

Leviticus 15 - 27, Section 3.

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Leviticus 15

This chapter treats of a variety of ceremonial uncleannesses of a much less serious nature than leprosy. This latter would seem to be presented as the expression of the deep-seated energy of nature's evil; whereas, chap. 15 details a number of things which are merely unavoidable infirmities, but which, as being, in any measure the outflow of nature, were defiling, and needed the provisions of divine grace. The divine presence in the assembly demanded a high order of holiness and moral purity. Every movement of nature had to be counteracted. Even things which, so far as man was concerned, might seem to be unavoidable weaknesses, had a defiling influence, and required cleaning, because Jehovah was in the camp. Nothing offensive, nothing unsightly, nothing in any way uncomely, should be suffered within the pure, unsullied and sacred precincts of the presence of the God of Israel. The uncircumcised nations around would have understood nothing of such holy ordinances; but Jehovah would have Israel holy, because He was Israel's God. If they were to be privileged and distinguished by having the presence of a holy God, they would need to be a holy people.

Nothing can be more calculated to elicit the soul's admiration than the jealous care of Jehovah over all the habits and practices of His people. At home and abroad, asleep and awake, by day and by night, He guarded them. He attended to their food, He attended to their clothing, He attended to their most minute and private concerns. If some trifling spot appeared upon the person, it had to be instantly and carefully looked into. In a word, nothing was overlooked which could, in any wise, affect the well-being or purity of those with whom Jehovah had associated Himself, and in whose midst He dwelt. He took an interest in their most trivial affairs. He carefully attended to everything connected with them, whether publicly, socially, or privately.

This, to an uncircumcised person, would have proved an intolerable burden. For such an one to have a God of infinite holiness about his path, by day, and about his bed, by night, would have involved an amount of restraint beyond all power of endurance; but to a true lover of holiness, a lover of God, nothing; could be more delightful. Such an one rejoices in the sweet assurance that God is always near; and he delights in the holiness which is, at once, demanded and secured by the presence of God.

Reader, say, is it thus with you? Do you love the divine presence and the holiness which that presence demands? are you indulging in anything incompatible with the holiness of God's presence? Are your habits of thought, feeling, and action, such as comport with the purity and elevation of the sanctuary? remember, when you read this fifteenth chapter of Leviticus, that it was written for your learning. You are to read it in the Spirit, for to you it has a spiritual application. To read it in any other way is to wrest it to your own destruction, or, to use a ceremonial phrase, "to seethe a kid in its mother's milk."

Do you ask, "what am I to learn from such a section of Scripture? What is its application to me?" In the first place, let me ask, do you not admit that it was written for your learning? This, I imagine, you will not question, seeing the inspired apostle so expressly declare that, "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." (Rom. 15: 4) Many seem to forget this important statement, at least, in so far as the book of Leviticus is concerned. They cannot conceive it possible, that they are to learn ought from the rites and ceremonies of a by-gone age, and particularly from such

rites and ceremonies as the fifteenth of Leviticus records. But, when we remember, that God the Holy Ghost has written this very chapter — that every paragraph, every verse, every line of it "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," it should lead us to inquire what it means. Surely, what God has written His child should read. No doubt, there is need of spiritual power to know *how*, and spiritual wisdom to know *when*, to read such a chapter; but the same holds good with respect to any chapter. One thing is certain, if we were sufficiently spiritual, sufficiently heavenly, sufficiently abstracted from nature, and elevated above earth, we should deduce nought but purely spiritual principles and ideas from this and kindred chapters. If an angel from heaven were to read such sections, how should he regard them? Only in a spiritual and heavenly light; only as the depositories of the purest and highest morality. And why should not we do the same? I believe we are not aware of what positive contempt we pour upon the sacred Volume by suffering any portion of it to be so grossly neglected as the book of Leviticus has been. If this book ought not to be read, surely it ought not to have been written. If it be not "profitable," surely it ought not to have had a place assigned it in the canon of divine inspiration; but, inasmuch as it hath pleased "the only wise God" to write this book, it surely ought to please His children to read it.

No doubt, spiritual wisdom, holy discernment, and that refined moral sense, which only communion with God can impart — all these things would be needed in order to form a judgement as to when such scripture ought to be read. We should feel strongly disposed to question the sound judgement and refined taste of a man, who could stand up and read the fifteenth of Leviticus, in the midst of an ordinary congregation. But why? Is it because it is not "divinely inspired," and, as such, "profitable?" By no means; but because the generality of persons are not sufficiently spiritual to enter into its pure and holy lessons.

What, then, are we to learn from the chapter before us? In the first place, we learn to watch, with holy jealousy, everything that emanates from nature. Every movement of, and every emanation from, nature is defiling. Fallen human nature is an impure fountain, and all its streams are polluting. It cannot send forth ought that is pure, holy, or good. This is a lesson frequently inculcated in the Book of Leviticus, and it is impressively taught in this chapter.

But, blessed be the grace that has made such ample provision for nature's defilement! This provision is presented under two distinct forms, throughout the entire of the book of God, and throughout this section of it in particular — namely, "water and blood." Both these are founded upon the death of Christ. The blood that expiates and the water that cleanses flowed from the pierced side of a crucified Christ. (Comp. John 19: 34, with 1 John 5: 6) "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7) And the word of God cleanseth our practical habits and ways. (Ps. 119: 9; Eph. 5: 26) Thus, we are maintained in fitness for communion and worship, though passing through a scene where all is defiling, and carrying with us a nature, every movement of which leaves a soil behind.

It has been already remarked that our chapter treats of a class of ceremonial defilement's less serious than leprosy. This will account for the fact that atonement is here foreshadowed, not by a bullock or a lamb, but by the lowest order of sacrifice — namely, "two turtle doves." But, on the other hand, the cleansing virtue of the Word is continually introduced, in the ceremonial actions of "washing," "bathing," and "rinsing." "Wherewithal shall a young man *cleanse* his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy *word*." "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might *sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*." Water held a most important place in the Levitical system of purification, and, as a type of the Word, nothing can be more interesting or instructive.

Thus we can gather up the most valuable points from this fifteenth chapter of Leviticus. We learn, in a very striking manner, the intense holiness of the divine presence. Not a soil, not a stain, not a speck can be tolerated, for a moment, in that thrice-hallowed region. "Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them." (Ver. 31.)

Again, we learn that human nature is the overflowing fountain of uncleanness. It is hopelessly defiled; and not only defiled, but defiling. Awake or asleep, sitting, standing, or lying, nature is defiled and defiling. Its very touch conveys pollution. This is a deeply-humbling lesson for proud humanity; but thus it is. The Book of Leviticus holds up a, faithful mirror to nature. It leaves "flesh" nothing to glory in. Men may boast of their refinement, their moral sense, their dignity. Let them study the third book of Moses, and there they will see what it is all really worth, in God's estimation.

Finally, we learn, afresh, the expiatory value of the blood of Christ, and the cleansing, purifying, sanctifying virtues of the precious word of God. When we think of the unsullied purity of the sanctuary, and then reflect upon nature's irremediable defilement, and ask the question, "However can we enter and dwell there?" the answer is found in "the blood and water" which flowed from the side of a crucified Christ — a Christ who gave up His life unto death for us, that we might live by Him. "There are three that bear record in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and," blessed be God," these three agree in one." The Spirit does not convey to our ears a message diverse from that which we find in the Word; and both the Word and the Spirit declare to us the preciousness and efficacy of the blood.

Can we not, therefore, say that the fifteenth chapter of Leviticus was "written for our learning?" Has it not its own distinct place in the divine canon Assuredly. There would be a blank were it omitted. We learn in it what we could not learn in the same way, anywhere else. True, all Scripture teaches us the holiness of God, the vileness of nature, the efficacy of the blood, the value of the Word but the chapter upon which we have been pondering presents these great truths to our notice, and presses them upon our hearts in a manner quite peculiar to itself.

May *every section* of our Father's Volume be precious to our hearts. May *every one* of His testimonies be sweeter to us than honey and the honeycomb, and may "*every one* of his righteous judgements" have its due place in our souls.

Leviticus 16.

This chapter unfolds some of the weightiest principles of truth which can possibly engage the renewed mind. It presents the doctrine of atonement with uncommon fullness and power. In short, we must rank the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus amongst the most precious and important sections of Inspiration; if indeed it be allowable to make comparisons where all is divine.

Looking at this chapter, historically, it furnished a record of the transactions of the great day of atonement in Israel, whereby Jehovah's relationship with the assembly was established and maintained, and all the sins, failures, and infirmities of the people fully atoned for, so that the Lord God might dwell among them. The blood which was shed upon this solemn day formed the basis of Jehovah's throne in the midst of the congregation. In virtue of it, a holy God could take up His abode in the midst of the people, notwithstanding all their uncleanness. "The tenth day of the seventh month" was a unique day in Israel. There was no other day in the year like it. The sacrifices of this one day formed the ground of God's dealing in grace, mercy, patience, and forbearance.

Furthermore, we learn from this portion of inspired history, "that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." God was hidden behind a veil and man was at a distance. "And the Lord

spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died; and the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times unto the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat."

The way was not open for man to approach, at all times, into the divine presence, nor was there any provision, in the entire range of the Mosaic ritual, for his abiding there continually. God was shut in from man; and man was shut out from God, nor could "the blood of bulls and goats" open a permanent meeting place; "A sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood" was needed to accomplish this. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Heb. 10: 1-4) Neither the Levitical priesthood nor the Levitical sacrifices, could yield perfection. Insufficiency was stamped on the latter, infirmity on the former, imperfection on both. An imperfect man could not be a perfect priest; nor could an imperfect sacrifice give a perfect conscience. Aaron was not competent or entitled to take his seat within the veil, nor could the sacrifices which he offered rend that veil.

Thus much as to our chapter, historically. Let us now look at it typically.

"Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a *sin* offering, and a ram for a *burnt* offering." (Ver. 3) Here, we have the two grand aspects of Christ's atoning work, as that which perfectly maintains the divine glory, and perfectly meets man's deepest need. There is no mention, throughout all the services of this unique and solemn day, of a meat offering, or a peace offering. The perfect human life of our blessed Lord is not foreshadowed, here, nor is the communion of the soul with God, consequent upon His accomplished work, unfolded. In a word, the one grand subject is "atonement," and that in a double way namely, first, as meeting all the claims of God — the claims of His nature — the claims of His character — the claims of His throne; and, secondly, as perfectly meeting all man's guilt and all his necessities. We must bear these two points in mind, if we would have a clear understanding of the truth presented in this chapter, or of the doctrine of the great day of atonement. "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place," with atonement, as securing the glory of God, in every possible way, whether as respects His counsels of redeeming love toward the church, toward Israel, and toward the whole creation, or in reference to all the claims of His moral administration; and with atonement as fully meeting man's guilty and needy condition. These two aspects of the atonement will continually present themselves to our view as we ponder the precious contents of our chapter. Their importance cannot possibly be overestimated.

"He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his Flesh, and he shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on. (Ver. 4) Aaron's person, washed in pure water, and robed in the white linen garments, furnishes a lovely and impressive type of Christ entering upon the work of atonement. He is seen to be *personally and characteristically* pure and spotless. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John 17: 19) It is peculiarly precious to be called, as it were, to gaze upon the Person of our divine Priest, in all His essential holiness. The Holy Ghost delights in every thing that unfolds Christ to the view of His people; and wherever we behold Him, we see Him to be the same spotless, perfect, glorious, precious, peerless Jesus, "the fairest among ten thousand, yea, altogether lovely." He did not need to *do* or to *wear* anything, in order to be pure and spotless. He needed no pure water, no fine linen. He was, intrinsically

and practically, "the holy One of God." What Aaron *did*, and what he *wore* — the washing and the robing, are but the faint shadows of what Christ *is*. The law had only a "shadow," and "not the very image of good things to come." Blessed be God, we have not merely the shadow, but the eternal and divine reality — Christ Himself.

"And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, Which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house." (Ver. 5, 6) Aaron and his house represent the Church, not indeed as the "one body," but as a priestly house. It is not the Church as we find it developed in Ephesians and Colossians, but rather as we find it in the First Epistle of Peter, in the following well-known passage: "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) So also in Hebrews: "But Christ as a Son over His own house; *whose house are we*, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Heb. 3: 6) We must ever remember that there is no revelation of the mystery of the Church in the Old Testament. Types and shadows there are, but no revelation. That wondrous mystery of Jew and Gentile forming "one body," "one new man," and united to a glorified Christ in heaven, could not, as is obvious, be revealed until Christ had taken His place above. Of this mystery Paul was, pre-eminently, made a steward and a minister, as he tells us in Ephesians 3: 1-12, a passage which I would commend to the prayerful attention of the Christian reader.

"And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." (Ver. 7-10) In these two goats, we have the two aspects of atonement already referred to. "The Lord's lot "fell upon one; and the people's lot fell upon the other. In the case of the former, it was not a question of the persons or the sins which were to be forgiven, nor of God's counsels of grace toward His elect. These things, I need hardly say, are of infinite moment; but they are not involved in the case of "the goat on which the Lord's lot fell." This latter typifies the death of Christ as that wherein God has been perfectly glorified, with respect to sin in general. This great truth is fully set forth in the remarkable expression, "the Lord's lot." God has a peculiar portion in the death of Christ — a portion quite distinct — a portion which would hold eternally good even though no sinner were ever to be saved. In order to see the force of this, it is needful to bear in mind how God has been dishonoured in this world. His truth has been despised. His authority has been contemned. His majesty has been slighted. His law has been broken. His claims have been disregarded. His name has been blasphemed. His character has been traduced.

