

# **LEVITICUS**

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## LEVITICUS 1 - LEVITICUS 2:16

We now commence the book of Leviticus, and we must connect chapter 1:1, with Exodus 40:38. The Lord had been speaking to Moses from Sinai; but He spoke "out of the tabernacle" directly His glory had taken possession of it. Thus He manifested His presence. We see a parallel to this in Acts 2. When God formed His spiritual house, by the disciples in Jerusalem being "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22), the first manifestation of His presence was by His Spirit speaking so powerfully through Peter, of what had been accomplished by the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ, that three thousand were converted. In our chapter God speaks only of the sacrifices, which presented in type that which in due season Christ was to accomplish.

The whole of the first chapter is occupied with instructions as to what was to take place if any man desired to offer to the Lord a burnt offering. Of all the offerings this stands first, inasmuch as it typifies the sacrifice of Christ from the most exalted standpoint; namely, its value and excellence in the sight of God. It was not compulsory as the sin offering. The word "offering" in verse 2 is a translation of the "Corban," to which the Lord referred in Mark 7:11—a voluntary offering, which might be omitted, or used on the other hand as a hypocritical reason for avoiding one's duty to aged parents

With the possible exception of Genesis 4:7, where "sin" may stand for "sin-offering," it is noticeable that the offerings that are mentioned up to the time of the giving of the law are burnt offerings. This agrees with what we read in Romans 5:13. From the moment of the fall sin was in the world, "but sin is not imputed when there is no law." God did not ignore the fact of sin, but He did not put it to man's account in the definite way in which He did when the law was given. Hence the sin offering did not come into prominence before the law was given.

In verse 3 we have according to the A.V. the words, "he shall offer it of his own voluntary will," but in Darby's New Translation this is rendered, "present it for his acceptance," and with this the R.V. agrees. So the thought evidently was that the offerer was to stand before God in all the acceptance of the unblemished offering that he brought. Hence the putting of his hand on

the head of the offering, of which the next verse speaks, signified that he identified himself with his offering. This, we believe, furnishes us with the root meaning, which is attached to the laying on of hands right through Scripture. It signifies, identification.

Reading through the chapter, we see at once that the instructions given divide into three parts, according to the offering brought, whether from the herd or the flock or from the fowls. We note that there are slight differences in minor details between the three, but the main outline is the same. The blood of each was to be sprinkled on the altar, and in each case neither the priests nor the offerer had any part reserved for them: all was for the Lord.

Yet certain things that are specified remind us that these types are only shadows and cannot portray the full excellence of that which they typify. For instance, the inward parts and the legs of the victims had to be washed with water before they were offered by fire to the Lord, just as the priests had to wash hands and feet every time they entered the tabernacle. So the crop of the fowl with its "feathers," or "refuse," had to be cast among the ashes. The fact is that the sin of man had brought defilement into the whole creation, and there is nothing perfect. But, with these precautions taken, the burnt offerings were a fitting type of the sacrifice made when Christ "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14), thus giving "Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2).

Three times in our chapter do we get the words, "a sweet savour unto the Lord." The special feature of the burnt offering was thus clearly indicated. It set forth the sacrifice of Christ in its own intrinsic excellence, as appreciated by God Himself. If His sacrifice had not effected anything for man, yet tested as He was by the fire of judgment everything about Him would have gone up as a sweet odour to God. But as a matter of fact though the benefit the believer gets from it is secondary, yet it does come in, for identified, as we are with His sacrifice, we stand in all its acceptability, accepted before God. The passages we quoted above from Hebrews 9 and Ephesians 5 make this abundantly clear.

The three classes of burnt offerings are mentioned on a descending scale. The rich man might bring his bullock, the man of medium substance his sheep, the poor man his young pigeon. Yet each of the three was a burnt offering, and in each case the offerer was accepted before God. What we see typified in these variations is not a greater or lesser acceptance but a greater or lesser

apprehension on the part of the offerer. To put it in another way: every believer stands accepted before God in the perfection and fragrance of the sacrifice of Christ, which never varies and is the same for all. What does vary is the measure in which we appreciate the value of His work. Consequently when we "offer the sacrifice of praise to God . . . the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 14:15), the character of our praise varies. If we bring together in our thoughts Leviticus I and what we have in 1 John 2:13-27, we may say that the "father" may bring his bullock, the "young man" his sheep, and the "babe" his young pigeon.

Before leaving Leviticus 1, glance again at the closing words of verses 9, 13, 17. As we see in verse 4, atonement was connected with the burnt offering, but it was not the prominent thought, but rather the excellence of the offering in the Divine estimation. It was a sweet savour to Him.

In **Leviticus 2** details are given as to the meal or grain offering. In the Hebrew a different word is used for this, but still a word which indicates a gift, for this too was a voluntary offering and not compulsory. The basic offering here was fine flour, though it might be offered in a variety of ways: either fresh and untreated, or baked in an oven or a pan, or cooked in a frying pan. But in each case both oil and frankincense were to be associated with it.

Now nothing is softer and more even and less gritty than fine flour, and hence it is a most fitting type of the smooth and flawless perfection of the life on earth of "the Man Christ Jesus." Moreover the oil here, as elsewhere, is typical of the Holy Spirit of God, in whose power the Lord Jesus went forth in His unparalleled path of service, as we see in Luke 3:22 and Luke 4:1, 14.

The oil was to be used in different ways. In the first case, verse 2, a handful of both flour and oil was to be taken by the priest and burned as a memorial on the altar. In the other cases, verses 4-9, the cakes were to be "mingled" with oil and then "anointed" with oil. Here again we may see typified what is made abundantly clear in the Gospel of Luke, particularly in the first chapter. When our blessed Lord stooped to become Man, His birth was the result of an action by the Holy Spirit, so that His Manhood, though true Manhood, was yet unique Manhood, "mingled" with the Holy Spirit. Later, as we have seen, He was "anointed" with the Holy Spirit and with power.

In this chapter the word "atonement" does not occur. That is because no blood was shed in the meal offering which typified His perfect life. It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.

There was thus a certain variety in the way in which the meal offering was constituted, but in each case, while only a part of that which was presented was burnt as a memorial and as a sweet savour to the Lord, all the frankincense had to be burnt with the memorial. This emphasizes again that the prime thought in the meal offering, as with the burnt offering, is that of the pleasure and delight of God Himself in the perfect life of the Lord Jesus, when tested in the fire. He is the only One in whom was found no flaw but rather every perfection in the energy of the Holy Spirit, everything about Him an odour of a sweet smell.

But though in this type God had all the frankincense there was a remainder of the flour and oil, or of the mingled and anointed cakes, which was to be the portion of Aaron and his sons. They were to have as a part of their food that which had been offered to God for His pleasure. In this we may see an indication of our privilege as those who have been "built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices" (1 Peter 2:5), for verse 7 proceeds to say, "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious," or, more literally, "is the preciousness." Christ is precious to God in infinite measure, but His preciousness is also for us.

The believer today then, as a priest, is permitted to have as the food of his soul all that excellence which has been displayed in Christ, and as he thus feeds he has the wherewithal to offer up those spiritual sacrifices of praise which are acceptable to God. But let us note those twice repeated words (verses 3 and 10) that it is "a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire." When Christ is before us, let us never forget the holiness of the theme, but treat it with that reverence and reserve, which springs from self-judgment, that is becoming.

In verses 11 and 13 we have further stringent regulations. From all meal offerings all leaven and honey were to be excluded, and in them salt was always to be found. All through Scripture consistently, leaven is a type of evil in its permeating power. It was wholly absent in the perfect life of our Lord, and it could never be offered to God. Honey is regarded as the sweetest thing among natural products, as is indicated in Judges 14:18. It too, was not to be offered to God. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the very embodiment of grace. But the grace of God is not natural sweetness, which is akin to human amiability, since truth as well as grace has reached us in Him. The truth that came by Jesus Christ connects itself with the salt that always was to be a part of the sacrifices offered to God.

The Lord's instruction to His disciples, and to us, was, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50). Then we have the Apostle Paul writing, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col. 4: 6), and again, "Speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). These Scriptures make plain what "salt" is, when it is applied to us. Healthy regard for truth preserves from that compromising attitude, which is so sweet if only human amiability be in question. In us, all this is only found in measure. In Christ, all was perfection.

Between verse 11, which prohibits both the leaven and the honey, and verse 13, which insists on the salt being present, comes verse 12, which mentions the first fruits. These though offered to the Lord, were not to be burnt on the altar as a sweet savour. No reason for this is mentioned here, but the reference is to the "new meal offering," of which we read in Leviticus 23:16,17, when we discover that these firstfruits consisted of two loaves, which were baked with leaven. They were only to be waved before the Lord and not burnt. They were not typical of Christ but rather of the church, as we shall see when we come to that chapter. Only the offerings that were typical of Christ could be burnt upon the altar as a sweet savour unto the Lord.

In the three verses that close the chapter a meal offering consisting of corn in the ear or beaten out of the ear is contemplated. The firstfruits of the harvest might be presented thus, not having passed through the mill under man's hand. The memorial of it might be burnt by the priest upon the altar with oil and all the frankincense. This would be acceptable to God. In Leviticus 23:10,11, the sheaf of firstfruits was only to be waved before the Lord, but, as we shall see, that typified Christ in resurrection. Here we are still occupied with Christ in His life of perfect obedience which culminated in His death. We see Him rather as the perfect "corn of wheat" which fell into the ground and died, and out of whose death springs life for others, as the Lord Himself indicated in John 12:24.

## LEVITICUS 3:1 - LEVITICUS 6:7

We now come to the third class of the offerings that were ordained under the law. The burnt offering and the meal offering were very closely connected: the first typifying the sacrificial death and blood-shedding of Christ in the excellence of His sweet savour before God; the second, the equally sweet savour of His perfect life in the energy of the Holy Spirit, tested even unto death. In the peace offering we have another aspect of His sacrifice which is based on the foregoing.

