate the value of that inestimable treasure. May our hearts enter more into the spirit of those words of the Psalmist, "Thy word is true *from the beginning*: and every one of thy righteous judgements *endureth for ever*." (Psalm 119: 160)

The foregoing train of thought is awakened by the perusal of the eleventh chapter of the Book of Leviticus. Therein we find Jehovah entering, in most marvellous detail, into a description of beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles, and furnishing His people with various marks by which they were to know what was clean and what was unclean. We have the summing up of the entire contents of this remarkable chapter in the two closing verses. "This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth; *to make a difference* between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten."

With regard to beasts, two things were essential to render them clean, they should chew the cud and divide the hoof. "Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven footed, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that shall ye eat." Either of these marks would, of itself, have been wholly insufficient to constitute ceremonial cleanness. The two should go together. Now, while these two marks were quite sufficient for the guidance of an Israelite, as to the cleanness or uncleanness of an animal, without any reference as to why or wherefore such marks were given, or what they meant, yet is the Christian permitted to enquire into the spiritual truth wrapped up in these ceremonial enactment's.

What, then, are we to learn from those two features in a clean animal? The chewing of the cud expresses the natural process of "inwardly digesting" that which one eats; while the divided hoof sets forth the character of one's outward walk. There is, as we know, an intimate connection between the two, in the christian life. The one who feeds upon the green pastures of the Word of God, and inwardly digests what he takes in — the one who is enabled to combine calm meditation with prayerful study, will, without doubt, manifest that character of outward walk which is to the praise of Him who has graciously given us His word to form our habits and govern our ways.

It is to be feared that many who *read the Bible* do not *digest the word*. The two things are widely different. One may read chapter after chapter, book after book, and not digest so much as a single line. We may read the Bible as part of a dull and profitless routine; but, through lack of the ruminating powers — the digestive organs, we derive no profit whatsoever. This should be carefully looked into. The cattle that browse on the green may teach us a wholesome lesson. They, first, diligently gather up the refreshing pasture, and then calmly lie down to chew the cud. Striking and beautiful picture of a Christian feeding upon and inwardly digesting the precious contents of the volume of inspiration. Would that there were more of this amongst us. Were we more accustomed to betake ourselves to the Word as the necessary pasture of our souls, we should, assuredly, be in a more vigorous and healthy condition. Let us beware of reading the Bible as a dead form — a cold duty — a piece of religious routine.

The same caution is needful in reference to the public exposition of the Word. Let those who expound Scripture to their fellows, first feed and digest for themselves. Let them read and ruminate, in private, not merely for others, but for themselves. It is a poor thing for a man to be continually occupied in procuring food for other people, And he himself dying of starvation. Then, again, let those who attend upon the public ministry of the Word, see that they are not doing so mechanically, as by the force of mere religious habit, but with an earnest desire to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" what they hear. Then will both teachers and taught be well-conditioned, the spiritual life nourished and sustained, and the true character of outward walk exhibited.

But, be it remembered, that the chewing of the cud must never be separated from the divided hoof. If one but partially acquainted with the priest's guide book — unpractised in the divine ceremonial, happened to see an animal chewing the cud, he might hastily pronounce him clean. This would have been a serious error. A more careful reference to the divine directory would, at once, show that he must mark the animal's walk — that he must note the impression made by each movement — that he must look for the result of the divided hoof. "Nevertheless, these shall ye not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you," &c., &c. (Ver. 4-6)

In like manner, the divided hoof was insufficient, if not accompanied by the chewing of the cud. "The swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you." (Ver. 7) In a word, then, the two things were inseparable in the case of every clean animal; and, as to the spiritual application, it is of the very last importance, in a practical point of view. The inward life and the outward walk must go together. A man may profess to love and feed upon — to study and ruminate over the Word of God — the pasture of the soul; but, if his footprints along the pathway of life are not such as the Word requires, he is not clean. And, on the other hand, a man may seem to walk with pharisaic blamelessness; but if his walk be not the result of the hidden life, it is worse than worthless. There must be the divine principle within which feeds upon and digests the rich pasture of God's Word, else the impression of the footstep will be of no avail. The value of each depends upon its inseparable connection with the other.

We are, here, forcibly reminded of a solemn passage in the First Epistle of John, in which the apostle furnishes us with the two marks whereby we may know those that are of God. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever *doeth not righteousness*, is not of God, neither he that *loveth not his brother*." (1 John 3: 10) Here we have the two grand characteristics of the eternal life, of which all true believers are possessed, namely, "righteousness" and "love". The outward and the inward. Both must be combined. Some professing Christians are all for love, so called; and some for righteousness. Neither can exist, in a divine way, without the other. If that which is called love exist without practical righteousness, it will, in reality, be but a lax, soft, easy-going habit of mind, which will tolerate all manner of error and evil. And, if that which is called righteousness exist without love, it will be a stern, proud, pharisaic, self-sufficient temper of soul resting upon the miserable basis of personal reputation. But where the divine life is in energy, there will ever be the inward charity combined with genuine practical righteousness. The two elements are essential in the formation of true Christian character. There must be the love that will express itself in reference to the very feeblest development of that which is of God; and, at the same time, the holiness that shrinks, with intense abhorrence, from all that is of Satan.

We shall now pass on to the consideration of that which the Levitical ceremonial taught with respect to "all that are in the waters." Here again, we find the double mark. "These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you." (Ver. 9, 10) Two things were necessary to render a fish ceremonially clean, namely, "fins and scales," which, obviously, set forth a certain fitness for the sphere and element in which the creature had to move.

But, doubtless, there was more than this. I believe it is our privilege to discern, in the natural properties with which God has endowed those creatures which move in the waters, certain spiritual qualities which belong to the Christian life. If a fish needs a "fin" to enable him to move through the waters and "scales" to resist the action thereof, so does the believer need that spiritual capacity which

enables him to move onward through the scene with which he is surrounded, and, at the same time, to resist its influence — to prevent its penetrating — to keep it out. These are precious qualities. The fin and the scale are pregnant with meaning — full of practical instruction to the Christian. They exhibit to us, in ceremonial garb, two things which we specially need, namely, spiritual energy to move onward through the element which surrounds us, and the power to preserve us from its action. The one will not avail without the other. It is of no use to possess a capacity to get on, through the world, if we are not proof against the world's influence; and though we may seem to be able to keep the world out, yet if we have not the motive power, we are defective. The "fins" would not do without the "scales," nor the "scales" without the "fins" Both were required, to render a fish ceremonially clean; and we, in order to be properly equipped, require to be encased against the penetrating influence of an evil world; and, at the same time, to be furnished with a capacity to pass rapidly on.

The whole deportment of a Christian should declare him a pilgrim and a stranger here. "*Onward*" must be his motto — ever and only, onward. Let his locality and his circumstances be what they may, he is to have his eye fixed on a home beyond this perishing, passing world. He is furnished, by grace, with spiritual ability to go forward — to penetrate, energetically, through all, and carry out the earnest aspirations of his heaven-born spirit. And, while thus vigorously pushing his way onward — while "forcing his passage to the skies," he is to keep his inward man fenced round about, and fast closed up against all external influences.

Oh! for more of the onward bent, the upward tendency! For more holy fixedness of soul, and profound retirement from this vain world! We shall have reason to bless the Lord for our meditations amid the ceremonial shadows of the Book of Leviticus, if we are led, thereby, to long more intensely after those graces which, though so dimly portrayed there, are, nevertheless, so manifestly needful for us.

From verse 13 to verse 24 of our chapter, we have the law with respect to birds. All of the carnivorous kind, that is, all that fed on flesh, were unclean. The omnivorous, or those who could eat anything, were unclean. All those which, though furnished with power to soar into the heavens, would, nevertheless, grovel upon the earth, were unclean. As to the latter class, there were some exceptional cases; (ver. 21, 22;) but the general rule, the fixed principle, the standing ordinance was as distinct as possible; "all fowls that creep, going upon all fours, shall be an abomination unto you." (Ver. 20) All this is very simple in its instruction to us. Those fowls that could feed upon flesh; those that could swallow anything or everything; and all grovelling fowls, were to be unclean to the Israel of God, because so pronounced by the God of Israel; nor can the spiritual mind have any difficulty in discerning the fitness of such an ordinance. We can not only trace in the habits of the above three classes of fowl the just ground of their being pronounced unclean; but we can also see in them the striking exhibition of that, in nature, which is to be strenuously guarded against by every true Christian. Such an one is called to refuse everything of a carnal nature. Moreover, he cannot feed, promiscuously, upon everything that comes before him. He must "try the things that differ:" He must "take heed what he hears." He must exercise a discerning mind, a spiritual judgement, a heavenly taste. Finally, he must use his wings. He must rise on the pinions of faith, and find his place in the celestial sphere to which he belongs. In short, there must be nothing grovelling, nothing promiscuous, nothing unclean, for the Christian.