Now, the death of Christ has made provision for all this. It has perfectly glorified God in the very place where all these things have been done. It has perfectly vindicated the majesty, the truth, the holiness, the character of God. It has divinely met all the claims of His throne. It has atoned for sin. It has furnished a divine remedy for all the mischief which sin introduced into the universe. It affords a ground on which the blessed God can act in Grace, mercy, and forbearance toward all. It furnishes a warrant for the eternal expulsion and perdition of the prince of this world. It forms the imperishable foundation of God's moral government. In virtue of the cross, God can act according to His own sovereignty. He can display the matchless glories of His character, and the adorable attributes of His nature. He might, in the exercise of inflexible justice, have consigned the human family to the lake of fire, together with the devil and his angels. But, in that case, where would be His love, His grace, His mercy, His kindness, His long-suffering, His compassion, His patience, His perfect goodness?

Then, on the other hand, had these precious attributes been exercised, in the absence of atonement, where were the justice, the truth, the majesty, the holiness, the righteousness, the governmental claims, yea, the entire moral glory of God! How could "mercy and truth meet together?" or "righteousness and peace kiss each other" How could "truth spring out of the earth" or "righteousness look down from heaven?" Impossible. Nought save the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ could have fully glorified God; but that has glorified Him. It has reflected the full glory of the divine character, as it never could have been reflected amid the brightest splendours of an unfallen creation. By means of that atonement, in prospect and retrospect, God has been exercising forbearance toward this world, for well nigh six thousand years. In virtue of that atonement, the most wicked, daring, and blasphemous of the sons of men "live, move, and have their being;" eat, drink, and sleep. The very morsel which yonder open blaspheming infidel puts into his mouth, he owes to the atonement which he knows not, but impiously ridicules. The sunbeams and showers which fertilise the fields of the atheist, reach him in virtue of the atonement of Christ. Yea, the very breath which the infidel and the atheist spend in blaspheming God's revelation, or denying His existence, they owe to the atonement of Christ. Were it not for that precious atonement, instead of blaspheming upon earth, they would be weltering in hell.

Let not my reader misunderstand me, I speak not here of the forgiveness or salvation of persons. This is quite another thing, and stands connected, as every true Christian knows, with the confession of the name of Jesus, and the hearty belief that God raised Him from the dead. (Rom. 10) This is plain enough, and fully understood; but it is in no wise involved in that aspect of the atonement which we are, et present, contemplating, and which is so strikingly foreshadowed by "the goat on which the Lord's lot fell." God's pardoning and accepting a sinner is one thing; His bearing with that man, and showering temporal blessings upon him, is quite another. Both are in virtue of the cross, but in a totally different aspect and application thereof.

Nor is this distinction, by any means, unimportant. Quite the opposite. Indeed, so important is it that where it is overlooked, there must be confusion as to the full doctrine of atonement. Nor is this all. A clear understanding of God's ways in government, whether in the past, the present, or the future, will be found involved in this profoundly interesting point. And, finally, in it will be found the key wherewith to expound a number of texts in which many Christians find considerable difficulty. I shall just adduce two or three of these passages as examples.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1: 29) With this we may connect a kindred passage in John's first epistle, in which the Lord Jesus Christ is spoken of as "the propitiation for the whole world." (1 John 2: 2)* In both these passages the Lord Jesus is referred to as the One who has perfectly glorified God with respect to "*Sin*" and "*the world*," in their broadest acceptation. He is here seen as the great Antitype of "the goat on which the Lord's lot fell." This gives us a most precious view of the atonement of Christ, and one which is too much overlooked, or not clearly apprehended. Whenever the question of *persons* and the forgiveness of *sins* is raised, in connection with these and kindred passages of scripture, the mind is sure to get involved in insuperable difficulties.

{*The reader will observe, in the above passage, that the words "the sins of" are introduced by the translators, and are not inspired. The divine accuracy of the passage is completely lost by retaining those uninspired words. The doctrine laid down is surely this — in the first clause of the verse Christ is set forth as the propitiation For His people's actual sins; but in the last clause, it is not a question of *sins* or of *persons* at all, but of *sin* and the *world* in general. In fact, the whole verse presents Christ as the Antitype of the two goats, as the One who has borne His people's sins; and, also, as the One who has

perfectly glorified God with respect to sin in general, and made provision for dealing in grace with the world at large, and for the final deliverance and blessing of the whole creation.}

So, also, with respect to all those passages in which God's grace to the world at large is presented. They are founded upon that special aspect of the atonement with which we are more immediately occupied. "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*." (Mark 16) "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life, For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn *the world*; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3: 16, 17) "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for *all men*; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a *ransom for all*, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. 2: 1-6) "For the *grace of God* that bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all men*," (Titus 2: 11) "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by *the grace of God* should taste death for *every man*. (Heb. 2: 9) "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3: 9)

There is no need whatsoever for seeking to avoid the plain sense of the above and similar passages. They bear a clear and unequivocal testimony to divine grace toward all, without the slightest reference to man's responsibility, on the one hand, or to God's eternal counsels, on the other. These things are just as clearly, just as fully, just as unequivocally, taught in the word. Man is responsible, and God is sovereign. All who bow to Scripture admit these things. But, at the same time, it is of the very last importance to recognise the wide aspect of the grace of God, and of the cross of Christ. It glorifies God and leaves man *wholly* without excuse. Men argue about God's decrees and man's incompetency to believe without divine influence. Their arguments prove that they do not want God; for did they only want Him, He is near enough to be found of them. The grace of God, and the atonement of Christ, are as wide as they could desire. "*Any*" — "*every*" — "*whosoever*" — and "*all*," are God's own words; and I should like to know who is shut out. If God sends a message of salvation to a man, He surely intends it for him; and what can be more wicked and impious than to reject God's grace, and make Him a liar, and then give His secret decrees as a reason for so doing. It would be, in a certain sense, honest for a man to say at once, "The fact is, I do not believe God's word, and I do not want His grace or His salvation." One could understand this; but for men to cover their hatred of God and His truth with the drapery of a false because one-sided theology, is the very highest character of wickedness. It is such as to make us feel, of a truth, that the devil is never more diabolical than when he appears with the Bible in his hand.

If it be true that men are prevented, by God's secret decrees and counsels, from receiving the gospel which He has commanded to be preached to them, then on what principle of righteousness will they be "punished with everlasting destruction" for not obeying that gospel? (2 Thess. 1: 6-10) Is there a single soul throughout all the gloomy regions of the lost who blames God's counsels for his being there? Not one. Oh! no; God has made such ample provision in the atonement of Christ, not only for the salvation of those that believe, but also for the aspect of His grace toward those that reject the gospel, that there is no excuse. It is not because a man *cannot*, but because he *will not* believe that he "shall be punished with everlasting destruction." Never was there a more fatal mistake than for a man to ensconce himself behind God's decrees while deliberately and intelligently refusing God's grace; and

this is all the more dangerous, because supported by the dogmas of a one-sided theology. God's grace is free to all; and if we ask, How is this? the answer is, "Jehovah's lot" fell upon the true victim, in order that He might be perfectly glorified as to sin, in its widest aspect, and be free to act in grace toward all, and "preach the gospel to every creature." This grace and this preaching must have a solid basis, and that basis is found in the atonement; and though man should reject, God is glorified in the exercise of grace, and in the offer of salvation, because of the basis on which both the one and the other repose. He *is* glorified, and He *shall be* glorified, throughout eternity's countless ages. ("Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again Now is the judgement of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me." (John 12: 27-32.)

Thus far we have been occupied only with one special point, namely, "the goat on which the Lord's lot fell;" and a cursory reader might suppose that the next thing in order would be the scape-goat, which gives us the other great aspect of the death of Christ, or its application to the sins of the people. But no: ere we come to that, we have the fullest confirmation of that precious line of truth which has been before us, in the fact that the blood of the slain goat, together with the blood of the bullock, was sprinkled upon, and before, Jehovah's throne, in order to show that all the claims of that throne were answered in the blood of atonement, and full provision made for all the demands of God's moral administration.

"And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." Here we have a most vivid and striking presentation indeed. The blood of atonement is carried in within the veil, into the holiest of all, and there sprinkled upon the throne of the God of Israel. The cloud of the divine presence was there; and in order that Aaron might appear in the immediate presence of the glory, and not die, "the cloud of incense" ascends and "covers the mercy-seat," on which the blood of atonement was to be sprinkled "seven times." The "*sweet* incense beaten *small*" expresses the fragrance of Christ's Person — the sweet odour of His most precious sacrifice.

"And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the Blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before tile mercy-seat." (Ver. 14, 15.) "Seven" is the perfect number; and in the sprinkling of the blood seven times before the mercy-seat we learn that whatever be the application of the atonement of Christ, whether as to things, to places, or to persons, it is perfectly estimated in the divine presence. The blood which secures the salvation of the Church — the "house" of the true Aaron; the blood which secures the salvation of the "congregation" of Israel; the blood which secures the final restoration and blessedness of the whole creation — that blood has been presented before God, sprinkled and accepted according to all the perfectness, fragrance, and preciousness of Christ. In the power of that blood God can accomplish all His eternal counsels of grace. He can save the Church, and raise it into the very loftiest heights of glory and dignity, despite of all the power of sin and Satan. He can restore Israel's scattered tribes — He can unite Judah and Ephraim — He can accomplish all the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He can save and bless untold millions of the Gentiles. He can restore and bless the

wide creation. He can allow the beams of His glory to lighten up the universe for ever. He can display, in the view of angels, men, and devils, His own eternal glory — the glory of His character — the glory of His nature — the glory of His works — the glory of His government. All this He can do, and will do; but the one solitary pedestal upon which the stupendous fabric of glory shall rest, for ever, is the blood of the cross — that precious blood, dear Christian reader, which has spoken peace, divine and everlasting peace, to your heart and conscience, in the presence of Infinite Holiness. The blood which is sprinkled upon the believer's conscience has been sprinkled "seven times" before the throne of God. The nearer we get to God, the more importance and value we find attached to the blood of Jesus. If we look at the brazen altar, we find the blood there; if we look at the brazen laver, we find the blood there; if we look at the golden altar, we find the blood there; if we look at the veil of the tabernacle, we find the blood there: but in no place do we find so much about the blood, as within the veil, before Jehovah's throne, in the immediate presence of the divine glory.

In heaven His blood for ever speaks,

In God the Father's ears."

"And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." The same truth meets us all along. The claims of the sanctuary must be provided for. Jehovah's courts, as well as His throne, must bear witness to the value of the blood. The tabernacle, in the midst of Israel's uncleanness, must be fenced round about by the divine provisions of atonement. Jehovah provided, in all things, for His own glory. The priests and their priestly service, the place of worship, and all therein, must stand in the power of the blood. The Holy One could not have remained, for a moment, in the midst of the congregation, were it not for the power of the blood! It was that which left Him free to dwell, and act, and rule, in the midst of an erring people.

"And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." (Ver. 17) Aaron needed to offer up sacrifice for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. He could only enter into the sanctuary in the power of the blood. We have, in verse 17, a type of the atonement of Christ in its application both to the church and to the congregation of Israel. The church now enters into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus. (Heb. 10) As to Israel, the veil is still on their hearts. (2 Cor. 3) They are still at a distance, although full provision has been made in the cross for their forgiveness and restoration when they shall turn to the Lord. This entire period is, properly speaking, the day of atonement. The true Aaron is gone in with His own blood, into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. By and by, He will come forth to lead the congregation of Israel into the full results of His accomplished work. Meanwhile, His house, that is to say, all true believers, are associated with Him, having boldness to enter into the holiest, being brought nigh by the blood of Jesus.

"And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." (Ver. 18, 19) Thus the atoning blood was sprinkled everywhere, from the throne of God within the veil, to the altar which stood in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 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: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world (at the end of everything earthly, everything human) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." (Heb. 9: 23-28)

There is but one way into the holiest of all, and that is a blood-sprinkled way. It is vain to strive to enter by any other. Men may attempt to work themselves in, to pray themselves in, to buy themselves in, to get in by a pathway of ordinances, or it may be of half-ordinances, half-Christ; but it is of no use. God speaks of one way, and but one, and that way has been thrown open through the rent veil of the Saviour's flesh. Along that way have the millions of the saved passed, from age to age. Patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, martyrs, saints in every age, from Abel downwards, have trod that blessed way, and found thereby sure and undisputed access. The one sacrifice of the Cross is divinely sufficient for all. God asks no more, and He can take no less. To add ought thereto is to cast dishonour upon that with which God has declared himself well pleased, yea, in which He is infinitely glorified. To diminish ought therefrom is to deny man's guilt and ruin, and offer an indignity to the justice and majesty of the eternal Trinity.

"And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and The altar, he shall bring the live goat. And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him *all* the iniquities of the children of Israel, and *all* their transgressions in *all* their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."

Here, then, we have the other grand idea attached to the death of Christ — namely, the full and final forgiveness of the people. If the death of Christ forms the foundation of the glory of God, it also forms the foundation of the perfect forgiveness of sins to all who put their trust in it. This latter, blessed be God, is but a secondary, an inferior application of the atonement, though our foolish hearts would fain regard it as the very highest possible view of the cross to see in it that which puts away all our sins. This is a mistake. God's glory is the first thing; our salvation is the second. To maintain Gods glory was the chief, the darling object of the heart of Christ. This object He pursued from first to last, with an undeviating purpose and unflinching fidelity. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." (John 10: 17) "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." (John 13: 31, 32) "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people from far: the Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft: in his quiver hath He hid me; and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom *I will be glorified.*" (Isaiah 49. 1-3)

Thus, the glory of God was the paramount object of the Lord Jesus Christ, in life and in death. He lived and died to glorify His Father's name. Does the Church lose ought by this? Nay. Does Israel Nay. Do the Gentiles? Nay. In no way could their salvation and blessedness be so perfectly provided for as by being made subsidiary to the glory of God. Hearken to the divine response to Christ, the true Israel, in the sublime passage just quoted. "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the

tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth."

