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THE CLOSING TYPES
OF
LEVITICUS

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THE CLOSING TYPES OF LEVITICUS

EXPOSITION OF LEVITICUS XXIV.—XXVII.

BY

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THE CLOSING TYPES OF LEVITICUS.

CHAPTER I.

THE DUTIES OF THE SANCTUARY.

Chap. xxiv. 1-9.

AFTER the Feasts comes a new section of this third book of Moses, which we now propose to consider. It consists of a rather miscellaneous group of particulars not yet laid down in the book.

The first words treat of the provision for the candlestick and the table before Jehovah continually.

“¹And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, ²Command the children of Israel that they take unto thee pure beaten olive oil for the light to light the lamp continually. ³Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, shall Aaron dress it from evening to morning before Jehovah continually: an everlasting statute throughout your generations. ⁴Upon the pure candlestick shall he arrange the lamps before Jehovah continually.”

“⁵And thou shalt take fine wheaten flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof; each cake shall be of two tenths. ⁶And thou shalt set them in two

rows, six in a row, upon the pure table before Jehovah. ⁷ And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon [each] row; and it shall be a bread of remembrance, an offering to Jehovah. ⁸ Every sabbath day he shall arrange it before Jehovah continually on the part of the children of Israel: an everlasting covenant. ⁹ And it shall be Aaron's, and his sons'; and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it [is] most holy unto him of Jehovah's fire-offerings: an everlasting statute" (vers. 1-9).

It is important for us to feel the part which God devolves on His children and expects from them, unless He be indifferent to His honour or their blessing. So it is here with His people. What a privilege and responsibility for the sons of Israel! They could not enter the holy place: the covering or curtain forbade it save for the priests. But on all the children of Israel lay the charge of providing pure olive oil beaten for the light of the sanctuary outside the veil of the testimony to cause the lamps to burn continually.

The meaning of the type is plain. That light was the exhibition of God in Christ who is the True Light. Light He was on coming into the world which lay in darkness; He was the light of men; He sheds His light on every man. There the Fathers are as dark as the Friends; for nothing can be more preposterous than that every man is lighted. On the contrary, every one, as man, is still darkness: so the apostle declares even of the elect in their natural state. And so terrible is this spiritual darkness that even the

presence of the divine light did not dispel it, as darkness yields to light naturally : the darkness in that case did not apprehend the light. Nor is it without moment to see that it is on His coming into the world that the light so manifests every man. The common rendering, as in the A.V., is both grammatically and dogmatically false. It would require the article to mean "that" cometh. As anarthrous, it must mean "on coming." Yet "on coming" has no distinctive force here, save as said of the true Light ; but as predicated of Him, it is full of interest and instruction. Said of man, it not only adds nothing beyond that he is a man, who must therefore have already come into the world ; but it might impart the strange notion that man is thus enlightened on his coming into the world, which yields no good sense.

Here however it is the same Light, yet not as when on earth He was "the light of the world." He is the light shining in the sanctuary, the light of God for those who have priestly title to enter there during the darkness which rests on the Christ-rejecting people. For as we are told in the detail of ver. 3, "in the tent of meeting Aaron shall order it from evening to morning before Jehovah continually." It is the function of the high priest (and we know Who He is that thus acts in heaven itself), not in the hand-made holies or the figures, but in the true. We know also what the oil denotes which caused the light to burn. It was the Holy Spirit given without measure. It was in that Spirit that the Lord met the tempter ; in that

Spirit that He was anointed for His service of every kind ; in that Spirit that He offered Himself spotless to God. So was He raised from among the dead ; so when risen did He charge the apostles whom He had chosen ; so the Revelation speaks of Him as having the seven Spirits of God, not only in dealing with the churches, but in view of the crisis of judgment that follows to bring in and rule the world-kingdom. It was His perfection as Incarnate never to speak or act otherwise where we who have the same Spirit so often and sadly fail. Here we have Him under the figure of the candlestick displaying the light on high.

Again, the pure table with its twelve loaves of fine flour represents Him as the heavenly food of the priests, Him Who was also the manna that came down for the people on earth. And as the spiritual fulness was aptly couched under the seven lamps of the candlesticks, so the twelve loaves pointed to the human or administrative fulness of Christ. We readily see the same principle in Israel, in the twelve apostles, in the complement of Israel and of Judah in the Revelation, in the gates &c. of the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. Jesus was also the bread of life as man ; and if Israel see this not yet, any more than the light of heaven, we whom by grace He made priests delight in both. For what nourishment is there not in that glorified Man whom we henceforth know and feed on (2 Cor. v. 16, 17) ?

Nor must we omit to take into account the pure frankincense upon earth now, for a memorial, our

acceptance in all the grace of Christ, the fragrance before God. We see the sabbath too here, as it followed the manna, as historically shown in Exod. xvi. It is on Christ that rest for us depends, not on the Spirit in us, which is our help and power; but He, Christ, is our peace before God. Only the priests eat of Him thus, and they only in a holy place. "For it is most holy unto him of the fire-offerings of Jehovah:" a statute for ever, as was the ordering of the candlestick, both figures of Christ in God's presence.

We cannot but see, if we believe the testimony of God, how rich as well as suited to need and condition is the provision of His grace in Christ. We are met, when outside in the folly and wretchedness of sin, by mercy that adapts itself to wants so extreme; and in truth we want every thing that is good, evil ourselves and delighting in it, yet not without shame and compunction and remorse. The goodness of God leads us to repentance. The grace of Christ, while manifesting to us our ruined and guilty estate, attracts and wins us to God, by His suffering for our sins.

But thus brought into the peace of heavenly light, we learn at first to our wonder that we are made priests to God, more wonderful, considering what He is and what we are, than that we should also be made kings. And there we, made free of the true Sanctuary, have the joy and blessing of Christ as its light in all fulness. There too we have the gracious provision for the sustenance and refreshment of the new man, in that plentiful store

of heavenly food which He as the golden table thus spread is meant to furnish those whom grace has called into this place of nearness before Him. This is not what is called "the mystery concerning Christ and concerning the church;" but a precious part of Christian privilege that accompanies it, as made known in the Epistle to the Hebrews and in the First Epistle of Peter.

CHAPTER II.

BLASPHEMY JUDGED WITH OTHER EVIL.

Lev. xxiv. 10-23.

In marked contrast with the provision for the full light of Christ to shine uninterruptedly in the sanctuary, till the morning without clouds, during the night, and in connexion with the pledge of blessing for all Israel, stands the public insult to Jehovah, which is here recounted with His judgment on it.

“¹⁰ And the son of an Israelitish woman, but who [was] son of an Egyptian man, went forth among the children of Israel; and this son of the Israelitish [woman] quarrelled with an Israelitish man together in the camp. ¹¹ And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the Name, and cursed; and they brought him to Moses (and his mother's name [was] Shelomith, daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan). ¹² And they placed him in ward, that they might decide at the mouth of Jehovah. ¹³ And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁴ Lead the blasphemer outside the camp; and all that heard shall lay their hands upon his head, and the whole assembly shall stone him. ¹⁵ And thou shalt speak to the children of Israel, saying, Every one when he curseth his God shall bear his sin. ¹⁶ And he that blasphemeth the name of Jehovah shall certainly be

put to death : all the assembly shall certainly stone him ; as well the stranger as the homeborn, when he blasphemeth the Name, shall be put to death. ¹⁷ And he that smiteth any man mortally shall certainly be put to death. ¹⁸ And he that smiteth any beast mortally shall make it good, life for life. ¹⁹ And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour as he hath done, so shall it be done to him, ²⁰ breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth ; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him. ²¹ And he that smiteth a beast [mortally] shall make it good ; and he that smiteth a man [mortally] shall be put to death. ²² Ye shall have one law ; as the stranger, so the homeborn ; for I [am] Jehovah your God. ²³ And Moses spoke to the children of Israel ; and they led the blasphemer outside the camp, and stoned him with stones. And the children of Israel did as Jehovah commanded Moses " (vers. 10-23).

The first portion of the chapter is the clear type of Christ, not only as the light of the heavenlies during the dark night for Israel on earth, but as the pledge by-and-by of their twelve-tribed fulness through the grace of Christ. Here we have not the shadows of good things to come, but the sad fact of Jehovah's name blasphemed meanwhile on the earth, where the responsibility lies to be His witness in reverence and righteousness and truth. Here is the sample, alas ! in this one man of Israel after the flesh, the son of an Israelitess and an Egyptian father : an unhallowed union, the fruit of which reviles the holy Name. No doubt all flesh

is as grass; but Israel was to be holy to Jehovah. And surely this is the most weighty step a woman (symbol of a state) takes in this life naturally. But Shelomith married an Egyptian, one of that oppressing world out of which Israel was brought with a high hand by Jehovah.

It is not that sin of idolatry for which they were to be swept off the land into Assyria; and especially even the royal tribe, when it apostatised, into Babylon. Here it is defiance, cursing the true God, or blaspheming Jehovah. This became emphatically true, when, weaned meanwhile from idols, they disdained and blasphemed the Name in the Messiah, Himself also Jehovah their God. Therefore are they given up nationally to a worse than Babylonish captivity. They are under the curse of Him they reviled, and the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost (1 Thess. ii. 16).

Therefore also, as they despised Him who suffered for sins, all their other sins, as in the verses that follow, come up against them. They have not even the temporary relief in the blood of calves and goats offered for their transgressions. They have in God's righteous judgment neither king nor prince, sacrifice nor statue, ephod nor teraphim. But the heavenly reality, the dead but now risen Christ, in the tabernacle not made with hands, is the sure token that more than all they lost they will find provided by Jehovah in the mercy that endures for ever, when they shall say, Blessed He that cometh in the Name of Jehovah. For repent they surely will, as it is the promise of divine

grace, and turn again, that their sins may be blotted out ; so that there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of Jehovah, and that He may send the Messiah that has been fore-appointed to them. He is now in the Sanctuary above, where the heavens received Him, after His atoning work was done, till times of restoring all things, of which God spoke by His prophets since the world began. The security is on high where only faith's eye can reach ; but it is unfailing before God, and awaits the moment when the gathering out of every nation as well as out of Israel is complete to join the Lord in the air. Then renewed dealings follow on to form a godly remnant of Jews, His missionaries to preach the gospel of the kingdom to all the nations before the end come, when the day of Jehovah ensues for the judgment of the quick throughout all the habitable earth, and He shall reign over Israel in mount Zion from henceforth even for ever, that is as long as earth endures.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAND AND JEHOVAH'S EARTHLY PURPOSE.

1. THE SABBATH YEAR.

Lev. xxv. 1-7.

THE Feasts had given the entire circle of divine purpose and ways leading up to its effectuation, etc. (chap. xxiii.). Chap. xxiv. presents, in a remarkable and concise twofold, the unfailing priestly light in the Sanctuary, whatever the darkness of Israel might be temporarily to their shame because of their rebellion and blasphemy of His Name. This is vividly set forth in the fruit of a mixed marriage in the same chapter and its unsparing doom. Now follows, in a seventh sabbatic year, and the jubilee when seven sevens of years pass, Jehovah's pledge that His mercy endures for ever, and this for His land, for His people; as it is written in Deuteronomy xxxii. 43, "For He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful to His land, to His people."

Jehovah means to bless all families of the earth in Abraham, and in his seed, the true (not the figurative) Son dead and risen; and so the apostle could justify, by its first clause, the gospel to every creature, and those that believe of the Gentiles, rejoicing with the Israel of God, all such fleshly

distinction gone in the church. But the fulfilment for Israel, and the nations as a whole awaits the day of Jehovah; when after overwhelming judgments on both, and on apostate Christendom most of all, the Crucified, Jah the Saviour, shall reign over all the earth. In that day shall there be one Jehovah, and His name one, all idols consigned to the moles and to the bats. Yet though mercy will surely bless the nations, even Egypt the old oppressor and Assyria that punished them for their idolatry, Israel shall still be expressly Jehovah's inheritance. No other is holy and pleasant here below. By the Christians, during Israel's night, as for the faithful elders, is seen a better land, that is, a heavenly, and not as by them afar off, but themselves brought nigh and lit up with the light of Christ, their life, known far more fully by sovereign grace. How can any, with the N. T. and the Holy Spirit as now given, doubt it for a moment? No wonder that such children are gloomy, under notions so defective (to say the least), and occupied overmuch with creature evil, to the loss of the spiritual good to be enjoyed; for whatever the reproach and the suffering, we more than conquer through Him that loved us.