The very title of this offering would show us that it was to be brought by an Israelite whose conscience was in rest and peace before God. There was no compulsion about it; he just desired to bring it; In this respect it was the opposite to the sin or trespass offering, which was to be brought under compulsion by the Israelite, whose conscience was not in peace because of wrong-doing.

Again we notice that the animal offered might be taken from the herd or from the sheep or from the goats, and the animal must be without blemish. But, on the other hand more latitude was allowed for a female as well as a male might be brought. This is what we might expect, seeing that it is the response of the would-be worshipper that is before us here.

The laying of the hand upon the head of the victim, the shedding and sprinkling of its blood by the priests is the same as with the burnt offering, but now instead of the whole victim in its parts being burnt on the altar, only the fat from the inward parts was to be burnt for a sweet savour to the Lord. Since this inward fat would be the sign of an animal of health and vigour, it aptly symbolizes the excellence and energy of that devotion unto death which marked our blessed Lord. This came up as a sweet savour to God as the type indicates.

The fat then of the peace offerings was wholly claimed by God, and the last verse of the chapter states this very clearly. The fat must be burned on the altar, and the blood must be sprinkled on it round about. The people of Israel were to eat neither the one nor the other. The blood was the life of the victim and the fat was its excellence. This strict ordinance testified that man as a



fallen sinner, has forfeited his own life, and has in himself no excellence in which he can stand before God. If he stands at all, it must be on the basis of the perfect life of Another poured out sacrificially before God, and in the excellence of the One who became the victim.

In this chapter we only learn what was to be done with the blood and the fat, which was God's portion. We have to turn to the law of the peace offering, given to us in Leviticus 7:11-34, to learn that in the peace offering not only the priest had his share, but that the offerer himself had his portion. So that communion with God, as to the excellence of the sacrifice of Christ, is a distinguishing feature of this offering. But its details should come before us when we reach chapter 7.

There is in our chapter, however, one slight intimation of this feature in verses 11 and 16. Twice do we get the expression, "the food of the offering," which was made by fire, and which came up as a sweet savour to God. Now the word here translated "food" is far more frequently translated "bread," but whichever word we adopt as the better translation, we have conveyed to us the thought of food which provides a satisfying portion. And we are permitted to find a portion in that which is the "bread" of God.

As we have before noticed in these types, God begins from His own side of the matter and works down to us. Hence we start with the burnt offering and lastly come to the offerings for sin and trespass. On our side of the matter, we have to begin with the sin offering. Nothing is right, nor can we advance further, until our sins with all their guilt are settled. With the offering for sins Leviticus 4 is occupied.

In verse 2 let us note two things. First, the sin that is contemplated is "against any of the commandments of the Lord." As before remarked, "sin is not imputed [put to account] when there is no law (Rom. 5:13). We have now reached the time when the law, with its many commandments in detail, has been given, so that when any of these commandments had been broken, the sin was at once put to account against the transgressor, and this particular offering was instituted to make atonement for the sinner.

But second, the sins that were contemplated when this offering was instituted, were those committed "through ignorance." In this we see the compassion of our God shining out. He well knew the frailty and ignorance and forgetfulness that characterizes poor, fallen humanity, and this provision was made. Sin committed deliberately in cold-blooded defiance of God is not

contemplated here; indeed we read in Hebrews 10:28, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses." Though God is a God of mercy, the law as such has no mercy in it, and therefore the merciful provision of the sin and trespass offerings only came into effect where the root of the sin was ignorance and not wilfulness.

Having read right through this chapter we at once see that the instructions fall naturally into four sections, according to the position held by the person or persons committing the sin. Upon that depended the gravity of the sin in the sight of God. Sin might be committed by (1) the high priest himself; (2) the whole congregation of Israel; (3) a ruler; (4) one of the common people. Hence in each case certain differences come to light, though there are features that appear consistently in each of the four.

Let us first note these consistent features. In each case, when the sin was recognized it had to be confessed before God in a practical way by the bringing of the appropriate sacrifice to be killed before the Lord, and the guilty one had to lay his hand on the head of the victim, thus identifying himself with it. In the case of the whole congregation sinning this had to be done by the elders of the congregation, as representing the mass of the people.

This identification, however, may be distinguished from that which we saw in the case of the burnt offering, inasmuch as here it meant the identification of the victim with the sinner, so that the guilt of the sin was transferred from the sinner to the victim, which would die in his stead. In the case of the burnt offering it signified the reverse and complementary thought of the offerer being identified with the sweet savour and acceptance of the offering. Both these things unite in the antitype—the propitiatory and substitutionary death of our blessed Lord.

In each case the victim was slain. Death is the wages of sin, and no sentence can be pronounced as an alternative to that. This is acknowledged in our law courts. A prisoner may be sentenced to a fine, with imprisonment as an alternative. But we never hear a judge sentence a man to death, with the alternative of prison or anything else. In all its gravity the death sentence on sin stands alone. This is clearly foreshadowed here. In each case the blood of the victim was sprinkled before the Lord, though not in each case sprinkled in just the same way. The sprinkled blood testified before God that the death sentence was accomplished, and, "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11).

Also in each case certain parts of the inwards and all the fat was to be taken and burnt upon the altar just as the fat of the peace offerings was burned. Nothing is said as to this burning being for a sweet savour as was the case with the peace offerings. The fat truly spoke of the excellence of the victim, which was a needful thing if there was to be atonement made for sin, but the point now is the covering of man's sin, rather than the gratification that is brought to God.

Lastly, in each case there was the forgiveness of the sin in virtue of the sacrifice. In the first case, that of the anointed priest, this fact is not mentioned, but evidently he was no exception to the rule. If we would understand the nature of the forgiveness that is mentioned, we must read and consider Romans 3:25.

In that important verse the word translated "remission" is one that means a "passing over," and it is the only time the word occurs in Scripture. In that verse we find that in Christ and His propitiatory death God has declared His righteousness in passing over the sins of His people in His forbearing mercy during the ages before Christ came. Holy angels, who may well have known what is stated in Hebrews 10:4, that, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," may have wondered where was the righteous basis for the forgiveness offered in Leviticus 4. It was the death of Christ that declared God's righteousness in this, and vindicated His action. The sacrifices and the forgivenesses of Old Testament times were like promissory notes with a distant due date. The due date came when Christ died, and turned the notes into the pure gold of a divinely accomplished redemption.

Now consider the differences in the four sections. If the anointed priest sinned, then we have the most serious case of all. He was the appointed link between the people and God, and the whole people were involved with himself. So a young bullock without blemish had to be offered, and its blood had to be sprinkled not only on the altar without, but carried into the sanctuary and sprinkled seven times before the vail and on the horns of the altar of incense. In type, the worship of the people was interrupted in the sin of the man, who presented it before God in the fragrance of the incense. Until the blood was sprinkled there could be no priestly action before the Lord on behalf of the people.

We find just the same features in the second case, that of the sin of the whole congregation. In this case possibly the priest himself was not implicated, but even so he would be left without any people fit to be represented before the Lord, so in effect the result was very much the same. In both these cases, where the sin was of a gravity affecting all, the body of the victim was to be carried without the camp and burnt there.

To this fact Hebrews 13:11 refers, and the application for us is given in the next verse. The sacrifice of Christ was for others and had in view the whole people, thus fitting in with the type. When He suffered, the days of Israel's wilderness camp were over, and Jerusalem was their city. Well, He suffered without the gate of their religious centre. The place of the Christian now, even if by nature a Jew, is outside that religious system in association with the rejected Christ who died and lives again.

When a ruler or one of the common people sinned, the animals brought for sacrifice were of lesser value. The blood was applied to the altar without, but not carried to the sanctuary within. Correspondingly the body of the victim was not to be burned without the camp. What was to be done with these bodies we are not told here. When we come to the law of the sin offering we find that it provided very holy food for the priests and their sons.

Details concerning the trespass offerings follow in Leviticus 5 and the first 7 verses of Leviticus 6. A trespass might be committed against one's fellow as well as against God and His holy things and a number of ways are specified in which trespass could take place.

The sacrifices enjoined reveal two things. First, that a trespass against God in His holy things is a more serious matter than a trespass against man, consequently the offerings prescribed in verses 15 and 18, and also in Leviticus 6: 6 are of a more substantial sort than the others. To touch an unclean thing, or to state something on oath erroneously has not the same gravity before God as to defile holy things or to do violence and deceit to one's neighbour and thus dishonour the name of the Lord.

For these lesser trespasses a lamb or kid, or two young pigeons might be brought; and of these two one might be offered as a burnt offering after the first had been offered as a trespass offering. Again, if so poor that a man could not bring even two pigeons! he might bring so little as the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour and the priest might offer as a trespass offering even that. When fine flour was offered as a meal offering there must be with it

both oil and frankincense. Here both these are expressly excluded. The sweet savour element was wanting in that which had compulsorily to be offered in atonement for the wrongdoing of sinful men.

We read in Hebrews 9:22, that "almost all things are by the law purged with blood." Here is a case in point, which made it necessary to put the word, "almost," before the word, "all." In the case before us we see the kindness of God considering the very great poverty of some of His erring people. The priest might eat the residue as though it had been a meal offering, but nevertheless the handful was burned as a sin offering.

Another thing marked these trespass offerings, where the rights of men had been infringed. The trespasser had not only to bring his offering to God but he had to make amends to the one whom he had trespassed against. If the evil had brought loss in the holy things of God, he had to make amends, as we see in Leviticus 5:16. And so also if a man had suffered loss, as we see in Leviticus 6:3. Reparation had to be made on the same basis in both cases. What had been lost originally had to be repaid and a fifth part added to it. Nothing more just than this can be found. Many a robber would not mind doing a bit of imprisonment if he be allowed to retain the gain he has made. But to lose all he made plus a fifth part beyond takes all the glamour from the wrong-doing.