And is it not a blessed thing to know that God is glorified in the putting away of our sins? We may ask, Where are our sins? Put away. By what? By that act of Christ upon the cross in which God has been eternally glorified. Thus it is. The two goats, on the day of atonement, give the double aspect of the one act. In the one, we see God's glory maintained; in the other, sins put away. The one is as perfect as the other. We are as perfectly forgiven as God is perfectly glorified, by the death of Christ. Was there one single point in which God was not glorified in the cross? Not one. Neither is there one single point in which we are not perfectly forgiven. I say we;" for albeit the congregation of Israel is the primary object contemplated in the beautiful and impressive ordinance of the scape-goat; yet does it hold good, in the fullest way, with respect to every soul that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that he is as perfectly forgiven as God is perfectly glorified, by the atonement of the cross. How many of the sins of Israel did the scape-goat bear away? "*All.*" Precious word! Not one left behind. and whither did he bear them? "Into a land not inhabited" — a land where they could never be found, because there was no one there to look for them. Could any type be more perfect? Could we possibly have a more graphic picture of Christ's accomplished sacrifice, in its primary and secondary aspects? Impossible. We can hang with intense admiration over such a picture, and, as we gaze, exclaim, "Of a truth, the pencil of the Master is here! "

Reader, pause here, and say, do you know that all your sins are forgiven, according to the perfection of Christ's sacrifice? If you simply Believe on His name they are so. They are all gone, and gone for ever. Say not, as so many anxious souls do, "I fear I do not *realise*." There is no such word as "realise" in the entire gospel. We are not saved by realisation, but by Christ; and the way to get Christ in all His fullness and preciousness is to believe "*only believe!*" And what will be the result? "The worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins." Observe this. "No more Conscience of sins." this must be the result, inasmuch as Christ's sacrifice is perfect-so perfect, that God is glorified therein. Now, it must be obvious to you that Christ's work does not need your realisation to be added to it to make it perfect. This could not be. We might as well say that the work of creation was not complete until Adam realised it in the garden of Eden. True, he did realise; but what did he realise? A perfect work. Thus let it be with your precious soul this moment, if it has never been so before. May you, now and evermore, repose, in artless simplicity, upon the One who has, by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified! And how are they sanctified? Is it by realisation? By no means. How then? By the perfect work of Christ.

Having sought — alas! most feebly — to unfold the doctrine of this marvellous chapter, so far as God has given me light upon it, there is just one point further to which I shall merely call my reader's attention, ere I close this section. It is contained in the following quotation: "and this shall be a statute for ever unto you, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you. For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins *before the Lord*. It shall be a *Sabbath of rest* and ye shall *afflict your souls*, by a statute for ever." (Ver. 29-31)

This shall have its full accomplishment in the saved remnant of Israel by and by, as foretold by the prophet Zechariah: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. *In that day* shall there be a *great mourning* in

Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon *In that day* there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. and it shall come to pass *in that day* that the light shall not be clear (in one place) and dark: (in another:) but it shall be one day, (the true and long-expected Sabbath,) which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be *in that day*. that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And THE LORD SHALL BE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH: *in that day* shall there be one Lord, and his name one *In that day* shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD And *in that day* there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." (Zech. 12 - 14)

What a day that will be! No marvel that it should be so frequently and so emphatically introduced in the above glowing passage. It will be a bright and blessed "Sabbath of rest" when the mourning remnant shall gather, in the spirit of true penitence, round the open fountain, and enter into the full and final results of the great day of atonement. They shall "afflict their souls," no doubt; for how could they do otherwise, while fixing their repentant gaze "upon him whom they have pierced?" But, oh! what a Sabbath they will have! Jerusalem will have a brimming cup of salvation, after her long and dreary night of sorrow. Her former desolations shall be forgotten, and her children, restored to their long-lost dwellings, shall take down their harps from the willows, and sing once more the sweet songs of Zion beneath the peaceful shade of the vine And fig tree.

Blessed be God, the time is at hand. Every setting sun brings us nearer to that blissful Sabbath. The word is, "Surely, I come quickly;" and all around seems to tell us that "the days are at hand, and the effect of every vision." May we be "sober, and watch unto prayer!" May we keep ourselves unspotted from the world; and thus, in the spirit of our minds, the affections of our hearts, and the experience of our souls, be ready to meet the heavenly Bridegroom! Our place for the present is outside the camp. Thank God that it is so! It would be an unspeakable loss to be inside. The same cross which has brought us inside the veil has cast us outside the camp. Christ was cast out thither, and we are with Him there; but He has been received up into heaven, and we are with Him there. Is it not a mercy to be outside of all that which has rejected our blessed Lord and Master? Truly so; and the more we know of Jesus, and the more we know of this present evil world, the more thankful we shall be to find our place outside of it all *with Him*.

Leviticus 17.

In this chapter the reader will find two special points, namely — first, that life belongs to Jehovah; and, secondly, that the power of atonement is in the blood. The Lord attached peculiar importance to both these things. He would have them impressed upon every member of the congregation.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, saying, What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the Lord, before the tabernacle of the Lord; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people." This was a most solemn matter; and we may ask what was involved in offering a sacrifice otherwise than in the manner here prescribed? It was nothing less than robbing Jehovah of His rights, and presenting to Satan that

which was due to God. A man might say, "Can I not offer a sacrifice in one place as well as another?" The answer is, "Life belongs to God, and His claim thereto must be recognised in the place which He has appointed — before the tabernacle of the Lord." That was the only meeting place between God and man. To offer elsewhere proved that the heart did not want God.

The moral of this is plain. There is one place where God has appointed to meet the sinner, and that is the cross — the antitype of the brazen altar. There and there alone has God's claim upon the life been duly recognised. To reject this meeting-place is to bring down judgement upon oneself — it is to trample under foot the just claims of God, and to arrogate to oneself a right to life which all have forfeited. It is important to see this.

"And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the Lord." The blood and the fat belonged to God. The blessed Jesus fully recognised this. He surrendered His life to God, and all his hidden enemies were devoted to Him likewise. He voluntarily walked to the altar and there gave up His precious life; and the fragrant odour of His intrinsic excellency ascended to the throne of God. Blessed Jesus! it is sweet, at every step of our way, to be reminded of Thee.

The second point above referred to is clearly stated in verse 11. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for IT IS THE BLOOD THAT MAKETH AN ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL." The connection between the two points is deeply interesting. When man duly takes his place as one possessing no title whatsoever to life — when he fully recognises God's claims upon him, then the divine record is, "I have given you the life to make an atonement for your soul." Yes; atonement is God's gift to man; and, be it carefully noted, that this atonement is in the blood, and *only* in the blood. "It is the *blood* that maketh an atonement for the soul." It is not the blood and something else. The word is most explicit. It attributes atonement exclusively to the *blood*. "Without shedding of *blood* there is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22) It was the *death* of Christ that rent the veil. It is "by *the blood* of Jesus" we have "boldness to enter into the holiest." "We have redemption through his *blood*, the forgiveness of sins." (Eph. 1: 7; Col. 1: 14) "Having made peace by *the blood* of his cross." "Ye who were afar off are made nigh by *the blood* of his cross." "*The blood* of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7) "They washed their robes and made them white in *the blood* of the Lamb." (Rev. 7) "They overcame him by *the blood* of the Lamb." (Rev. 12)

I would desire to call my reader's earnest attention to the precious and vital doctrine of the blood. I am anxious that he should see its true place. The blood of Christ is the foundation of everything. It is the ground of God's righteousness in justifying an ungodly sinner that believes on the name of the Son of God; and it is the ground of the sinner's confidence in drawing nigh to a holy God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil. God would be just in the condemnation of the sinner; but, through the death of Christ, He can be just And the justifier of him that believeth — a just God and a Saviour. The righteousness of God is His consistency with Himself — His acting in harmony with His revealed character. Hence, were it not for the cross, His consistency with Himself would, of necessity, demand the death and judgement of the sinner; but in the cross that death and judgement were borne by the sinner's Surety, so that the same divine consistency is perfectly maintained while a holy God justifies an ungodly sinner through faith. *It is all through the blood of Jesus* — nothing less — nothing more — nothing different. "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. This is conclusive. This is God's simple plan of justification. Man's plan is much more cumbrous, much more roundabout. And not only is it cumbrous and roundabout, but it attributes righteousness to something quite different from what I find in the word. If I look from Genesis 3 down to the close of Revelation, I find the blood of

Christ put forward as the alone ground of righteousness. We get pardon, peace, life, righteousness, all by the blood, and nothing but the blood. The entire book of Leviticus, and particularly the chapter upon which we have just been meditating, is a commentary upon the doctrine of the blood. It seems strange to have to insist upon a fact so obvious to every dispassionate teachable student of holy Scripture. Yet so it is. Our minds are prone to slip away from the plain testimony of the word. We are ready to adopt opinions without ever calmly investigating them in the light of the divine testimonies. In this way we get into confusion, darkness, and error.

May we all learn to give the blood of Christ its due Place! It is so precious in God's sight that He will not suffer ought else to be added to or mingled with it. "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for *it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*"

Leviticus 18 — Leviticus 20.

This section sets before us, in a very remarkable manner, the personal sanctity and moral propriety which Jehovah looked for, on the part of those whom He had graciously introduced into relationship with Himself and, at the same time, it presents a most humiliating picture of the enormities of which human nature is capable.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *I am the Lord your God.*" Here we have the foundation of the entire superstructure of moral conduct which these chapters present. Israel's acting was to take their character from the fact that Jehovah was their God. They were called to comport themselves in a manner worthy of so high and holy a position. It was God's prerogative to set forth the special character and line of conduct becoming a people with whom He was pleased to associate His name. Hence the frequency of the expressions — "I am the Lord." "I Am the Lord your God." "I the Lord your God am holy." Jehovah was their God, and He was holy; hence, therefore, they were called to be holy likewise. His name was invoked in their character and acting.

This is the true principle of holiness for the people of God in all ages. They are to be governed and characterised by the revelation which He has made of Himself. Their conduct is to be founded upon what He is, not upon what they are in themselves. This entirely sets aside the principle expressed in the words, "Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou;" a principle so justly repudiated by every sensitive mind. It is not a comparison of one man with another; but a simple statement of the line of conduct which God looks for in those who belong to Him. "after the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances." The Egyptians and the Canaanites were all wrong. How was Israel to know this? Who told them? How came they to be right, and all besides wrong? These are interesting inquiries; and the answer is as simple as the questions are interesting. Jehovah's word was the standard by which all questions of right and wrong were to be definitely settled in the judgement of every member of the Israel of God. It was not, by any means, the judgement of an Israelite in opposition to the judgement of an Egyptian or of a Canaanite; but it was the judgement of God above *all*. Egypt might have her practices and her opinions, and so might Canaan; but Israel were to have the opinions and practices laid down in the word of God. "Ye shall do my judgements, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgements; which, if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord."

It will be well for my reader to get a clear, deep, full, practical sense of this truth. The word of God must settle every question and govern every conscience. There must be no appeal from its solemn

and weighty decision. When God speaks, every heart must bow. Men may form and hold their opinions; they may adopt and defend their practices; but one of the finest traits in the character of "the Israel of God" is profound reverence for, and implicit subjection to, "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." The exhibition of this valuable feature may, perhaps, lay them open to the charge of dogmatism, superciliousness, and self-sufficiency, on the part of those who have never duly weighed the matter; but, in truth, nothing can be more unlike dogmatism than simple subjection to the plain truth of God; nothing more unlike superciliousness than reverence for the statements of inspiration; nothing more unlike self-sufficiency than subjection to the divine authority of holy scripture.

True, there will ever be the need of carefulness as to the tone and manner in which we set forth the authority for our convictions and our conduct. It must be made manifest, so far as it may be, that we are wholly governed, not by our own opinions, but by the word of God. There is great danger of attaching an importance to an opinion merely because we have adopted it. This must be carefully guarded against. *Self* may creep in and display its deformity in the defence of our opinions as much as in anything else; but we must disallow it, in every shape and form, and be governed, in all things, by "Thus saith the Lord."

But, then, we are not to expect that everyone will be ready to admit the full force of the divine statutes and judgements. It is as persons walk in the integrity and energy of the divine nature that the word of God will be owned, appreciated, and revered. An Egyptian or a Canaanite would have been wholly unable to enter into the meaning or estimate the value of these statutes and judgements, which were to govern the conduct of the circumcised people of God; but that did not, in any wise, affect the question of Israel's obedience. They were brought into a certain relationship with Jehovah, and that relationship had its distinctive privileges and responsibilities. "I am the Lord *your* God." This was to be the ground of their conduct. They were to act in a way worthy of the One who had become *their* God, and made them *His* people. It was not that they were a whit better than other people. By no means. The Egyptians or Canaanites might have considered that the Israelites were setting themselves up as something superior in refusing to adopt the habits of either nation. But, no; the foundation of their peculiar line of conduct and tone of morality was laid in these words, "*I am the Lord your God.*"

In this great and practically-important fact, Jehovah set before His people a ground of conduct which was immovable, and a standard of morality which was as elevated, and as enduring, as the eternal throne itself. The moment He entered into a relationship with a people, their ethics were to assume a character and tone worthy of Him. It was no longer a question as to what they were, either in themselves or in comparison with others; but of what God was in comparison with all. This makes a material difference. To make *self* the ground of action or the standard of ethics is not only presumptuous folly, but it is sure to set one upon a descending scale of action. If *self* be my object, I must, of necessity, sink lower and lower every day; but if, on the other hand, I set the Lord before me, I shall rise higher and higher as, by the power of the Holy Ghost, I grow in conformity to that perfect model which is unfolded to the gaze of faith in the sacred pages of inspiration. I shall, undoubtedly, have to prostrate myself in the dust, under a sense of how infinitely short I come of the mark set before me; but, then, I can never consent to the setting up of a lower standard, nor can I ever be satisfied until I am conformed in all things to Him who was my substitute on the cross, and is my Model in the glory.