As to "creeping things," the following was the general rule: "And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth shall be an abomination; it shall not be eaten." (Ver. 41) How wonderful to think of the condescending grace of Jehovah! He could stoop to give directions about a crawling reptile. He would not leave His people at a loss as to the most trivial affair. The priest's guide book

contained the most simple instructions as to everything. He desired to keep His people free from the defilement consequent upon touching, tasting, or handling ought that was unclean. They were not their own, and hence they were not to do as they pleased. They belonged to Jehovah; His name was called upon them; they were identified with Him. His word was to be their grand regulating standard, in every case. From it they were to learn the ceremonial *status* of beasts, birds, fishes, and creeping things. They were not to think their own thoughts, to exercise their own reasoning powers, or be guided by their own imaginations, in such matters. *God's Word was to be their sole directory.* Other nations might eat what they pleased; but Israel enjoyed the high privilege of eating that only which was pleasing to Jehovah.

Nor was it as to the mere matter of *eating* ought that was unclean that the people of God were so jealously guarded. Bare *contact* was forbidden. (See ver. 8, 24, 26-28, 31-41) It was impossible for a member of the Israel of God to touch that which was unclean without contracting defilement. This is a principle largely unfolded, both in the law and the prophets. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, ask ye now the priests concerning the law, saying, if one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean." (Hag. 2: 11-13) Jehovah would have His people holy in all things. They were neither to eat nor touch ought that was unclean. "Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby." Then follows the powerful reason for all this careful separation. "*For I am The Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.*" (Ver. 43-45)

It is well to see that the personal holiness of God's people — their entire separation from all manner of uncleanness, flows out of their relationship to Him. It is not upon the principle of "stand by thyself, I am holier than thou;" but simply this, "God is holy," and therefore all who are brought into association with Him must be holy, likewise. It is, in every way, worthy of God that *His* people should be holy. "Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." What else save holiness could become the house of such an One as Jehovah? If any one had asked an Israelite, of old, "Why do you shrink so from that reptile which crawls along the path?" He would have replied, "Jehovah is holy; and I belong to Him. He has said 'Touch not.'" So, also, now, if a Christian be asked why he walks apart from the ten thousand things in which the men of this world participate, his answer is simply to be, "*My Father is holy.*" This is the true foundation of personal holiness. The more we contemplate the divine character, and enter into the power of our relationship to God, in Christ, by the energy of the Holy Ghost, the holier we must, of necessity, be. There can be no progress in the condition of holiness into which the believer is introduced; but there is, and ought to be, progress in the apprehension, experience, and practical exhibition of that holiness. These things should never be confounded. All believers are in the same condition of holiness or sanctification; but their practical measure may vary to any conceivable degree. This is easily understood. The condition arises out of our *being brought nigh* to God, by the blood of the cross; the practical measure will depend upon our *keeping nigh*, by the power of the Spirit. It is not a man setting up for something superior in himself — for a greater degree of personal sanctity than is ordinarily possessed — for being, in any wise, better than his; neighbours. All such pretensions are utterly contemptible, in the judgement of every right-thinking person. But then, if God, in His exceeding grace, stoop down to our low estate, and lift us into the holy elevation of His blessed presence, in association with Christ, has He not a right to prescribe what our character is to be, as thus brought nigh? Who could think of calling in question a truth so

obvious And, further, are we not bound to aim at the maintenance of that character which He prescribes? Are we to be accused of presumption for so doing Was it presumption in an Israelite to refuse to touch Nay, it would have been presumption of the most daring and dangerous character to have done so. True, he might not have been able to make an uncircumcised stranger understand or appreciate the reason of his conduct; but this was not his province. Jehovah had said, "Touch not," not because an Israelite was holier in himself than a stranger; but because Jehovah was holy, and Israel belonged to Him. It needed the eye and the heart of a circumcised disciple of the law of God, in order to discern what was clean and what was not. An alien knew no difference. Thus it must ever be. It is only Wisdom's children that can justify her and approve her heavenly ways.

Ere turning from Leviticus 11, my reader might, with much spiritual profit, compare it with the tenth chapter of Acts, ver. 11-16. How strange is must have appeared to one who had, from his earliest days, been taught in the principles of the Mosaic ritual, to see a vessel descending from heaven, "wherein were *all manner* of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and *creeping things*, and fowls of the air;" and not only to see such a vessel, so filled, but also to hear a voice, saying, "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat." How wonderful. No examination of hoofs or habits! There was no need of this. The vessel and its contents had come from heaven. This was enough. The Jew might ensconce himself behind the narrow enclosures of the Jewish ritual, and exclaim, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean;" but, then, the tide of divine grace was rising, majestically, above all such enclosures, in order to embrace, in its mighty compass, "all manner" of objects, and bear them upward to heaven, in the power and on the authority of those precious words, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." It mattered not what was in the vessel, if God had cleansed it. The Author of the Book of Leviticus was about to raise the thoughts of His servant above the barriers which that book had erected, into all the magnificence of heaven's grace. He would teach him that true cleanness — the cleanness which heaven demanded, was no longer to consist in chewing the cud, dividing the hoof, or any such ceremonial marks, but in being washed in the blood of the Lamb, which cleanseth from all sin, and renders the believer clean enough to tread the sapphire pavement of the heavenly courts.

This was a noble lesson for a Jew to learn. It was a divine lesson, before the light of which the shadows of the old economy must pass away. The hand of sovereign grace has thrown open the door of the kingdom; but not to admit ought that is unclean. This could not be. Nothing unclean can enter heaven. But, then, a cloven hoof was no longer to be the criterion; but "*what God hath cleansed.*" When God cleanses a man, he must needs be clean. Peter was about to be sent to open the kingdom to the Gentiles, as he had already opened it to the Jews; and his Jewish heart needed to be enlarged. He needed to get above the dark shadows of a by-gone age, into the meridian light that was shining from an open heaven, in virtue of a completed sacrifice. He needed to get out of the narrow current of Jewish prejudices, should be borne upon the bosom of that mighty tide of grace which was about to roll through the length and breadth of a lost world. He had to learn, too, that the standard by which true cleanness must be regulated, was no longer carnal, ceremonial, and earthly, but spiritual, moral, and heavenly. Assuredly, we may say, these were noble lessons for the apostle of the circumcision to learn upon the housetop of Simon the tanner. They were eminently calculated to soften, to expand, and elevate a mind which had been trained amid the contracting influences of the Jewish system. We bless the Lord for these precious lessons. We bless Him for the large and wealthy place in which He has set us, by the blood of the cross. We bless Him that we are no longer hemmed round about by "touch not this; taste not that; handle not the other thing; but that His Lord assures us that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. 4: 4, 5)

## Leviticus 12.

This brief section reads out to us, after its own peculiar fashion, the double lesson of "man's ruin and God's remedy." But though the fashion is peculiar, the lesson is most distinct and impressive. It is, at once, deeply humbling and divinely comforting. The effect of all scripture, when interpreted to one's own soul, directly, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is to lead us out of self to Christ. wherever we see our fallen nature — at whatever stage of its history we contemplate it, whether in its conception, at its birth, or at any point along its whole career, from the womb to the coffin, it wears the double stamp of iniquity and defilement. This is, sometimes, forgotten amid the glitter and glare, the pomp and fashion, the wealth and splendour of human life. The mind of man is fruitful in devices to cover his humiliation. In various ways he seeks to ornament and gild, and put on an appearance of strength and glory; but it is all vain. He has only to be seen as he enters this world, a poor helpless creature; or, as he passes away from it, to take his place with the clod of the valley, in order to have a most convincing proof of the hollowness of all his pride, the vanity of all his glory. Those whose path through this world has been brightened by what man calls glory, have entered in nakedness and helplessness, and retreated amid disease and death.

Nor is this all. It is not merely helplessness that belongs to man — that characterises him as he enters this life. There is defilement also. "Behold," says the psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. 51: 5) "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25: 4) In the chapter before us, we are taught that the conception and birth of "a man child," involved "seven days" of ceremonial defilement to the mother, together with thirty-three days of separation from the sanctuary; and these periods were doubled in the case of "a maid child." Has this no voice? Can we not read, herein, an humbling lesson? Does it not declare to us, in language not to be misunderstood, that man is "an unclean thing," and that he needs the blood of atonement to cleanse him? Truly so. Man may imagine that he can work out a righteousness of his own. He may vainly boast of the dignity of human nature. He may put on a lofty air, and assume a haughty bearing, as he moves across the stage of life; but if he would just retire for a few moments, and ponder over the short section of our book which now lies open before us, his pride, pomp, dignity, and righteousness would speedily vanish; and, instead thereof, he might find the solid basis of all true dignity, as well as the ground of divine righteousness, in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The shadow of this cross passes before us in a double way in our chapter; first, in the circumcision of the "man child," whereby he became enrolled as a member of the Israel of God; and, secondly, in the burnt offering and sin offering, whereby the mother was restored from every defiling influence, rendered fit, once more, to approach the sanctuary, and to come in contact with holy things. "And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle dove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest; who shall offer it before the Lord, and make, an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female." (Ver. 6, 7) The death of Christ, in its two grand aspects, is here introduced to our thoughts, as the only thing which could possibly meet, and perfectly remove, the defilement connected with man's natural birth. The burnt offering presents the death of Christ, according to the divine estimate thereof; the sin offering, on the other hand, presents the death of Christ, as bearing upon the sinner's need.