In the light of this we see how very exceptional was the statement of Zacchaeus, recorded in Luke 19:8. He could say, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." This was going far beyond that which the law demanded, and by the man of the world it would have been considered over-scrupulous honesty; so much so that if anyone merited salvation Zacchaeus must have done so. All such thoughts were brushed aside by the Lord when He said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The most virtuous observance of the law in one of its details does not compensate for the infringement of it in other details. Hence we read "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. 3:20). Zacchaeus had to receive salvation as a true "son of Abraham," that is as a believer — see, Galatians 3:7.

We cannot doubt that the principles laid down in verses 2-5, have their application today to any wrongdoing or offence against man on the part of a Christian. Even if done inadvertently, the believer should be most careful to

make reparation, as full as may be within his power. The fact that we are not under law, but under grace with its higher standards, should make us most careful not to fall below the standard which the law has set in this matter.

## LEVITICUS 6:8 - LEVITICUS 10:7

From verse 8 of chapter 6 to the end of Leviticus 7 we have the law of the various offerings. In each case the "law" furnishes further details as to how the offering was to be presented to the Lord and, more particularly, how the priests were to deal with the parts that were not burned before Him.

Again the burnt offering comes first. Since all was consumed on the altar, the law concerning it was simple. Every morning the wood was to be laid on the altar and the burnt offering consumed upon it; but so it was to be in the evening and all the night the fire on the altar was to be kept burning. Never was the fire to go out, and the very ashes were to be dealt with in a reverent manner.

In this we may learn two things. First, that the sweet savour of the sacrifice of Christ is ever before God. In the value and fragrance of His work propitiation has been effected, and so God still goes forward with an erring people. But second, that the fire was never to go out because it typified the consuming judgment of God, the claims of which could never be satisfied by the shadow sacrifices demanded by the law. Only when the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ had been accomplished could the words be written, "There is no more offering for sin" (Heb. 10:18). Today we may rejoice that "the fire upon the altar" has indeed gone out, though the fire of God's wrath will yet burn against sinful men, who have rejected His grace, when they reach a lost eternity.

The law of the meal offering occupies verses 14-18 and is mainly concerned with that part of the offering which was not burnt as a sweet savour, and so was to be eaten by Aaron and his sons. It was food for the priestly family only; that is, for the males who would normally officiate as priests. It was to be treated as a most holy thing. Leaven was to be completely excluded, and it was to be eaten in the tabernacle precincts. In the next chapter we find that those who were permitted to eat of the peace offerings had to be ceremonially clean, and this doubtless applied to the priests who partook of the meal offerings. Today every saint is constituted a priest, but we need to be morally clean to digest inwardly the excellencies of the life of our blessed Lord, which were so wholly offered to God.

Verses 19-23 deal with the special meal offering of Aaron and his sons in the day of his anointing. This was to be offered half in the morning and half at night, but all was to be burnt as a sweet savour and none was to be eaten. Not till the priest was anointed and fully qualified was he permitted to partake, but in his anointing the sweet savour was to go up to God.

The remainder of the chapter is occupied with the law of the sin offering. Verse 25 shows how closely it was linked with the burnt offering, and just because it had definite reference to sin its holiness is specially emphasized. Both offerings found their fulfillment in the sacrificial death of Christ, but the burnt offering typified the Godward side of it, more connected with propitiation, while the sin offering typified the manward side, connected with substitution.

Parts of the sin offering were to be eaten by the males of the priestly families, but only in the tabernacle and its court and not in their homes. But to this there was an exception. If the blood had been brought into the holy place for reconciliation, as was to be the case when the priest himself sinned or the whole congregation was involved in sin, then none of it was to be eaten. The body of the animal was to be burned without the camp, as we saw in chapter 4. In ordinary cases the priests did eat, and this may remind us today that though the sin may be on the part of another the saint in priestly condition may take it home to himself, while helping the other. We find something in the spirit of this when we read Galatians 6:1,2.

Leviticus 7:1-7 records the law of the trespass offering, which is the same as for the sin offering. As verse 7 says, "there is one law for them." In verses 8-10 we have a supplementary detail, first as to the skin of the burnt offering, which was to be for the offering priest, who was permitted to have the externals of the sacrifice, the inwards of which were wholly for God. We may apply this by reminding ourselves that though we may be allowed to share in the sweet savour of the death of Christ, we only touch the externals. The inward excellence, as known to God, must ever be beyond us.

Then all of the meal offerings which was left for the consumption of the priests, if baked or fried was to be the portion of the offering priest. If mingled with oil and dry, it was to be shared equally among all the sons of Aaron. Thus a distinction was made between priests who were passive in any given matter and the priest who was active. All believers are priests but not all priests are in action.



The law of the peace offering extends from verse 11 to verse 34. The order of the offerings is changed, and here it comes last, the reason being, we suppose, that, while in the other cases the participators were only the priests, here the common person, who brought the offering was permitted to have a share. A peace offering might be brought for a thanksgiving (verse 12) or in connection with a vow or voluntary offering (verse 16) and in the latter case the time for eating was extended to two days. There was the portion for God, a portion for the priest and a portion for the offerer, but the communion based upon a voluntary offering endures longer than that based upon thankfulness for some benefit conferred.

Here again the holiness of the offering is enforced. The partaker must himself be clean, and that which he eats must be preserved from contamination. Hereby we are reminded that we must be clean not only in ourselves but also in our ways and associations. No communion with God is possible apart from that. In this connection too we are told that both fat and blood were prohibited. The life and excellence of the victims was wholly for the Lord.

The special portion of the officiating priest was to be the right shoulder of the victim. The breast that was waved before the Lord was also to be the portion of the priests. We find an allusion to this in 1 Corinthians 10:18. Even in Israel those who did eat of the sacrifices were identified with the altar. It imposed at once special cleanliness in person and ways upon the common person who partook, as we have just seen, and the priests were all their lives set apart for God. Today every true believer is a priest and must never forget he is identified with the Christ who died.

The few verses that close the chapter give a summary of the things we have briefly considered, and enforce the fact that though many of the details laid down may at first sight seem to be of a rather trifling nature, they are nevertheless the things "which the Lord commanded Moses . . . in the day that He commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations." Similarly we may read 1 Corinthians 12—14, and think that the instructions given through Paul for the order of the assemblings of the church of God, are some of them rather trifling; but let us not overlook verse 37 of chapter 14. The "commandments of the Lord" through the Apostle Paul are no less binding than the commandments of the Lord through Moses, though we are now under grace and not law.

**Leviticus 8** is occupied with the record of how Moses himself acted in complete obedience to the divine command when he came to the point of the consecration of Aaron and his sons. We saw how all was to be done when we read Exodus 29, we now are permitted to see how carefully Moses obeyed, so that presently he received the commendation "My servant Moses (...) is faithful in all Mine house" (Num. 12:7). Thus, in the consecration of Aaron and his sons there was the bathing all over (verse 6), typical of the new birth; then the application of the blood of sacrifice (verses 23 and 24), typical of the redeeming blood of Christ; then the application of the oil (verse 30), typical of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Today no one becomes a priest except they are the subject of a work wrought in them — the new birth — and know the efficacy of the blood of Christ, shed for them, and have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, bestowed upon them.

But we notice of course that, as had been directed, Aaron had the anointing oil not merely sprinkled but poured upon his head (verse 12). Here he stands as a type of our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who needed no application of the blood but was anointed with the Spirit in His solitary perfection. We have an allusion to this in Psalm 133:2, where the unity of brethren that is so good and pleasant, is likened to the "ointment" or oil that was poured so copiously upon Aaron's head that it ran down beard and garment even to the skirts of it. The outpouring of the Spirit upon the church today, and the effusion that is to mark the world to come, according to Joel 2:28, are both in the nature of an overflow from our High Priest on high.

In our chapter we also learn that Moses applied both blood and oil to the tabernacle and altar and other vessels of the sanctuary, and this is alluded to in Hebrews 9:21, as far as the blood is concerned. It shows that the whole of this earthly system stood before God on that basis. For us it typified that the cross of Christ, coupled with the gift of the Spirit, forms the foundation of all our blessing. But all through this chapter it is not merely the blood shed, but also the blood applied. And that, not only to the tabernacle and its vessels, but also to the persons of the priests: right ear, right hand, right foot. The order is significant. By the ear we hear the word of God. By hand and foot we act and walk according to that which we hear. The movements of the priest are to be controlled by what he hears.

At the end of this chapter (verses 31-36), we see that Moses, who was the mediator of this earthly system, carefully instructed Aaron and his sons as to the seven days that followed their consecration. They were to eat the flesh of the ram of consecration, as had been made plain in Exodus 29, and also they

were to abide in the tabernacle and its court for the seven days, until the atonement for themselves and the whole system was completed. In this way the claims of the holiness of God were to be pressed upon them.

All this having been carried out according to God's order, the eighth day arrived, and proved to be a very special occasion. With this **Leviticus 9** is occupied. All is still under the direction of Moses, but, having been installed, Aaron is now the chief actor. He had to offer first for himself and then for the people, and it is to be noted that in both verses 2 and 3 the sin offering is mentioned before the burnt offering. At the beginning of the Book the burnt offering came first, and the sin and trespass offerings came last, typifying Christ and His sacrifice as viewed by God. But here the application to us is typified, and until our sins are settled we can present nothing at all to God. Hence the sin offering must of necessity come first, and the others follow.

Verse 8 records the slaying of the sin offering which was for himself. Since he was now the anointed priest, and all the people were represented in him, the carcass of the victim was burned "without the camp" (verse 11), according to the instructions. Verse 15 records the sin offering for the people, and this was dealt with "as the first," since, when the whole people were in question, the procedure was to be the same as for the anointed priest.