Having said thus much on the main principle of the section before us — a principle of unspeakable importance to Christians, in a practical point of view — I feel it needless to enter into anything like a detailed exposition of statutes which speak for themselves in most obvious terms. I would merely remark that those statutes range themselves under two distinct heads, namely, first, those

which set forth the shameful enormities which the human heart is capable of devising; and, secondly, those which exhibit the exquisite tenderness and considerate care of the God of Israel.

As to the first, it is manifest that the Spirit of God could never enact laws for the purpose of preventing evils that have no existence. He does not construct a dam where there is no flood to be resisted. He does not deal with abstract ideas, but with positive realities. Man is, in very deed, capable of perpetrating each and every one of the shameful crimes referred to in this most faithful section of the book of Leviticus. If he were not, Why should he be told not to do so. Such a code would be wholly unsuitable for angels, inasmuch as they are incapable of committing the sins referred to; but it suits man, because he has gotten the seeds of those sins in his nature. This is deeply humbling. It is a fresh declaration of the truth that man is a total wreck. From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, there is not so much as a single speck of moral soundness, as looked at in the light of the divine presence. The being for whom Jehovah thought it needful to write Leviticus 18 - 20 must be a vile sinner; but that being is man — the writer and reader of these lines. How plain it is, therefore, that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. 8) Thank God, the believer is "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." He has been taken completely out of his old creation standing, and introduced into the new creation, in which the moral evils aimed at in this our section can have no existence. True, he has gotten the old nature; but it is his happy privilege to "reckon" it as a dead thing, and to walk in the abiding power of the new creation, wherein "all things are of God." This is Christian liberty — even liberty to walk up and down in that fair creation where no trace of evil can ever be found; hallowed liberty to walk in holiness and purity before God and man; liberty to tread those lofty walks of personal sanctity whereon the beams of the divine countenance ever pour themselves in living lustre. Reader, this is Christian liberty. It is liberty, not to commit sin, but to taste the celestial sweets of a life of true holiness and moral elevation. May we prize more highly than we have ever done this precious boon of heaven — Christian liberty!

And, now, one word as to the second class of statutes contained in our section — namely, those which so touchingly bring out divine tenderness and care. Take the following: "and when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; *thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger*: I am the Lord your God." (Lev. 19: 9, 10) This ordinance will meet us again in Lev. 23, but there we shall see it in its dispensational bearing. Here, we contemplate it morally, as unfolding the precious grace of Israel's God. He would think of "the poor and stranger;" and He would have His people think of them likewise. When the golden sheaves were being reaped, and the mellow clusters gathered, "the poor and stranger" were to be remembered by the Israel of God, because Jehovah was the God of Israel. The reaper and the grape-gatherer were not to be governed by a spirit of grasping covetousness, which would bare the corners of the field and strip the branches of the vine, but rather by a spirit of large-hearted, genuine benevolence, which would leave a sheaf and a cluster "for the poor and stranger," that they, too, might rejoice in the unbounded goodness of Him whose paths drop fatness, and on whose open hand all the sons of want may confidently wait.

The Book of Ruth furnishes a fine example of one who fully acted out this most benevolent statute. "And Boaz said unto her, (Ruth,) At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed and left. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not." (Ruth 2:

14-16) Most touching and beautiful grace! Truly, it is good for our poor selfish hearts to be brought in contact with such principles and such practices. Nothing can surpass the exquisite refinement of the words, "*let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her.*" It was, evidently, the desire of this noble Israelite that "the stranger" might have abundance, and have it, too, rather as the fruit of her own gleaning than of his benevolence. This was the very essence of refinement. It was putting her in immediate connection with, and dependence upon, the God of Israel, who had fully recognised and provided for "the gleaner." Boaz was merely acting out that gracious ordinance of which Ruth was reaping the benefit. The same grace that had given him the field gave her the gleanings. They were both debtors to grace. She was the happy recipient of Jehovah's goodness. He was the honoured exponent of Jehovah's most gracious institution. All was in most lovely moral order. The creature was blessed and God was glorified. Who would not own that it is good for us to 'be allowed to breathe such an atmosphere?

Let us now turn to another statute of our section. "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob Him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning." (Lev. 19: 13) What tender care is here! The High and Mighty One that inhabiteth eternity can take knowledge of the thoughts and feelings that spring up in the heart of a poor labourer. He knows and takes into account the expectations of such an one in reference to the fruit of his day's toil. The wages will, naturally, be looked for. The labourer's heart counts upon them; the family meal depends upon them. Oh! let them not be held back. Send not the labourer home with a heavy heart, to make the heart of his wife and family heavy likewise. By all means, give him that for which He has wrought, to which he has a right, and on which his heart is set. He is a husband, he is a father; and he has borne the burden and heat of the day that his wife and children may not go hungry to bed. Disappoint him not. Give him his due. Thus does our God take notice of the very throbbings of the labourer's heart, And make provision for his rising expectations. Precious grace! Most tender, thoughtful, touching, condescending love! The bare contemplation of such statutes is sufficient to throw one into a flood of tenderness. Could any one read such passages and not be melted? Could any one read them and thoughtlessly dismiss a poor labourer, not knowing whether he and his family have wherewithal to meet the cravings of hunger?

Nothing can be more painful to a tender heart than the lack of kindly consideration for the poor, so often manifested by the rich. These latter can sit down to their sumptuous repast after dismissing from their door some poor industrious creature who had come seeking the just reward of his honest labour. They think not of the aching heart with which that man returns to his family, to tell them of the disappointment to himself and to them. Oh! it is terrible. It is most offensive to God, and to all who have drunk, in any measure, into His grace. If we would know what God thinks of such acting, we have only to hearken to the following accents of holy indignation: "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them that have reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." (James 5: 4) "The Lord of Sabaoth" hears the cry of the aggrieved and disappointed labourer. His tender love tells itself forth in the institutions of His moral government; and even though the heart should not be melted by the grace of those institutions, the conduct should, at least, be governed by the righteousness thereof. God will not suffer the claims of the poor to be heartlessly tossed aside by those who are so hardened by the influence of wealth as to be insensible to the appeals of tenderness, and who are so far removed beyond the region of personal need as to be incapable of feeling for those whose lot it is to spend their days amid exhausting toil or pinching poverty. The poor are the special objects of God's care. Again and again He makes provision for them in the statutes of His moral administration; and it is particularly declared of Him who shall, ere long, assume, in manifested glory, the reins of government, that "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the

poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight." (Psalm 72: 12-14)

May we profit by the review of those precious and deeply practical truths! May our hearts be affected, and our conduct influenced by them. We live in a heartless world; and there is a vast amount of selfishness in our own hearts. We are not sufficiently affected by the thought of the need of others. We are apt to forget the poor in the midst of our abundance. We often forget that the very persons whose labour ministers to our personal comfort are living, it may be, in the deepest poverty. Let us think of these things. Let us beware of "grinding the faces of the poor." If the Jews of old were taught by the statutes and ordinances of the Mosaic economy, to entertain kindly feelings toward the poor, and to deal tenderly and graciously with the sons of toil, how much more ought the higher and more spiritual ethics of the Gospel dispensation produce in the hearts and lives of Christians a large-hearted benevolence toward every form of human need.

True, there is an urgent need of prudence and caution, lest we take a man out of the honourable position in which he was designed and fitted to move — namely, a position of dependence upon the fruits, the precious and fragrant fruits, of honest industry. This would be a grievous injury instead of a benefit. The example of Boaz should instruct in this matter. He allowed Ruth to glean; but he took care to make her gleaning profitable. This is a very safe and a very simple principle. God intends that man should work at something or another, and we run counter to Him when we draw our fellow out of the place of dependence upon the results of patient industry, into that of dependence upon the results of false benevolence. The former is as honourable and elevating as the latter is contemptible and demoralising. There is no bread so sweet to the taste as that which is nobly earned; but then those who earn their bread should get enough. A man will feed and care his horses; how much more his fellow, who yields him the labour of his hands from Monday morning till Saturday night.

But, some will say, "There are two sides to this question." Unquestionably there are; and, no doubt, one meets with a great deal amongst the poor which is calculated to, dry up the springs of benevolence and genuine sympathy. There is much which tends to steel the heart, and close the hand; but, one thing is certain — it is better to be deceived in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred than to shut up the bowels of compassion against a single worthy object. Your heavenly Father causes His sun to shine upon the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust. The sure sunbeams that gladden the heart of some devoted servant of Christ are poured upon the path of some ungodly sinner; and the self-same shower that falls upon the tillage of a true believer, enriches also the furrows of some blaspheming infidel. This is to be our model. "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5: 48) It is only as we set the Lord before us, and walk in the power of His grace, that we shall be able to go on, from day to day, meeting with a tender heart and an open hand every possible form of human misery. It is only as we ourselves are drinking at the exhaustless fountain of divine love and tenderness, that we shall be able to go on ministering to human need unchecked by the oft-repeated manifestation of human depravity. Our tiny springs would soon be dried up were they not maintained in unbroken connection with that ever-gushing source.

The statute which next presents itself for our consideration, exemplifies, most touchingly, the tender care of the God of Israel. "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord." (Ver. 14) Here, a barrier is erected to stem the rising tide of irritability with which uncontrolled nature would be almost sure to meet the personal infirmity of deafness. How well we can understand this! Nature does not like to be called upon to repeat its words, again and again, in order to meet the deaf man's infirmity. Jehovah thought of this, and provided for it. And what is the provision? "Thou shalt fear thy God." When tried by a deaf person, remember the

Lord, and look to Him for Grace to enable you to govern your temper.

The second part of this statute reveals a most humiliating amount of wickedness in human nature. The idea of laying a stumbling-block in the way of the blind, is about the most wanton cruelty imaginable; and yet man is capable of it, else he would not be warned against it. No doubt, this, as well as many other statutes, admits of a spiritual application; but that in no wise interferes with the plain literal principle set forth in it. Man is capable of placing a stumbling block in the way of a fellow-creature afflicted with blindness. Such is man! Truly, the Lord knew what was in man when He wrote the statutes and judgements of the Book of Leviticus.

I shall leave my reader to meditate alone upon the remainder of our section. He will find that each statute teaches a double lesson — namely, a lesson with respect to nature's evil tendencies, and also a lesson as to Jehovah's tender care.*

{*Verses 16 and 17 demand special attention. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people." This is a most seasonable admonition for the people of God, in every age. A talebearer is sure to do incalculable mischief. It has been well remarked that a talebearer injures three persons — he injures himself, he injures his hearer, and he injures the subject of his tale. This he does directly; and as to the indirect consequences, who can recount them? Let us carefully guard against this horrible evil. May we never suffer a tale to pass our lips; and let us never stand to hearken to a talebearer. May we always know how to drive away a backbiting tongue with an angry countenance, as the north wind driveth away rain.

In verse 17, we learn what ought to take the place of tale bearing. "thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." In place of carrying to another a tale about my neighbour, I am called upon to go directly to himself and rebuke him, if there is anything wrong. This is the divine method. Satan's method is to act the talebearer. }

Leviticus 21 — Leviticus 22.

These chapters unfold, with great minuteness of detail, the divine requirements in reference to those who were privileged to draw near as priests to "offer the bread of their God." In this, as in the preceding section, we have conduct as the *result*, not the procuring *cause* of the relationship. This should be carefully borne in mind. The sons of Aaron were, in virtue of their birth, priests unto God. They all stood in this relationship, one as well as another. It was not a matter of attainment, a question of progress, something which one had, and another had not. All the sons of Aaron were priests. They were born into a priestly place. Their capacity to understand and enjoy their position and its attendant privileges was, obviously, a different thing altogether. One might be a babe; and another might have reached the point of mature and vigorous manhood. The former would, of necessity, be unable to eat of the priestly food, being a babe for whom "milk" and not "strong meat" was adapted: but he was as truly a member of the priestly house as the man who could tread, with firm step, the courts of the Lord's house, and feed upon "the wave breast" and "heave shoulder" of the sacrifice.

This distinction is easily understood in the case of the sons of Aaron, and, hence, it will serve to illustrate, in a very simple manner, the truth as to the members of the true priestly house over which our Great High Priest presides, and to which all true believers belong. (Heb. 3: 6) Every child of God is a priest. He is enrolled as a member of Christ's priestly house. He may be very ignorant; but his position, as a priest, is not founded upon knowledge, but upon life. His experience may be very shallow; but his place as a priest does not depend upon experience, but upon life. His capacity may be very limited; but his relationship as a priest does not rest upon an enlarged capacity, but upon life. He was born into the position and relationship of a priest. He did not work himself thereinto. It was not by any efforts of his

own that he became a priest. He became a priest by birth. The spiritual priesthood, together with all the spiritual functions attaching thereunto, is the necessary appendage to spiritual birth. The capacity to enjoy the privileges and to discharge the functions of a position must not be confounded with the position itself. They must ever be kept distinct. relationship is one thing; capacity is quite another.