"And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean." Nothing but blood-shedding could impart cleanness. The cross is the only

remedy for man's infirmity, and man's defilement. Wherever that glorious work is apprehended, by faith, there is perfect cleanness enjoyed. Now, the apprehension may be feeble — the faith may be but wavering — the experience may be shallow; but, let the reader remember, for his soul's joy and comfort, that it is not the depth of his experience, the stability of his faith, or the strength of his apprehension, but the divine value, the changeless efficacy of the blood of Jesus. This gives great rest to the heart. The sacrifice of the cross is the same to every member of the Israel of God, whatever be his status in the assembly. The tender considerateness of our ever gracious God is seen in the fact that the blood of a turtle dove was as efficacious for the poor, as the blood of a bullock for the rich. The full value of the atoning work was alike maintained and exhibited in each. Had it not been so, the humble Israelite, if involved in ceremonial defilement, might, as she gazed upon the well-stocked pastures of some wealthy neighbour, exclaim, "Alas! what shall I do? How shall I be cleansed? How shall I get back to my place and privilege in the assembly? I have neither flock nor herd. I am poor and needy." But, blessed be God, the case of such an one was fully met. A pigeon or turtle dove was quite sufficient. The same perfect and beautiful grace shines forth, in the case of the leper, in Lev. 14: "*And if he be poor and cannot get so much, then he shall take, &c . . . . . And he shall offer the one of the turtle doves, or of the young pigeons, such as he can get; even such as he is able to get . . . . . This is the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing.*" (Ver. 21, 30-32)

Grace meets the needy one just where he is, and as he is. The atoning blood is brought within the reach of the very lowest, the very poorest, the very feeblest. All who need it can have it. "If he be poor" — what then? Let him be cast aside? Ah no; Israel's God could never so deal with the poor and needy. There is ample provision for all such in the gracious expression, "Such as he can get; even such as he is able to get." Most exquisite grace! "To the poor the Gospel is preached." None can say, "the blood of Jesus was beyond me." Each can be challenged with the inquiry, "how near would you have it brought to you?" "I bring near my righteousness." How "near?" So near, that it is "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." (Rom. 4: 5) Again, "the word is *nigh* thee." How "nigh?" "So nigh "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10: 9) So also that most touching and beautiful invitation," Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and *he that hath no money.*" (Isa. 55: 1)

What matchless grace shines in the expressions, "to him that *worketh not,*" and, "he that hath *no money!*" They are as like God as they are unlike man. Salvation is as free as the air we breathe. Did we create the air? Did we mingle its component parts? No; but we enjoy it, and, by enjoying it, get power to live and act by Him who made it. So is it in the matter of salvation. We get it without a fraction, without an effort. We feed upon the wealth of another; we rest in the work finished by another; and, moreover, it is by so feeding and resting, that we are enabled to work for Him on whose wealth we feed, and in whose work we rest. This is a grand Gospel paradox, perfectly inexplicable to legality, but beautifully plain to faith. Divine grace delights in making provision for those who are "not able" to make provision for themselves.

But, there is another invaluable lesson furnished by this twelfth chapter of Leviticus. We not only read, herein, the grace of God to the poor, but, by comparing its closing verse with Luke 2: 24, we learn the amazing depth to which God stooped in order to manifest that grace. The Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, the pure and spotless Lamb, the Holy One, who knew no Sin, was "made of a woman," and that woman — wondrous mystery! — having borne in her womb, and brought forth, that pure and perfect, that holy and spotless human body, had to undergo the usual ceremonial, and

accomplish the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses. And not only do we read divine grace in the fact of her having thus to purify herself, but also the mode in which this was accomplished. "And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, *a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.*" From this simple circumstance we learn that the reputed parents of our blessed Lord Jesus were so poor, as to be obliged to take advantage of the gracious provision made for those whose means did not afford "a lamb for a burnt offering." What a thought! The Lord of Glory, the most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth, the One to whom pertained "the cattle upon a thousand hills" — yea, the wealth of the universe — appeared in the world which His hands had made, in the narrow circumstances of humble life. The Levitical economy had made provision for the poor, and the mother of Jesus availed herself thereof. Truly, there is a profound lesson in this for the human heart. The Lord Jesus did not make his appearance, in this world, in connection with the great or the noble. He was pre-eminently a poor man. He took His place with the poor. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. 8: 9)

May it ever be our joy to feed upon this precious grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which we have been made rich for time and for eternity. He emptied Himself of all that love could give, that we might be filled. He stripped Himself, that we might be clothed. He died, that we might live. He, in the greatness of His grace, travelled down from the height of divine wealth into the depth of human poverty, in order that we might be raised from the dunghill of nature's ruin, to take our place amid the princes of His people, for ever. Oh! that the sense of this grace, wrought in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost, may constrain us to a more unreserved surrender of ourselves to Him, to whom we owe our present and everlasting felicity, our riches, our life, our all!

#### **Leviticus 13-14.**

Of all the functions which, according to the Mosaic ritual, the priest had to discharge, none demanded more patient attention, or more strict adherence to the divine guide-book, than the discernment and proper treatment of leprosy. This fact must be obvious to every one who studies, with any measure of care, the very extensive and important section of our book at which we have now arrived.

There were two things which claimed the priest's vigilant care, namely, the purity of the assembly, and the grace which could not admit of the exclusion of any member, save on the most clearly-established grounds. Holiness could not permit any one to remain in who ought to be out; and, on the other hand, grace would not have any one out who ought to be in. Hence, therefore, there was the most urgent need, on the part of the priest, of watchfulness, calmness, wisdom, patience, tenderness, and enlarged experience. Things might seem trifling which, in reality, were serious; and things might look like leprosy which were not it at all. The greatest care and coolness were needed. Judgement rashly formed, a conclusion hastily arrived at, might involve the most serious consequences, either as regards the assembly or some individual member thereof.

This will account for the frequent occurrence of such expressions as the following, namely, "The priest shall look;" — "The, priest shall shut up him that hath the plague *seven days;*" — "And the priest shall look on him the seventh day;" — "Then the priest shall shut him up *seven days more*" — "And the priest *shall look on him again* the seventh day;" — "And the priest shall *see him;*" — "Then the priest shall *consider.*" No case was to be hastily judged, or rashly decided. No opinion was to be formed from mere hearsay. Personal observation, priestly discernment, calm reflection, strict adherence to the written word — the holy, infallible guide book — all these things were imperatively demanded of the

priest, if he would form a sound judgement of each case. He was not to be guided by his own thoughts, his own feelings, his own wisdom, in any thing. He had ample guidance in the word, if only he was subject thereto. Every point, every feature, every movement, every variation, every shade and character, every peculiar symptom and affection — all was provided for, with divine fullness and forethought; so that the priest only needed to be acquainted with, and subject to, the word in all things, in order to be preserved from ten thousand mistakes.

Thus much as to the priest and his holy responsibilities.

We shall now consider the disease of leprosy, as developed in a person, in a garment, or in a house.

Looking at this disease in a physical point of view, nothing can possibly be more loathsome; and being, so far as man is concerned, totally incurable, it furnishes a most vivid and appalling picture of sin — sin in one's natures — in his circumstances — sin in an assembly. What a lesson for the soul in the fact that such a vile and humiliating disease should be used as a type of moral evil, whether in a member of God's assembly, in the circumstances of any member, or in the assembly itself!

1. And first, then, as to leprosy in a person; or, in other words, the working of moral evil, or of that which might seem to be evil, in any member of the assembly. This is a matter of grave and solemn import — a matter demanding the utmost vigilance and care on the part of all who are concerned in the good of souls and in the glory of God, as involved in the well-being and purity of His assembly as a whole, or of each individual member thereof.

It is important to see that, while the broad principles of leprosy and its cleansing apply, in a secondary sense, to any sinner, yet, in the scripture now before us, the matter is presented in connection with those who were God's recognised people. The person who is here seen as the subject of priestly examination, is a member of the assembly of God. It is well to apprehend this. God's assembly must be kept pure, because it is His dwelling-place. No leper can be allowed to remain within the hallowed precincts of Jehovah's habitation.