In verses 12-14 we have the burnt offering for himself and in verse 16 the burnt offering for the people. These offerings were followed by both meal and peace offerings (verses 17-21), but no mention is made of a trespass offering, for as yet there had been no time for cases of actual trespass to have occurred.

When all this was accomplished, the great event of the eighth day came to pass. First, the newly installed priest lifted up his hand toward the people and blessed them. Then both Moses and he went into the tabernacle and coming out again gave a blessing, but this time as through the mediator as well as through the priest. Whatever the people might prove themselves to be, the attitude of God toward them was one of blessing. When we read the four verses that close the Gospel of Luke, we at once feel how far more wonderful were the uplifted hands and the blessing of the Lord Jesus, just as He ascended into heaven, to take up His High Priestly work there, having accomplished on earth propitiation by His blood.

But second, an even greater event was the appearing of the glory of the Lord in the sight of all the people, and coupled with this fire came out from Him

and consumed the burnt offering on the altar. The effect upon the people was instantaneous. No man can stand in the presence of the glory of God, for all have come short of it, as we read in Romans 3:23.

The instructions as to how the various sacrifices were to be offered have already been before us, but not till the consecration of Aaron do we read of them actually being made, so we may say that at the start it was the hand of God that lit on the altar the fire to consume the burnt offering, which was never to go out, as we have already seen. It was God's fire and not man's fire which consumed the sacrifice, and the typical force of this is easily seen.

Thus far the hand of the faithful Moses had been on all the events of the day, but before it closed the two elder sons of Aaron broke away from under his direction and offered incense on "strange fire" before the Lord. The incense was right but the fire was wrong. As far as we know, the only instruction that had been given in this matter is found in Exodus 30:7,8, where the fire is connected with the lighting of the lamps in the holy place. They may have thought that if the incense was right any fire would do to bring out its fragrance. But no, the fire must be God's fire and not man's. Let us learn from this that though in our worship the words we use are altogether right, if the energy behind their utterance is of the flesh, all is wrong. Worship must be by the Spirit of God, and we have indeed to say,

"Then let Thy grace mould every word  
That meets Thy holy ear."

They used strange fire, and the fire of the Lord came out and consumed them. This may appear to us very drastic judgment, but it is evidently God's way at the beginning of any new movement to emphasize His holiness in a severe way. So it was with the first man who broke the sabbath, and with Achan, just as Israel entered the land; and with Ananias and Sapphira at the beginning of the church. Many similar transgressions may have occurred in the respective histories without such a judgment.

We add the simple yet solemn reflection that everything that is committed to the hands of men breaks down at the outset. It was so in the Garden of Eden, and again when the law was given, in the episode of the golden calf, and so it is here. The priesthood having been established, on the very day on which they began to officiate failure supervened and Nadab and Abihu died, that so God might be sanctified before all the people. Though the people might

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mourn, the claim of God on the priests was such that no mourning became them. The claims of natural relationship were set aside.

## LEVITICUS 10:8 - LEVITICUS 15:33

We notice that in verse 8 the Lord speaks directly to Aaron and not as previously to Moses. This is doubtless because the matter of which He spoke concerned only the priests, and was in view of the failure that had just supervened. To the priests ministering in the sanctuary wine and strong drink of any kind were forbidden, for such only excite the natural powers and feelings of men, to the point of clouding their memory and their judgment.

Now the priest was to draw near to God in strict conformity to the prescribed order and not as Nadab and Abihu had done. Moreover he was to put a difference between holy and unholy, between clean and unclean, as verse 10 says. He was also to teach the people all that God had ordained, and for this a clear mind was needed. The tendency of strong drink would be to disqualify him for all these things.

The application of this to ourselves is very clear. All who have come to the Lord, while He is still disallowed of men, are constituted priests, as we learn in 1 Peter 2:3,4, and all of us should be in right priestly condition. But the position is one thing; and the condition which answers to it, is another. Hence that important word, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). When thus filled we can offer the sacrifice of praise, as the next verse indicates. The contrast is between what is fleshly and what is spiritual. We are to decline what excites the flesh that we may know the power of the Spirit.

The same thing of course is true not only of our praise but also as to our powers of spiritual discernment, and as to our ability to teach others that which we may have learned from God of His things.

The next paragraph (verses 12-15) shows how carefully Moses handed on to Aaron and his remaining sons the instructions as to their eating what remained of the meal and peace offerings. The last paragraph (verses 16-20) indicate that further failure supervened in the priestly family. Part of the sin offering was to be eaten by the priests but instead it had been burnt. This failure sprang out of human weakness and not out of human wilfulness, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, and hence no summary judgment was executed. Herein lies a lesson for us.

The weakness of the Aaronic priesthood is twice stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews — Heb. 5:2 and Heb. 7:28 — they were men "compassed with infirmity." Our High Priest is the Son of God, who has passed through the heavens, and though all-perfect and all-powerful, He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Hence the contrast, made so plain in Hebrews, since all the infirmities are ours and not His.

So we note how Moses, acting on God's behalf, was content with the confession of Aaron's weakness. We might summarize the chapter as, "Strange fire," which was judged. "Strong drink," which was forbidden. "Sin-offering mishandled," which was passed over, as being the result of human infirmity.

The whole of **Leviticus 11** is occupied with regulations as to the food of the people, whether in relation to beasts, fishes, birds or creeping things. Through the priest the people were to be instructed in what was to be regarded as clean, and what unclean. Among animals those only were clean that possessed the two marks: chewing the cud and the cloven hoof. Animals that chew the cud are classified as "ruminants," and to "ruminate" has acquired "meditate" as a secondary meaning. The animals with cloven hoof are sure-footed and also in many cases light-footed. When Habakkuk wrote, "The Lord God . . . will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places," he seemed to indicate both these ideas. If the word of God is hid in our hearts by meditation, and if it affects our outward walk in this fashion, our way will be clean in the sight of God.

Similarly with the fishes; there had to be the scales, indicating protection from the waters without, and the fins that gave power of propulsion, and ability to swim against the stream. A spiritual application of this to ourselves is very obvious.

In general the creeping things were forbidden, though in verses 21 and 22 there are certain exceptions. So when John the Baptist made locusts his food he was strictly within the law.

The latter part of the chapter gives rules as to how unclean creatures might communicate defilement to other things or persons. Here we have foreshadowed what is plain in the New Testament. There is an infection or a contagion about what is evil, so that the Christian has to be on his guard as to

his associations. Such scriptures as 1 Corinthians 5:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 2:19 are quite clear as to this.

One other thing we may remark in connection with this chapter: these distinctions were not made in Noah's day — see Genesis 9:2,3. This fact, we believe, lies behind Paul's statement, "there is nothing unclean of itself" (Rom. 14:14); and again, "all things are lawful for me" (1 Cor. 10:23). In Noah's day all men were in view. In Moses' day Israel only was in question, and these special laws were intended to impress them with the holiness of God, on the one hand, and to help to keep them distinct and separate from the nations, on the other. The first council in Jerusalem recognized this distinction, as we see in Acts 15:19-21.

So, while we see some spiritual instruction in this chapter and gladly accept it, we know that we are living in a dispensation when we "should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28), as far as the Gospel is concerned. This was the lesson conveyed to Peter by the vision of the great sheet let down from heaven, wherein were all manner of creatures. All were embraced in the sheet, and, cleansed by God all were taken up into heaven.

**Leviticus 12** is short, but its theme shows that sin having entered into the world, its defiling power extends over the very beginnings of human life. Both child and mother were unclean and had to be purified. If a man-child, purification was complete by circumcision on the eighth day, and the New Testament significance of that rite is "putting off the body of the flesh," as it should read in Colossians 2:11; that is, the refusal of the flesh as having been condemned in the cross of Christ. When a daughter was born the period of the mother's defilement was twice as long as when a son was born; a reminder of the fact that sin came in through Eve. But whether son or daughter the offerings for purification were the same — a burnt offering and a sin offering had to be brought. If there was poverty so small an offering as two young pigeons might be brought.

When we turn to the account of the birth of our Lord, as recounted in Luke 2, we note that Mary brought this smallest of offerings; a testimony to the poverty of Joseph and herself. We also note that our Lord was circumcised on the eighth day, according to the law, though there was no sinful flesh in Him to be "put off." This is in keeping with the fact of His baptism at the hands of John, thus fulfilling all righteousness, though He had no sins to confess, as had the people: in keeping also with the fact that He was carried down into



Egypt, so that, retracing Israel's history, it might be said of Him, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

**Leviticus 13** is lengthy in contrast with chapter 12. This is easily understood when we say that the one deals with the defilement that marks the very start of man's life, the other with the working and development of that defilement all through the days of his life, involving such a variety of detail. There can be no doubt that leprosy is as striking a type of sin as the Bible affords. The instructions of this chapter are given to Aaron as well as Moses, for the detection and treatment of leprosy was the peculiar province of the priest. Be it noted that leprosy, as a type, lays stress not on the guilt of sin so much as on its corrupting and defiling power.

A large part of the chapter is occupied with instructions to the priest, which would enable him to diagnose the case and determine whether the sufferer was afflicted with leprosy or not. If leprosy was indicated the man was to be declared unclean. If only some skin trouble or inflammation was discerned, then the man was to be pronounced clean.

One remarkable contingency is contemplated, as we see in verses 12 and 13, and again in verse 17, If the disease should come completely to the surface, so that the flesh is white and covered, and so further spreading became impossible, the man was to be pronounced clean. This may have seemed a remarkable ruling in Aaron's day, but its typical meaning for us is simple and striking. Sin defiles as long as it is working beneath the surface, but when it is brought completely to the surface by honest and thorough confession on the part of the sinner, it ceases to defile. In confession the sinner has judged himself and the spreading and defiling power of his sin is broken.

Apart from this exceptional case the poor leper had to dwell alone without the camp. He had to put a special mark upon himself and continually declare his uncleanness, so that others might not be defiled by him.