Furthermore, in looking at the family of Aaron, we see that nothing could break the relationship between him and his sons. There were many things which would interfere with the full enjoyment of the privileges attaching to the relationship, A son of Aaron might "defile himself by the dead." He might defile himself by forming an unholy alliance. He might have some bodily "blemish." He might be "blind or lame." He might be "a dwarf." Any of these things would have interfered, very materially, with his enjoyment of the privileges, and his discharge of the functions pertaining to his relationship, as we read, "No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish: he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and the holy; only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them." (Lev. 21: 21-23) But none of these things could possibly touch the fact of a relationship founded upon the established principles of human nature. Though a son of Aaron were a dwarf, that dwarf was a son of Aaron. True, he was, as a dwarf, shorn of many precious privileges and lofty dignities pertaining to the priesthood; but he was a son of Aaron all the while. He could neither enjoy the same measure or character of communion, nor yet discharge the same elevated functions of priestly Service, as one who had reached to manhood's appointed stature; but he was a member of the priestly house, and, as such, permitted to "eat the bread of his God." The relationship was genuine, though the development was so defective.

The spiritual application of all this is as simple as it is practical. To be a child of God, is one thing; to be in the enjoyment of priestly communion and priestly worship, is quite another. The latter is, alas! interfered with by many things. Circumstances and associations are allowed to act upon us by their defiling influence. We are not to suppose that all Christians enjoy the same elevation of walk, the same intimacy of fellowship, the same felt nearness to Christ. Alas! alas! they do not. Many of us have to mourn over our spiritual defects. There is lameness of walk, defective vision, stunted growth; or we show ourselves to be defiled by contact with evil, and to be weakened and hindered by unhallowed associations. In a word, as the sons of Aaron, though being priests by birth, were, nevertheless, deprived of many privileges through ceremonial defilement and physical defects; so we, though being priests unto God, by spiritual birth, are deprived of many of the high and holy privileges of our position, by moral defilement and spiritual defects. We are shorn of many of our dignities through defective spiritual development. We lack; singleness of eye, spiritual vigour, whole-hearted devotedness. Saved we are, through the free grace of God, on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice. "We are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus;" but, then, salvation is one thing; communion is quite another. Sonship is one thing; obedience is quite another.

These things should be carefully distinguished. The section before us illustrates the distinction with great force and clearness. If one of the sons of Aaron happened to be "broken-footed, or broken-handed," was he deprived of his sonship? Assuredly not. Was he deprived of his priestly position? By no means. It was distinctly declared, "He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy." What, then, did he lose by his physical blemish? He was forbidden to tread some of the higher walks of priestly service and worship. "Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar." These were very serious privations; and though it may be objected that a man could not help many of these physical defects, that did not alter the matter. Jehovah could not have a blemished priest

at His altar, or a blemished sacrifice thereon. Both the priest and the sacrifice should be perfect. "No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire." (Lev. 21: 22) "But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer; for it shall not be acceptable for you." (Lev. 22: 20)

Now, we have both the perfect priest, and the perfect sacrifice, in the Person of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. He, having "offered himself without spot to God," passed into the heavens, as our great High Priest, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. The Epistle to the Hebrews dwells elaborately upon these two points. It throws into vivid contrast the sacrifice and priesthood of the Mosaic system and the Sacrifice and Priesthood of Christ. In Him we have divine perfectness, whether as the Victim or as the Priest. We have all that God could require, and all that man could need. His precious blood has put away all our sins; and His all-prevailing intercession ever maintains us in all the perfectness of the place into which His blood has introduced us. "We are complete in him;" (Col. 2); and yet, so feeble and so faltering are we in ourselves; so full of failure and infirmity; so prone to err and stumble in our onward way, that we could not stand for a moment, were it not that "He ever lives to make intercession for us." These things have been dwelt upon in the earlier chapters of this volume; and it is, therefore, needless to enter further upon them here. Those who have anything like correct apprehensions of the grand foundation truths of Christianity, and any measure of experience in the Christian life, will be able to understand how it is that, though "complete in him who is the head of all principality and power, they, nevertheless, need, while down here amid the infirmities, conflicts, and buffetings of earth, the powerful advocacy of their adorable and divine High Priest. The believer is "washed, sanctified, and justified. (1 Cor. 6) He is "accepted in the beloved." (Eph. 1. 6) He can never come into judgement, as regards his person. (See John 5: 24, where the word is *krisin* and not *katakrisin*) Death and judgement are behind him, because he is united to Christ who has passed through them both, on his behalf and in his stead. All these things are divinely true of the very weakest, most unlettered, and inexperienced member of the family of God; but yet, inasmuch as he carries about with him a nature so incorrigibly bad, and so irremediably ruined, that no discipline can correct it, and no medicine cure it, inasmuch as he is the tenant of a body of sin and death — as he is surrounded, on all sides, by hostile influences — as he is called to cope, perpetually, with the combined forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil — he could never keep his ground, much less make progress, were he not upheld by the all-prevailing intercession of his great High Priest, who bears the names of His people upon His breast and upon His shoulder.

Some, I am aware, have found great difficulty in reconciling the idea of the believer's perfect standing in Christ with the need of priesthood. "If," it is argued, "he is perfect, what need has he of a priest?" The two things are as distinctly taught in the word as they are compatible one with another, and understood in the experience of every rightly-instructed Christian. It is of the very last importance to apprehend, with clearness and accuracy, the perfect harmony between these two points. The believer is perfect in Christ; but, in himself, he is a poor feeble creature, ever liable to fall. Hence, the unspeakable blessedness of having One who can manage all his affairs for him, at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens — One who upholds him continually by the right hand of His righteousness — One who will never let him go — One who is able to save to the uttermost — One who is "the same yesterday, today, and for ever" — One who will bear him triumphantly through all the difficulties and dangers which surround him; and, finally, "present him faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Blessed for ever be the grace that has made such ample provision for all our need in the blood of a Spotless Victim and the intercession of a divine High Priest!

Dear christian reader, let it be our care so to walk, so to "keep ourselves unspotted from the

world," so to stand apart from all unhallowed associations, that we may enjoy the highest privileges and discharge the most elevated functions of our position as members of the priestly house of which Christ is the Head. We have "boldness to enter into the holiest, through the blood of Jesus" — "we have a great High Priest over the house of God." (Heb. 10) Nothing can ever rob us of these privileges. But, then, our communion may be marred — our worship may be hindered — our holy functions may remain undischarged. Those ceremonial matters against which the sons of Aaron were warned, in the section before us, have their antitypes in the Christian economy. Had they to be warned against unholy contact? So have we. Had they to be warned against unholy alliance? So have we. Had they to be warned against all manner of ceremonial uncleanness? So have we to be warned against "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." (1 Cor. 7) Were they shorn of many of their loftiest priestly privileges by bodily blemish and imperfect natural growth! So are we, by moral blemish, and imperfect spiritual growth.

Will any one venture to call in question the practical importance of such principles as these? Is it not obvious that the more highly we estimate the blessings which attach to that priestly house of which we have been constituted members, in virtue of our spiritual birth, the more carefully shall we guard against everything which might tend in any wise, to rob us of their enjoyment? Undoubtedly. And this it is which renders the close study of our section so pre-eminently practical. May we feel its power, through the application of God the Holy Ghost! Then shall we enjoy our priestly place. Then shall we faithfully discharge our priestly functions. We shall be able "to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." (Rom. 12: 1) We shall be able to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." (Heb. 13: 15) We shall be able, as members of the "spiritual house" and the "holy priesthood," to "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2: 5) We shall be able, in some small degree, to anticipate that blissful time when, from a redeemed creation, the hallelujahs of intelligent and fervent praise shall ascend to the throne of God and the Lamb throughout the everlasting ages.

Leviticus 23.

One of the most profound and comprehensive chapters in the inspired volume now lies open before us, and claims our prayerful study. It contains the record of the seven great feasts or periodical solemnities into which Israel's year was divided. In other words, it furnishes us with a perfect view of God's dealings with Israel, during the entire period of their most eventful history.

Looking at the feasts separately, we have the Sabbath, the Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, the first-fruits, Pentecost, the feast of trumpets, the day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles. This would make eight, altogether; but it is very obvious that the Sabbath occupies quite a unique and independent place. It is first presented, and its proper characteristics and attendant circumstances fully set forth; and then, we read "These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons." (Ver. 4) so that, strictly speaking, as the attentive reader will observe, Israel's *first* great feast was the Passover, and their *seventh* was the feast of tabernacles. That is to say, divesting them of their typical dress, we have, full, redemption; and, last of all, we have the millennial glory. The paschal lamb typified the death of Christ; (1 Cor. 5: 7;) and the feast of tabernacles typified "the times of the restitution of all things, of which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began." (Acts 3: 21)

Such was the opening and such the closing feast of the Jewish year. Atonement is the foundation, glory the top-stone; while, between these two points, we have the resurrection of Christ, (ver. 10-14,) the gathering of the Church, (ver 15-21,) the waking up of Israel to a sense of their long-lost glory, (ver. 24-25) their repentance and hearty reception of their Messiah. (Ver. 27-32.) And that not one feature

might be lacking in this grand typical representation, we have provision made for the Gentiles to come in at the close of the harvest, and glean in Israel's fields. (Ver. 22.) All this renders the picture divinely perfect, and evokes from the heart of every lover of Scripture the most intense admiration. What could? be more complete? The blood of the Lamb and practical holiness founded thereon — the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and His ascension into heaven — the descent of the Holy Ghost, in Pentecostal power, to form the Church — the awakening of the remnant — their repentance and restoration — the blessing of "the poor and the stranger" — the manifestation of the glory — the rest and blessedness of the kingdom. Such are the contents of this truly marvellous chapter, which we shall, now, proceed to examine in detail. May God the Holy Ghost be our Teacher!

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings." The place which the Sabbath here gets is full of interest. The Lord is about to furnish a type of all His dealings in grace with His people; and, ere He does so, He sets forth the Sabbath as the significant expression of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. It was an actual solemnity, to be observed by Israel; but it was also a type of what is yet to be, when all that great and glorious work which this chapter foreshadows shall have been accomplished. It is God's rest, into which all who believe can enter now in spirit; but which, as to its full and actual accomplishment, yet remains. (Heb. 4) we work now. We shall rest by and by. In one sense, the believer enters into rest; in another sense, he labours to enter into it. He has found his rest in Christ; he labours to enter into his rest in glory. He has found his full mental repose in what Christ has wrought for him, and his eye rests on that everlasting Sabbath upon which he shall enter when all his desert toils and conflicts are over. He cannot rest in the midst of a scene of sin and wretchedness. "He rests in Christ, the Son of God, who took the servant's form." And, while thus resting, he is called to labour as a worker together with God, in the full assurance that, when all his toil is over, he shall enjoy unbroken, eternal repose in those mansions of unfading light and unalloyed blessedness where labour and sorrow can never enter. Blessed prospect! May it brighten more and more each hour in the vision of faith! May we labour all the more earnestly and faithfully, as being sure of this most precious rest at the end! True, there are foretastes of the eternal Sabbath; but these foretastes only cause us to long more ardently for the blessed reality — that Sabbath which shall never be broken — that "holy convocation" which shall never be dissolved.

We have already remarked that the Sabbath occupies quite a unique and independent place in this chapter. This is evident from the wording of the fourth verse, where the Lord seems to begin afresh with the expression, "These are the feasts of the Lord," as if to leave the Sabbath quite distinct from the seven feasts which follow, though it be, in reality, the type of that rest to which those feasts so blessedly introduce the soul.

"These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's Passover." (Ver. 4, 5) Here, then, we have the first of the seven periodical solemnities — the offering of that paschal lamb whose blood it was that screened the Israel of God from the sword of the destroying angel, on that terrible night when Egypt's firstborn were laid low. This is the acknowledged type of the death of Christ; and, hence, its place in this chapter is divinely appropriate. It forms the foundation of all. We can know nothing of rest, nothing of holiness, nothing of fellowship, save on the ground of the death of Christ. It is peculiarly striking, significant, and beautiful to observe that, directly God's rest is spoken of, the next thing introduced is the blood of the paschal lamb. As much as to say, "There is the *rest*, but here is your

title." No doubt, labour will *capacitate* us, but it is the blood that *entitles* us to enjoy the rest.

"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein." (Ver. 6-8.) The people are here assembled round Jehovah, in that practical holiness which is founded upon accomplished redemption; and, while thus assembled, the fragrant odour of the sacrifice ascends from the altar of Israel to the throne of Israel's God. This gives us a fine view of that holiness which God looks for in the life of His redeemed. It is based upon the sacrifice, and it ascends in immediate connection with the acceptable fragrance of the Person of Christ. "Ye shall do no *servile work* therein. But ye shall offer *an offering made by fire.*" What a contrast! The servile work of man's hands, and the sweet savour of Christ's sacrifice! The practical holiness of God's people is not servile labour. It is the living unfolding of Christ, through them, by the power of the Holy Ghost. "To me to live is Christ." This is the true idea. Christ is our life; and every exhibition of that life is, in the divine judgement, redolent with all the fragrance of Christ. It may be a very trifling matter, in man's judgement; but, in so far as it is the outflow of Christ our life, it is unspeakably precious to God. It ascends to Him and can never be forgotten. "The fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ" are produced in the life of the believer, and no power of earth or hell can prevent their fragrance ascending to the throne of God.

It is needful to ponder deeply the contrast between "servile work," and the outflow of the life of Christ. The type is very vivid. There was a total cessation of manual labour throughout the whole assembly; but the sweet savour of the burnt offering ascended to God. These were to be the two grand characteristics of the feast of unleavened bread. Man's labour ceased, and the odour of the sacrifice ascended; and this was the type of a believer's life of practical holiness. What a triumphant answer is here to the legalist, on the one side, and the antinomian on the other! The former is silenced by the words, "no servile work;" and the latter is confounded by the words, "Ye shall offer an offering made by fire." The most elaborate works of man's hands are "servile;" "but the smallest cluster of "the fruits of righteousness" is to the glory and praise of God. Throughout the entire period of the believer's life, there must be no servile work; nothing of the hateful and degrading element of legality. There should be only the continual presentation of the life of Christ, brought out and exhibited by the power of the Holy Ghost. Throughout the "seven days" of Israel's second great periodical solemnity, there was to be "no leaven;" but, instead thereof, the sweet savour of "an offering made by fire" was to be presented to the Lord. May we fully enter into the practical teaching of this most striking and instructive type!