But, then, mark the care, the vigilance, the perfect patience, inculcated upon the priest, lest ought that was not leprosy might be treated as such, or lest ought that really was leprosy might be suffered to escape. Many things might appear "in the skin" — the place of manifestation" — like the plague of leprosy," which, upon patient, priestly investigation, would be found to be merely superficial. This was to be carefully attended to. Some blemish might make its appearance, upon the surface, which, though demanding the jealous care of the one who had to act for God, was not, in reality, defiling. And, yet, that which seemed but a superficial blemish might prove to be something deeper than the skin, something below the surface, something affecting the hidden springs of the constitution. All this claimed the most intense care on the part of the priest. (See ver. 2-11) Some slight neglect, some trifling oversight, might lead to disastrous consequences. It might lead to the defilement of the assembly, by the presence of a confirmed leper, or to the expulsion, for some superficial blemish, of a genuine member of the Israel of God.

Now, there is a rich fund of instruction in all this for the people of God. There is a difference between personal infirmity and the positive energy of evil — between mere defects and blemishes in the outward character, and the activity of sin in the members. No doubt, it is important to watch against our infirmities; for, if not watched, judged, and guarded against, they may become the source of positive evil. (See ver. 14-25) Everything of nature must be judged and kept down. We must not make any allowance for personal infirmity, *in ourselves*, though we should make ample allowance for it *in others*. Take, for example, the matter of an irritable temper. I should judge it in myself; I should make

allowance for it in another. It may, like "the burning boil," in the case of an Israelite, (ver. 19, 20,) prove the source of real defilement — the ground of exclusion from the assembly. Every form of weakness must be watched, lest it become an occasion of sin. "A bald forehead" was not leprosy, but it was that in which leprosy might appear, and, hence, it had to be watched. There may be a hundred things which are not, in themselves, sinful, but which may become the occasion of sin, if not diligently looked after. Nor is it merely a question of what, in our estimation, may be termed Blots, blemishes, and personal infirmities, but even of what our hearts might feel disposed to boast of. Wit, humour, vivacity of spirit and temper; all these may become the source and centre of defilement. Each one has something to guard against — something to keep him ever upon the watch-tower. How happy it is that we have a Father's heart to come to and count on, with respect to all such things We have the precious privilege of coming, at all times, into the presence of unrebuking, unupbraiding love, there to tell out all, and obtain grace to help in all, and full victory over all. We need not be discouraged, so long as we see such a motto inscribed on the door of our Father's treasury, "He giveth more grace." Precious motto! It has no limit. It is bottomless and boundless.

We shall now proceed to inquire what was done in every case in which the plague of leprosy was unquestionably and unmistakably defined. The God of Israel could bear with infirmity, blemish, and failure; but the moment it became a case of defilement, whether in the head, the beard, the forehead, or any other part, it could not be tolerated in the holy assembly. "The leper, in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." (Ver. 45, 46) Here was the leper's condition — the leper's occupation — the leper's place. With rent garments, bare head, and covered lip; crying, Unclean, unclean; and dwelling outside, in the dreary solitude, the dismal desert waste. What could be more humiliating, what more depressing than this? "He shall dwell alone." He was unfit for communion or companionship. He was excluded from the only spot, in all the world, in which Jehovah's presence was known or enjoyed.

Reader, behold, in the poor, solitary leper, a vivid type of one in whom sin is working. This is really what it means. It is not, as we shall see presently, a helpless, ruined, guilty, convicted sinner, whose guilt and misery have come thoroughly out, and who is, therefore, a fit subject for the love of God, and the blood of Christ. No; we see in the excluded leper, one in whom sin is actually working — one in whom there is the positive energy of evil. this is what defiles and shuts out from the enjoyment of the divine presence and the communion of saints. So long as sin is working, there can be no fellowship with God, or with His people. "He shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." How long? "All the days wherein the *plague* shall be *in* him." This is a great practical truth. The energy of evil is the death-blow to communion. There may be the outward appearance, the mere form, the hollow profession; but communion there can be none, so long as the energy of evil is there. It matters not what the character or amount of the evil may be, if it were but the weight of a feather, if it were but some foolish thought, so long as it continues to work, it must hinder communion, it must cause a suspension of fellowship. It is when it rises to a head, when it comes to the surface, when it is brought thoroughly out, that it can be perfectly met and put away by the grace of God and by the blood of the Lamb.

This leads us to a deeply-interesting point in connection with the leper — a point which must prove a complete paradox to all save those who understand God's mode of dealing with sinners. "And if a leprosy break; out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague, from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh; then the priest shall consider; and,

behold, if the leprosy be covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean." (Lev. 13: 12, 13) The moment a sinner is in his true place before God, the whole question is settled. Directly his real character is fully brought out, there is no further difficulty. He may have to pass through much painful exercise, ere he reaches this point — exercise consequent upon his refusal to take his true place — to bring out "all the truth," with respect to what he is; but the moment he is brought to say, from his heart, "*just as I am*," the free grace of God flows down to him. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." (Ps. 32: 3, 4) How long did this painful exercise continue? Until the whole truth was brought out — until all that which was working inwardly came fully to the surface. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Ver. 5)

It is deeply interesting to mark the progress of the Lord's dealing with the leprous man, from the moment that the suspicion is raised, by certain features in the place of manifestation, until the disease covers the whole man, "from the crown of the head unto the sole of the foot." There was no haste, and no indifference. God ever enters the place of judgement with a slow and measured pace; but when He does enter, He must act according to the claims of His nature. He can patiently investigate. He can wait for "seven days;" and should there be the slightest variation in the symptoms, He can wait for "seven days more;" but, the moment it is found to be the positive working of leprosy, there can be no toleration. "Without the camp shall his habitation be." How long? Until the disease comes fully to the surface. "If the leprosy have covered *all* his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean." This is a most precious and interesting point. The very smallest speck of leprosy was intolerable to God; and yet, when the whole man was covered, from head to foot, he was pronounced clean — that is, he was a proper subject for the grace of God and the blood of atonement.

Thus is it, in every case, with the sinner. God is "Of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity;" (Hab. 1: 13;) and yet, the moment a sinner takes his true place, as one thoroughly lost guilty, and undone — as one in whom there is not so much as a single point on which the eye of Infinite Holiness can rest with complacency — as one who is so bad, that he cannot, possibly, be worse, there is an immediate, a perfect, a divine settlement of the entire matter. The grace of God deals with sinners; and when I know myself to be a sinner, I know myself to be one whom Christ came to save. The more clearly any one can prove me to be a sinner, the more clearly he establishes my title to the love of God, and the work of Christ. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3: 18) Now, if I am "unjust;" I am one of those very people for whom Christ died, and I am entitled to all the benefits of His death. "There is not a just man upon earth;" and, inasmuch as I am "Upon earth," it is plain that I am "unjust;" and it is equally plain that Christ died for me — that he suffered for my sins. Since, therefore, Christ died for me, it is my happy privilege to enter into the immediate enjoyment of the fruits of His sacrifice. This is as plain as plainness itself. It demands no effort whatsoever. I am not called to be anything but just what I am. I am not called to feel, to experience, to realise anything. The word of God assures me that Christ died for me just as I am; and if He died for me I am as safe as He is Himself. There is nothing against me. Christ met all. He not only suffered for my "*sins*," but He "*made an end of sin*." He abolished the entire system in which, as a child of the first Adam, I stood, and He has introduced me into a new position, in association with Himself, and there I stand, before God, free from all charge of sin, and all fear of judgement.

Just as I am — without one plea,

But that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bidst me come to thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come!

How do I know that His blood was shed for me? By the Scriptures. Blessed, solid, eternal ground of knowledge! Christ suffered for sins. I have gotten sins. Christ died "the just for the unjust." I am unjust. Wherefore, the death of Christ appropriates itself to me, as fully, as immediately, and as divinely, as though I were the only sinner upon earth. It is not a question of my appropriation, realisation, or experience. Many souls harass themselves about this. How often has one heard such language as the following, "Oh! I believe that Christ died for sinners, but I cannot *realise* that my sins are forgiven. I cannot apply, I cannot appropriate, I do not experience the benefit of Christ's death." All this is self and not Christ. It is feeling and not Scripture. If we search from cover to cover of the blessed volume, we shall not find a syllable about being saved by realisation, experience, or appropriation. The Gospel applies itself to all who are on the ground of being lost. Christ died for sinners. That is just what I am. Wherefore, He died for me. How do I know this? Is it because I feel it? By no means. How then? By the word of God. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; he was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15: 3, 4) Thus it is all "according to the Scriptures." If it were according to our feelings, we should be in a deplorable way, for our feelings are hardly the same for the length of a day; but the scriptures are ever the same. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name

No doubt, it is a very happy thing to realise. to feel, and to experience; but, if we put these things in the place of Christ, we shall neither have them nor the Christ that yields them. If I am occupied with Christ, I shall realise; but if I put my realisation in place of Christ, I shall have neither the one nor the other. This is the sad condition of thousands. Instead of resting on the stable authority of "the Scriptures," they are ever looking into their own hearts, and, hence, they are always uncertain and, as a consequence, always unhappy. A condition of doubt is a condition of torture. But how can I get rid of my doubt? Simply by relying on the divine authority of "the Scriptures." Of what do the Scriptures testify? Of Christ. (John 5) They declare that Christ died for our sins, and that He was raised again for our justification. (Rom. 4) This settles everything. The self-same authority that tells me I am unjust, tells me also that Christ died for me. Nothing can be plainer than this. If I were ought else than unjust, the death of Christ could not be for me at all, but being unjust, it is divinely fitted, divinely intended, and divinely applied to me. If I am occupied with anything in, of, or about myself, it is plain I have not entered into the full spiritual application of Lev. 13: 12, 13. I have not come to the Lamb of God, "*just as I am.*" It is when the leper is covered from head to foot that he is on the true ground. It is there and there alone that grace can meet him. "Then the priest shall consider; and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean." Precious truth! "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." So long as I think there is a single spot which is not covered with the direful disease, I have not come to, the end of myself. It is when my true condition is fully disclosed to my view, that I really understand the meaning of salvation by grace.