In the latter part of this chapter we find that leprosy might also be discovered in garments of wool or linen or skin, and if so, the article was to be destroyed by fire. So leprosy might affect the surroundings of men and not only their bodies. Again care was to be taken that the trouble really was leprosy. It might be defilement of a different nature, which should have different treatment so that the whole garment was not destroyed. The instructions we have in Jude 22 and 23, give us in New Testament terms what is a counterpart of this. Indeed it is possible that the last clause of verse 23 is an

allusion to the verses we are considering. Under the Mosaic law the priests were to exercise care and discrimination in their dealings, and no less discrimination is demanded under grace. It would be much easier no doubt to have a rigid rule applicable in all cases, which would eliminate all exercise of mind as to how things should be dealt with, but such is not God's way.

It is to be noted that time was allowed for the diagnosis to be made by the priest. The garment was shut up for seven days, and if then there was no certain indication, it should be washed and again shut up seven days, and then the true nature of the trouble would be revealed. If the trouble was other than leprosy, then only the affected part was to be torn out; if leprosy, all was to be destroyed in the fire. In the New Testament garments are used figuratively to express our associations and surroundings — see, for instance, Revelation 3:4; Revelation 7:14; Revelation 16:15 — and this helps us to see an application of these instructions to ourselves.

The leprous garment was to be destroyed. The leprous man was to dwell without the camp, and he could only be readmitted if and when he was cleansed. His cleansing was an elaborate process and the whole of **Leviticus 14** is occupied with it, until we come to verse 33, when a similar plague in a house is in question. The ceremonies connected with his cleansing divide into two parts: first, those which took place without the camp, detailed in verses 3 to 8; second, those which took place on the seventh and eighth days after he had entered it.

We must carefully note that the ceremonies did not cleanse the leper, they only began when it was quite clear that he was cleansed. The healing that is contemplated is an act of God, which took place while the leper was still outside the camp. The priest had to go forth outside the camp and inspect him, and if he was cleansed it was the responsibility of the priest to pronounce him clean, and having done so to carry out the prescribed ceremony, which typified the ground and basis of his cleansing. In the two birds, one killed and the other set free, we see the death and resurrection of Christ set forth.

It may seem a strange regulation that one of the birds had to be, "killed in an earthen vessel over running water;" but in the light of the New Testament use both of "earthen vessel," and "running" or "living water," we begin to discern the significance. Dimly foreshadowed we see incarnation indicated as the necessary preliminary for the blood-shedding of our Lord, and also the fact that the offering of Himself to God was in the power of the eternal Spirit.

Then the bird that was released was first dipped in the blood of the slain bird, and thus identified with it. Two birds were needed in the type to set forth Christ in death and in resurrection. As the released bird soared into the heavens it carried the blood not into the sanctuary but into the heavens. This was the basis of all that followed.

But the blood had not only to be shed, and then carried on high to God's heaven, it had also to be applied to the cleansed leper. Seven times was it sprinkled upon him; applied, that is, in a full and complete way. Then, and then only, was the cleansed leper pronounced to be clean. Here again we observe an important type, which agrees with what we saw in Exodus 12. The blood must be applied as well as shed. The precious blood of Jesus was indeed "shed at Calvary," but in order to share in the benefit thereof each of us has to be able to say, "shed for me."

Notice too, that into the blood of the slain bird were to be dipped the cedar wood, the scarlet and the hyssop. The cedar is the most majestic of trees, hyssop is the humblest of herbs, and scarlet bespeaks the glory of men. The death of Christ has stained the pride of all human glory and of all that is natural to this first creation from the greatest things to the least.

Brought into the camp, the cleansed leper had to remain outside his tent for seven days, and then he had to divest himself of the hair that naturally characterized him, and thoroughly wash himself and his clothes. Then on the eighth day he submitted to further ceremonies, very similar to those which inaugurated the priests. Offerings of all kinds — save the peace offering — were presented to God, and then the blood and also the oil were applied to the leper; to his right ear, his right hand, his right foot. The significance of thus we saw when reading Leviticus 8.

It seems to us remarkable that the cleansed leper should have been accorded treatment so similar to the priests, though he was not a priest. This type seems designed to "shew forth all longsuffering " to use Paul's expression from 1 Timothy 1:16. There we have Paul lifted from the leprosy of being "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," into the exceeding abundance of "the grace of our Lord." Here we find a loathsome leper cleansed and brought into the camp almost as if he had been a priest.

From verse 33 to the end of the chapter we have the law concerning leprosy in a house, which would apply when they entered the land. Again we notice

that great care is enjoined to make sure that the trouble is leprosy, and if the evil can be stayed by the removal of affected parts, well and good. If not, the whole house had to be broken down and the rubbish deposited in an unclean place without the city. If cleansed, the procedure was very similar to that in connection with persons.

There is no record in Scripture of leprosy occurring in a house, but these instructions stand in Scripture and have a warning voice for us. The church today is "the house of God," and in its external character may be corrupted. Hence we read, "that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17), and in Revelation 2 and 3 we find the churches of Asia scrutinized by the Lord, and in result the threat of a breaking down, and even a total repudiation.

Chapters 13 and 14 have been occupied with the worst form of defilement; one which usually was lifelong and entailed total exclusion from the camp of Israel, in the midst of which it was God's pleasure to dwell.

**Leviticus 15** is occupied with a variety of lesser defilements, which entailed a temporary separation and diligent washings before re-admission to the camp and its privileges was possible. These defilements sprang from the weakness of human nature and conditions as they exist today, as the result of the fall. Many of them were of an unavoidable nature but nevertheless they were to be recognized as being of a defiling nature and treated as such. Thus Israel was to be impressed with the holiness of their God and how everything of a defiling nature must be removed, if His presence was to be enjoyed.

We do well to remember that the fall has produced in us many a weakness affecting our spirits as well as our bodies. For instance, many of us have to say with sad feeling what a very true servant of God wrote in days gone by:

"Yet, Lord, alas! what weakness  
Within myself I find,  
No infant's changing pleasure  
Is like my wandering mind."

It is because of this weakness, the more felt as the believer is marked by spirituality of mind, that defilement is so easily contracted, and consequently the "feet-washing," of which John 13 speaks, is so needed by us all.

## LEVITICUS 16:1 - LEVITICUS 22:33

The opening words of chapter 16 carry us back to the early verses of Leviticus 10 where the sin of Nadab and Abihu is recorded. Certain consequences flowing from that sin are mentioned in the rest of the 10th chapter, but now we find that it furnished the occasion for the ritual of the annual day of atonement to be revealed. Verse 29 of our chapter shows that it was the procedure to be observed on that day, and how it fitted into the succession of feasts that filled Israel's year we shall discover when we come to Leviticus 23:26-32. For the moment we confine ourselves to what is contained in this chapter, viewing it in a twofold way.

In the first place then we have a type of the efficacy which in due time was to be found in the sacrificial "offering of the body of Jesus Christ once" (Heb. 10:10) In the type **two** animals were needed, and each subjected to different treatment, so as to set forth the two aspects of the death of Christ, which we must carefully distinguish. When, however, we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and read the latter part of Leviticus 9, and the early part of Leviticus 10 we find the word, "**once**" or "**one**" used no less than six times in regard to the anti-typical Sacrifice, which was one in its nature, and offered once for all. Just as two men—Moses and Aaron, Apostle and Priest—were needed to shadow forth the excellence and office of Christ personally, so two goats were needed to shadow forth the excellence of His work.

The details as to the two goats are given to us in verses 7-10 and again in 15-22. The one upon which the Lord's lot fell had to be slain and its blood carried within the veil and sprinkled upon the mercy seat and seven times before it; Aaron being enveloped in a cloud of incense as he did this. Here then is a type of Christ entering into heaven itself, having obtained eternal redemption. He entered once in the fragrance of His own perfection, and "by His own blood," as Hebrews 9:12 tells us.

The blood sprinkled once only on the mercy seat sets forth the propitiatory value and perfection before God of the blood of Christ, the virtue of which lies in the infinitude and eternity of the Person who shed it. The cherubim were placed so that they gazed down upon the blood of the mercy seat, and that with complacency, since typically the claims of God on account of

Israel's sins for the past year were satisfactorily met. While we have in the type that which is limited and temporal, we have in the Antitype that which is infinite and eternal.

The blood sprinkled seven times before the mercy seat sets forth rather the perfection of the sacrifice in its application to men. It is a glorious fact that the redemptive value of the work of Christ will be displayed in a variety of ways. We, who are the Church today, know its propitiatory value, for it has met the Divine claims against us. But the same thing will be true as to a restored Israel, and as to the nations who will be blessed in the millennial age, and as to the eternal state which lies beyond that. But whether we think of the blood sprinkled once or as sprinkled seven times, all indicates the propitiatory efficacy of the blood of Christ, that is, its value as meeting all the righteous claims of the throne of God.

The second goat was treated in an entirely different way. Upon the first goat the lot fell "for the Lord." The other was the "scapegoat," or more literally, a "goat for going away." Upon its head Aaron had to put his hands, and, confessing over it the sins and transgressions of the people, put them all upon its head, and then send him away into an uninhabited land by the hand of a fit man. Here we see in type not propitiation but substitution — our side of the matter rather than God's. The actual word, "substitute," does not occur in the Bible, but what it signifies is there, and first comes clearly to light when we read that Abraham offered the ram "**in the stead of his son**" (Gen. 22:13). Here the sins of the people in their condemning weight were placed on the head of the goat instead of resting on themselves. Their sins were typically borne away by their substitute

When we turn to the Antitype the same truth meets us in the prediction of the prophet, "All we like sheep have gone astray; . . . and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). In this great verse two things strike us. First, it is "all we" and "us all." Who are the "we" and the "us"? The people of God who confess their sins and believe in the Substitute. Exactly so; for while the propitiatory work of Christ opens the door in righteousness to whosoever will, its substitutionary effect is confined to believers.