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest; and ye shall wave the sheaf Before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day, when ye wave the sheaf, an the lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt offering unto the Lord. And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, in all your dwellings." (Ver. 9-14)

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept." (1 Cor. 15: 20) The beautiful ordinance of the presentation of the sheaf of first fruits typify the resurrection of Christ, who, "at the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," rose

triumphant from the tomb, having accomplished the glorious work of redemption. His was a "resurrection *from among* the dead;" and, in it, we have, at once, the earnest and the type of the resurrection of His people. "Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." When Christ comes, His people will be raised from among the dead;" (*ek nekron*) that is those of them that sleep in Jesus. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (Rev. 20: 5) When, immediately after the transfiguration, our blessed Lord spoke of His rising "*from among the dead*," the disciples questioned among themselves what that could mean. (See Mark 9) Every orthodox Jew believed in the doctrine of the "resurrection of the dead," (*anastasis nekron*) But the idea of a "resurrection from among the dead," (*anastasis ek nekron*) was what the disciples were unable to grasp and, no doubt, many disciples since then have felt considerable difficulty with respect to a mystery so profound.

However, if my reader will prayerfully study and compare 1 Cor. 15 with 1 Thess. 4: 13-18, he will get much precious instruction upon this most interesting and practical truth. He can also look at Romans 8: 11, in connection. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead (*ek nekron*) dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." From all these passages it will be seen that the resurrection of the Church will be upon precisely the same principle as the resurrection of Christ. Both the Head and the body are shown to be raised "from among the dead." The first sheaf and all the sheaves that follow after are morally connected.

It must be evident to any one who carefully ponders the subject, in the light of scripture, that there is a very material difference between the resurrection of the believer and the resurrection of the unbeliever. Both shall be raised; but Revelation 20: 5, proves that there will be a thousand years between the two, so that they differ both as to the principle, and as to the time. Some have found difficulty, in reference to this subject, from the fact that, in John 5: 28, our Lord speaks of "the *hour* in the which *all* that are in the graves shall hear his voice." "How," it may be asked, "can there be a thousand years between the two resurrections when both are spoken of as occurring in an 'hour'?" The answer is very simple. In verse 28, the quickening of dead souls is spoken of as occurring in an "hour;" and this work has been going on for over eighteen hundred years. Now, if a period of nearly two thousand years can be represented by the word "hour," what objection can there be to the idea of one thousand years being represented in the same way? Surely, none whatever, especially when it is expressly stated that "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

But, furthermore, when we find mention made of "a *first* resurrection," is it not evident that all are not to be raised together? Why speak of a "first" if there is but the one? It may be said that "the first resurrection" refers to the soul; but where is the scripture warrant for such a statement? The solemn fact is this: when the "shout of the archangel and the trump of God" shall be heard, the redeemed who sleep in Jesus will be raised to meet Him in the glory. The wicked dead, whoever they be, from the days of Cain down, will remain in their graves, during the thousand years of millennial blessedness; and, at the close of that bright and blissful period, they shall come forth and stand before "the great white throne," there to be "judged every man according to his works," and to pass from the throne of judgement into the lake of fire. Appalling thought!

Oh! reader, how is it in reference to your precious soul Have you seen, by the eye of faith, the blood of the paschal Lamb shed to screen you from this terrible hour? Have you seen the precious sheaf of firstfruits reaped and gathered into the heavenly garner, as the earnest of your being gathered in due time? These are solemn questions, deeply solemn. Do not put them aside. See that you are, now, under the cover of the blood of Jesus. Remember, you cannot glean so much as a single ear in the fields of

redemption until you have seen the true sheaf waved before the Lord. "Ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until *the self-same day* that ye have brought an offering unto your God." The harvest could not be touched until the sheaf of first fruits had been presented, and, with the sheaf, a burnt offering and a meat offering.

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves, of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked *with leaven*; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord." (Ver. 15-17) This is the feast of Pentecost — the type of God's people, gathered by the Holy Ghost, and presented before Him, in connection with all the preciousness of Christ. In the Passover, we have the death of Christ; in the sheaf of first fruits, we have the resurrection of Christ; and in the feast of Pentecost, we have the descent of the Holy Ghost to form the Church. All this is divinely perfect. The death and resurrection of Christ had to be accomplished, ere the Church could be formed. The sheaf was offered and then the loaves were baked.

And, observe, "They shall be baked *with leaven*." Why was this? Because they were intended to foreshadow those who, though filled with the Holy Ghost, and adorned with His gifts and graces, had, nevertheless, *evil* dwelling in them. The assembly, on the day of Pentecost, stood in the full value of the blood of Christ, was crowned with the gifts of the Holy ghost; but there was leaven there also. No power of the Spirit could do away with the fact that there was evil dwelling in the people of God. It might be suppressed and kept out of view; but it was there. This fact is foreshadowed in the type, by the leaven in the two loaves; and it is set forth in the actual history of the Church; for, albeit God the Holy Ghost was present in the assembly, the flesh was there likewise to lie unto Him. Flesh is flesh, nor can it ever be made ought else than flesh. The Holy Ghost did not come down, on the day of Pentecost, to improve nature or do away with the fact of its incurable evil, but to baptise believers into one body, and connect them with their living Head in heaven.

Allusion has already been made, in the chapter on the peace offering, to the fact that leaven was permitted in connection therewith. It was the divine recognition of the evil in the worshipper. Thus is it also in the ordinance of the "two wave loaves;" they were to be "baked with *leaven*," because of the *evil* in the antitype.

But, blessed be God, the evil which was divinely recognised was divinely provided for. This gives great rest and comfort to the heart. It is a comfort to be assured that God knows the worst of us; and, moreover, that He has made provision according to *His* knowledge, and not merely according to *ours*. "And ye shall offer *with the bread*, seven lambs *without blemish*, of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams; they shall be for a burnt offering unto the Lord, with their meat offering and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. (Ver. 18) Here, then, we have, in immediate connection with the leavened loaves, the presentation of an unblemished sacrifice, typifying the great and all-important truth that it is Christ's perfectness and not our sinfulness that is ever before the view of God. Observe, particularly, the words, "ye shall offer *with the bread*, seven lambs *without blemish*." Precious truth! Deeply precious, though clothed in typical dress! May the reader be enabled to enter into it, to make his own of it, to stay his conscience upon it, to feed and refresh his heart with it, to delight his whole soul in it. Not I, but Christ.

It may, however, be objected that the fact of Christ's being a spotless lamb is not sufficient to roll the burden of guilt from a sin-stained conscience — a sweet-savour offering would not, of itself, avail

for a guilty sinner. This objection might be urged; but our type fully meets and entirely removes it. It is quite true that a burnt offering would not have been sufficient where "leaven" was in question; and hence we read, "Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a *sin offering*, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings." (Ver. 19) The "sin offering" was the answer to the "leaven" in the loaves — "peace" was established, so that communion could be enjoyed, and all went up in immediate connection with the "sweet savour" of the "burnt offering" unto the Lord.

Thus, on the day of Pentecost, the church was presented, in all the value and excellency of Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Though having in itself the leaven of the old nature, that leaven was not reckoned, because the divine Sin Offering had perfectly answered for it. The power of the Holy Ghost did not remove the leaven, but the blood of the Lamb had atoned for it. This is a most interesting and important distinction. The work of the Spirit in the believer does not remove indwelling evil. It enables him to detect, judge, and subdue the evil; but no amount of spiritual power can do away with the fact that the evil is there — though, blessed be God, the conscience is at perfect ease, inasmuch as the blood of our Sin Offering has eternally settled the whole question; and, therefore, instead of our evil being under the eye of God, it has been put out of sight for ever, and we are accepted in all the acceptableness of Christ, who offered Himself to God as a sweet-smelling sacrifice, that He might perfectly glorify Him in all things, and be the food of His people for ever.

Thus much as to Pentecost — after which a long; period is entered to roll on ere we have any movement amongst the people. there is, however, the notice of "the poor and stranger" in that beautiful ordinance which has already been referred to in its moral aspect. Here we may look at it in a dispensational point of view. "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the Lord your God." (Ver. 22) Provision is here made for the stranger to glean in Israel's fields. The Gentile is to be brought in to participate in the overflowing goodness of God. When Israel's storehouse and winepress have been fully furnished, there will be precious sheaves and rich clusters for the Gentile to gather.

We are not, however, to suppose that the spiritual blessings with which the Church is endowed in the heavenlies with Christ are set forth under the figure of a stranger gleanings in Israel's fields. These blessings are as new to the seed of Abraham as they are to the Gentile. They are not the gleanings of Canaan, but the glories of heaven — the glories of Christ. The Church is not merely blessed by Christ, but with and in Christ. The bride of Christ will not be sent forth to gather up, as a stranger, the sheaves and clusters in the corners of Israel's fields, and from the branches of Israel's vines. No; she tastes of higher blessings, richer joys, nobler dignities, than ought that Israel ever knew. She is not to glean as a stranger on earth, but to enjoy her own wealthy and happy home in heaven to which she belongs. This is the "better thing" which God hath, in His manifold wisdom and grace, "reserved" for her. No doubt, it will be a gracious privilege for "the stranger" to be permitted to glean after Israel's harvest is reaped; but the church's portion is incomparably higher, even to be the bride of Israel's king, the partner of His throne, the sharer of His joys, His dignities, and His glories; to be like Him, and with Him, for ever. The eternal mansions of the Father's house on high, and not the ungleaned corners of Israel's fields below, are to be the church's portion. May we ever bear this in mind, and live, in some small degree, worthy of such a holy and elevated destination!

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work; but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord." (Ver. 23-25) A new subject is introduced here, by the words, "the Lord spake unto Moses,"

which, let me remark in passing, affords an interesting help in classifying the subjects of the entire chapter. Thus, the Sabbath, the Passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, are given under the first communication. The wave sheaf, the wave loaves, and the ungleaned corners, are given under the second; after which we have a long unnoticed interval, and then comes the soul-stirring feast of trumpets, on the first day of the seventh month. This ordinance leads us on to the time, now fast approaching, when the remnant of Israel shall "blow up the trumpet" for a memorial, calling to remembrance their long-lost glory, and stirring up themselves to seek the Lord.

The feast of trumpets is intimately connected with another great solemnity, namely, "the day of atonement." "Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God it shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath." (Ver. 27-32) Thus, after the blowing of the trumpets, an interval of eight days elapses, and then we have the day of atonement, with which these things are connected, namely, affliction of soul, atonement for sin, and rest from labour. All these things will find their due place in the experience of the Jewish remnant, by and by. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." (Jer. 8: 20) such will be the pathetic lament of the remnant when the Spirit of God shall have begun to touch their heart and conscience. "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall Be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for her firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart," &c. (Zech. 12: 10-14)

What deep mourning, what intense affliction, what genuine penitence there will be, when, under the mighty action of the Holy Ghost, the conscience of the remnant shall recall the sins of the past, the neglect of the Sabbath, the breach of the law, the stoning of the prophets, the piercing of the Son, the resistance of the Spirit! All these things will come in array on the tablets of an enlightened and exercised conscience, and produce keen affliction of soul.

But the blood of atonement will meet all. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. 13: 1) They will be made to feel their guilt and be afflicted, and they will also be led to see the efficacy of the blood and perfect peace — a sabbath of rest unto their souls.

Now, when such results shall have been reached, in the experience of Israel, in the latter day, for what should we look? Surely, THE GLORY. When the "blindness" is removed, and The veil is taken away, when the heart of the remnant is turned to Jehovah, then shall the bright beams of the "Sun of righteousness" fall, in healing, restoring, and saving power upon a truly penitent, afflicted, and poor people. To enter elaborately upon this subject would demand a volume in itself. The exercises, the experiences, the conflicts, the trials, the difficulties, and the ultimate blessings of the Jewish remnant are fully detailed throughout the Psalms and Prophets. The existence of such a body must be clearly seen, ere the Psalms and Prophets can be studied with intelligence and satisfaction. Not but that we may learn much from those portions of inspiration, for "all scripture is profitable." But the surest way to make a right use of any portion of the Word of God, is to understand its primary application.. If, then, we apply scriptures to the Church or heavenly body which belong, strictly speaking, to the Jewish remnant or earthly body, we must be involved in serious error as to both the one and the other. In point of fact, it happens, in many cases, that the existence of such a body as the remnant is completely ignored, and the true position and hope of the Church are entirely lost sight of. These are grave errors

which my reader should sedulously seek to avoid. Let him not suppose, for a moment, that they are mere speculations fitted only to engage the attention of the curious, and possessing no practical power whatever. There could not be a more erroneous supposition. What! is it of no practical value to us to know whether we belong to earth or heaven? Is it of no real moment to us to know whether we shall be at rest in the mansions above, or passing through the apocalyptic judgements down here? Who could admit ought so unreasonable? The truth is, it would be difficult to fix on any line of truth more practical than that which unfolds the distinctive destinies of the earthly remnant and the heavenly Church. I shall not pursue the subject further, here; but the reader will find it well worthy of his calm and prayerful study. We shall close this section with a view of the feast of tabernacles — the last solemnity of the Jewish year.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations; ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days: all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths; that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." (Ver. 33-43)

This feast points us forward to the time of Israel's glory in the latter day, and, therefore, it forms a most lovely and appropriate close to the whole series of feasts. The harvest was gathered in, all was done, the storehouses were amply furnished, and Jehovah would have His people to give expression to their festive joy. But, alas! they seem to have had but little heart to enter into the divine thought in reference to this most delightful ordinance. They lost sight of the fact that they had been strangers and pilgrims, and hence their long neglect of this feast. From the days of Joshua down to the time of Nehemiah, the feast of tabernacles had never once been celebrated. It was reserved for the feeble remnant that returned from the Babylonish captivity to do what had not been done even in the bright days of Solomon. "And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun, unto that day, had not the children of Israel done so. and there was very great gladness." (Neh. 8: 17) How refreshing it must have been to those who had hung their harps on the willows of Babylon, to find themselves beneath the shade of the willows of Canaan! It was a sweet foretaste of that time of which the feast of tabernacles was the type, when Israel's restored tribes shall repose within those millennial bowers which the faithful hand of Jehovah will erect for them in the land which He swore to give unto Abraham and to his seed for ever. Thrice happy moment when the heavenly and the earthly shall meet, as intimated, in "the first day" and "the eighth day" of the feast of tabernacles! "The heavens shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel."