The Jews are exiles again, and far longer the time required for their blind hatred of their, of Jehovah's, Messiah. But they shall yet sing, "His foundation is in the mountains of holiness. Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion more than all the tabernacles of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." At that very time God

will have visited the judgments of saints and apostles and prophets on the corrupt city of confusion, which has so long dazzled the eyes of the superstitious as the false eternal, doomed to God's burning, the smoke of which is to go up to the ages of ages, when the earth as well as the heavens rejoice. Neither London nor Paris, neither Berlin nor Vienna nor yet Moscow, has the smallest claim to a sacred title. It is quite easy to understand that successful merchants, soldiers, and scientists think otherwise; but what is the worth of any opinion of man? The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God abides for ever. And the Christian can say so with an emphasis and joy unknown as yet to the Jew, if he but know his calling upwards, waiting for the Lord to receive him to Himself for heavenly glory as well as reigning over the earth in that day.

"¹And Jehovah spoke to Moses in mount Sinai, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When ye come into the land that I will give you, the land shall keep a sabbath to Jehovah. ²Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years shalt thou prune thy vineyard, and gather in the produce thereof; ³but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest for the land, a sabbath to Jehovah. Thy field thou shalt not sow, nor prune thy vineyard. ⁴That which groweth of itself of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, and the grapes of thine undressed vines thou shalt not gather: a year of rest shall it be for the land. ⁵And the sabbath of the land shall be for food

for you; for thee, and for thy bondman, and for thy handmaid, and for thy hired servant, and for him that dwelleth as a sojourner with thee, 'and for thy cattle, and for the beasts that [are] in thy land: all the produce thereof, it shall be for your food."

Now here was to worldly ears the strangest edict ever imposed on a people. Nebuchadnezzar, despotic as he was, could not dare to issue it; nor Cyrus the Persian, nor Alexander. Julius Cæsar or his imperial nephew would have counted it stark madness. Jehovah laid it down as a matter of course for a people separated to Himself; and this early in their wilderness history. For it is intimated that He spoke it to Moses in mount Sinai, whence they moved early in the second year; as then He told them of their coming to the promised land, though many years through their sinful folly must pass till the rebellious generation was followed by another one. He knew the end from the beginning, and has communicated to His own what was good for them to know, let the mis-called higher critics revile as they may. Nor did Jehovah ever fail to make good the extraordinary means He adopted, as explained in vers. 21, 22. He gave them, while Israel obeyed, the produce of three years on every sixth year, to carry over not that year only but the sabbatic and the eighth, when they sowed and waited for its harvest. It was therefore a constant exertion of divine power and goodness to a people whom He thus encouraged to trust and honour Him. But Israel soon became restive

under His control and authority, and contrived to be "like all the nations," growing mad on strange gods beyond any. Retrograding they violated the Covenant, and made it impossible for Jehovah to perform His wondrous part, unless He consented to His own dishonour.

The Sabbath had a great and holy interest from the beginning. It was God's rest from creating to make; but man sinned and failed to enter. It reappeared in His dealings of grace before Israel reached Sinai, when it was marked out after the manna was given, type of rest after the living bread from heaven. But Israel liked not that bread of God, and lusted after flesh, confiding in human ability to keep the law which embodied the Sabbath as a divine command. It became a sign to Israel, a sign of God: rest to faith, when God introduced any new principle in the great book of redemption, Exodus. But Israel despised and ignored His sabbaths, though every week closed with one, and the first month had an added one to which Messiah's death lent a most solemn import, with the sevens till Pentecost; and the seventh month more openly still, with its Day of Atonement, and its Feast of Booths, with its first day and eighth extraordinarily. But the sabbath year was the same writ large to be read and seen by all men. It brought into prominence the land: "a year of rest for the land," of which Jehovah was landlord, and Israel His tenants at will.

O that His people had hearkened, and Israel had walked in His ways! But they would none of

Him to their own ruin, to this day even worse than of old, but not for ever. No : the land is His, and He will give it again to them, no longer on the condition of their faithfulness to Him but of His to them in mercy ; when they are brought down truly to feel that mercy alone suits either their sin and ruin, or His grace and truth as their Saviour God. God's rights remain to faith when man, yea the chosen nation, sinned away all pretension to right on their part. It is true that an unparalleled tribulation must be the last chapter of the Jew without the true God and His Anointed, alas ! under the antichrist, the man of sin, "the time of Jacob's trouble ; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer. xxx. 7). Yes, Jehovah will be merciful to His land, to His people.

The sabbath year was also marked by the liberation of a brother who had become a bondman to an Israelite ; for what anomalies might not be till Messiah come and reign over them ? But even during the day of evil through one man's weakness or fault, and another man's availing himself of it for his selfishness, in that land only was the sign of the good time coming, and of Him who is competent to put down all enemies. But even now Jehovah insisted on all that heeded this law, that after six years of bondage the Hebrew slave could claim liberty. "In the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee" (Exod. xxi., Deut. xv. 12) ; and when sent free, he was not to "go away empty." The law made nothing perfect ; but it was a righteous, good, and holy check on man. It was

not Christ and redemption, or the Spirit and the new man; so that neo-critics, who complain of things then as not on the Christian level, only betray their illwill and ignorance.

Again, the seventh or sabbath year was Jehovah's release for the insolvent Hebrew (Deut. xv. 1-15). It is beautiful and affecting, how the law-giver was inspired to appeal to the hearts of those who had, on behalf of the poor brother that had not. But the divine mind was clear and express in this beneficent obliteration of debts in the year when His own bounty was so conspicuous to His people, spite of sad and frequent faults.

There was the further care of His wisdom, that "at the end of [every] seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing" (Deut. xxxi. 10, 11). Thus admirably was it provided, unless rebellious wickedness hindered, that every Israelite, men, women, and children, ay, "and thy stranger that is within thy gates," should hear and observe to do all the words of this law.

But as unbelief led to idolatry, so even before this, to profane the sabbaths of every kind, of days and years, as we find predicted in Lev. xxvi. 14, 15, and also punished in the carrying away to Babylon for seventy years (2 Chron. xxxvi. 20, 21). Alas! it is the old, old story of man's failure in every duty, and from the earliest; for what meant

the setting up the calf of gold which Aaron made at the people's mandate, before the tables on which Jehovah deigned to write His law were brought down by Moses? These however are only the wretched ways of man. But days come, when all will be recovered by a poor and afflicted and repentant people under Messiah and the new covenant. Then will be fulfilled all the pledges of the sabbath year, and incomparably more, every promise and every prediction to God's glory, and to the blessing of Israel and all the nations; as the heavenly saints will enjoy still higher and richer blessings with Christ above.

Here again note the testimony to Jehovah's beneficence to the humble and the needy and the stranger that sojourned with the Israelite, to their cattle, and to the very beasts in their land: none forgotten, all provided for; though in the sabbath year not a field was sown nor a vineyard pruned, not a field reaped nor the grapes gathered. What a witness for God, if Israel had obeyed! But they disobeyed here as elsewhere; and were it not that Jehovah changes not, the sons of Jacob had been destroyed hopelessly. But He looked on to Messiah and His sacrificial work, awaiting in the latter day their repentance in His grace. Then will He blot out their transgressions for His own sake, and will not remember their sins. Then the deaf shall hear, and the blind see. Then shall the lame leap as a hart, and the tongue sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break forth, and torrents in the desert. And the mirage shall become a pool, and the thirsty

land springs of water ; in the habitations of wild dogs where they lay, grass with reeds and rushes. In short, sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

On the other hand it ought to be plain to every reflecting Christian that the type of the recurring sabbatical year of release cannot without violence be applied to the church or to any individual member of it. *We* have redemption in Christ through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. It is a constant privilege of the gospel. One may have to confess any and every sin into which he falls by the way through unwatchfulness and failure in dependence on God. But the redemption which we received at the start remains unrevoked and unimpaired throughout the entire course of each believer ; and the grace which gave it sovereignly then abides in His faithful goodness to the last, providing the advocacy of Christ with the Father and securing our humiliation and self-judgment to the restoration of the soul.

Our relation to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is therefore very different from that of Israel as here traced. And it is of the more importance to seize it, as the tendency ever is to slip from the heavenly and eternal character of our privileges into the earthly and temporal nature of theirs. To confound them has been the bane of Christendom ; and the issue is the loss of the "better thing" God provided for us, and the denial of the hopes of Israel in their due place and season.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

Lev. xxv. 8-13

DEEPLY impressive as the sabbath year is in ushering in this chapter, more outward and imposing and thorough-going is the jubilee when seven sabbaths of years were fulfilled, or forty-nine years. This therefore is next introduced in a general way with details to the end of the chapter.

“⁸And thou shalt count to thee seven sabbaths of years, seven years seven times; and the days of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to thee forty and nine years. ⁹And thou shalt cause a sound of the trumpet to go forth in the seventh month on the tenth [day] of the month; on the day of atonement shall ye sound the trumpet throughout all your land. ¹⁰And ye shall hallow the year of the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty in the land to all the inhabitants thereof: a jubilee shall it be to you; and ye shall return [every] man to his possession, and ye shall return [every] man to his family. ¹¹A jubilee this fiftieth year [shall] be to you: ye shall not sow, nor reap its after-growth, nor gather one of its separations. ¹²For it [is] the jubilee; it shall be holy to you; out of the field ye shall eat its produce. ¹³In this year of

jubilee shall ye return [every] man to his possession" (8-13).

As there was a sabbath day and month, so also a sabbatical year and one after seven times that year; this last being the jubilee, when the cycle of seven sabbatical years was completed. The first two referred to the people with Jehovah; the last two to the land. So it is with us now that the Spirit of God carefully brings out the individual's true and full relation to God, before our corporate privilege is unfolded, as we may read in the Epistle to the Ephesian saints. So here, after days of sin, sorrow, and ruin, it is the day anticipated in these pledges by the way whereon Jehovah who chose Israel will remember His people, even to the joy of the nations long envious and scornful; when He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful to His land, to His people. The land is prominent in the sabbatical year, still more completely in the jubilee.

Hence the explicit care to base the jubilee on the offering and acceptance of the atonement-day, the most solemn sacrifice of the year. The cornet which was to sound so loud, and bring in the proclamation of liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof, was not on the first of the seventh month but on the tenth. The first was a sabbath too, and distinguished by a memorial of blowing the cornet. It too was a holy convocation: no servile work was to be done, and a fire-offering made to Jehovah. But the tenth was the fast,

when no work was to be done, with the most peremptory warning that every soul not afflicted on that same day should be cut off from among his peoples, and that every soul doing any manner of work on that same day Jehovah would destroy from among His people. Christ's atonement alone accounts for this. Therefore the repentance in dust and ashes; therefore too the exclusion of any manner of work. His work, His suffering for sin, explains it all.

The "liberty" which immediately follows is the answer to that work of atonement completed and accepted. It is quite a different liberty from that deliverance from the law of sin and death which we know as Christians as traced in Rom. viii., 2 Cor. iii., and Gal. v. The jubilee is in no way the type of what pertains to the Christian or the church, but of Israel for the land when Jehovah's people shall be brought into their full promised blessing. Pentecost typifies what we now enjoy by the gift of the Spirit, consequent on Christ our passover sacrificed for us, and His resurrection shown in its wave-sheaf and the wave-loaves, till at an untold moment the heavenly saints are changed and caught up to meet Him for the Father's house. Only this was a mystery not yet revealed in scripture but hid in God. After that, when time begins again to be counted, in the seventh month comes a new series of divine dealings to apply the already accomplished work of atonement to Israel, awaked from their long slumber of death on the first of the month,

then brought by self-judgment and humiliation under the atoning sacrifice in power of truth, at length the feast of glory for time and even eternity.