But further, it is the Lord Himself who laid our sins on the Substitute. Aaron doubtless confessed and laid on the head of the goat all that he knew and remembered of the transgressions of the people, but how could he confess them all? A well-known hymn may say, "I lay my sins on Jesus," but we may

well be thankful that it is not left for us to do it. It has been accomplished by an act of God, and hence done perfectly.

But now, having briefly considered this chapter as a type, let us note in the second place the contrasts that it presents. The second verse indicates what is stated in Hebrews 9:8,9, that, "the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest." And further, verse 4 shows that Aaron could no longer wear his garments "for glory and for beauty." The failure of the priesthood had supervened, and consequently he had to go in wearing holy garments of plain linen. The holiest was closed to all, save this one man on this one special yearly occasion. How great then the contrast with our Lord, who has entered the true holiest, even heaven itself, in virtue of His own blood, and who is there in perpetuity and "crowned with glory and honour."

Again, Aaron had first to offer the bullock for himself and for his house, since he was, as Hebrews 5:1-3 points out, compassed with infirmity, and so had to offer for his own sins. Our High Priest is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26).

And further, there was no finality about these proceedings. They were to take place every year on the tenth day of the month, though we believe there is no record in the rest of the Scriptures of its being observed in Israel. Year by year it was to remind the people of their sins and give them in type a settlement of those sins, and a cleansing of the sanctuary and their earthly religious system. Hence, reminded of their sins, the day was to be one of affliction and mourning and cessation of work. Thus Israel was shown that in the work of atonement their works had no place.

Once more, we may note the contrast stated in Hebrews 10:1-4. In those sacrifices there was a remembrance of sins made every year, for it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. What happened was that in His forbearance God "passed over" (the words placed in the margin against Romans 3:25) the sins that were committed before Christ died. Hence the word used so frequently in the Old Testament is "atonement," the literal meaning of which is "covering." In the New Testament that word does not occur — Romans 5:11 being a mistranslation. The rather, we read in Hebrews 10:18, that, "where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin." The word for "remission" means "a sending away," and not merely a covering. So in the Old Testament we find a provisional covering of sin in the forbearance of God, awaiting the complete

sending away of sin, which was only accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ.

Thus in Leviticus 16 we have a striking exemplification of the fact that the law had only a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, and that consequently these yearly sacrifices could not "make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1). Have we ever thanked God in adequate measure that we are in the favoured position of being once purged, and therefore having no more conscience of sins?

**Leviticus 17** gives us a kind of appendix to all this, guarding against abuses that might so easily creep in. If sacrifices were offered, the animal must be presented at the door of the tabernacle and not slain elsewhere in the camp or outside in the open field. The evil practice that this guarded against is revealed in verse 7, which verse also discloses that already the people had been infected with idolatry. We may remember how Stephen in his address — Acts 7:42,43 — charged the people with idolatry even in the wilderness. This shows how much the prohibition of verses 1-9, was needed, and how it was disregarded by some, though perhaps not in a public way. Verse 7 plainly says, "they shall **no more** offer their sacrifices unto devils;" and that "devils," or more correctly "demons," were the objects of such sacrifices is corroborated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:20.

The rest of Leviticus 17 is occupied with regulations as to eating. The blood, neither of beast nor fowl, was to be eaten for it is the life of the creature, and life belongs to God. This enactment specially enforced for Israel what had been laid down in the time of Noah after the flood, as recorded in Genesis 9:4. So when the apostles and elders gave this injunction to Gentile believers, as recorded in Acts 15:20 and 29, they were not imposing upon them what was merely an item of the law of Moses, but rather a prohibition that applies to mankind generally. We do well to observe it, though we do not need to observe the extreme scruples of the Jews, as is shown by the instruction of 1 Corinthians 10:25.

An important fact is stated in verse 11. The life of the flesh is in the blood, but atonement was only made when the blood was shed and "upon the altar." The blood in the veins of the living animal effected nothing. Men, who profess to be Christian teachers, have taken the words, "the life of the flesh is in the blood," and have made the attempt to prove from them the idea that the blood of Christ means the life of Christ, and that it is really His wonderful life that works salvation. But they only utter this falsity by ignoring what this



verse states. It was not the blood of the living animal that made atonement in the type. It was only the blood "upon the altar."

Three chapters follow — **Leviticus 18,19, and 20** — which in many respects make terrible reading, but which, if read quietly as in the presence of God, are calculated to have a wholesome effect upon us. We are brought face to face, especially in chapters 18 and 20, with great depths of depravity, and it is a solemn and soul-searching thing to realize that we have within us that fallen, fleshly nature which is capable of such things as these. The sins prohibited have largely to do with the sexual nature of mankind, and it is today perfectly obvious that sins of that nature underlie a vast amount of the depravity and crime that fill every land.

The opening verses of Leviticus 18 show that the Lord was looking back on Egypt and forward to Canaan. Both these lands were in the grip of very degrading idolatry, and so Israel was exposed to the infection both before and after their wilderness journey. They were not to follow the evil but keep God's statutes and judgments, and so doing they should live in them. This is the statement that the Apostle quotes in Galatians 3:12. This doing was not "of faith," and obedience would ensure not heaven but continued life on earth.

**Leviticus 19** contains sundry statutes, many of which were designed to regulate man's dealings with his neighbour, and at the same time display the gracious thought of God for those not easily able to protect themselves. In all this Jehovah asserted the glory of His name and manifested His own rights. This we see in such verses as 4, 12, 21, 26, 30, 37.

At the same time we delight in the care for the poor and the stranger manifested in verses 9 and 10. If Boaz had not observed this regulation the Book of Ruth had never been written. Again the hired servant is protected in verse 13, and the deaf and blind in verse 14. Towards the end of the chapter honour is demanded for the aged, though such may be getting feeble, and the stranger is specially protected. All this displays the kindness of God.

In the middle of the chapter what we may call social sins and errors are prohibited. It is well for us to observe these things for they are not unknown in Christian circles. Especially would we desire to emphasize verse 16. Who can estimate the trouble and sorrow caused by talebearers among the saints of God? It is connected here with standing up against the "blood," or "life," of one's neighbours. To such a length will tale-bearing go. But notice the next

verse. We are to rebuke our neighbour and not suffer sin upon him. The instruction evidently is: if you discern wrong or sin in your brother, go straight to him about it, and do not talk against him behind his back. If we Christians acted thus how much good would be gained and how much evil avoided!

**Leviticus 20** opens with warnings against the very idolatry that Stephen had to accuse the people of, as we have seen, and verse 6 adds to this a warning against the practice of spiritism, which, sad to say, has become so common in our day. Following this are verses that indicate that if we do not sanctify the Lord in our hearts we shall not observe the natural relations that God has ordained, whether parents, as in verse 9, or other relationships as in verses 10-21.

This thought is enforced in the closing verses of the chapter. The many statutes were given so that Israel might be utterly different from the corrupted nations into whose land they were going. The holiness of God is greatly stressed, and it is remarkable how many times the words "I am the Lord your God," are repeated. Verse 27 certainly infers that the terrible evils forbidden were largely introduced among the nations by spiritist practices — the trafficking with demons.

**Leviticus 21** is occupied with special instructions for the priests, not only as to themselves but also as to their families. Special sanctity became such in their habits and their persons. Reading this chapter we perceive how serious was the sin of Eli in not restraining his sons in their evil ways. Even more stringent were the rules for the high priest himself, as seen in verses 10-15. So when Caiaphas rent his clothes, as recorded in Matthew 26:65, he definitely broke the commandment of verse 10. It has been asserted by some who have investigated the matter, that every possible rule of justice, both divine and human, was broken in the condemnation of our Lord

What is ordained in verses 16-24, is very striking. Any man of the priestly family, who was deformed or blemished, was debarred from going into the sanctuary and exercising his functions, but he was not to be deprived of priestly food. He should **eat** "the bread of his God," though he might not **offer** "the bread of his God." Today all true Christians are priests, and we cannot but think that something analogous may be seen. There may be those who, by reason of some grievous defect which is public, are debarred from public activity, whether in worship or in service, yet they are as much entitled

to have their part in that which as spiritual food is the life of the priestly family, as the most unblemished and favoured of their brethren.

**Leviticus 22** continues the same strain for the first 16 verses. The most rigid care had to be taken lest uncleanness of any sort was brought into contact with the holy things of God. All these regulations were clearly intended to impress the children of Israel with their own natural liability to that which was defiling in contrast with the essential holiness of God. We too need to be impressed with this, though the uncleanness we have to fear today is that which springs from within rather than from without. In our Lord's time the Pharisees and others were misusing instructions such as these, treating such ceremonial observances as if they were the only thing that mattered. Hence the Lord's word that, "those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man" (Matt. 15:18).

From verse 17 to the end of the chapter we have regulations as to offerings which might be brought by the ordinary Israelite or even by a stranger. Here the same intention is seen Every offerer had to know the holiness of Jehovah to whom the offering was made, and see that no blemish of any kind marked the offering, and that it was not some very small and feeble creature just born. All was to be done as God ordained. They were hallowed, and thus set apart, by Jehovah; and He was to be hallowed in the midst of them.

When we turn to the Book of Malachi, we at once see that the remnant of the people who had returned to the land, were violating these instructions in outrageous fashion. The priests were offering "polluted bread" on the altar of the Lord. They were offering "the blind for sacrifice," and also "the lame and sick." They were challenged to offer such things to the governor and see what he would say. Offered to him it would be an impertinence; offered to God it was a shameful sin. They were treating the statutes of our chapter as though they were null and void. Hence the reminder that the "law of Moses . . . with the statutes and judgments" (Mal. 4:4), had not lost any of its force though a thousand years had passed since it was given. What God ordains at the beginning of a dispensation stands unaltered and authoritative at the end of it.