There is a fine passage in the last chapter of Zechariah which goes to prove, very distinctly, that the true celebration of the feast of tabernacles belongs to the glory of the latter day. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." (Lev. 14: 16) What a scene! Who would seek to rob it of its characteristic beauty by a vague system of interpretation falsely called spiritualizing? Surely, Jerusalem means Jerusalem; nations mean nations;

and the feast of tabernacles means the feast of tabernacles. Is there anything incredible in this? Surely, nothing save to man's reason which rejects all that lies beyond its narrow range. The feast of tabernacles shall yet be celebrated in the land of Canaan, and the nations of the saved shall go up thither to participate in its glorious and hallowed festivities. Jerusalem's warfare shall then be accomplished, the roar of battle shall cease. The sword and the spear shall be transformed into the implements of peaceful agriculture; Israel shall repose beneath the refreshing shade of their vines and fig-trees; and all the earth shall rejoice in the government of "the Prince of Peace." Such is the prospect presented in the unerring pages of inspiration. The types foreshadow it; the prophets prophesy of it; faith believes it; and hope anticipates it.

NOTE. — At the close of our chapter we read, "And Moses declared unto the children of Israel *the feasts of the Lord.*" This was their true character, their original title; but in the Gospel of John, they are called "*feasts of the Jews.*" They had long ceased to be Jehovah's feasts. He was shut out. They did not want Him; and, hence, in John 7, when Jesus was asked to go up to "*the Jews' feast of tabernacles,*" He answered, "My time is not yet come;" and when He did go up it was "privately," to take His place outside of the whole thing, and to call upon every thirsty soul to come unto Him and drink. There is a solemn lesson in this. Divine institutions are speedily marred in the hands of man; but, oh! how deeply blessed to know that the thirsty soul that feels the barrenness and drought connected with a scene of empty religious formality, has only to flee to Jesus and drink freely of His exhaustless springs, and so become a channel of blessing to others.

Leviticus 24.

There is very much to interest the spiritual mind in this brief section. We have seen in chapter 23. the history of the dealings of God with Israel, from the offering up of the Pascal Lamb, until the rest and glory of the millennial Kingdom. In the chapter now before us, we have two grand ideas — namely, first, the unfailing record and memorial of the twelve tribes, maintained before God, by the power of the Spirit, and the efficacy of Christ's priesthood; and, secondly, the apostasy of Israel after the flesh, and divine judgement executed thereon. It is the clear apprehension of the former that will enable us to contemplate the latter.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee *pure* oil olive, *beaten* for the light, to cause the lamps to burn *continually.* Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it *from the evening unto the morning* before the Lord *continually;* it shall be a statute for ever in your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord *continually.*" (Ver. 1-4) The "pure oil" represents the grace of the Holy Spirit, founded upon the work of Christ, as exhibited by the candlestick of "beaten gold." The "olive" was *pressed* to yield the "oil," and the gold was "*beaten*" to form the candlestick. In other words, the grace and light of the Spirit are founded upon the death of Christ, and maintained, in clearness and power, by the priesthood of Christ. The golden lamp diffused its light throughout the precincts of the sanctuary, during the dreary hours of night, when darkness brooded over the nation and all were wrapped in slumber. In all this we have a vivid presentation of God's faithfulness to His people whatever might be their outward condition. Darkness and slumber might settle down upon them, but the lamp was to burn "continually." The high priest was responsible to keep the steady light of testimony burning during the tedious hours of the night. "Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning, before the Lord continually." The maintenance of this light was not left dependent upon Israel. God had provided one whose office it was to look after it and order it continually.

But, further, we read, "And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two-tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six in a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord *continually*, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, by a perpetual statute." (Ver. 5-9) There is no mention of leaven in these loaves. They represent, I doubt not, Christ in immediate connection with "the twelve tribes of Israel." They were laid up in the sanctuary before the Lord, on the pure table, for seven days, after which they became the food of Aaron and his sons, furnishing another striking figure of Israel's condition in the view of Jehovah, whatever might be their outward aspect. The twelve tribes are ever before Him. Their memorial can never perish. They are ranged in divine order in the sanctuary, covered with the fragrant incense of Christ, and reflected from the pure table whereon they rest beneath the bright beams of that golden lamp which shines, with undimmed lustre, through the darkest hour of the nation's moral night.

Now, it is well to see that we are not sacrificing sound judgement or divine truth on the altar of fancy, when we venture to interpret, after such a fashion, the mystic furniture of the sanctuary. We are taught, in Hebrews 9, that all these things were "the patterns of things in the heavens;" and again, in Hebrews 10: 1, that they were "a shadow of good things to come." We are, therefore, warranted in believing that there are "things in the heavens" answering to the "patterns" — that there is a substance answering to the "shadow". In a word, we are warranted in believing that there is that "in the heavens" which answers to "the seven lamps," "the pure table," and the "twelve loaves." This is not human imagination, but divine truth on which faith has fed, in all ages. What was the meaning of Elijah's altar of "twelve stones," on the top of Carmel? It was nothing else than the expression of his faith in that truth of which the "twelve loaves" were "the pattern" or "the shadow." He believed in the unbroken unity of the nation, maintained before God in the eternal stability of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whatever might be the external condition of the nation. Man might look in vain for the manifested unity of the twelve tribes; but faith could always look within the hallowed enclosure of the sanctuary, and there see the twelve loaves, covered with pure frankincense, ranged in divine order on the pure table; and even though all without were wrapped in midnight's gloomy shades, yet could faith discern, by the light of the seven golden lamps, the same grand truth foreshadowed — namely, the indissoluble unity of Israel's twelve tribes.

Thus it was then; and thus it is now. The night is dark and gloomy. There is not, in all this lower world, so much as a single ray by which the human eye can trace the unity of Israel's tribes. They are scattered among the nations, and lost to man's vision. But their memorial is before the Lord. Faith owns this, because it knows that "all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus." It sees in the upper sanctuary, by the Spirit's perfect light, the twelve tribes faithfully memorialised. Harken to the following noble accents of faith: "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise *our twelve tribes*, instantly serving God night and day, (*nukta kai emeran*) hope to come." (Acts 26: 6, 7) Now, if King Agrippa had asked Paul, "Where are the twelve tribes?" could he have shown them to him? No. But why not? Was it because they were not to be seen? No; but because Agrippa had not eyes to see them. The twelve tribes lay far beyond the range of Agrippa's vision. It needed the eye of faith and the gracious light of the Spirit of God to be able to discern the twelve loaves, ordered upon the pure table in the sanctuary of God. There they were, and Paul saw them there; though the moment in which he gave utterance to his sublime conviction was as dark as it well could be, Faith is not governed by appearances. It takes its stand upon the lofty rock of God's eternal word, and, in all the calmness and certainty of that holy elevation, feeds upon the

immutable word of Him who cannot lie. Unbelief may stupidly stare about and ask, Where are the twelve tribes? or, How can they be found and restored? It is impossible to give an answer. Not because there is no answer to be given; But because unbelief is utterly incapable of rising to the elevated point from which the answer can be seen. Faith is as sure that the memorial of the twelve tribes of Israel is before the eye of Israel's God, as it is that the twelve loaves were laid on the golden table every Sabbath day. But who can convince the sceptic or the infidel of this? Who can secure credence for such a truth from those who are governed, in all things, by reason or sense, and know nothing of what it is to hope against hope? Faith finds divine certainties and eternal realities in the midst of a scene where reason and sense can find nothing. Oh! for a more profound faith! May we grasp, with more intense earnestness, every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, and feed upon it in all the artless simplicity of a little child.

We shall now turn to the second point in our chapter — namely, the apostasy of Israel, after the flesh, and the divine judgement thereon.

"And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel and this son of an Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp. And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses And they put him in ward, that the mind of the Lord might be showed them. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him And Moses spake to the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones. And the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses." (Ver. 10-23)

The peculiar place assigned by the inspired penman to this narrative is striking and interesting. I have no doubt whatever but that it is designed to give us the opposite side of the picture presented in the opening verses of the chapter. Israel after the flesh has grievously failed and sinned against Jehovah. The name of the Lord has been blasphemed amongst the Gentiles. Wrath has come upon the nation. The judgements of an offended God have fallen upon them. But the day is coming when the dark and heavy cloud of judgement shall roll away; and then shall the twelve tribes, in their unbroken unity, stand forth before all the nations as the amazing monument of Jehovah's faithfulness and loving-kindness, "And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call Upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." (Isa. 12)

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed in your mercy, that they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! For who

hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. 11. 25-36)

Passages might be multiplied to prove that though Israel is suffering the divine judgement because of sin, yet "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" — that though the blasphemer is being stoned without the camp, the twelve loaves are undisturbed within the sanctuary. "The voices of the prophets" declare, and the voices of apostles re-echo the glorious truth that "all Israel shall be saved;" not because they have not sinned, but because "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Let Christians beware how they tamper with "the promises made unto the fathers." If these promises be explained away or misapplied, it must, necessarily, weaken our moral sense of the divine integrity and accuracy of Scripture, as a whole. If one part may be explained away, so may another.

If one passage may be vaguely interpreted, so may another; and thus it would come to pass that we should be deprived of all that blessed certainty which constitutes the foundation of our repose in reference to all that the Lord hath spoken. But more of this as we dwell upon the remaining chapters of our book.

Leviticus 25.

The intelligent reader will discern a strong moral link between this and the preceding chapter. In Lev. 24 we learn that the house of Israel is preserved for the land of Canaan. In chapter 25 we learn that the land of Canaan is preserved for the house of Israel. Taking both together, we have the record of a truth which no power of earth or hell can obliterate. "All Israel shall be saved," and "the land shall not be sold forever." The former of these statements enunciates a principle which has stood like a rock amid the ocean of conflicting interpretations; while the latter declares a fact which many nations of the uncircumcised have sought in vain to ignore.

The reader will, I doubt not, observe the peculiar way in which our chapter opens. "And! the Lord spake unto Moses in *Mount Sinai*." The principal part of the communications contained in the Book of Leviticus is characterised by the fact of its emanating "from the tabernacle of the congregation." This is easily accounted for. Those communications have special reference to the service, communion, and worship of the priests, or to the moral condition of the people, and hence they are issued, as might be expected, from "the tabernacle of the congregation," that grand centre of all that appertained, in any way, to priestly service. Here, however, the communication is made from quite a different point. "The Lord spake unto Moses in *Mount Sinai*." Now, we know that every expression in Scripture has its own special meaning, and we are justified in expecting a different line of communication from "mount Sinai" from that which reaches us from "the tabernacle of the congregation." And so it is. The chapter at which we have now arrived treats of Jehovah's claims as Lord of all the earth. It is not the worship and communion of a priestly house, or the internal ordering of the nation; but the claims of God in government, His right to give a certain portion of the earth to a certain people to hold as tenants under Him. In a word, it is not to Jehovah in "the tabernacle" — the place of *worship*; but Jehovah in "Mount Sinai" — the place of *government*.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a Sabbath unto the Lord. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto

the land. And the Sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, and for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat." (Ver. 1-7)

Here, then, we have the special feature of the Lord's land. He would have it to enjoy a sabbatical year, and in that year there was to be the evidence of the rich profusion with which He would bless those who held as tenants under Him. Happy, highly privileged tenantry! What an honour to hold immediately under Jehovah! No rent! No taxes! No burdens! Well might it be said, "Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah." We know, alas! that Israel failed to take full possession of that wealthy land of which Jehovah made them a present, He had given it *all*. He had given it *forever*. They took but *a part*, and that for *a time*. Still, there it is, The property is there, though the tenants are ejected for the present. "the land shall not be sold *for ever*: for *the land is mine*; for ye are strangers and sojourners *with me*." What does this mean, but that Canaan belongs specially to Jehovah, and that He will hold it through the tribes of Israel? True, "the earth is the Lord's," but that is quite another thing. It is plain that He has been pleased, for His own unsearchable purposes, to take special possession of the land of Canaan, and to submit that land to a peculiar line of treatment, to mark it off from all other lands, by calling it His own, and to distinguish it by judgements, and ordinances, and periodical solemnities, the mere contemplation of which enlightens the understanding: and affects the heart. Where, throughout all the earth, do we read of a land enjoying a year of unbroken repose — a year of richest abundance? The rationalist may ask, "How can these things be" The sceptic may doubt if they could be; but faith finds a satisfying answer from the lips of Jehovah: "And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store." (Ver. 20-22) Nature might say, "What shall we do for *our sowing*?" Gods answer is, "I will command *My blessing*." God's "blessing" is better far than man's "sowing." He was not going to let them starve in His sabbatic year. They were to feed upon the fruits of His blessing, while they celebrated His year of rest — a year which pointed forward to that eternal Sabbath that remains for the people of God.