It is here too that the jubilee finds its just place and true application; for it has its peculiar place for Israel so marked that it is treated here distinctly from the greater cycle of the Feasts of Leviticus. It has nothing whatever to say to any joy for us in the resurrection when the last trumpet sounds for our joining Christ on high to be with Him above. It concerns characteristically the people and the land; for Christ is to have glory everywhere, and a suited people for the earth as well as the heavens. Here the theologians are sadly astray and short of the truth. And the N. T. is as clear about it, as the O. T. is full of it. The fiftieth year the Israelites were to hallow, and proclaim in the land for all the inhabitants thereof. It is the era when all Israel shall be saved too, when all Zion's children shall be taught of Jehovah, and great shall be their peace. They shall be all righteous, and possess the land for ever as the branch of Jehovah's planting, the work of His hands, that He may be glorified. The type was but the shadow of a greater antitype. But it is of Israel's blessedness here below when Messiah reigns.

"A jubilee shall it be to you, and ye shall return every man to his possession, and ye shall return every man to his family." We can readily perceive how appropriate such consolation

is to poor distressed Israel. They had a vested interest there, and from Jehovah, but by their own self-confidence held on the tenure of law, that is, of their own righteousness. Alas! they violated their law in every way. They were as mad as Babylon on their idols, and the Jews were exiled to Babylon, as the rest had been to Assyria. And when a remnant of Jews returned in God's goodness for the coming of Messiah in due time, it was but to reject and have Him crucified by lawless hands; as they also refused the Spirit's call in the gospel, and especially rose up against it for the Gentiles. For all that Jehovah waits to be gracious; and when the Gentiles, instead of standing by faith and continuing in goodness, claim all for themselves in pride and denial of Israel, they too shall become objects of judgment. Then God's mercy shall flow like a river on Israel repentant and believing; and the jubilee shall sound for the long distant and deaf, the atoning sacrifice being received in faith and true affliction of heart to the denial of self and all manner of work. Liberty shall be proclaimed, and a return shall be for every man, and for every man to his family. As the land shall mourn, every family apart and their wives apart in self-judgment, so all will be united in joy when the restitution of all things arrives. "A jubilee this fiftieth year shall be to you."

Such language has a force to Israel as it has to no other people, because Jehovah gave them the land of His choice for them, as for none else. Still less can the words have fitness for the

Christian or the church, chosen out of every family, and brought into union with Christ, so that henceforth as Christians we know no man according to flesh. We belong even now to a dead and risen Christ, and are a new and heavenly family, not man's but God's for glory on high. And what is the possession to which every Christian returns? The notion becomes an absurdity. We had nothing in our natural estate as children of wrath; we had only sins and sin. There was no earthly paradise for fallen man to return to, nor yet possession in the land of Israel for a Gentile. To us all our portion as Christians is above nature and heavenly; and it is what sovereign grace gives us in and with Christ. Only thus could heavenly glory be ours, and all we enjoy as members of His body and shall inherit in that day.

So also the provision that follows, like that of the sabbatical year in vers. 11, 12. "Ye shall not sow, nor reap its aftergrowth, nor gather in its separations (i. e. the fruit of its undressed vines). For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy to you: out of the field ye shall eat its produce." It is a little testimony to the great change when the land shall be no more barren or reluctant, but yield its increase with all fulness, to honour the great King, and greet His people no longer small but mighty and exalted and blest. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to Jehovah for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." How apply such words to the

Christian and the church, save to drag us down from heaven to earth, and to deny Israel's hopes under Messiah and the new covenant! No, it is for them, not about us, that we read, "In this year of jubilee ye shall return every man to his possession."

"Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

They shall fear thee while the sun endureth, and so long as the moon, throughout all generations, he shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.

In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace, till the moon be no more.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth.

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; and the poor, that hath no helper.

He shall have pity on the poor and needy, and the souls of the needy he shall save.

He shall redeem their soul from oppression and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight: and they shall live; and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: and men shall pray for him continually; they shall bless him all the day long.

There shall be abundance of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass on the earth.

His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him happy.

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things: and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen.

The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."

CHAPTER V.

THE JUBILEE THE STANDARD OF VALUE

Lev. xxv. 14-17

THE position of Israel on earth was unique. They were the only people over whom Jehovah's name was called. "Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen: in order that ye may know and believe that I am He; before Me was no god formed, and none will be after Me." So the apostle, instead of depreciating their privileges, says in Rom. ix. 4, "Whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the law-giving, and the service, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever." It was they who in their blind unbelief stumbled at the stumbling-stone, the infinite grace of His humiliation, and His obedience unto death—the death of the cross, which shut out from the eyes of their heart the height of His glory far beyond that of the Messiah.

But even in the matter of the land allotted to each Israelite, we see a standard of valuation which was meant to keep before them their peculiar relation to Jehovah, as well as their bright prospect, whatever the failure or the chastening,

whatever the change even to exile. For a restitution of all things awaits them on earth under the Messiah, the ground of all their blessings.

“¹⁴ And if thou sell aught to thy neighbour, or buy of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not over-reach one another. ¹⁵ According to the number of years since the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour; according to the number of years of the crops he shall sell to thee. ¹⁶ According to the greater number of the years thou shalt increase the price thereof; and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price thereof; for it is the number of the crops that he selleth to thee. ¹⁷ And ye shall not over-reach one another; but thou shalt fear thy God; for I [am] Jehovah your God” (vers. 14-17).

But like every thing else here below committed to man's responsibility, the polity of the theocracy broke down through the rebellion of Israel. Those who were nationally set apart to Jehovah sought to be like the nations, that they might have not only a king but other and false gods. Thus the warnings given in His ordinances were trampled under foot. Has therefore the word of Jehovah failed? Far from it. Israel, having gone astray, has borne the chastisement and has yet more and worse to bear before the blessing. But the word of God shall stand for ever: even while the ruin is complete, and before the manifested blessing comes for Israel and the land, we have it for our profit by faith.

To the Jew it ought to have been a precious resource that underneath such regulations as these

the principle stood that the land belonged to Jehovah. This secures inalienable title for Israel in the long run. The Gentiles have trodden down the land and its capital for many centuries; but their times shall be fulfilled. The last empire is doubtless to revive in a portentous way, and shall be destroyed, not by conquest or decay, but by divine judgment. So shall be destroyed the Antichrist, the lawless king in the land; the Assyrian, or King of the North; and later his gigantic patron, Gog, Prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal: these, with their allies and followers too, constitute all the nations of the earth. Their downfall in the day of Jehovah will make way for Jacob to take root. Israel shall blossom and bud; and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit. In that day shall be a root of Jesse, standing as a banner of the peoples: the nations shall seek to it; and His resting-place shall be glory.

How obvious the comfort thus rendered to the believing Israelite, who would enjoy the blessed assurance of Jehovah's loving interest in His people! Thus He secures the restoration of the property assigned, in spite of all their errors and imprudence, or the over-reaching of others meanwhile. We know that, among Gentiles who know not God, reigns a general anxiety as to both persons and property. To Israel only was there the divine guarantee at every half-century. But what when this beneficent pledge is incomparably exceeded in the great Jubilee! Then "Behold, these shall come from afar; and, behold, these from the north and

from the west ; and these from the land of Sinim. Shout, ye heavens ; and be joyful, thou earth ; and break forth, ye mountains, into singing ; for Jehovah comforteth his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted ones" (Isa. xlix. 12, 13). No loss of liberty or land more ; "for as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name remain" (Isa. lxvi. 22).

But before that day, and as long or far as there was fidelity to Jehovah and His word, they were bound in selling or buying the land, or rather the lease of it, by the jubilee as instituted by divine command. Personal equity was not all, but Jehovah's valuation of the worth of its produce till the jubilee. A regularly recurring miracle accompanied subjection to His law. It was not, as for the Christian and the church, a constant hope of Christ's coming suited to the heavenly people ; but the earthly people had their times and seasons, and the value of their sales according to the distance or the nearness of the jubilee. *We* are not of the world, and should always wait expectantly.

The Israelites were not to over-reach one another ; and, if obedient, had a free insurance of life, liberty, and land from Jehovah. "Thou shalt fear thy God ; for I [am] Jehovah your God." What could be more simple and sure for an earthly people ? If rebellious, how could they expect it ? God is not mocked.

CHAPTER VI.

INCENTIVES TO OBEDIENCE IN THE LAND

Lev. xxv. 18-24

JEHOVAH did not fail to encourage His people in subjection to Himself as their God, and in a way suited to their position in the land He was about to give them. By their own act their tenure depended on their fidelity; but He exhausted all means to explain, and stimulate, to strengthen and cheer them. Yea, He would act on their behalf in mercy and judgment; and they shall celebrate it soon in everlasting song when they own their rejected king.

“¹⁸ Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. ¹⁹ And the land shall yield its fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. ²⁰ And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: ²¹ then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for the three years. ²² And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat of the fruits, the old, until the ninth year; until its fruits come in, ye shall eat [of] the old. ²³ And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land [is] mine; for ye [are] strangers and sojourners with me.

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"And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land" (vers. 18-24).

Obedience is indeed the essential claim of God on the creature, and the creature's inalienable duty. But even innocent, sinless, man never stood in it, but failed; and this very soon, when tested, as the opening facts of inspired history prove to every soul that fears God and trembles at His word. How much less did or could fallen man recover his balance? One perfect exception at length appeared, the hope of Whom acted powerfully on all who waited for Him in faith; but all others departed more and more sadly from God, and hardened themselves in disobedience and selfwill with ever growing boldness of unbelief.

That exception however was the Creator become man; who demonstrated the incurable evil of fallen man, only made worse by corrupting or defying all God's remedial means. Worst of all, He proved favoured man's hatred of God come in nothing but goodness, for God was as far as possible from judging and publishing man's iniquity, but revealing Himself in sovereign grace. Man's answer was enmity to God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing to them their offences. Thereon God would and does now act in Him for His own glory, bringing in the gospel of His grace, and the church Christ's body. Then obedience assumes its fullest character in those that are His elect according to God the Father's foreknowledge by (or, in) the Spirit's sanctification unto obedience and blood-sprinkling

of Jesus Christ. The Christian by grace obeys God as a son after Christ's pattern, though he receives His blood-sprinkling to do it. It is in full contrast with Israel under the most solemn sanction of death if they violated the law (Exod. xxiv. 7, 8); as they shortly did thoroughly. But what can we say of our obedience either individually or collectively? Its very nature is ignored. The total ruin of Christianity proper is attested by the boast of Christendom in its twofold shame of Jewish ordinance and of Gentile philosophy.

But the land itself equally attests the no less ruin of the Jew. Does Israel therein dwell in safety? Does the land yet yield its fruit? Do the people of God eat their fill, and dwell therein in peace, honour, blessing and glory? When under the Messiah and the new covenant, it will assuredly be so. No longer will they say, what shall we eat the seventh year? Jehovah will bless them every year, not when, by the political help of friendly Gentiles, the Jews, before the harvest and after the blossom, think to become a ripe grape. Not so: the sprigs shall be cut off, and the spreading branches cut down. They are not yet a people prepared for Jehovah. The veil still lies upon their heart, which has not yet truly turned to Him. They do not yet repent at the feet of the crucified Messiah; and they shall be left together to the ravenous birds of the mountains and to the beasts of the earth, who shall respectively summer and winter upon them. Yet the same inspired prophet declares, following up their bitter dis-

appointment, "In that time shall a present be brought unto Jehovah of hosts" of that very afflicted people, not with worldly aid without faith, nor to provisional region half-way, but to the place of His name, the Mount Zion. There shall they be ranged in the land, yet in a wholly different order from that under Joshua, but carefully from north to south laid down in Ezek. xlviii. and with parallel lines from east to west, then only to be for all the twelve-tribed nationality of Israel.

The Jews are still under the retribution, not only of the law broken in all ways but of the Messiah rejected. So the prophet Isaiah forewarned in his second and still more mature and profound portion, which depraved wits will have to be of his nameless double. Jerusalem is trodden down of Gentiles till their seasons are fulfilled. And the Jews must face a darker page of sin and woe, when the mass of them in the land shall receive the Antichrist for King, as their fathers rejected the true Anointed. Then shall be seen the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory; and when these things begin to come to pass, a godly Jewish remnant look up and lift up their heads, because their redemption draws nigh.