The force of all this will be more fully apprehended when we come to consider the ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper, in Lev. 14. We shall, now, briefly enter upon the question of leprosy in a garment, as presented in Lev. 13: 47-59.

2. The garment or skin suggests to the mind the ideo of a man's circumstances or habits. This is a deeply practical point. We are to watch against the working of evil in our ways just as carefully as

against evil in ourselves. The same patient investigation is observable with respect to, a garment as in the case of a person. There is no haste; neither is there any indifference. "The priest shall look upon the plague, and shut up it that hath the plague seven days." There must be no indifference, no indolence, no carelessness. Evil may creep into our habits and circumstances, in numberless ways; and, hence, the moment we perceive ought of a suspicious nature, it must be submitted to a calm, patient process of priestly investigation. It must be "shut up seven days," in order that it may have full time to develop itself perfectly.

"And he shall look on the plague on the seventh day: if the plague be spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in a skin, or in any work that is made of skin, the plague is a fretting leprosy; it is unclean. He shall therefore burn that garment." The wrong habit must be given up, the moment I discover it. If I find myself in a thoroughly wrong position, I must abandon it. The burning of the garment expresses the act of judgement upon evil, whether in a man's habits or circumstances. There must be no trifling with evil. In certain cases the garment was to be "washed," which expresses the action of the Word of God upon a man's habits. "Then the priest shall command that they wash the thing wherein the plague is, and he shall shut it up *seven days more*." There is to be patient waiting in order to ascertain the effect of the Word. "And the priest shall look on the plague, after that it is washed; and, behold, if the plague have not changed . . . thou shalt burn it in the fire." When there is any thing radically and irremediably bad in one's position or habits, the whole thing is to be given up. "And if the priest look, and, behold, the plague be somewhat dark: after the washing of it; then he shall rend it out of the garment." The Word may produce such an effect as that the wrong features in a man's character, or the wrong points in his position, shall be given up, and the evil be got rid of; but if the evil continue, after all, the whole thing must be condemned and set aside.

There is a rich mine of practical instruction in all this. We must look well to the position which we occupy, the circumstances in which we stand, the habits we adopt, the character we wear. There is special need of watchfulness. Every suspicious symptom and trait must be sedulously guarded, lest it should prove, in the sequel, to be "a fretting" or "spreading leprosy," whereby we ourselves and many others may be defiled. We may be placed in a position attached to which there are certain wrong things which can be given up, without entirely abandoning the position; and, on the other hand, we may find ourselves in a situation in which it is impossible to "abide with God." Where the eye is single, the path will be plain. Where the one desire of the heart is to enjoy the divine presence, we shall easily discover those things which tend to deprive us of that unspeakable blessing.

May our hearts be tender and sensitive. May we cultivate a deeper, closer walk with God; and may we carefully guard against every form of defilement, whether in person, in habit, or in association!

We shall, now, proceed to consider the beautiful and significant ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper, in which we shall find some of the most precious truths of the gospel presented to us.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: he shall be brought unto the priest: and the priest shall go forth out of the camp." (Lev. 14: 1-3) We have already seen the place which the leper occupied. He was outside the camp, in the place of moral distance from God — from His sanctuary and His assembly. Moreover, he dwelt in dreary solitude, in a condition of uncleanness. He was beyond the reach of human aid; and, as for himself, he could only communicate defilement to every one and every thing he touched. It was, therefore, obviously impossible that he could do ought to cleanse himself. If, indeed, he could only defile by his very touch, how could he possibly cleanse himself? How could he contribute towards, or co-operate in,

his cleansing? Impossible. As an unclean leper, he could not do so much as a single thing for himself; *all* had to be done *for* him. He could not make his way to God, but God could make His way to him. He was shut up to God. There was no help for him, either in himself or in his fellow-man. It is clear that one leper could not cleanse another; and it is equally clear that if a leper touched a clean person he rendered him unclean. His *only* resource was in God. He was to be a debtor to grace for everything.

Hence we read, "The priest shall go forth out of the camp. It is not said, "the leper shall go." this was wholly out of the question. It was of no use talking to the leper about going or doing. He was consigned to dreary solitude; whither could he go? He was involved in helpless defilement; what could he do? He might long for fellowship and long to be clean; but his longings were those of a lonely helpless leper. He might make efforts after cleansing; but his efforts could but prove him unclean, and tend to spread defilement. Before ever he could be pronounced "clean," a work; had to be wrought for him — a work which he could neither do nor help to do — a work which had to be wholly accomplished by another. The leper was called to "stand still," and behold the priest doing a work in virtue of which the leprosy could be perfectly cleansed. The priest accomplished *all*. The leper did *nothing*.

"Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds, alive and clean, and cedarwood, and scarlet, and hyssop. and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water." In the priest going forth from the camp — forth from God's dwelling place — we behold the blessed Lord Jesus coming down from the bosom of the Father, His eternal dwelling-place, into this polluted world of ours, where He beheld us sunk in the polluting leprosy of sin. He, like the good Samaritan, "came where we were." He did not come half-way, merely. He did not come nine-tenths of the way. He came all the way. This was indispensable. He could not, consistently with the holy claims of the throne of God, have bidden our leprosy to depart had He remained in the bosom. He could call worlds into existence by the word of His mouth; but when leprous sinners had to be cleansed, something more was needed. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." When worlds were to be framed, God had but to speak, When sinners had to be saved, He had to give His Son. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4: 9, 10)

But there was far more to be accomplished than the mission and incarnation of the Son. It would have availed the leper but little indeed, had the priest merely gone forth from the camp and looked upon his low and forlorn condition. Blood shedding was essentially necessary ere leprosy could be removed. The death of a spotless victim was needed. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22) And, be it observed, that the shedding of blood was the real basis of the leper's cleansing. It was not a mere circumstance which, in conjunction with others, contributed to the leper's cleansing. By no means. the giving up of the life was the grand and all-important fact. when this was accomplished the way was open; every barrier was removed; God could deal in perfect grace with the leper. this point should be distinctly laid hold of, if my reader would fully enter into the glorious doctrine of the blood.

"And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water." Here we have the acknowledged type of the death of Christ, "who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." "He was crucified in weakness." (Heb. 9; 2 Cor. 13) The greatest, the mightiest, the most glorious, the most momentous work that ever was accomplished, throughout the wide universe of God, was wrought "in weakness." Oh! my reader, how terrible a thing must sin be, in the judgement of God, when His own beloved Son had to come down from heaven, and hang upon

yonder cursed tree, a spectacle to men, to angels, and to devils, in order that you and I might be forgiven! And what a type of sin have we in leprosy! Who would have thought that that little "bright spot" appearing on the person of some member of the congregation was a matter of such grave consequence? But, ah! that little "bright spot" was nothing less than the energy of evil, in the place of manifestation. It was the index of the dreadful working of sin in the nature; and ere that person could be fitted for a place in the assembly, or for the enjoyment of communion with a holy God, the Son of God had to leave those bright heavens, and descend into the lowest parts of the earth, in order to make a full atonement for that which exhibited itself merely in the form of a little "bright spot." Let us remember this. Sin is a dreadful thing in the estimation of God. He cannot tolerate so much as a single sinful thought. Before one such thought could be forgiven, Christ had to die upon the cross. The most trifling sin, if any sin can be called trifling, demanded nothing less than the death of God's Eternal and Co-equal Son. But, eternal praise be to God, what sin demanded, redeeming love freely gave; and now God is infinitely more glorified in the forgiveness of sins than He could have been had Adam maintained his original innocency. God is more glorified in the salvation, the pardon, the justification, the preservation, and final glorification of guilty man, than He could have been in maintaining an innocent man in the enjoyment of creation blessings. Such is the precious mystery of redemption. May our hearts enter, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into the living and profound depths of this wondrous mystery!