"And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." (Ver. 8, 9) It is peculiarly interesting to note the various methods in which the millennial rest was held up to view, in the Jewish economy. Every seventh day was a sabbatical day; every seventh year was a sabbatical year; and every seven times seven years there was a jubilee. Each and all of these typical solemnities held up to the vision of faith the blessed prospect of a time when labour and sorrow should cease; when "the sweat of the brow" would no longer be needed to satisfy the cravings of hunger; but when a millennial earth, enriched by the copious showers of divine grace, and fertilised by the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness, should pour its abundance into the storehouse and winepress of the people of God. Happy time! Happy people! How blessed to be assured that these things are not the pencillings of imagination, or the flights of fancy, but the substantial verities of divine revelation, to be enjoyed by faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Of all the Jewish solemnities the jubilee would seem to have been the most soul-stirring and enrapturing. It stood immediately connected with the great day of atonement. It was when the blood of the victim was shed, that the emancipating sound of the jubilee trump was heard through the hills and

valleys of the land of Canaan. That longed-for note was designed to wake up the nation from the very centre of its moral being, to stir the deepest depths of the soul, and to send a shining river of divine and ineffable joy through the length and breadth of the land. "In the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. Not a corner was to remain unvisited by "the joyful sound." The aspect of the jubilee was as wide as the aspect of the atonement on which the jubilee was based.

"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession." (Ver. 8-13) All estates and conditions of the people were permitted to feel the hallowed and refreshing influence of this most noble institution. The exile returned; the captive was emancipated; the debtor set free; each family opened its bosom to receive once more its long-lost members; each inheritance received back its exiled owner. The sound of the trumpet was the welcome and soul-stirring signal for the captive to escape; for the slave to cast aside the chains of his bondage; for the manslayer to return to his home; for the ruined and poverty-stricken to rise to the possession of their forfeited inheritance. No sooner had the trumpet's thrice-welcome sound fallen upon the ear, than the mighty tide of blessing rose majestically, and sent its refreshing undulations into the most remote corners of Jehovah's highly-favoured land.

"And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another: according to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee. According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am "the Lord your God." (Ver. 14-17) The year of jubilee reminded both buyer and seller that the land belonged to Jehovah, and was not to be sold. "The fruits" might be sold, but that was all — Jehovah could never give up the land to any one. It is important to get this point well fixed in the mind. It may open up a very extensive line of truth. If the land of Canaan is not to be sold — if Jehovah declares it to be His for ever, then for whom does He want it? Who is to hold under Him? Those to whom He gave it by an everlasting covenant, that they might have it in possession as long as the moon endureth — even to all generations.

There is no spot in all the earth like unto the land of Canaan in the divine estimation. There Jehovah set up His throne and His sanctuary; there His priests stood to minister continually before Him; there the voices of His prophets were heard testifying of present ruin and future restoration and glory; there the Baptist began, continued, and ended his career as the forerunner of the Messiah; there the Blessed One was born of a woman; there He was baptised; there He preached and taught; there He laboured and died; from there He ascended in triumph to the right hand of God; thither God the Holy Ghost descended, in Pentecostal power; from thence the overflowing tide of gospel testimony emanated to the ends of the earth; thither the Lord of glory will descend, ere long, and plant His foot "on the mount of Olives;" there His throne will be re-established and His worship restored. In a word, His eyes and His heart are there continually; its dust is precious in His sight; it is the centre of all His thoughts and operations, as touching this earth; and it is His purpose to make it an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations.

It is, then, I repeat, immensely important to get a firm hold of this interesting line of truth with respect to the land of Canaan. Of that land Jehovah hath said, "IT IS MINE." Who shall take it from

Him? Where is the king or the emperor, where the power, human or diabolical, that can wrest "the pleasant land out of Jehovah's omnipotent grasp? True, it has been a bone of contention, an apple of discord to the nations. It has been, and it will yet be, the scene and centre of cruel war and bloodshed. But far above all the din of battle and the strife of nations, these words fall with divine clearness, fullness, and power, upon the ear of faith — "*the land is mine!*" Jehovah can never give up that land, nor those "twelve tribes," through whom He is to inherit it for ever. Let my reader think of this. Let him ponder it deeply. Let him guard against all looseness of thought and vagueness of interpretation, as to this subject. God hath not cast away His people, or the land which He swore to give unto them for an everlasting possession. "The twelve loaves" of Leviticus 24 bear witness to the former; and "the jubilee" of Leviticus 25 bears witness to the latter. The memorial of the "twelve tribes of Israel" is ever before the Lord; and the moment is rapidly approaching when the trump of jubilee shall be heard upon the mountains of Palestine. Then, in reality, the captive shall cast off the ignominious chain which, for ages, has bound him. Then shall the exile return to that happy home from which he has so long been banished. Then shall every debt be cancelled, every burden removed, and every tear wiped away. "For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her (Jerusalem) like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb; and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many For I know their works and their thoughts; it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory, And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow; to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." (Isaiah 66: 12-23)

And, now, let us look for a moment at the practical effect of the jubilee — its influence upon the transactions between man and man. "And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another. according to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according to the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee." The scale of prices was to be regulated by the jubilee. If that glorious event were at hand, the price was low; if far off, the price was high. All human compacts as to land were broken up the moment the trump of jubilee was heard, for the land was Jehovah's; and the jubilee brought all back to its normal condition.

This teaches us a fine lesson. If our hearts are cherishing the abiding hope of the Lord's return, we shall set light by all earthly things. It is morally impossible that we can be in the attitude of waiting for the Son from heaven, and not be detached from this present world. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." (Phil. 4) A person may hold "the doctrine of the millennium," as it is called, or the doctrine of "the second advent," and be a thorough man of the world; but one who lives

in the habitual expectation of Christ's appearing must be separated from that which will be judged and broken up when He comes. It is not a question of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, which is quite true; or of the transitory and unsatisfying character of the things of time, which is equally true. It is far more potent and influential than either or both of these. It is this, "*The Lord is at hand*. May our hearts be affected and our conduct in all things influenced by this most precious and sanctifying truth!

Leviticus 26.

This chapter requires little in the way of note or exposition. It contains a most solemn and affecting record of the blessings of obedience, on the one hand, and the terrible consequences of disobedience, on the other. Had Israel walked in obedience, they would have been invincible. "I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. and five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you and ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondsmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright." (Ver. 6-13)

The presence of God should ever have been their shield and buckler. No weapon formed against them could prosper. But, then, the divine presence was only to be enjoyed by an obedient people. Jehovah could not sanction by His presence disobedience or wickedness. The uncircumcised nations around might depend upon their prowess and their military resources. Israel had only the arm of Jehovah to depend upon, and that arm could never be stretched forth to shield unholiness or disobedience. Their strength was to walk with God in a spirit of dependence and obedience. So long as they walked thus, there was a wall of fire round about them, to protect them from every enemy and every evil.

But, alas! Israel failed altogether. Notwithstanding the solemn and appalling picture placed before their eyes, in verses 14-33 of this chapter, they forsook the Lord and served other gods, and thus brought upon themselves the sore judgements threatened in this section, the bare record of which is sufficient to make the ears tingle. Under the heavy weight of these judgements they are suffering at this very hour. Scattered and peeled, wasted and outcast, they are the monuments of Jehovah's inflexible truth and justice. They read aloud, to all the nations of the earth, a most impressive lesson on the subject of the moral government of God — a lesson which it would be profitable for these nations to study deeply, yea, and a lesson which it would be salutary for our own hearts to ponder likewise.

We are very prone to confound two things which are clearly distinguished in the word, namely, God's government and God's *grace*. The evils which result from this confusion are various. It is sure to lead to an enfeebled sense of the dignity and solemnity of government, and of the purity, fullness, and elevation of grace. It is quite true that God in government reserves to Himself the sovereign right to act in patience, long-suffering, and mercy; but the exercise of these attributes, in connection with His throne of government, must never be confounded with the unconditional actings of pure and absolute grace.

The chapter before us is a record of divine government, and yet, in it we find such clauses as the following: "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me; and that also they have walked contrary unto me, and that I also have

walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them; and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgements, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet, for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord." (Ver. 40-45)

Here we find God in government, meeting, in long-suffering mercy, the very earliest and faintest breathings of a broken and penitent spirit. The history of the judges and of the kings presents many instances of the exercise of this blessed attribute of the divine government. Again and again, the soul of Jehovah was grieved for Israel, (Judges 10: 16,) and He sent them one deliverer after another, until at length there remained no hope, and the righteous claims of His throne demanded their expulsion from that land which they were wholly incompetent to keep.

All this is *government*. But, by and by, Israel will be brought into possession of the land of Canaan on the ground of unqualified and unchangeable *grace* — grace exercised in divine righteousness through the blood of the cross. It will not be by works of law; nor yet by the institutions of an evanescent economy, but by that grace which "reigns through righteousness, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Wherefore, they shall never again be driven forth from their possession. No enemy shall ever molest them. They shall enjoy undisturbed repose behind the shield of Jehovah's favour. Their tenure of the land will be according to the eternal stability of divine grace, and the efficacy of the blood of the everlasting covenant. "They shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation."

May the Spirit of God lead us into more enlarged apprehensions of divine truth, and endow us with a greater capacity to try the things that differ, and rightly to divide the word of truth.

Leviticus 27

This closing section of our book treats of the "singular vow," or the voluntary act whereby a person devoted himself or his property unto the Lord. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow the persons shall be for the Lord by thy estimation. And thy estimation shall be after the shekel of the sanctuary."

Now, in the case of a person devoting himself, or his beast, his house, or his field, unto the Lord, it was obviously a question of capacity or worth; and, hence, there was a certain scale of valuation, according to age. Moses, as the representative of the claims of God, was called upon to estimate, in each case, according to the standard of the sanctuary. If a man undertakes to Make a vow, he must be tried by the standard of righteousness; and, moreover, in all cases, we are called upon to recognise the difference between capacity and title. In Exodus 30: 15, we read, in reference to the atonement money, "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls." In the matter of atonement all stood upon one common level. Thus it must ever be. High and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, old and young, all have one common title. "There is no difference." All stand alike on the ground of the infinite preciousness of the blood of Christ. There may be a vast difference as to capacity, as to title there is none. There may be a vast difference as to experience — as to title there is none. There may be a vast

difference as to knowledge, gift, and fruitfulness — as to title there is none. The sapling and the tree, the babe and the father, the convert of yesterday and the matured believer, are all on the same ground. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less." Nothing more could be given, nothing less could be taken. "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." This is our title to enter. Our capacity to worship, when we have entered, will depend upon our spiritual energy. Christ is our title. The Holy Ghost is our capacity. Self has nothing to do with either the one or the other. What a mercy! We get in by the blood of Jesus; we enjoy what we find there by the Holy Ghost. The blood of Jesus opens the door; the Holy Ghost conducts us through the house. The blood of Jesus opens the casket; the Holy Ghost unfolds the precious contents. The blood of Jesus makes the casket ours; the Holy Ghost enables us to appreciate its rare and costly gems.

But, in Leviticus 27, it is entirely a question of ability, capacity, or worth. Moses had a certain standard from which he could not possibly descend. He had a certain rule from which he could not possibly swerve. If any one could come up to that well; if not, he had to take his place accordingly.

What, then, was to be done in reference to the person who was unable to rise to the height of the claims set forth by the representative of divine righteousness? Hear the consolatory answer: "But if he be *poorer* than thy estimation, then he shall present himself before *the priest*, and the priest shall value him; *according to, his ability* that vowed shall the priest value him." (Ver. 8) In other words, if it be a question of man's undertaking to meet the claims of *righteousness*, then he must meet them. But if, on the other hand, a man feels himself wholly unable to meet those claims, he has only to fall back upon grace, which will take him up, just as he is. Moses is the representative of the claims of divine righteousness. The priest is the exponent of the provisions of divine grace. The poor man who was unable to stand before Moses fell back into the arms of the priest. Thus it is ever. If we cannot "*dig*" we can "*beg*;" and directly we take the place of a beggar, it is no longer a question of what we are able to *earn*, but of what God is pleased to *give*. "Grace all the work shall crown, through everlasting days." How happy it is to be debtors to grace! How happy to take when God is glorified in giving! When man is in question, it is infinitely better to dig than to beg; but when God is in question, the case is the very reverse.

I would just add, that I believe this entire chapter bears, in an especial manner, upon the nation of Israel. It is intimately connected with the two preceding chapters. Israel made "a singular vow" at the foot of Mount Horeb; but were quite unable to meet the claims of law — they were far "poorer than Moses' estimation." But, blessed be God, they will come in under the rich provisions of divine grace. Having learnt their total inability "to dig," they will not be "ashamed to beg;" and, hence, they shall experience the deep blessedness of being cast upon the sovereign mercy of Jehovah, which stretches, like a golden chain, "from everlasting to everlasting." It is well to be poor, when the knowledge of our poverty serves but to unfold to us the exhaustless riches of divine grace. That grace can never suffer any one to go empty away. It can never tell any one that he is too poor. It can meet the very deepest human need; and not only so but it is glorified in meeting it. This holds good in every case. It is true of any individual sinner; and it is true with respect to Israel, who, having been valued by the Lawgiver, have proved "poorer than his estimation." Grace is the grand and only resource for all. It is the basis of our salvation; the basis of a life of practical godliness; and the basis of those imperishable hopes which animate us amid the trials and conflicts of this sin-stricken world. May we cherish a deeper sense of grace, and more ardent desire for the glory!

We shall here close our meditations upon this most profound and precious book. If the foregoing pages should be used of God to awaken an interest in a section of inspiration which has been so much neglected by the Church, in all ages, they shall not have been written in vain. C. H. M.