Jehovah will vindicate His rights in that day. "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity," whatsoever the pretentious pride of Gentile may say. "For the land is Mine." Strangers and sojourners with Him had been the men of Israel. But thenceforward He will hide His face no more from them; "for I have poured out my Spirit upon the

house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah." The right of redemption which they were responsible to grant in all the land of their possession He keeps for the fit moment, and will triumphantly proclaim to their everlasting joy. And what unselfish joy will be the glorified church's in that day looking down from the heavenly places, and praising Him who is the giver of every good giving and every perfect gift, and of His Son through whom it all comes righteously, and of His Spirit in virtue of whom it can alone be divinely known and enjoyed.

But Christendom is as faithless to His grace as she is indifferent to His glory on high, and hence has sought that supremacy on earth, which is the proper portion in reserve for Israel, when the Son of man shall reign over all nations and tongues under the heavens. They repentant and restored to their land in that day shall have the place of earthly power in righteousness as His own people. Meanwhile we believe and confess Him as the rejected Messiah exalted to the throne of His Father, and not yet sitting on His own throne, and share His sufferings here below, unknown to the world and refusing its alliance or its honours, but waiting for Him to receive us to Himself for the Father's house, and to be manifested along with Him when He is manifested in glory.

Ignorance of the gospel and of the church's heavenly relationship coveted earthly ease and worldly honour soon after the apostles passed away. That departure left room for the rivalry of the West and the East; as later still it gave birth to

the Crusaders which are the plainest evidence that the grace and truth which came through our Lord Jesus was practically not only depraved but effaced. It was what struck the Christian Seer with wondering horror, when he beheld, not the chaste virgin espoused to Christ and suffering with Him here below, but the great harlot gorgeously arrayed, pandering to the lust of kings, intoxicating the peoples, and riding the Beast or Roman Empire, but destined to be the object of God's sternest judgments for her corruption, cruelty to the saints, and abominable idolatry. But the end is not yet though at hand, and pride rises high before the irretrievable downfall.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RIGHT OF REDEMPTION

Lev. xxv. 25-28

HERE as elsewhere is no hiding of the people's failure in responsibility. Each would surely have his portion in Jehovah's land. Each was to enjoy the sabbath year of the land to Jehovah. For each throughout all the land the joyful sound of the jubilee should sound after forty-nine years, proclaiming liberty and return, each to his possession. Not because they were more numerous or able, nor yet that they were more righteous than others, had they been chosen; but because Jehovah loved Israel, and because He would keep the oath He had sworn to their fathers, He brought them out with a powerful hand from the then greatest kingdom on earth that oppressed them, redeeming them out of the house of bondage, and giving them these pledges of unfailing rest and deliverance for the day when judgment falls on the inhabited earth. But Israel shall have the kingdom under the whole heavens under the Son of man: an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom which shall not be destroyed.

Yet it is a great mistake to confound this coming day of blessing for His earthly people with

the secret hid in God, and thus from ages and generations, for Christ's glory in the heavens and the joint-heirs with Him, His heavenly bride. Restitution of all things now ruined here below is quite different from that glory which is above the world, wherein all distinction between Jew and Gentile disappears; because Christ is "the all" for all on high, in the faith of which the Christian and the church are called now to walk. In the world to come, whatever the blessing to every family on earth, the daughter of Zion shall have the first dominion; for great will be the Holy One of Israel in the midst of her. The glorified above as one with Christ shall with Him share the universe. He is given head over all things to the church, His body.

Meanwhile on the side of man failure is anticipated and provided for; and here is contemplated the first case of loss through poverty, the form which failure must take in this type; and which we know in a still deeper way.

"²⁵ If thy brother grow poor and sell of his possession, then shall his nearest of kin come and redeem what his brother sold. ²⁶ And if the man have no one having right of redemption, and his hand hath attained and found sufficiency for its redemption, ²⁷ then shall he reckon the years since his sale, and restore the overplus to the man to whom he sold it; and so return to his possession. ²⁸ And if his hand have not found what sufficeth to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of the buyer until

the year of jubilee; and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession."

"If" is a serious word for man. No doubt it is righteous; but the fact is that the first man breaks down and fails in his responsibility. He is fallen and a sinner; and of this Israel in the past is the constant witness. Every help that mercy could furnish, while law governed, Israel enjoyed, priesthood, offering, sacrifice. But the failure was ever more and more; and the rejection of their own Messiah, added to their previous idolatry, made their tenure of Jehovah's land impossible, and their scattering over the earth complete, till the repentance of a godly remnant and return to their Messiah in heart. This will be of Jehovah's mercy enduring for ever, and through the atonement which grace applies to Israel in that great day. For Jesus will then be owned as the Kinsman Redeemer. And He will indeed come to redeem. The right is His, and He will not fail to recognise and apply it, in everlasting mercy.

But Israel must be made willing. And so it shall be in the day of His power. They refused Him to their own sin and shame and loss in the day of His humiliation, proud as man is so often of his poverty, and blind to his need of grace. Kin otherwise will have failed, and their own hand will have attained to no sufficiency. But grace will count that the time of suffering is accomplished, and that iniquity is pardoned through Him that loved His people and suffered for their sins. It is quite a mistake that mankind is here in question,

however wide the gospel call. But redemption, whether for forgiveness of sins, or deliverance of the body, is of believers only. The theologians forget relationship, or vaguely misapply it. We hear of a brother who had his possession lost through unfaithfulness, and restored through grace triumphant over all difficulties. And Israel will be the standing and public witness, both of the loss through evil, and of the gain through grace. Yet the merit is not theirs in any way but only of Jesus, as the grace here and in every case is of God delighting in good of His own nature and of His own will, which rises above creature weakness and worthlessness, whatever the fruits of His Spirit in any.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DWELLING-HOUSE

Lev. xxv. 29-34

It is the people and the land with which Jehovah connects redemption. Both were objects of His gracious choice. Both have fallen under the greatest change through contempt of His goodness on man's part, and opposition to His will, even to rebellion and apostasy. But Jehovah will triumph on behalf of both, but by His own mercy in Christ the Redeemer, when Israel shall sing, Not unto us, O Jehovah, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy loving-kindness and for Thy truth's sake. The redeemed of Jehovah whom He had redeemed from the hand of the oppressor, and gathered out of the countries from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, shall give thanks to Jehovah, and say that He is good, for His loving-kindness endures for ever. What a contrast with man's way who starts with confidence, and whose hopes tell a flattering tale; but, looking no more truly to God than the beasts that perish, he has this of His hand to lie down in sorrow. And none will have this more bitterly and manifestly than such of Israel as presume on

their name and privileges as His people while their heart is far from Him and under the enemy's power. But blessed are all who have their confidence in the Son—in Jehovah Himself. And Zion shall put on her strength, Jerusalem her beautiful garments; and her waste places shall break forth, for Jehovah comforts His people, and redeems her as well as them.

The truth is made more emphatic in the type by making an exception of what man builds, a dwelling-house in a walled city. “²⁸And if any one sell a dwelling-house in a walled city, then he shall have the right of redemption up to the end of the year of the sale; for a full year he shall have the right of redemption. ²⁹But if it be not redeemed until a whole year is complete, then the house that [is] in the walled city shall be established for ever to him that bought it throughout his generations; it shall not go out in the jubilee. ³¹But the houses in villages that have no wall round about them shall be counted as the fields of the country; they may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubilee. ³²But [as to] the cities of the Levites, the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites shall have a perpetual right of redemption. ³³And if a man redeem from one of the Levites (or, one of the Levites redeem something), then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall go out in the jubilee; for the houses of the cities of the Levites [are] their possession among the children of Israel. ³⁴And the field of the suburbs of their cities shall not be

sold; for it [is] their perpetual possession (vers. 29-34).

It was the dwelling-house in a walled city which thus lost its claim to redemption at the jubilee. The seller had the right to gain it back during a full year from its sale; after that, if not bought back, it passed for ever to the possession of the purchaser. Though it was built on the land which God gave the Israelites, its privilege of divine gift was vitiated by the prevalence of man's failure, as a twofold witness may show us. "For every house is builded by some one." It is only a man that builds it. But the God that built all things claimed the land as His and gave it to His people as their landlord, to make it all the surer as He will prove it to be in the great jubilee, when every intruder vanishes, and He reinstates His people, who had lost it meanwhile over and over again by their departure from Himself. The land will go out free for the Israelite in that day by Jehovah's vengeance on their wicked enemies, and His mercy toward themselves, at last repentant in dust and ashes and resting on the atoning blood of Him whom they now refuse and despise. But the dwelling-place which each built or took from the Canaanite was no such gift of God as the land of promise.

And this was made still more precise by the added feature of being "in a walled city." For here is not merely man's hand everywhere apparent in his dwelling-house, but yet more the "walled city" marks the presence if not the prevalence of the

enemy's power. There is therefore recourse to such a human measure of protection, which tells the tale how little as yet the Israelite enjoys His full privilege when they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree ; and none shall make them afraid, for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it. No doubt it will be because a King shall reign in righteousness, far beyond David or Solomon, His feeble types. And the man who is God, and Jehovah's fellow, shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest ; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And then shall the Spirit be poured from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest ; and His people shall dwell in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting-places.

So, when the work of dealing with Israel's enemies is in process but not yet complete, we hear in Ezek. xxxviii. Israel shall then be gathered out of many peoples into the land bought back from the sword. But the chief of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, unmoved by the downfall of the head of the western powers in league with the Antichrist, and even by the destruction of the eastern hordes who opposed the west, persists in his mischievous purpose of self-aggrandisement, and hopes by coming down on Israel's unprotected appearance to become overlord of the earth. "Thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages ; I will go up to them that are at rest, that dwell safely,

all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to seize the spoil and to take the prey; to turn thy hand against the waste places that are inhabited, and against a people gathered out of the nations which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land." But Jehovah will prove Himself the true and glorious bulwark of His people, and pour upon this last enemy and all his hosts, before the proper reign of peace over the earth begins, overflowing rain and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. So it shall be upon the mountains of Israel; nor will that exemplary punishment suffice. For Jehovah will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell at ease in the isles. Their walled cities, their fortifications, their formidable navies, will be a vain defence, for it is the day when the risen Lord will judge the inhabited earth; and they shall know that He is Jehovah (Ezek. xxxix. 6).

Hence the house in the country parts, not thus protected, fell under the principle of the land, retained the right of redemption, and should go out in the jubilee. The strength and shield of man must fall in that day, and the defenceless that confide in Him shall triumph, when the fastness of the high defences of men's walls will He bring down, lay low, bring to the ground, into the dust.

On a similar principle too the house of the Levites fell under His care who calls them to be His servants, and had perpetual right of redemption. Even if sold in the city of his possession, it must go out at the jubilee. On the other hand,

their fields in the suburbs of their cities could not be sold. They must abide their perpetual possession, as God's sacred gift to them; and this He will see to when He comes whose right it is to repair all wrongs and failures for His own that wait or Him.

The Christian now is in a different position and His glory heavenly; and he shall reign with Christ over the earth. He has already redemption in Him through His blood, but awaits His coming again for the redemption of the body and also of the inheritance. He is united to Christ by the Spirit who strengthens him to suffer with Him joyfully, not of the world as He was not.

CHAPTER IX.

THE POOR BROTHER IN DECAY

Lev. xxv. 35-38

HERE we read a new statute respecting the poor brother fallen into decay. It does not touch on what might be done by his nearest relation, or by his own recovery, as in vers. 25-28, but on loving succour where there was no such resource from without or from within. For Jehovah encouraged compassion in His people, of which they had been so richly the objects from Himself. Nothing more alien from His mind, among His own and even to strangers, than the spirit of independence of which the Gentiles are proud in their self-sufficient ignorance of God.

“³⁵ And if thy brother grow poor and be fallen into decay beside thee, then thou shalt relieve him, stranger or sojourner, that he may live beside thee. ³⁶ Thou shalt take no usury nor increase of him; and thou shalt fear thy God, that thy brother may live beside thee. ³⁷ Thy money shalt thou not give him on usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase. ³⁸ I [am] Jehovah your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, to be your God” (vers. 35-38).