"As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field." The blood being shed, the priest can enter directly and fully upon his work. Up to this, we read, "the priest shall command;" but now he acts immediately himself. The death of Christ is the basis of His priestly ministration. Having entered with His own blood into the holy place, He acts as our Great High Priest, applying to our souls all the precious results of His atoning work, and maintaining us in the full and divine integrity of the position into which His sacrifice has introduced us. "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth he should not be a priest." (Heb. 8: 3, 4)

We could hardly have a more perfect type of the resurrection of Christ than that presented in "the living bird let loose into the open field." It was not let go until after the death of its companion; for the two birds typify one Christ, in two stages of His blessed work, namely, death and resurrection. Ten thousand birds let loose would not have availed for the leper. It was that living bird, mounting upward into the open heavens, bearing upon his wing that significant token of accomplished atonement — it was that which told out the great fact that the work was done — the ground cleared, the foundation laid. Thus is it in reference to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. His resurrection declares the glorious triumph of redemption. "He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." "He was raised again for our justification." It is this that sets the burdened heart free, and liberates the struggling conscience. The scripture assures me that Jesus was nailed to the cross under the weight of my sins; but the same Scriptures assure me that He rose from the grave without one of those sins upon Him. Nor is this all. The same Scriptures assure me that all who put their trust in Jesus are as free from all charge of guilt as He is; that there is no more wrath or condemnation for them than for Him; that they are in Him, one with Him, accepted in Him; co-quickened, co-raised, co-seated with Him. Such is the peace giving testimony of the Scriptures of truth — such, the record of God who cannot lie. (See Rom. 6: 6-11; Rom. 8: 1-4; 2 Cor, 5: 21; Eph. 2: 5, 6; Col. 2: 10-15, 1 John 4: 17)

But we have another most important truth set before us in ver 6 of our chapter. We not only see our full deliverance from guilt and condemnation, as beautifully exhibited in the living bird let loose, but we see also our entire deliverance from all the attractions of earth and all the influences of nature. "The scarlet" would be the apt expression of the former, while "the cedar wood and hyssop" would set forth the latter. The cross is the end of all this world's glory. God presents it as such, and the believer recognises it as such. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6: 14)

Then, as to the "cedar wood and hyssop," they present to us, as it were, the two extremes of nature's wide range. Solomon "spoke of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." (1 Kings 4: 33) From the lofty cedar which crowns the sides of Lebanon, down to the lowly hyssop — the wide extremes and all that lies between — nature, in all its departments, is brought under the power of the cross; so that the believer sees, in the death of Christ, the end of all his guilt, the end of all earth's glory, and the end of the whole system of nature — the entire old creation. And with what is he to be occupied? With Him who is the Antitype of that living bird, with blood-stained feathers, ascending into the open heavens. Precious, glorious, soul-satisfying object! A risen, ascended, triumphant, glorified Christ, who has passed into the heavens, bearing in His sacred Person the marks of an accomplished atonement. It is with Him we have to do. We are shut up to Him. He is God's exclusive object. He is the centre of heaven's joy, the theme of angels' song. We want none of earth's glory, none of nature's attractions. We can behold them all, together with our sin and guilt, for ever set aside by the death of Christ. We can well afford to dispense with earth and nature, inasmuch as we have gotten, instead thereof "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

"And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the bird loose into the open field." The more deeply we ponder over the contents of Lev. 13 the more clearly we shall see how utterly impossible it was for the leper to do ought towards his own cleansing. All he could do was to "put a covering upon his upper lip;" and all he could say was, "Unclean, unclean." It belonged to God, and to Him alone, to devise and accomplish a work whereby the leprosy could be perfectly cleansed; and, further, it belonged to God, and to Him alone, to pronounce the leper "clean." Hence it is written, "the priest shall sprinkle;" and "he shall pronounce him clean." It is not said, "the leper shall sprinkle, and pronounce, or imagine himself, clean." This would never do. God was the Judge — God was the Healer — God was the Cleanser. He alone knew what leprosy was, how it could be put away, and when to pronounce the leper clean. The leper might have gone on all his days covered with leprosy, and yet be wholly ignorant of what was wrong with him. It was the word of God — the Scriptures of truth — the divine Record, that declared the full truth as to leprosy; and nothing short of the self-same authority could pronounce the leper clean, and that, moreover, only, on the solid and indisputable ground of death and resurrection. There is the most precious connection between the three things in verse 7: the blood is sprinkled, the leper pronounced clean, and the living bird let loose. There is not so much as a single syllable about what the leper was to do, to say, to think, or to feel. It was enough that he was a leper; a fully revealed, a thoroughly judged leper, covered from head to foot. this sufficed for him; all the rest pertained to God.

It is of all importance, for the anxious inquirer after peace, to enter into the truth unfolded in this branch of our subject. So many are tried by the question of *feeling, realising, and appropriating*, instead of seeing, as in the leper's case, that the sprinkling of the blood was as independent and as divine as the shedding of it. It is not said, "The leper shall apply, appropriate, or realise, and then he shall be clean." By no means. The plan of deliverance was divine; the provision of the sacrifice was divine; the shedding of the blood was divine; the sprinkling of the blood as divine; the record as to the

result was divine: in short, it was all divine.

It is not that we should undervalue realisation, or, to speak more correctly, communion, through the Holy Ghost, with all the precious results of Christ's work for us. Far from it: we shall see, presently, the place assigned thereto, in the divine economy. But then, we are no more saved by realisation, than the leper was cleansed by it. The gospel, by which we are saved, is that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." There is nothing about realisation here. No doubt, it is happy to realise. It is a very happy thing for one, who was just on the point of being drowned, to realise himself in a life-boat; but, clearly, he is saved by the boat and not by his realisation. So it is with the sinner that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is saved by death and resurrection. Is it because he realises it? No; but because God says it. It is "according to the Scriptures." Christ died and rose again; and, on that ground, God pronounces him clean.

"No condemnation, O, my soul!

*'Tis God that speaks the word...*

This gives immense peace to the soul. I have to do with God's plain record, which nothing can ever shake. That record has reference to God's own work. It is He Himself, who has wrought all that was needful, in order to my being pronounced clean in His sight. My pardon no more depends upon my realisation than upon any "works of righteousness that I have done;" and it no more depends upon my works of righteousness than it does upon my crimes. In a word, it depends, exclusively, upon the death and resurrection of Christ. How do I know it? God tells me. It is "according to the scriptures."

There are, perhaps, few things which disclose the deep-seated legality of our hearts, more strikingly, than this oft-raised question of realisation. We *will* have in something of self, and thus so sadly mar our peace and liberty in Christ. It is mainly because of this that I dwell, at such length, upon the beautiful ordinance of The cleansing of the leper, and especially on the truth unfolded in Lev. 14: 7. It was the priest that sprinkled the blood; and it was the priest that pronounced the leper clean. Thus it is in the case of the sinner. The moment he is on his true ground, the blood of Christ and the word of God apply themselves without any further question or difficulty whatever. But the moment this harassing question of realisation is raised, the peace is disturbed, the heart depressed, and the mind bewildered. the more thoroughly I get done with self, and become occupied with Christ, as presented in "the Scriptures," the more settled my peace will be. If the leper had looked at himself, when the priest pronounced him clean, would he have found any basis for the declaration? Surely not. The sprinkled blood was the basis of the divine record, and not anything in, or connected with, the leper. The leper was not asked how he felt, or what he thought. He was not questioned as to whether he had a deep sense of the vileness of his disease. He was an acknowledged leper; that was enough. It was for such an one the blood was shed; and that blood made him clean. How did he know this? Was it because he felt it? No; but because the priest, on God's behalf, and by His authority told him so. The leper was pronounced clean on the very same ground that the living bird was let loose. The same blood which stained the feathers of that living bird was sprinkled upon the leper. This was a perfect settlement of the whole affair, and that, too, in a manner entirely independent of the leper, the leper's thoughts, his feelings, and his realisation. Such is the type. had when we look from the type to the Antitype, we see that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ entered heaven, and laid on the throne of God the eternal record of an accomplished work, in virtue of which the believer enters also. This is a most glorious truth, divinely calculated to dispel from the heart of the anxious inquirer every doubt, every fear, every bewildering thought, and every harassing question. A risen Christ is God's exclusive object, and He

sees every believer in Him. May every awakened soul find abiding repose in this emancipating truth.

"And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days." (Ver. 8) The leper, being pronounced clean, can begin to do what he could not even have attempted to do before, namely, to cleanse himself, cleanse his habits, shave off all his hair; and, having done so, he is privileged to take his place in the camp — the place of ostensible, recognised, public relationship with the God of Israel, whose presence in that camp it was which rendered the expulsion of the leper needful. The blood having been applied in its expiating virtue, there is the washing of water, which expresses the action of the word on the character, the habits, the ways, so as to render the person, not only in God's view, but also in the view of the congregation, morally and practically fit for a place in the public assembly.