When we turn from the type to the Antitype we find as ever that which is perfect and in full agreement with God's thoughts and demands. We have only to quote one verse in connection with that which has been before us. We know that we have been redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb **without blemish and without spot**" (1 Peter 1:19).

## LEVITICUS 23:1 - LEVITICUS 25:23

Chapter 22 ended with a solemn reminder to Israel of the holiness of Jehovah, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt to be their God. **Chapter 23** opens with the fact that He desired to have the people, whom He had thus redeemed, assembled before Him. A "convocation" is a "calling together," and this was to mark the feasts of the Lord.

The weekly sabbath is mentioned first of all. For six days work was to be done, but every seventh day was to be a time of complete rest. Other scriptures indicate the special character of the sabbath. For instance, Deuteronomy 5:15, states that it was to act as a reminder of their deliverance from Egypt. Again, Ezekiel 20:12, shows that it stood as a sign between God and Israel, that there was a covenant between them. It signified rest after work accomplished. This was the case in creation when, after six days of work which was very good, God rested. Under the law Israel was to work for six days, and so earn a rest on the seventh.

In reading the Gospels, we cannot but be struck with the frequency with which our Lord's recorded works of mercy were done on the sabbath, incurring the anger of Pharisees and scribes. Israel had wholly broken the covenant, so He was setting aside the sign of it, and showing also that there was no rest for God in a creation that had been ruined by sin. Hence that great word of His, recorded in John 5:17, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." We are delivered from the law, and it no longer forms the basis of our relation with God. We stand before God in righteousness, accomplished by the work of Christ, and therefore we begin with rest on the first day of the week, instead of reaching it at the end by works of our own.

The sabbath however had a typical significance, foreshadowing the rest of God, into which ultimately we shall be introduced, according to Hebrews 4. When we read, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9), the margin tells us that the word used there for "rest" is literally "a keeping of a sabbath" — the only place in Scripture where that particular word is used. In our chapter therefore the sabbath is prophetic of that rest into which God will ultimately bring the true Israel, and the feasts of the Lord, which follow, are prophetic of the steps by which that rest is to be reached.

Of these feasts the passover stands first, as typifying that which forms the basis of all God's work toward that end — the death of Christ. Full details of this we had before us in Exodus 12 and so in verse 5 it is mentioned without detail; and we may pass on to the consideration of the feast of unleavened bread, in verses 6-8.

Leaven being a type of sin in its fermenting activity it was to be wholly excluded from their bread for seven days. Here we have something that is applied to ourselves in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8. We know that Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us, though we are not of Israel, and the seven days of unleavened bread picture the complete period in which we now live, when it is incumbent on us to have done with the sin for which, and to which, Christ has died. We are to "keep the feast . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

There will be no doubt a special application to Israel in the day to come, when they discover how their Messiah has died for them, and learn to abhor and forsake their sin. It stands true indeed in every connection, that if a soul is released from the penalty of sin, which has been expiated in the death of Christ, that soul repudiates the sin for which Christ died. The principle of it is clearly stated in Romans 6:2.

Our chapter is divided into paragraphs, beginning respectively with verses 9, 23, 26 and 33. The first paragraph contains the feasts that have the character of "firstfruits," see, verses 10 and 17. As a matter of fact, though the words are identical in our version, the words in the original differ. In verse 10. the significance of the word is "**principal** fruits," and in verse 17, it is "**earliest** fruits;" another mark this of Divine inspiration, inasmuch as we can now see that here were types and predictions of, first, the resurrection of Christ, and second, of saints who are His followers.

The New Testament antitype of the first we find in such a scripture as, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). The sheaf of the firstfruits, that was to be offered by being waved before the Lord, and which would be accepted on behalf of the people, was in an absolute sense the beginning of the harvest. Until it was offered the produce of the harvest was not in any form to be touched by the people, as verse 14 shows. When offered it was to be accompanied only by a burnt offering and a meal offering with the corresponding drink offering.

How accurately all this foreshadowed the great Antitypical event we can plainly see. Christ risen is before us, so no sin offering is suitable here. Nor has the peace offering a place, since the thought of communion does not enter. The two offerings that do appear set forth the sweet savour of both His spotless life and His sacrificial death.

And further, the sheaf of firstfruits was not to be waved before the Lord on the sabbath, but on the day after the sabbath, that is, on the first day of the week. True to this type, Christ lay in the tomb all the sabbath, and on the first day of the week He rose from the dead. The sheaf was waved "to be accepted for you," as verse 11 says, and in keeping with this Jesus our Lord, who was delivered for our offences, "was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). The believer today stands before God in the acceptance of the risen Christ; and indeed for any saint at any time no other acceptance is possible.

The succeeding feast had its date fixed in reference to this one. Fifty days had to be counted, which according to Jewish reckoning, brought them to the morrow after the seventh sabbath — the feast of Pentecost. The offering on this occasion of two wave loaves is spoken of as "a new meal offering." This it was indeed, inasmuch as from every other meal offering leaven had to be rigidly excluded, and here it had to be introduced. Yet though introduced its fermenting action was to be ended by the action of fire, since the loaves were to be baked.

Here then we see foreshadowed that which first took place on that day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2. On that great occasion, fifty days after the resurrection of our Lord, three thousand Jews, gathered out of many nations, were converted, and offered as "earliest fruits" to God. Not until Acts 10 is reached do we get Gentiles offered as "earliest fruits." But they **were** so offered, for later we find the Apostle Paul speaking of himself as "ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:16).

In our type there were two loaves, setting forth the two classes, and both, the sin that was in them being judged and thus set aside, were equally accepted, when presented to God. What is not typified here is the fact that in the Church both are made one before God. But that fact is a part of "the mystery" which has now been revealed and which, we are expressly told, was not made known in earlier ages. What is foreshadowed is the fact that the saints today are not the complete harvest that is to be reaped as the result of the death and

resurrection of Christ but rather, "a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (Jas. 1:18).

In keeping with all this, the accompanying offerings were to include both sin and peace offerings as well as burnt offerings. The two loaves themselves were the meal offering but representing as they did redeemed sinners, they could not be presented save on the basis of a sin offering, the leaven that was in them having been typically judged by the fire. Again, we meet with the words, "Ye shall do no servile work therein." We had them in connection with the feast of unleavened bread, but they were absent in connection with the sheaf of firstfruits. If saints are to be presented to God, all human effort is totally excluded.

Verse 22 is really a parenthesis, brought in to show that God, while ordaining these feasts in which He was to be honoured and exalted, had a heart full of compassion for the needy among His people, and even for the stranger. In the Book of Ruth we are permitted to see how a God-fearing Israelite, Boaz, observed this command; and his observance of it was over-ruled of God to bring Ruth's name into the genealogy, not only of David but also of Christ Himself, as mentioned in Matthew 1:5.

The feasts of the Lord were not equally distributed throughout the year. After Pentecost came a pause until the seventh month, and then in quick succession came three feasts, which closed the series. On the first day of the seventh month the feast of trumpets was to be observed, which in its prophetic bearing still awaits fulfilment. It foretells the gathering together of the elect Israel at the second Advent, according to the Lord's words, recorded in Matthew 24:31.

Verse 24 of our chapter speaks of this feast as "an holy convocation," and an holy gathering together that day will indeed prove to be. It will be accomplished on the ground of sacrifice, as the next verse indicates, and all "servile work" is eliminated, for this predicted gathering together of Israel will not be achieved by works of law, but wholly based on the mercy of God, as declared in Romans 11:26-32.

On the tenth day of the seventh month came the day of atonement, details of which we had before us when considering chapter 16. Here we have emphasized the elimination of all work on that day, and even more strongly the affliction of heart and soul that was to characterize the people. Viewing it therefore in its setting amongst the other feasts, it is predictive of that great

spiritual awakening in Israel, which will produce repentance of unusual depth and reality, as is predicted in Zechariah 12:10-14. By this inward work of grace there will be created a nation morally fit to enter upon millennial blessedness.

Just five days later came the feast of tabernacles which lasted for seven days. It was a time of thanksgiving and rejoicing when all the fruits of the year had been gathered in, and that doubtless was all that it conveyed to the people at that time. Now that we have the light of New Testament prophecy we see how it foretold the millennial blessedness, which is the purpose of God for Israel. Had the people known its ultimate meaning they might not have been so careless as to its observance, as is noted for us in Nehemiah 8:17. And a similar carelessness seems to have marked them as to other feasts.

Reviewing the teaching of the chapter, we find that it points to great landmarks in Israel's history — the death of Christ; His resurrection; the coming of the Spirit; the gathering out of an elect people; their profound repentance; millennial joy and blessing. The first three have found fulfilment: the last three await it. The portion of the church is not found here, but in the New Testament only. We may rest assured that, whether for Israel or for the church, not one predicted thing will fail when its season arrives.

The last words of the chapter repeat the opening words of verse 2 — "**the feasts of the Lord.**" It is sadly instructive to note how John speaks of them in his Gospel. A sample is, "After this there was **a feast of the Jews**" (5:1), and so it is all through. They were being more observant of them than their fathers, but only in a ritualistic way. They had lost the kernel while retaining the shell. Consequently their feasts were disowned. Herein is a warning for us. Let us not fail to take to heart the principle involved in it, and the danger disclosed.

**Leviticus 24** divides into two parts. In the first we have instructions as to the maintenance of the lamps in the holy place and of the cakes upon the golden table, so that all was to be in order before God. In the latter part we discover that there was bad disorder in the camp, when it was a question of the actual state of the people. To view things ideally according to God's mind is one thing: to view them practically according to the state of the people is quite another. And thus it is of course in connection with ourselves today.

It is worthy of note how often the word "pure" occurs in verses 1-9. The pure candlestick had seven lamps to be fed with the pure oil beaten out of olives.