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Three divine principles are here applied to the duty of the Israelite, standing in a relationship to Jehovah peculiar to that people of His choice, whatever the mercy it may involve as it does to the stranger; for God abides good in Himself and to all, and will not suffer His people to forget it, though prone to do so as scripture proves, to say nothing of experience.

(1) It is His grace which gives prosperity to any. Only unbelief is blind to His over-ruling who counts the hairs of our head, and without whom not a sparrow falls unheeded. Man, sinner alas! as he is, is no object of indifference to Him. The Israelite was then precious to Him for the fathers' sake, as he will be by-and-by not for them also but incomparably more for Him whom in repentance and faith they will own as their Messiah, so long despised, their all-gracious and Almighty deliverer when ready to perish under the Antichrist and to be swallowed up by the nations. But even from early days He would have them pitiful to their brother, or even a stranger and sojourner by their side, that he might live and not die. It was grace that called out Abram from beyond the Euphrates, where their fathers in old time dwelt and even served other gods. It was grace that sent Moses to plague Egypt which oppressed the sons of Israel, and brought them out of the iron furnace across the Red Sea which covered their enslavers. When the same power should destroy the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the rest who dwelt in the

promised land, they were bound to remember that all was of His grace, and that He enjoined it in due measure on those who prospered on behalf of their decayed brothers. It was no small grace which inaugurated the emerging, if not birth, of His people, when brought forth out of the land of Egypt to receive the land of Canaan, and have Jehovah their saviour and guide and governor to be their God.

Just so we, Christians, are privileged and bound ever to look back and cherish our beginning, the foundation of all our blessing in Him who died, rose, and ascended to the highest heaven for us. This rises far above what was given or possible to Israel; for we can say, and ought to know by divine teaching, we are quickened and raised together with Christ and made to sit together in Him in the heavenlies. And as we are such a workmanship as this, His body who is Head over all, so were we created in Christ Jesus (for it is a wholly new thing) for good works which God before prepared that we should walk in them, a new walk in many respects because of and suited to such a unique relationship.

(2) Israel had to represent Jehovah and do His will as given to dwell in His land. If the strange gods gave a licence to every passion of sinful man through the working of the great enemy of God and man, the Jew was called to practise mercy, as belonging to and confessing Him who delights in mercy. How could He maintain a people in His land, the good land flowing with

milk and honey, where His eyes rested continually, if they set His will at nought and abandoned Him? They had deliberately taken their stand on their obedience of His law, and must abide the consequence. Mercy obtained is a valid ground for expecting mercy to be shewn; and the law bound this on the Jew as we see here.

(3) But there was also the powerful influence of hope, which governs the regulations of all this chapter. The Jew was called to act in view of the jubilee, and was inexcusable if he put it from his eyes in his conduct. When a brother was decayed, he was to bear in mind the deliverance that ere long would surely come, and thereby be strengthened to assist the need, and not to make it an occasion for selfish greed by interest for a loan, or return of food to increase his own store. For Israel in the land was not to be a merchant like the Canaanite; but it is the striking contrast of the Jews now among the nations, enriching themselves in this way beyond all others, the banking masters of the world. They have for the time lost their true place, because they became apostate from God, first by idolatry, then by rejecting Jesus the Christ; as they will descend lower still by receiving the Antichrist. Even on their return from Babylon, which was to see the Messiah in humiliation, they made the divine command of no effect by their tradition; and selfish interest prevailed over goodness and mercy, till unbelief wrought to the utmost.

But what has Christendom to say as to this?

Has it the face to reproach the Jew? Christendom that has oppressed, plundered, and cruelly persecuted the Jew, instead of being a city of refuge to the man-slayer, till the death of the anointed priest (that is, in antitype, till Christ closes His priesthood on high)! Thence He will come for judgment, and the believing homicide will be cleared and enter on his inheritance; but the blood of guilt shall lie on the unrepentant murderer who persists in his unbelief to helpless ruin.

It is not Romanism only, but the Greek church yet more which hates the Jew and disbelieves his hopes in a future day, blessed in a new way and in Jehovah's special mercy, and not at all as merged in the church of God. For the church has a heavenly place of union with her glorified Head; whereas Israel has the promise of the first dominion on the earth when the Lord reigns over all the nations also. This earthly dominion Christendom in all its forms began to covet, when it shirked to share Christ's sufferings here below, and the heavenly hope of Christ's glory above and reigning with Him over the world in that day.

Satan will find means to amalgamate with the Jew the Western powers in the worship of idols, and the false prophet-king of the Jews in the land (Dan. xi. 36-39). And the Lord will destroy them both at His appearing (2 Thess. ii. 3, Rev. xvii. xix.), as He will afterwards and similarly destroy him whom Isaiah and Micah call "the Assyrian," as Daniel styles him "the king of the north," their

then external enemy (Isa. xxviii. xxix. xxx., Dan. viii. 23-25, xi. 40-45), of whom Sennacherib was the type.

CHAPTER X.

THE POOR BROTHER SOLD

Lev. xxv. 39-46

THERE is a condition still more lamentable than the decay of poverty. The Israelite might be so reduced as to sell himself to bondage; and this condition comes under divine regulation to the end of the chapter. Here we may notice its first part.

“³⁹ And if thy brother grow poor beside thee, and be sold to thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant: ⁴⁰ as a hired servant, as a sojourner, he shall be with thee; until the year of jubilee he shall serve with thee. ⁴¹ And he shall go out from thee, he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers he shall return. ⁴² For they [are] my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as they sell bondmen. ⁴³ Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, and thou shalt fear thy God. ⁴⁴ And thy bondmen and thy bondmaids whom thou shalt have—of the nations that are round about you—of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. ⁴⁵ Moreover of the children of those that dwell as sojourners with you, of them shall ye buy and of their families that [are] with you, which they beget

in your land; and they shall be your possession.
⁴⁶ And ye shall make them as an inheritance to your children after you, to inherit as a possession: these ye shall make your bondmen for ever; but your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour" (vers. 39-46).

Whatever the disorder created by sin and its resulting miseries, Jehovah provided merciful checks, especially for the people of His choice till the day of restitution, of which the jubilee was the recurring foreshadow. The Israelite might through sheer distress be sold to one of his brethren, but never in perpetuity. Ordinarily it was but for the term of six years of servitude, and on the seventh he went out free for nothing, as we know from the deeply interesting "judgment" with its details in Exod. xxi. 2-6. But, if as here with no such limit, the year of jubilee reinstated him. Meanwhile Jehovah imposed the duty on his Israelitish master that he should not be treated as a bondservant, but as a hired servant, as a sojourner and not a slave. Then should he go out from his employer, and his children with him unconditionally. The sale of bondmen did not apply. On the contrary he lifted up his head as free, and all his, returning to his own family and to the possession of his fathers.

With such considerate care did Jehovah provide for His people, whatever their improvidence. How affecting and securing the ground on which He laid it down! "For they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt." There superstition took care of the priests who kept them in unceasing

bondage to false gods who were but demons without truth or pity. The Eternal, who rescued Israel out of that house of bondage and iron furnace, did not hinder as yet such an Israelite as broke down in his responsibility from tasting the bitter effect of his or others' wrongs. But He restricted the chastening to measured times, and gave the sure hope of merciful return: the pledge of a glorious one for ever, when the Divine Deliverer shall rescue them from sins and sufferings no less than enemies, and Himself be the ground of a holy freedom and an unfailing inheritance, as due to One who is David's Son and David's Lord. What a joyful sound will be the trumpet voice of the true and full jubilee, which needs not but precludes repetition!

When it was only a nation favoured of Jehovah, the law did not interfere with an Israelite buying slaves, as we see in vers. 44-46. They were free to have such slaves of the nations round about them, or even of the sojourners with them. Neither could claim the relation of their own brotherhood holy to Jehovah: of both they might buy, and make them their possession, and leave them as an inheritance to their own children after them, their bondmen for ever. And even in the day, when the creation shall be delivered from its present groans and thralldom, when the church shall share Christ's glory above and over all things, when Israel shall own the crucified but all the more exalted Messiah, the Son of man and Heir of all things, kings here below shall be nursing fathers of the Jew never

more to be despised or persecuted, and queens their nursing mothers. Strangers shall build up Zion's walls, and their kings shall minister in that day. Aliens shall be their plowmen and their vine-dressers. For that nation and kingdom that will not serve Zion shall perish. "But ye shall be named priests of Jehovah: men shall call you the ministers of our God. Ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and to their glory shall ye succeed." Need one refer to more decisive proofs of the change that awaits Israel under Messiah and the new covenant? And the time hastens: the zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.

It is infatuation for Gentile theology to take any of this away from the hopes of Israel. True Christian faith maintains it all for the Jew when his heart shall turn to the Lord whom they despised to their own sin, shame, and loss. But God's gifts and calling stand without a change on His part, who awaits and will bring out their salvation in sovereign grace. Our calling is above: we can well afford to set our mind on heavenly things. Their portion will be all blessing and glory on the earth, and in their own land, then the joy and boast and crown of all lands. The word of our God, Israel's God, shall stand for ever. God has provided some better thing concerning us [who believe while the Jews are impenitent] that apart from us even those who of old believed but received not the promises should not be made perfect. We shall each enjoy our proper portion practically at the same time to God's glory in Christ.

CHAPTER XI.

THE POOR BROTHER SELLING HIMSELF TO THE STRANGER WAXING RICH

Lev. xxv. 47-55

This last case is the saddest of all to a true Israelite. It was not without a fault that a person under the government of Jehovah grew poor in His land (vers. 25, etc.), and had to sell his possessions, whether land, or a dwelling house in a walled city (vers. 29, etc.). It was worse to fall into such decay as to become an object of help to Jew, stranger, or sojourner, for money and victuals (35-38). Still worse was it to be sold to a brother Israelite, even if Jehovah in each interposed His shield of mercy (39-46). But here it is the poor brother selling himself to a stranger or sojourner becoming rich. Yet Jehovah speaks here also.

“⁴⁷And if a stranger or a sojourner with thee become rich beside thee, and thy brother beside him grow poor, and sell himself to the stranger [or] sojourner with thee, or to a descendant of the stranger's family: ⁴⁸after he is sold, there shall be right of redemption for him; one of his brethren may redeem him; ⁴⁹or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any of his next of kin of his family may redeem him; or if he may obtain the means, he may redeem

himself. ⁵⁰ And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he sold himself to him unto the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of the years; according to the days of a hired servant shall he be with him. ⁵¹ If [there be] yet many years, according to them shall he return the price of his redemption out of the money he was bought for. ⁵² And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee, then he shall reckon with him; according to his years shall he return the price of his redemption. ⁵³ As a hired servant shall he be with him year by year: he shall not rule with rigour over him before thine eyes. ⁵⁴ And if he be not redeemed by these [means], then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, he and his children with him. ⁵⁵ For to me the children of Israel [are] servants; they [are] my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I [am] Jehovah your God" (vers. 47-55).

As this chapter is devoted to redemption by grace and in power, it is in perfect keeping with its aim to let Israel know the reserves which awaited their failure in responsibility to the law, which they had accepted as the ground of their standing before Jehovah. Their fall to such an extreme of want as for an Israelite to sell himself into voluntary bondage to a rich stranger or sojourner with them, or to a scion of such a house, is here provided for in God's considerate goodness. Jehovah would not hinder their tasting their evil or folly; but He was careful to lay down, that after he had sold himself,

there should be right of redemption for him. One of his brethren might redeem him, or his uncle, or his uncle's son, or any of the near relations of his family: there was room for that affectionate and special interest, which He ever cherished in, and commended to, His people.

Or again, the man, once so desperately impoverished, might somehow obtain adequate means to redeem himself, so that he could not be kept an hour longer in slavery. As being in that land, no strangers any more than a brother could plead a just title against the statutes of Jehovah. But justice must stand too. "And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he sold himself to him unto the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of the years; according to the days of a hired servant shall he be with him." Absolute slavery Jehovah would not tolerate for a child of Abraham. If the price of redemption was equitably offered, the stranger must accept it and set him free. If many years had yet to run, redemption price had to be returned out of the money that he was bought for (51); and if there remained but few years, the reckoning must be accordingly (52).