But, be it observed, the man, though sprinkled with blood and washed with water, and thus entitled to a position in the public assembly, was not permitted to enter his own tent. He was not permitted to enter upon the full enjoyment of those private, personal privileges, which belonged to his own peculiar place in the camp. In other words, though knowing redemption through the shed and sprinkled blood, and owning the word as the rule, according to which his person and all his habits should be cleansed and regulated, he had yet to be brought, in the power of the Spirit, into full, intelligent communion with his own special place, portion, and privileges in Christ.

I speak according to the doctrine of the type; and I feel it to be of importance to apprehend the truth unfolded therein. It is too often overlooked. There are many, who own the blood of Christ as the alone ground of pardon, and the word of God as that whereby alone their habits, ways, and associations are to be cleansed and ordered, who, nevertheless, are far from entering, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into communion with the preciousness and excellency of that One, Whose blood has put away their sins, and whose word is to cleanse their practical habits. They are in the place of ostensible and actual relationship; but not in the power of personal communion. It is perfectly true, that all believers are in Christ, and, as such, entitled to communion with the very highest truths. Moreover, they have the Holy Ghost, as the power of communion. All this is divinely true; but, then, there is not that entire setting aside of all that pertains to nature, which is really essential to the power of communion with Christ, in all the aspects of His character and work. In point of fact, this latter will not be fully known to any until "the eighth day" — the day of resurrection-glory, when we shall know even as we are known. Then, indeed, each one for himself, and all together, shall enter into the full, unhindered Power of communion with Christ, in all the precious phases of His Person, and features of His character, unfolded from verse 10 to 20 of our chapter. Such is the hope set before us; but, even now, in proportion as we enter, by faith, through the mighty energy of the indwelling Spirit, into the death of nature and all pertaining thereto, we can feed upon and rejoice in Christ as the portion of our souls, in the place of individual communion.

"But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head, and his beard, and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean." (Ver. 9.) Now, it is clear, that the leper was just as clean, in God's judgement, on the first day, when the blood was sprinkled upon him, in its sevenfold or perfect efficacy, as he was on the seventh day. Wherein, then, was the difference? Not in his actual standing and condition, but in his personal intelligence and communion. On the seventh day, he was called to enter into the full and complete abolition of all that pertained to nature. He was called to apprehend that, not merely was nature's leprosy to be put away, but nature's ornaments — yea, all that was natural — all that belonged to the old condition.

It is one thing to know, as a doctrine, that God sees my nature to be dead, and it is quite another thing for me to "reckon" myself as dead — to put off, practically, the old man and his deeds — to mortify my members which are on the earth. This, probably, is what many godly persons mean when they speak of progressive sanctification. They mean a right thing, though they do not put it exactly as the Scriptures do. The leper was pronounced clean, the moment the blood was sprinkled upon Him; and yet he had to cleanse himself. How was this? In the former case, he was clean, in the judgement of God; in the latter, he was to be clean practically, in his own personal intelligence, and in his manifested character. Thus it is with the believer. He is, as one with Christ, "washed, sanctified, and justified" — "accepted" — "complete." (1 Cor. 6: 11; Eph. 1: 6; Col 2: 10) Such is his unalterable standing and condition before God. He is as perfectly sanctified as he is justified, for Christ is the measure of both the one and the other, according to God's judgement and view of the case. But, then, the believer's apprehension of all this, in his own soul, and his exhibition thereof in his habits and ways, open up quite another line of things. Hence it is we read, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us *cleanse ourselves* from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7: 1) It is because Christ has cleansed us by His precious blood that therefore we are called to "cleanse ourselves" by the application of the word, through the Spirit. "This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness. because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." (1 John 5: 6-8) Here we have atonement by the blood, cleansing by the word, and power by the Spirit, all founded upon the death of Christ, and all vividly foreshadowed in the ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper.

"And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the Lord." (Ver. 10-12) The entire range of offerings is here introduced; but it is the trespass offering which is first killed, inasmuch as the leper is viewed as an actual trespasser. This is true in every case. As those, who have trespassed against God, we need Christ as the one who atoned, on the cross, for those trespasses. "Himself bare our *sins* in his own body on the tree." The first view which the sinner gets of Christ is as the Antitype of the trespass offering.

"And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot." "The ear" — that guilty member which had so frequently proved a channel of communication for vanity, folly, and even uncleanness — that ear must be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering. Thus all the guilt, which I have ever contracted by that member, is forgiven according to God's estimate of the blood of Christ. "*The right hand*," which had, so frequently, been stretched forth for the execution of deeds of vanity, folly, and even uncleanness, must be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering. Thus all the guilt, which I have ever contracted by that member, is forgiven, according to God's estimate of the blood of Christ. "*The foot*," which had so often run in the way of vanity, folly, and even uncleanness, must now be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering, so that all the guilt, which I have ever contracted by that member, is forgiven, according to God's estimate of the blood of Christ. Yes; *all, all, all* is forgiven — all is cancelled — all forgotten — all sunk as lead in the mighty waters of eternal oblivion. Who shall bring it up again? Shall angel, man, or devil, be able to plunge into those unfathomed and unfathomable waters, to bring up from thence those trespasses of "foot," "hand," or "ear," which redeeming love has cast thereinto? Oh! no; blessed be

God, they are gone, and gone for ever. I am better off, by far, than if Adam had never sinned. Precious truth! To be washed in the blood is better far than to be clothed in innocency.

But God could not rest satisfied with the mere blotting out of trespasses, by the atoning blood of Jesus. This, in itself, is a great thing; but there is something greater still.

"And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand: and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord. And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering; and the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand, he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord." (Ver. 15-18) Thus, not only are our members cleansed by the blood of Christ, but also consecrated to God, in the power of the Spirit. God's work is not only negative, but positive. The ear is no longer to be the vehicle for communicating defilement, but to be "swift to hear" the voice of the Good Shepherd. The hand is no longer to be used as the instrument of unrighteousness, but to be stretched forth in acts of righteousness, grace, and true holiness. The foot is no longer to tread in folly's paths, but to run in the way of God's holy commandments. And, finally, the whole man is to be dedicated to God in the energy of the Holy Ghost.

It is deeply interesting to see that "the oil" was put upon the blood of the trespass offering." The blood of Christ is the divine basis of the operations of the Holy Ghost. The blood and the oil go together. As sinners we could know nothing of the latter save on the ground of the former. The oil could not have been put upon the leper until the blood of the trespass offering had first been applied. "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise." The divine accuracy of the type evokes the acclamation of the renewed mind. The more closely we scrutinise it — the more of the light of Scripture we concentrate upon it — the more its beauty, force, and precision, are perceived and enjoyed. All, as might justly be expected, is in the most lovely harmony with the entire analogy of the word of God. There is no need for any effort of the mind. Take Christ as the key to unlock the rich treasury of the types; explore the precious contents by the light of Inspiration's heavenly lamp; let the Holy Ghost be your interpreter; and you cannot fail to be edified, enlightened, and blessed.

"And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness." Here we have a type of Christ, not only as the bearer of our trespasses, but also as the One, who made an end of sin, root and branch; the One, who destroyed the entire system of sin — "The Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." "The propitiation for the whole world." As the trespass offering, Christ put away all my trespasses. As the sin offering, He met the great root from whence those trespasses emanated. He met all; but it is as the trespass offering I first know Him, because it is as such I first need Him. It is the "conscience of sins" that first troubles me. This is divinely met by my precious Trespass Offering. Then, as I get on, I find that all these sins had a root, a parent stem, and what root or stem I find within me. This, likewise, is divinely met by my precious Sin Offering. The order, as presented in the leper's case, is perfect. It is precisely the order which we can trace in the actual experience of every soul. The trespass offering comes first, and then the sin offering.

"And afterward he shall kill the burnt offering." This offering presents the highest possible aspect of the death of Christ. It is Christ offering Himself without spot to God, without special reference to either trespasses or sin. It is Christ in voluntary devotedness, walking to the cross, and there offering Himself as a sweet savour to God.