The pure table had on it the twelve cakes of fine flour, covered in pure frankincense, renewed sabbath by sabbath before the Lord. Here we see what will yet be realized in the coming age, when the light of the Spirit of God will not only be "before the throne," but also, "sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 4:5; Rev. 5:6). In that age too the twelve tribes will at last be maintained before God in a fragrance which they derive altogether from Christ.

The holiness of all this is emphasized in verse 9. The weekly cakes were to be eaten only by the priests, and in the holy place. They were not to be carried forth into the outside world. Yet even this regulation had to give way in the presence of the pressing need of David, who was the Lord's anointed, as recorded in 1 Samuel 21:6; and this action of Ahimelech was approved by our Lord in Matthew 12:3,4. The true Lord's Anointed is "greater than the temple," important though that temple and its arrangements were. David moreover was in rejection when the incident took place; and our Lord was the rejected One when He spoke in Matthew 12. Under these circumstances the needs of the Lord's Anointed took precedence of legal regulations.

The sin of the man who cursed the name of the Lord is brought in here by way of contrast. The Lord's mind concerning him was made known and he had to die. In verse 17, killing a man is mentioned, and cursing the Lord is as grave a sin as that, for death was to be the penalty of both. Here too we have mentioned lesser evils, and we get the legislation, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth," mentioned also in Exodus and Deuteronomy, and referred to by the Lord in Matthew 5:38. He referred to it to throw into relief the grace that He was beginning to reveal, which would entail upon His disciples the showing of grace to others.

**Leviticus 25** introduces a fresh subject. The previous chapters have dealt mainly with matters that specially concerned the priests, and were spoken "out of the tabernacle" (chap. 1:1). We now have a matter that concerned rather right government in Israel, when they were come into the land, and so it was spoken "in Mount Sinai." In this connection the basic fact they had to remember is stated in verse 23, — "the land is Mine." Consequently Israel had to deal with the land, when they possessed it, in the way prescribed in the earlier verses.

Every seventh year was to be a sabbatical year, when the land was to be given a rest. And when seven of these sabbatical years had passed the fiftieth year was to be a jubilee, when not only no sowing was to be done but every

man was to return to his inheritance. This law must have been a great test to the people.

In verse 20, it is anticipated that they would say, "What shall we eat . . .?" In answer to that they had to rely on God's pledged word that the sixth year should bring forth enough for three years. This being so there would be a sufficiency of supply even when they did not sow on the fiftieth year as well as the forty-ninth. The question became simply this—Would they take God at His word? It is a rather ominous fact that there is no record in the history of the people of the jubilee year being observed, though we do have a reference to a kinsman redeeming an inheritance.

What is made very plain is that since the land was God's, those to whom He gave it might only dispose of it on the leasehold principle, selling it until the jubilee came; the value of the lease decreasing as the jubilee drew near. Thus each inheritance was not to be permanently alienated from the family that originally had it. In this way any accumulation of landed property by men of a grasping nature was prevented and, what was even more important, Israel had a continual reminder that all they were to possess they held from the Lord, and they were dependent upon Him. Do we who are Christians need this reminder any less than they? Do we not rather need it more?

## LEVITICUS 25:23 - LEVITICUS 27

Israel having been reminded that the land, into which they were going, was Jehovah's, so that they were merely tenants in possession for a time, and therefore they might not permanently alienate it, they were next instructed as to right of redemption that was to be observed, if anyone became poor and parted with his land for a time.

Some who had done this might later be prospered financially and be able themselves to redeem it. Such a case is contemplated in verse 26, and equitable terms of redemption are stated in verse 27. But in verse 25 we learn that, if a man remained poor and unable for this, "any of his kin" might step in and redeem it for him. This is illustrated for us by the action of Boaz in the Book of Ruth; and by this type we see how needful it was that the Lord Jesus should assume perfect Manhood, sin apart. Thus He "took part" of "flesh and blood," as Hebrews 2:14 says, that so by death He might annul the power of the devil over us. Had He taken hold of angels only, He could not have fulfilled the type as our Kinsman-Redeemer, and paid the necessary price.

Verses 29-34, deal with exceptions to the above. Houses in villages were to be treated as land but not if the house stood in a walled city. Such could only be redeemed within a year of the original transaction. They were more distinctively man's handiwork, lacking the simplicity connected with God's handiwork in the countryside. And further there was special protection ordered for the Levites and their possessions since they were specially God's possession.

In the latter part of our chapter we pass from the laws relating to the land to those concerning the redemption of persons. The first case considered is that of the Israelite who becoming poor sold himself for a period of service to one of his brethren. He was to be treated as a hired servant and not a bondservant and at the jubilee he was to be free. The case of such was considered fully when we read Exodus 21.

But then secondly, some of the nations round about might be prepared to sell themselves into servitude. If so, no redemption was provided for, and their service would be perpetual. It may be remarked that here we have a form of slavery permitted: Yes, but it was a form that was accepted for a monetary

consideration by the person concerned, and not something forced on them, or similar to what was done with African negroes a century or two ago.

Thirdly, there was the case of the Israelite who, becoming poor, sold himself into servitude to some sojourner or stranger in the land. He would go out free at the jubilee, but also special arrangements were made for his possible redemption before the jubilee arrived. But such right of redemption was again limited to one of his own kin — brother, uncle or cousin. So that the "kinsman-redeemer" comes into view when persons are in question, and not only in connection with land. In considering this type, we have to remind ourselves, as indeed with all the types, that the great Reality that is typified far exceeds the type.

**Leviticus 26**, which we have now reached, bears an exceedingly solemn character. Verses 1-13 give a glowing picture of the earthly blessing and prosperity that would follow their obedience. Verses 14-39 give a terrible forecast of the evils that would ensue, if disobedience marked them.

Verse 1 prohibits idolatry of any kind. Verse 2 enforces the sanctity of the sabbath and the sanctuary. Verse 3 sums up all the other laws as "My statutes" and "My commandments," which were to be carried out. Lip service was not enough. They were to "do them."

Then follow the details of the prosperity that would follow. But, all was strictly provisional. It is, "If ye walk . . . then I will give." All depended upon their obedience and that "If" proved fatal. The blessings promised were of an **earthly** and **material** sort. They may be summed up as, fruitfulness, peace, victory and the realized presence of God in their midst. Jehovah had broken the bands of the yoke, imposed on them in Egypt, so that they went upright instead of being bowed down under heavy burdens. His presence would be their continued salvation. There is no mention of heaven or of the life to come. How great the contrast with the Christian's portion — blessed "with all **spiritual** blessings in **heavenly** places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3), and that without the introduction of any "if."

The larger part of the chapter is occupied with warnings as to the dreadful evils that would be provoked by their disobedience, and which would fall upon them with sevenfold intensity. In the days of Ezekiel the sad history of Israel's law-breaking was reaching a climax, and through him the Lord spoke of, "My four sore judgments . . . the sword, and the famine, **and the** noisome beast, and the pestilence" (Ezek. 14:21). In our chapter the "four sore

judgments" appear, only the sword instead of being mentioned first comes in the fourth place. Moreover, as verses 36 and 37 disclose, they would also bring the sword the one upon the other, and thus add to their miseries and destruction.

Verses 34 and 35 anticipate that they would ignore the commandments as to the sabbath, particularly as regarded the land, and that consequently God would give it a long sabbatical rest, when they were driven out and it lay desolate. We all know how long a rest that land has had until quite recent years.

With verse 40 a ray of light begins to shine. A door of hope is opened, if two things come to pass. First, there must be the confession of their iniquities. Second, the acceptance of the punishment that their iniquities have brought upon them. This second stipulation is mentioned twice, you notice, and evidently it is a very important matter. Both things are seen in Daniel's prayer (Dan. 9) so he got a speedy answer. A man may confess his sin but, if he still kicks against the punishment it incurs, it shows that his confession is superficial only, and lacks depth of real contrition. This is as true for us today as it was for Israel of old, since God's governmental dealings with His children, though always in love, are in strict righteousness. Psalm 73 gives evidence as to this.

It is also made plain in the end of the chapter that though disobedience would bring upon them such dire consequences, God would never forget His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in which He pledged Himself toward them unconditionally. To this Paul refers in Galatians 3:17, pointing out that the law was not given until four hundred and thirty years after and cannot disannul it. This earlier covenant was "by promise" and when God fulfils it, Israel will be blessed on the ground of mercy, as is stated in Romans 11:31,32.

One thing more may be said: the woes threatened, like the favours offered in the earlier verses, are all of an earthly and temporal nature, though described in terrible terms. No attempt is made to soften down the language; indeed the very reverse. Just so it is in the New Testament where the dire consequence of unforgiven sin in eternity are stated. The language, whether of our Lord or of His apostles, could not be stronger. In this we ought to see clear evidence of the kindness of God. Those who break human laws may sometimes have ground for the complaint that had they been told plainly the penalty involved they would not have transgressed. No such complaint from Israel would have

stood against God. Nor will any such complaint stand from those who, having heard the Gospel and refused its warnings, pass into a lost eternity.

**Leviticus 27** contemplates cases where Israelites might desire to devote under a vow to the Lord either themselves or their animals, houses, land, etc., on special occasions. As to persons there was a fixed valuation, as given in the opening verses. This was in the hands of Moses. Verse 8 contemplates the case of the poor man, who was permitted to turn from Moses to the priest, who would value him according to his ability. Now the priest was one who could "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" (Heb. 5:2). Pure law itself admits of no flexibility: what is demanded must be paid in full. The priest represented that measure of grace that was permissible under the law system.

There seems to be very little reference in the Old Testament to such vows and offerings to the Lord. It is possible that the vow of Jephthah (Judges 11) so rashly made, came under this heading. So also the vow of Hannah, in giving Samuel to the Lord. Israel frequently misused, if they did not neglect these regulations, and of this we have an illustration in Malachi 1:14. God was not deceived however, and a curse came on the head of the man who was deceitful in that which he vowed.