But Jehovah's pitifulness went farther still; for in ver. 53 it was prescribed, even where he had no means or prospect of redemption till the jubilee, that the Israelite bondman was to have a place like no other slave. "As a hired servant shall he be with him year by year: he [the stranger master] shall not rule with rigour over him before thine

[Israel's] eyes." Thus was the strain meanwhile to be alleviated, if Israel had the heart and power to see Jehovah's will enforced on behalf of His poor.

Then came the great resource when the trumpet of jubilee sounded over the land (54). If every other means failed, here was sure hope for Israel. "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was bitter of soul" in abnormal bondage, was entitled to leap for joy at Jehovah's glad tidings of grace; as it is said here, "he shall go out in the year of jubilee, he and his children with him." And Thou, blessed Jesus, true but rejected and only the more glorious Messiah, shalt have the joy of redeeming Israel from all his iniquities and all distresses and all indignities, Thyself the more loved then for Thy sufferings and shame at the Jews' hand, joining hand in hand thus with the lawless Gentiles as presently with the Antichrist against Jehovah and His Anointed. Thou shalt return in glory to destroy the destroyers, to deliver Israel in its godly remnant, and to crush the nations, with the old serpent that deceived them all, and that deceives Christendom now as blind as it is haughty.

The very learned prelate of Chester, Dr. John Pearson, had low views of Christ's personal glory, and accordingly of His work and offices. His was such "dry light" on divine things as might satisfy the most scientific of theologians. Yet even he saw in this chapter not the prototype of Christian privilege, but rather a strong contrast with the "better thing" God provided concerning

us. So even his cold spirit warmed a little when he compared our privileges with those pledges of goodness to Israel. "We were all at first enslaved by sin, and brought into captivity by Satan, neither was there any way of escape but by way of Redemption. Now it was the law of Moses that if any were able he might redeem himself: but this to us was impossible, because absolute obedience in all our actions is due unto God; and therefore no act of ours can make any satisfaction for the least offence. Another law gave yet more liberty, that he which was sold might be redeemed again; one of his brethren might redeem him. But this in respect of all the mere sons of men was equally impossible, because they were all under the same captivity. Nor could they satisfy for others, who were wholly unable to redeem themselves. Wherefore there was no other brother but that Son of Man which is the Son of God; who was like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, which could work this redemption for us. And what he only could, that he freely did for us." (An Exposition of the Creed, vol. i. 119, Oxford, 1797.)

Yes, we were all lost far beyond the worst picture of any Israelite; and we are saved as none could be till the Son of God had wrought soul-salvation for such as believe beyond what Dr. P. ever taught or knew; for God's salvation *is* come, and His righteousness *is* revealed. Such is His gospel to Jew and Greek through and upon faith in Christ. But the favoured nation, according to

Rom. xi. and the facts which every one sees day by day, are enemies, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Blindness in part is their state while the gospel goes out to the Gentile, till a new-born remnant of the Jews say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah. Then will Jesus come to the deliverance of the remnant and the destruction of their foes. "And so all Israel [except the apostates] shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion [a later epoch than out of heaven] the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins [never so great as then]: as concerning the gospel, enemies for your sake [the Gentiles now called], but as touching the election, beloved for the fathers' sake" (Rom. xi. 26-28). Can anything be plainer that the present age then closes, and the new age begins for the generation to come?

CHAPTER XII.

THE JUBILEE CONCLUDED

Lev. xxv. 55

THE last verse concludes the subject with a renewed statement of Jehovah's immediate interest in His people. They were His servants; He had brought them forth out of the land of Egypt; and He in His eternal covenanted Name was their God.

“⁵⁵For unto me [are] the children of Israel servants; they [are] my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I [am] Jehovah your God.”

Throughout, the great aim of these statutes of the jubilee is that the Israelite should remember that his best and unfailing Friend and mighty Deliverer is Jehovah. It is the same assured truth which the last of their prophets uttered, “I Jehovah change not; and ye, sons of Jacob, are not consumed” (Mal. iii. 6). We learn that the jubilee is the pledge that the land as well as the people is to share the same deliverance at His hand. The scattering of Israel is the visible sign that the accomplishment has not yet taken place, as this cannot be till they own their rejected Messiah. It is Emmanuel's land, as they are His

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people; and His eyes are continually on both. Babylon was the instrument of punishing their idolatry; as Rome longer and more heavily, because of Him whom they despised with averted face and alienated heart. But the day hastens when they shall say in their heart, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah. He will come when the godly remnant is rejected like Himself, and the mass fall victims both to idolatry and to the Antichrist.

How gracious and grand for Israel, when it shall be no more the shadow but the very image! when the Lord shall come to Zion a Redeemer indeed, and to those that turn from transgressions in Jacob, saith Jehovah! "And as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith Jehovah: My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforward and for ever."

Truly "the gifts and the calling of God admit of no change of mind," as he wrote who loved them as much as Moses did. Both loved Israel because they are the objects of God's grace, and Messiah's people for the earth's glory in divine purpose. This makes their unbelief and its chastisement the more bitter, but gives certainty that the Deliverer is at hand. They belong to Him as His servants; and when they own it, He will appear for their rescue and redemption. He does not forget their old deliverance out of the iron furnace; but then

the new covenant shall eclipse the old, and glory shall dwell in their land, as the fruit of His grace and of blood that speaks a better thing than Abel. How will they exult when they learn that Messiah suffered that they might be saved, and own Him, as unbelieving Thomas did, their Lord and their God. In the fulness of His person Jesus is not Messiah only but also Jehovah their God.

Grace like this when brought home by the Spirit will at length subdue the self-righteous heart of Israel, and produce the generation to come which will then be fitted to bear witness to the besotted heathen world with a power beyond the feeble testimony of the nations which have long compromised the name of the Lord Jesus by the vanity of knowledge falsely so-called, and by worldly lusts as unjudged as among the heathen themselves. It will be another thing when the long unbelieving Jew is brought into childlike faith; and yet more when the Lord Jesus reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords, after an unparalleled judgment of the quick in West, East, South and North, with a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit suited to that wondrous display of His government and blessing of all the families of the earth in righteousness, power, and glory.

On Israel's repentance for the blotting of their sins depends the coming of times of refreshing from the presence of Jehovah, when He will send the Messiah-Jesus who was fore-ordained for them, times of restoring all things, of which God spoke

by the mouth of His holy prophets since time began.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COVENANT WITH MOSES, AND THAT WITH THE FATHERS

Lev. xxvi. 1-13

CHAPTERS xxvi. and xxvii. wind up the book as an appendix : the first on the obligations which bound all the people of Israel ; the second on the vows of the individual.

Chap. xxvi. opens with the prohibition of image worship, and with the reverence due to the sabbath and the sanctuary of Jehovah, the pillars of the law ; the very evils to which man was most prone (vers. 1, 2). This is followed by His blessings on their obedience (vers. 3-13).

“¹ Ye shall make yourselves no idols, nor rear yourselves carved image or statue, nor shall ye set up a figured stone in your land, to bow down unto it ; for I [am] Jehovah your God. ² Ye shall observe my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary : I [am] Jehovah. ³ If ye walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, ⁴ then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit ; ⁵ and your treading out (or, threshing) shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing-time : and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land

securely. ⁶And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make [you] afraid : and I will put away the evil beasts out of the land ; and the sword shall not go through your land. ⁷And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword ; ⁸and five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight ; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. ⁹And I will turn my face toward you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. ¹⁰And ye shall eat old store and clear off the old because of the new. ¹¹And I will set my habitation among you ; and my soul shall not abhor you ; ¹²and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. ¹³I [am] Jehovah your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen ; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you walk upright " (vers. 1-13).

The sons of Israel of all men had the least excuse for idolatry. Those who heard His voice out of the midst of fire, and besought a mediator lest they should perish, saw no similitude, and heard Him denounce the heathen device of representing Him by any likeness of the creature in heaven above, or on earth beneath, or in the waters that sink below it. He could not be true God if He tolerated bowing down to another god. Real service must be His exclusively ; yet Aaron's deplorable weakness here betrayed itself at the beginning of their history, and Solomon's even worse in

its zenith. There too lay the continual warfare of His true prophets with the false who misled kings and priests and people, till there was no remedy; and He who loved them had to say, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it. And it shall be no [more], until he come whose right it is; and I will give it [him]" (Ezek. xxi. 27).

But there was another thing hateful in His eyes, where they set up no strange god. Nor is anyone more explicit in denouncing their profane irreverence and shameless hypocrisy than Malachi, the last of the post-captivity prophets. We know from his contemporary Nehemiah how His sabbaths were then profaned, and His sanctuary set at nought. The sabbath had a special place in the decalogue as flowing simply from divine authority, prescriptive and not in the same sense moral as the other nine commandments. It was instituted as a sign of creation and a pledge of God's rest; and God imposed it in His law for Israel, the measure of man's responsibility, as a sign to them as His people. A new day, the first day of the week, is the day of Christ's resurrection, the Lord's day for the Christian, as the day of the new creation in Him, and of sovereign grace to us who now believe for heavenly glory as His body and bride. The sabbath is in no way abrogated or changed or spiritualised, but must be fulfilled in all its own blessedness for man on earth, and for Israel God's firstborn among all nations, when idols vanish for ever, and the sanctuary of Jehovah shall never be profaned more.

The conditional blessings are for Israel obedient to their God, Jehovah, and earthly, however rich ; they are not those characteristic of the Christian, whatever special pleaders argue. If Israel walk in His statutes submissively, rain is assured in due season, the earth will yield its produce, and trees their fruit ; the threshing reaches to the vintage, and it to the sowing time. Bread to the full should be theirs, instead of selling it for their other wants, and safety within their dwellings. Nay more, neither evil beasts, nor hostile sword should alarm. "I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall terrify." "And ye shall chase your foes, and they shall fall before you by the sword," five chasing a hundred, and a hundred putting ten thousand to flight. "And I will turn my face toward you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you." The old store will abound beyond their eating and need clearing away because of the new. And, better still, "I will set my habitation among you, and my soul shall not abhor you ; and I will walk among you and be your God, and ye shall be my people." As He began, so would He continue : "I [am] Jehovah your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen, and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you walk upright."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PENALTIES OF THE VIOLATED COVENANT

Lev. xxvi. 14-26

THEN Jehovah pronounces the inevitable consequences of Israel's disobedience.

“¹⁴ But if ye hearken not unto me, and do not all these commandments, ¹⁵ and if ye shall despise my statutes, and if your soul shall abhor mine ordinances, so that ye do not all my commandments, that ye break my covenant, I also will do this unto you: ¹⁶ I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and fever, which shall cause the eyes to fail, and the soul to waste away; and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. ¹⁷ And I will set my face against you, that ye may be routed before your enemies: they that hate you shall have dominion over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

“¹⁸ And if for this ye hearken not unto me, I will punish you sevenfold more for your sins, and I will break the arrogance of your power; ¹⁹ and I will make your heaven as iron and your earth as bronze; ²⁰ and your strength shall be spent in vain; and your land shall not yield its produce, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.

“²¹ And if ye walk contrary to me, and will not

hearken unto me, I will bring sevenfold more plagues upon you, according to your sins. ²³ And I will send the beasts of the field among you, that they may rob you of your children, and cut off your cattle, and make you few in number; and your streets shall be desolate.

“²⁴ And if ye will not be disciplined by me through these, but walk contrary to me, ²⁴ then will I also walk contrary to you, and will smite you, even I, sevenfold for your sins. ²⁵ And I will bring a sword upon you that avengeth with the vengeance of the covenant, and ye shall be gathered into your cities, and I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. ²⁶ When I break the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and shall deliver you the bread again by weight; and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied” (vers. 14-26).