"And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean." (ver. 20.) The meat offering typifies "the man Christ Jesus" in His perfect human life. It is intimately associated, in the case of the cleansed leper, with the burnt offering; and so it is in the experience of every saved sinner. It is when we know our *trespasses* are forgiven, and the root or principle of *sin* judged, that we can, according to our measure, by the power of the Spirit, enjoy communion with God about that blessed One, who lived a perfect human life, down here, and then offered Himself without spot to God on the cross. Thus, the four classes of offerings are brought before us in their divine order, in the cleansing of the leper — namely, the trespass offering, the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the meet offering, each exhibiting its own specific aspect of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

Here closes the record of the Lord's dealings with the leprous man; and, oh! what a marvellous record it is! What an unfolding of the exceeding hatefulness of sin, the grace and holiness of God, the preciousness of Christ's Person, and the efficacy of His work! Nothing can be more interesting than to mark the footprints of divine grace forth from the hallowed precincts of the sanctuary, to the defiled place where the leper stood, with bare head, covered lip, and rent garments. God visited the leper where he was; but He did not leave him there. He went forth prepared to accomplish a work, in virtue of which he could bring the leper into a higher place, and higher communion than ever he had known before. On the ground of this work, the leper was conducted from his Place of defilement and loneliness to the very door of the tabernacle of the congregation, the priestly place, to enjoy priestly privileges. (Comp. Ex. 29: 20, 21, 32) How could he ever have climbed to such an elevation! Impossible For ought he could do, he might have languished and died in his leprosy, had not the sovereign grace of the God of Israel stooped to lift him from the dunghill, to set him among the princes of His people. If ever there was a case in which the question of human effort, human merit, and human righteousness, could be fully tried and perfectly settled, the leper is, unquestionably, that case. Indeed it were a sad loss of time to discuss such a question in the presence of such a case. It must be obvious, to the most cursory reader, that nought but free grace, reigning through righteousness, could meet the leper's condition and the leper's need. And how gloriously and triumphantly did that grace act! It travelled down into the deepest depths, that it might raise the leper to the loftiest heights. See what the leper lost, and see what he gained! He lost all that pertained to nature, and he gained the blood of atonement and the grace of the Spirit. I mean typically. Truly, he was a gainer, to an incalculable amount. He was infinitely better off than if he had never been thrust forth from the camp. Such is the grace of God! Such the power And value, the virtue and efficacy, of the blood of Jesus!

How forcibly does all this remind us of the prodigal, in Luke 15! In him, too, leprosy had wrought and risen to a head. He had been afar off in the defiled place, where his own sins and the intense selfishness of the far country had created a solitude around him. But, blessed for ever be a Father's deep and tender love, we know how it ended. The prodigal found a higher place, and tasted higher communion than ever he had known before. "The fatted calf" had never been slain for him before. "The best robe" had never been on him before. And how was this? Was it a question of the prodigal's merit? Oh! no; it was simply a question of the Father's love.

Dear reader, let me ask, can you ponder over the record of God's dealings with the leper, in Leviticus 14, or the Father's dealings with the prodigal, in Luke 15, and not have an enlarged sense of the love that dwells in the bosom of God, that flows through the Person and work of Christ, that is recorded in the Scriptures of truth, and brought home to the heart by the Holy Ghost? Lord grant us a deeper and more abiding fellowship with Himself!

From verse 21 to 32 we have "the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not

able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing." This refers to the sacrifices of "the eighth day," and not to the "two birds alive and clean." These latter could not be dispensed with in any case, because they set forth the death and resurrection of Christ as the alone ground on which God can receive a sinner back to Himself. On the other hand, the sacrifices of "the eighth day," being connected with the soul's communion, must, in some degree, be affected by the measure of the soul's apprehension. But, whatever that measure may be, the grace of God can meet it with those peculiarly touching words, "*such as he is able to get.*" And, not only so, but "the two turtle doves" conferred the same privileges on the "poor," as the two lambs conferred upon the rich, inasmuch as both the one and the other pointed to "the precious blood of Christ," which is of infinite, changeless, and eternal efficacy in the judgement of God. All stand before God on the ground of death and resurrection. All are brought into the same place of nearness; but all do not enjoy the same measure of communion — all have not the same measure of apprehension of the preciousness of Christ in all the aspects of His work. They might, if they would; but they allow themselves to be hindered, in various ways. Earth and nature, with their respective influences, act prejudicially; The Spirit is grieved, and Christ is not enjoyed as He might be. It is utterly vain to expect that, if we are living in the region of nature, we can be feeding upon Christ. No; there must be self emptiness, self-denial, self-judgement, if we would habitually feed upon Christ. It is not a question of salvation. It is not a question of the leper introduced into the camp — the place of recognised relationship. By no means. It is only a question of the soul's communion, of its enjoyment of Christ. As to this, the largest measure lies open to us. We may have communion with the very highest truths; but, if our measure be small, the unupbraiding grace of our Father's heart breathes in the sweet words, "*such as he is able to get.*" The title of all is the same, however our capacity may vary; and, blessed be God, when we get into His presence, all the desires of the new nature, in their utmost intensity, are satisfied; all the powers of the new nature, in their fullest range, are occupied. May we prove these things in our souls' happy experience, day by day!

We shall close this section with a brief reference to the subject of leprosy in a house.

3. The reader will observe, that a case of leprosy, in a person, or in a garment, might occur in the wilderness; but, in the matter of a house, it was, of necessity, confined to the land of Canaan. "When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession, . . . .then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house. And he shall look on the plague; and, behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight are lower than the wall; then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days."

Looking at the house as the type of an assembly, we have some weighty principles presented to us as to the divine method of dealing with moral evil, or suspicion of evil, in a congregation. We observe the same holy calmness and perfect patience with respect to the house, as we have already seen, in reference to the person or the garment. There was no haste, and no indifference, either as regards the house, the garment, or the individual. The man who had an interest in the house was not to treat with indifference any suspicious symptoms appearing in the wall thereof; neither was he to pronounce judgement himself upon such symptoms. It belonged to the priest to investigate and to judge. The moment that ought of a questionable nature made its appearance, the priest assumed a judicial attitude with respect to the house. The house was under judgement, though not condemned. The perfect period was to be allowed to run its course, ere any decision could be arrived at. The symptoms might prove to be merely superficial, in which case there would be no demand for any action

whatever.

"And the priest shall *come again The seventh day*, and shall *look*: and, behold, if the plague be spread in the walls of the house, then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is, and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city." The whole house was not to be condemned. The removal of the leprous stones was first to be tried.

"And if the plague come again, and break out in the house, after that he hath taken away the stones, and after that he hath scraped the house, and after that it is plastered; then the priest shall come and look; and, behold, if the plague be spread in the house. it is a fretting leprosy in the house: it is unclean. And he shall break; down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place." The case was hopeless, the evil irremediable, the whole building was annihilated.

"Moreover, he that goeth into the house all the while that it is shut up shall be unclean until the even. And he that lieth in the house shall wash his clothes; and he that eateth in the house shall wash his clothes." This is a solemn truth. *Contact defiles!* Let us remember this. It was a principle largely inculcated under the Levitical economy; and, surely, it is not less applicable now.

"And if the priest shall come in, and look upon it, and, behold, the plague hath not spread in the house, after the house was plastered; then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed." The removal of the defiled stones, &c., had arrested the progress of the evil, and rendered all further judgement needless. The house was no longer to be viewed as in a judicial place; but, being cleansed by the application of the blood, it was again fit for occupation.

And, now, as to the moral of all this. It is, at once, interesting, solemn, and practical. Look, for example, at the church at Corinth. It was a spiritual house, composed of spiritual stones; but, alas! the eagle eye of the apostle discerned upon its walls certain symptoms of a most suspicious nature. Was he indifferent? Surely not. He had imbibed far too much of the spirit of the Master of the house to admit, for one moment, of any such thing. But he was no more hasty than indifferent. He commanded the leprous stone to be removed, and gave the house a thorough scraping. Having acted thus faithfully, he patiently awaited the result. And what was that result? All that the heart could desire. "Nevertheless, God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more . . . . . *In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*" (Comp. 1 Cor. 5 with 2 Cor. 7: 11) This is a lovely instance. The zealous care of the apostle was amply rewarded; the plague was stayed, and the assembly delivered from the defiling influence of unjudged moral evil.

Take another solemn example. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write: These things saith he that hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, Which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." (Rev. 2: 12-16.) Here the divine Priest stands in a judicial attitude with respect to His house at Pergamos. He could not be indifferent to symptoms so alarming; but He patiently and graciously gives time to repent. If reproof or warning, and discipline, prove unavailing, judgement must take its course.

These things are full of practical teaching as to the doctrine of the assembly. The seven churches of Asia afford various striking illustrations of the house under priestly judgement. We should ponder them deeply and prayerfully. They are of immense value. We should never sit down, at ease, so long as ought of a suspicious nature is making its appearance in the assembly. We may be tempted to say, "It is none of my business;" but it is the business of every one who loves the Master of the house to have a jealous, godly care, for the purity of that house; and if we shrink; from the due exercise of this care, it will not be for our honour or profit, in the day of the Lord.

I shall not pursue this subject any further in these pages and shall merely remark, in closing this section, that I do not doubt, in the least, that this whole subject of leprosy has a great dispensational bearing, not only upon the house of Israel, but also upon the professing church.