Israel's promises end in misery; and Jehovah judges his disobedience as it deserves, and with increasing severity at his ever growing rebelliousness. He appoints over the people, when their soul abhorred His righteous ordinances, “terror, consumption and fever,” not only the dread of a guilty conscience, but disease in its wasting chronic form and in its raging acuteness; and sends their enemies to devour their harvests and rout their armies, yea to domineer over them even to their fleeing when unpursued. If this suffice not to humble them before Him, He will punish sevenfold more, to break their arrogance. He will make their heaven as iron and their earth as bronze, re-

fusing all heat and moisture, and vegetation, so that their toil should be vain. And if this be not enough to recall them, sevenfold more plagues should fall on them, and the very beasts of the field should rob them of their children and cut off their cattle, to reduce them indefinitely and desolate their very streets. And if this failed to discipline their refractory spirit, He would walk as contrary to them in displeasure as they to Him in selfwill. He must smite them Himself personally sevenfold for their sins, and bring a sword on them to execute the vengeance of the covenant. And as they gathered into their cities out of the goodly land, He would send the pestilence on them, and they should be delivered into the hand of the enemy. Their efforts at union for strength should only and surely bring on them death and degradation as a people. Scarcity of bread should do its withering work in their prostrate condition. How could it be otherwise under the condition of law between the righteous Jehovah, and His people more guilty than the nations which knew not God?

The law as such knows no grace; its function must be to condemn every breach. Grace and truth came through our Lord Jesus; undoubtedly God's grace, but through Him, the one Mediator of God and men, Who gave Himself a ransom for all, the testimony in its own time. This we Gentiles know now as the consequence of Israel's unbelief to the uttermost after the fullest and most patient waiting on them; and no remedy when their Messiah came in gracious humiliation and divine

power, any more than under the law and the prophets. The apostles too testified in the Holy Spirit and like power in men of like passions. But all has been vain, that mercy might flow to the Gentiles who have sinned worse than Israel under far superior privileges, till they too are cut off; and sovereign mercy shall once more shine on Israel, and for ever.

CHAPTER XV.

STERNER WOES ON THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND

Lev. xxvi. 27-39

It might have been thought hard to find strokes heavier than those Jehovah inflicted on His people according to the earlier half of our chapter. But as Israel hardened their necks and persevered in their iniquities, here we have His yet more awful dealings with their stubborn rebelliousness. He is gracious beyond measure; but we know Him that said, To me [belongs] vengeance: *I* will recompense, saith the Lord [Jehovah]; and again, The Lord [Jehovah] will judge His people. Fearful [is it] to fall into a living God's hands (Heb. x. 30, 31). If He punished the vile abominations of the doomed nations who had intruded into His land, much more strictly does He chasten His people. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos iii. 2).

"²⁷And if for all this ye hearken not to me, but walk contrary to me, ²⁸then I will walk contrary to you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you sevenfold for your sins. ²⁹And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. ³⁰And I will destroy your high

places, and cut down your sun-pillars, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols; and my soul shall abhor you. ³¹ And I will lay waste your cities, and desolate your sanctuaries, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. ³² And I will bring the land into desolation, that your enemies who dwell therein may be astonished at it. ³³ And I will scatter you among the nations, and will draw out the sword after you; and your land shall be desolation, and your cities waste. ³⁴ Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths all the days of her desolation, when ye [are] in your enemies' land; then shall the land rest and enjoy her sabbaths. ³⁵ All the days of the desolation it shall rest; in which it rested not in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. ³⁶ And as to those that remain of you, I will send faintness into their heart in the lands of their enemies, and the sound of a driven leaf shall chase them, and they shall flee as one fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth; ³⁷ and they shall stumble one over another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth; and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. ³⁸ And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. ³⁹ And they that remain of you shall waste away through their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also through the iniquities of their fathers shall they waste away with them" (vers. 27-39).

The furnace of wrath waxes hotter against guilty Israel, and as Jehovah says, "I, even I, will chastise you sevenfold for your sins." The flesh of

their own sons and daughters should be their food, and the high places and sun-pillars which they had honoured should be cut down, their own carcasses heaped upon those of their idols, and His soul abhorring them. He would proceed to devastate their cities and sanctuaries to the astonishment of their enemies dwelling therein (27-32).

Their land too should not escape ; and as they had despised His sabbaths in days and years and jubilees, there should be a judicial sabbath : for it should be desolate while Israel should be in the enemies' land. The land that flows with milk and honey should lie desolate and have rest, against the rest which it had not when the tribes dwelt there (32-35). Instead of the courage He once gave them against all odds, they would fall into abject terror. "I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies ; and the sound of a driven leaf shall chase them ; and they shall flee as one fleeth from the sword ; and they shall fall when none pursueth. And they shall stumble one upon another, as it were before the sword, when none pursueth" (36, 37). There too should they perish among the nations and the enemies' land eat them up. Those left of them in their enemies' lands shall pine away in their own iniquities, and in the iniquities of their fathers with them (38, 39).

Thus brought down to the lowest misery and degradation, the goodness of God leads them to repentance. What a lesson to all the nations ! Yet this they never learn, till Israel shows the way,

forgiven of grace, when they cannot forgive themselves before Jehovah and His anointed! But we must not anticipate what is to follow. How awful when a people boasting of Jehovah's name sell themselves really to His enemy, and become slaves of demons which supplant His will and worship; and their religion so-called becomes their worst sin and their most destructive snare. Thus it was in Israel, as it now is in Christendom. The end for both (as far at least as "this generation" goes for the Jew) will be at the consummation of the age in judgment, which the Lord Jesus will surely execute. But the greatest reviler of revelation cannot charge the God of Israel with partiality to His people when inconsistent or unworthy. Demons, instead of chastising, humoured their devotees for their own bad and mischievously vile ends. So it is in all religions, save the faith in God through Christ.

CHAPTER XVI.

ISRAEL REPENT, AND JEHOVAH REMEMBERS HIS COVENANT WITH THEIR FATHERS

Lev. xxvi. 40-46

HERE however we have the turning-point of grace. There is no restoration for Babylon, and especially none for the Babylon of the N.T. which among her many lies dares to call herself "the eternal city," but is really doomed to the everlasting judgment of God, as we read in Rev. xiv., xvi., xvii. and xviii. to the joy of all in heaven who in view of her smoke going up unto the ages of ages say, Hallelujah (Rev. xix. 1-5)! Reunion of Christendom or not, this is God's destiny for her of the seven hills. "Come out of her, My people," says the voice from above, "that ye have not fellowship with her sins, and that ye do not receive of her plagues." But there is sure restoration for Israel, and a history in the future of their land more glorious than David's or Solomon's, or than any nation's that ever existed on the earth. The time hastens and is at hand. Israel will repent, and believe in Jehovah's Messiah, their crucified King of glory.

"⁴⁰ And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, through their unfaithfulness wherein they were unfaithful to me, and

also that they have walked contrary to me, "so [that] I also walked contrary to them, and brought them into the land of their enemies. If then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity, "I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. "For the land shall be left by them, and shall enjoy its sabbaths, when it is in desolation without them; and they shall accept the punishment of their iniquity; because, even because, they despised my judgments, and their soul despised my statutes. "And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not despise them, and will not abhor them, to make an end of them utterly, and to break my covenant with them, for I [am] Jehovah their God. "But I will remember toward them the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt before the eyes of the nations, that I might be their God: I [am] Jehovah.

"These [are] the statutes and ordinances and laws which Jehovah made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses" (vers. 40-46).

Does anyone object that this blessed change is sometimes made conditional on Israel's repentance? The answer is that there is no real force in the objection, because Jehovah has promised unconditionally that He will so work in their hearts when the due moment comes as only known to

Him. And this is remarkably confirmed even in this chapter of arraignment and denunciation and furious wrath against them for their wickedness. Yet here here is no condition but an express prediction, "And they shall confess their iniquity" &c. God may exceed in goodness and mercy; never does He come short; and He here declares that so it is to be. Undoubtedly He makes good the condition in their souls where such a condition is laid down in His word.

In fact such a prediction as this unconditional one entirely agrees with the covenant with their fathers; for such was its character in distinct contrast with the covenant of law whereof Moses was mediator. And observe the deliberate iteration of His assurance to Israel, beginning with the "worm" Jacob yet redeemed and called by name, His servant and chosen, next with Isaac, and then with Abraham His friend. Why all this care but to give the most stable confidence to those just awakened to feel and own their ages of rebellious and even apostate iniquity? The covenant with the fathers as here joins in one common boon the entire people of spared Israel and the land. In this future kingdom of power it will not be what characterises Christianity and the church, the extinction of Jewish and Gentile differences in Christ as now. The blessing to come in that day will be of Israel as the head, and of the nations in willing subordination, because Israel is the special people of Jehovah Messiah for the earth. We are of heavenly grace, wherein fleshly difference is of no account.

It is well for Christians to learn that Christianity, precious as it is, is not all; and that, when God's present work is accomplished, God has other ways in which He is to be glorified in Christ. There will be another and a good age to succeed this present evil age, before the eternal state, the complete form of the new heavens and new earth, wherein righteousness is to dwell.

It is the millennium which begins when this age closes and continues till the dissolution of all things, preparatory to the absolutely perfect state of heaven and earth, when there is no change, but all is fixed for the righteous, as well as for the unrighteous. In the millennial age there will be perfect blessedness for those in the heavens who reign with Christ; but the earth, though governed righteously, and delivered from the power of evil, and full of divine fruits, will be tried by Satan's temptation at the end, and bring the final judgment of God on the wicked from first to last.

CHAPTER XVII.

PERSONAL VOWS

Lev. xxvii. 1-8

THESE were special acts of devotedness to Jehovah through the priest, but according to his valuation who was king in Jeshurun and thus type of Messiah.

The chapter is a remarkable example of that divine inspiration, which underlies Scripture for the profit of faith, but above the ken of the wise and prudent who dare to judge God's word under the plea of historical and literary investigation, totally blind to their guilty unbelief and profanity. But the single-eyed believer delights to observe that chap. xxv. looks on to the true and full day of Jubilee when Jehovah will make good His rights over the land on behalf of His people its failing tenants. Then chap. xxvi. sets out the sad ruin of His guilty people under the first covenant because of their disobedience and apostasy; but also restoring mercy under the second when they accept the punishment of their iniquity, and He remembers His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the land. Lastly comes this appendix of special or voluntary vows which turns on His absolute title when all on man's part had failed, and He acts through Him who shall there build the temple of

Jehovah, bear the glory, and sit and rule upon His throne; when He shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between Them both (Zech. vi. 13).

The vows here brought together consist, first of persons, male or female; secondly of beasts so devoted; thirdly of house or field, and this brings in the Jubilee, and proves the chapter to be in its precisely right and necessary place. The rest of the chapter states the distinction between persons or things thus devoted from those that were simply sanctified, with certain exceptions already established by His law. These verses 1-8 deal only with the persons.

“¹ And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When a man devoteth by a vow, the persons [shall be] for Jehovah by thy valuation. ² And thy valuation shall be of the male from twenty years old even to sixty years old: even thy valuation shall be sixty shekels of silver after the shekel of the sanctuary. ³ And if for a female, then thy valuation shall be thirty shekels. ⁴ And if from five years old even to twenty years old, then thy valuation of the male shall be twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels. ⁵ And if from a month old even to five years old, then thy valuation of the male shall be five shekels of silver, and for the female thy valuation [shall be] three shekels of silver. ⁶ And if from sixty years old and above, if a male, then thy valuation shall be fifteen shekels; and for the female ten shekels. ⁷ And if he be poorer than thy valuation, then he shall

present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to his means that vowed shall the priest value him" (vers. 1-8).

Jehovah would have seriousness in His people in making a vow. There was no demand on His part in this case, as in the firstlings of man and beast, &c. There was a whole tribe, the sons of Levi, already consecrated to the religious service of Jehovah; but He accepted the desire of any individual for devotedness to Himself, and laid down directions for Moses to value them on a certain scale of valuation, which varied according to their age and sex (vers. 1, 2).

The first estimate took account of the time when service was most prized from twenty years to sixty years old, the male at fifty shekels of silver, the female at thirty. This would mean of our money (say) six pounds five shillings, and three pounds fifteen shillings respectively (vers. 3, 4).

The next estimation for each is from five years of age to twenty, and is rated at twenty shekels for the male, and ten for the female, or two pounds ten shillings, and one pound five shillings (ver. 5).

Then the extreme point for males and females from a month to five years has the valuation of five shekels for the one, and three for the other, or twelve shillings and sixpence, and seven shillings and sixpence (ver. 6).

Next for the oldest class, from sixty years and above, for the male fifteen shekels or one pound seventeen shillings, and the female ten shekels or one pound five shillings (ver. 7). There the scale for the

aged female rose nearest to the male, where man might be disposed to despise.

As Jehovah did not require these vows, He did not make them irrevocable. The persons thus devoted might be redeemed; and the foregoing scale of valuation was therefore provided. The use to be made of the redemption price is referred to in 2 Kings xii. as "the money of the persons for whom each man is rated." This, with other contributions fixed or voluntary there stated, the priests were to take in the days of the temple for repairing the breaches of the house wheresoever any breach was found.

But in its considerate equity there was another provision given in ver. 8, "And if he be poorer than thy valuation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to his means that vowed shall the priest value him." It was due to Jehovah that something should be paid, that the exemption from his obligation might not be a light thing, or God mocked by heedlessness. Yet there must be no harshness; only gracious care that the debt to God might not oppress the poorest of His people.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEASTS OR HOUSE DEVOTED

Lev. xxvii. 9-15

BUT things also animate or inanimate might be set apart to Jehovah, as here we have animals and a house.

“⁹And if [it be] a beast of which men offer an offering to Jehovah, all that they give of such to Jehovah shall be holy. ¹⁰They shall not alter it nor change it, a good for a bad nor a bad for a good; and if he at all change beast for beast, then it and the exchange thereof shall be holy. ¹¹And if any unclean beast, of which they do not offer an offering to Jehovah, then he shall present the beast before the priest; ¹²and the priest shall value it, between good and bad: according to thy valuation, O priest, so shall it be. ¹³And if they will in any wise redeem it, then they shall add a fifth thereof according to thy valuation.

“¹⁴And when anyone halloweth his house, that it may be holy to Jehovah, the priest shall value it, between good and bad: as the priest shall value it, so shall it stand. ¹⁵And if he that halloweth it will redeem his house, he shall add the fifth of the money of thy valuation to it, and it shall be his” (vers. 9-15).

A necessary difference at once appears between beasts clean or unclean, as there was no question of the firstborn of man and of cattle already claimed from the sons of Israel as Jehovah's (Exod. xiii. 2), at least the males (12, 13). The firstling of an ass if not ransomed with a lamb must have its neck broken; as the firstborn of man among their sons with a price. For the firstborn of Israel the tribe of Levi was substituted as we know from Num. iii.; but as its number did not suffice to represent all the firstborn, the rest who were over and above those ransomed by the Levites were redeemed by the ransom-money of five shekels apiece according to the shekel of the sanctuary. Thus in everyway Jehovah associated with Himself His people so liable to forget their high relations, grounded on different figures of redemption.

The first principle laid down impressed on the Israelite that if he gave to Jehovah a clean beast, one presentable for sacrifice, it was to be thenceforward "holy" (9). It could not be bought back. Even if defective or bad in any way, he could not alter, nor change it for an unblemished beast, neither good for bad nor bad for good. All this should have been weighed before offering it; and if the offerer altered his mind, he must learn that God did not. If it was real concern for Jehovah's honour, he might bring another good beast; but the original animal and the exchange must remain holy to Jehovah (10).

There was more allowance where there was no such close link with Jehovah as with animals fit

for sacrifice to Him. If an unclean beast were presented, he should present it to the priest, and the priest should value it whether it be good or bad; and as he valued it, so should it be. If one wished to recall the unclean beast, it was open to him with a fifth added to the estimation, as a trespass or forfeit, because of his lack of due gravity in what was thus connected with Jehovah (11-13).

It is substantially the same with the latter case, where one hallowed his house to Jehovah. The priest valued it good or bad; and at his valuation, so it was to stand. But if the Israelite did not stand to his purpose and wished to redeem, Jehovah made no difficulty, but impressed a reproof on his fickleness by requiring a fifth over its estimated value; and thus he might have his house back.

We see the same guard against second thoughts in the book of Psalms, though in a more general form and the converse too, where there was no such devotion to Jehovah. It is part of what is shewn to please Jehovah and suits the hill of His holiness, that if a man have sworn to his own hurt, he does not change. He who is by grace steadfast in word and deed, abhorring evil and cleaving to good, shall never be moved even in a world of vain show. But we soon find out how fickle we are, when we are seriously given up to do the will of God. As long as it is only a theory of duty, we are to spare and let ourselves off easily. And we prove that it is sure to be no better with others till they have

Christ as their life, and self is thoroughly judged before God. The Holy Spirit then helps us in power to glorify God, whatever it may cost us, and it is our delight thus to please Christ.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DEVOTED FIELD SANCTIFIED TO JEHOVAH

Lev. xxvii. 16-25

THERE were two cases in the hallowing of the field, which are here distinguished, a field of the Israelite's possession, and a field which he bought. Descent or purchase involved a marked difference.

“¹⁶ And if a man hallow to Jehovah out of a field of his possession, thy valuation shall be according to the seed thereof: the homer of barley seed at fifty shekels of silver. ¹⁷ If he hallow his field from the year of jubilee, according to thy valuation it shall stand; ¹⁸ but if he hallow his field after the jubilee, then the priest shall reckon unto him the money according to the years that remain until the year of the jubilee, and there shall be a reduction from thy valuation. ¹⁹ And if he that hallowed the field will in any wise redeem it, he shall add the fifth of the money of thy valuation unto it, and it shall be assured to him. ²⁰ But if he do not redeem the field, or if he sell the field to another man, it cannot be redeemed any more; ²¹ and the field when it goeth out in the jubilee, shall be holy to Jehovah as a field devoted: the possession thereof shall be the priest's. ²² And if he hallow to Jehovah a field

that he hath bought, which [is] not the field of his possession, ²³the priest shall reckon to him the amount of thy valuation unto the year of the jubilee; and he shall give thy valuation on that day, holy unto Jehovah. ²⁴In the year of the jubilee the field shall return to him of whom it was bought, to him to whom the possession of the land [belonged]. ²⁵And all thy valuations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel" (vers. 16-25).

God will not allow His people to forget that the land of Canaan is His peculiarly, as they were to whom He gave it in possession. This was of their special favours. Israel were His people as no other nation could be then, and their land too was His that He might secure it to them for ever, unless they apostatised, for which He drove them out and made them the slave and butt of their enemies' malice and contempt. So it was for their idolatry when the mother of idols led the Jew captive, as Assyria led away Ephraim long before; and so it was to be again as Isaiah foretold both (chaps. xl.-xlviii. and chaps. xlix.-lvii.) when the Roman should take away both their place and nation because they rejected the Messiah.

But here it is an Israelite while acknowledged of Jehovah sanctifying to Jehovah a part of a field of his possession. The valuation was to be according to the seed required, a homer of barley being rated at fifty shekels of silver. Here the jubilee rules, the standard for rectifying man's weakness or fault and for restoring divine order. If he sanctified

his field from the year of jubilee, it must stand according to the valuation. The jubilee proclaimed Jehovah's rights unmistakeably; and if the field were devoted to Him, there could be no change. The estimation allowed no abatement, nor meddling.

But if after the jubilee the Israelite sanctified it, "then the priest shall reckon to him the money according to the years that remain to the year of the jubilee," and thus equitable abatement ensues. Yet the case does not end there. "If he that sanctified the field will in any wise redeem it," he must submit to the usual forfeit required in thus departing from his original purpose of devotedness to Jehovah. The fifth part has to be added of the valuation money to that valuation price, in order to gain back the portion devoted.

It is also laid down that, if he will not redeem the field, or if he have sold the field to another man, it "shall not be redeemed any more." Further still, the rights of Jehovah are repeated by the provision that "the field, when it goeth out in the jubilee, shall be holy to Jehovah as a field devoted." The terms of re-acquiring it had not been complied with. Jehovah was the real Landlord; and His title is not to be any longer subject to human caprice. "The possession thereof shall be the priest's." Thus Jehovah would exercise His people in a due regard for His majesty and word, who sought thereby the best blessing for His people, and the restitution of the land as well as of the people.

On the other hand, if one sanctified to Jehovah a field which he had bought, outside the field of

his possession, the priest must reckon unto him the worth of the valuation unto the year of jubilee; and this valuation was then and there to be given, a holy thing to Jehovah. There was no forfeit of the fifth part to be added to the price. Nor did it abide holy to Jehovah beyond the year of jubilee; for then it must return to the original possessor of the land who had sold it. Jehovah's gift held good: if man changes, He does not.

Another law was applied inflexibly throughout these transactions. "And all thy valuations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel" (ver. 25). Israel might desire to purchase by what coin was most convenient in their dealings with the nations. But as in relation to the temple service and their redemption price, so here they must make their payments "according to the shekel of the sanctuary."

We are under grace, not law; but what a profound error that we as Christians are left to our own will or wisdom! We are bought with an infinite price, and are in no wise our own. Undoubtedly all things are ours, life or death, things present or things to come. But we are Christ's by the same title which makes all to be ours; so that the bondman if called in the Lord is His freedman; and the free man if called is Christ's bondman. Such is Christian liberty. Humbled at our sins, we rejoice in His grace which has set us free to be all the more His servants, as He was the lowliest of all and the only efficacious One in love without measure to God's glory.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUDING REGULATIONS

Lev. xxvii. 26-34

IT remains to notice briefly the verses that follow.

“²⁶ Only the firstling among beasts, which is made a firstling to Jehovah, no man shall sanctify it: whether [it be] ox or sheep, it [is] Jehovah's.

²⁷And if [it be] of an unclean beast, then he shall ransom [it] according to thine estimation, and shall add to it the fifth thereof; or if it be not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to thine estimation.

²⁸Notwithstanding, no devoted thing that a man shall devote to Jehovah of all that he hath, of man or beast, or of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing [is] most holy to Jehovah. ²⁹None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death. ³⁰And all the tithe of the land,

of the seed of the land, [or] of the fruit of the tree, [is] Jehovah's, holy to Jehovah. ³¹And if a man will redeem [aught] of his tithe, he shall add to it the fifth thereof. ³²And all the tithe of the herd

or the flock, whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy to Jehovah. ³³He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it; and if he change it at all, then both it

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and that for which it is changed shall be holy : it shall not be redeemed. "These [are] the commandments which Jehovah commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai" (vers. 26-34).

It was not unneeded to remind the thoughtless, that the firstlings of clean animals being already due to Jehovah were not objects of the devotedness contemplated in this chapter. Such firstlings were already His as every Israelite ought to know. But it was here interdicted, lest any should make a vow as to such, and deceive his soul to Jehovah's dishonour.

The same principle applies as we have seen already, if a man sought to redeem the firstling of an unclean beast. He must submit to the appointed estimation, and was not to make one of his own ; and he must add a fifth to it as the penalty of changing his mind about a vow to Jehovah. If not redeemed, it was to be sold accordingly, as being incapable of any holy purpose.

The great general rule was that what was devoted to Jehovah of all a man had, man, beast, field, should be sold or redeemed, every devoted thing being most holy to Jehovah. None devoted which shall be devoted of men should be ransomed, but surely put to death. As to the tithe of land, whether seed of the land, or fruit of the tree, all was Jehovah's, holy to Him. And if a man would redeem of it, he must add the fifth as forfeit. Again, in tithe of herd or flock, the tenth was holy to Jehovah. And it was carefully insisted that he

was not to search for good or bad, nor to change: Jehovah accepted it simply as it was. If however he did change it all, he must offer alike the original and the change: both should be holy, and neither to be ransomed.

Thus did Jehovah teach His people to be obedient, and hate self-will. How much more is this incumbent on us whom the Spirit sanctified unto Christ's obedience and the sprinkling of His blood, the Christian's place as distinct from Israel's! Practical righteousness is looked for in all; but righteousness is consistency with relationship, and Israel are an earthly people, the church a heavenly one.



