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THE PRIESTHOOD

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THE PRIESTHOOD,
ITS PRIVILEGES AND ITS DUTIES :

AN

EXPOSITION OF LEVITICUS VIII.-XV.

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

Before we enter upon the details of the types in Leviticus viii. ix., it seems well to speak of priesthood generally, and also in special reference to Christianity.

The priest offered gifts and sacrifices to God. In patriarchal days this fell to the head of the family, and indeed to its members also as may be seen in the very first recorded instance of Cain and Abel. But when the law came, priesthood was established in a particular family of that tribe which was chosen for divine service and separated from the inheritance of the land given to the other tribes of Israel. The Levites had therefore the tithes of the children of Israel as a heave-offering to Jehovah, but of this the Levites were bound to offer a tenth of the tithes to the priests, who had also their own special perquisites by Jehovah's command.

The Epistle to the Hebrews treats of Levitical priesthood, as well as of the sanctuary and the sacrifices, more formally and fully than any other part of the N. T., though the principle runs through the Epistles in general and even the

Revelation. To the Hebrews the utmost care was taken to lay the foundation of all that follows on the Person of Christ, Son of God in chap. i., Son of Man in chap. ii., with incontestably superior glory in both respects, whatever His humiliation in grace for our sakes, to every creature, even to angels. Such is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. Others, as Moses, Aaron, Joshua, derived dignity from the office to which each was called of God; He had intrinsic glory and excellence which conferred lustre on all He undertook, though perfectly subject to God in all respects. As sin had ruined all creation, His death was the only door of deliverance for "everything," and the "many sons" for glory in particular, to annul the devil's power, to succour in temptation and sympathise in suffering, as well as to make propitiation for sins.

The Epistle accordingly contemplates on the one hand the partakers of a heavenly calling passing through the wilderness, and on the other Jesus the Son of God, called as Aaron, but owned of Him as His Son, and saluted as according to the order of Melchizedek. Such He is, and He only, being first by interpretation King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of peace. The exercise is after the pattern of Aaron (intercession based on sacrificial blood-shedding), the order after that of Melchizedek, as being not a succession of priests but one ever-living priest. Thus Ps. cx. is cited as divine authority for a priesthood ever-lasting and intransmissible, which supersedes that of Aaron. "For such a high priest became us, holy,

guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily, as the high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, then [for] those of the people; for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appointeth men high priests having infirmity; but the word of the oath-swearing which [was] after the law, a Son perfected for ever."

Hence the doctrine of the Epistle beyond doubt is of a sole High Priest Who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, minister of the holy place, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man. The redemption too is everlasting, as is the inheritance. His offering once for all has perfected, not only for ever but without interruption, the sanctified. The unity of the priesthood for the saint is as certain and plain as that of the sacrifice for our sins.

Nevertheless the same chap. x. which sums this up clearly exhorts Christians as a whole, sprinkled and washed as they were, to approach with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, as having boldness to enter the holies by the blood of Jesus, a new and living way which He dedicated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and [having] a great priest over the house of God. The inspired writer takes his place with every other saint now, as entitled to draw near, where no son of Aaron could, and even as Aaron could not; for he had no such "boldness" when he entered on the Atonement-day with fear of death. Compare also

chap. xiii. 10, 15, 16. The apostle Peter teaches us the same truth: the believers are "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ;" and "a royal priesthood . . . to show forth the virtues of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 5-9). The Book of Revelation teaches the same truth (chap. i. 6).

Under the Levitical system the way of the holies had not yet been manifested. But by Christ's death the veil was rent; and now the way is open not by grace only but in righteousness. Earthly sacrifices, priesthood, and sanctuary alike disappear; and we who believe are privileged to approach God. Compare also Rom. v. 2, 2 Cor. iii. 18, Eph. ii. 13-18, iii. 12, Col. i. 12, 13. In the N. T. an official priest is either Jewish or heathen, never Christian; a mere and guilty imposture.

Save Christ the High Priest, alone efficacious for us, scripture recognises no priesthood but that of all Christians. To assert a sacerdotal class for us is to deny that we can offer up our spiritual sacrifices to God; it is in effect to efface the proper and revealed effect of Christ's sacrifice; it is therefore to obliterate the gospel and to restore Judaism. Not only is it a superstitious falsehood, but a contradiction of the faith "once for all" since redemption. Nay more, it essentially and systematically opposes the full and final revelation of God's word which will have the Christian to walk, not in the distance and darkness of the law, but in the light and grace of God perfectly revealed in Christ, His Father and

our Father, His God and our God. It is wholly inconsistent with the great mystery as to Christ and as to the church (Eph. v. 32). For we all compose the one body of Christ, His bride, and are members one of another, each one spirit with the Lord. Hence such a relationship is incompatible with a priestly caste nearer to God than the rest, who are able only through it to draw near to Him. It is in short apostasy, not from Christ's Person, but from the truth of Christ's work and from the reality of the Holy Spirit's presence Who constitutes all the saints now God's habitation and Christ's one body.

No doubt these subtle adversaries of the faith allege Exod. xix, 5 to oppose the dogmatic teaching of the N. T. But the argument is absolutely worthless. For the promise to Israel of being a kingdom of priests was strictly conditional on their obedience, as the law is and must be; whereas our priestly standing, like other privileges, hangs on Christ and His finished work to God's glory. The ritualist is what the apostle calls "fallen from grace," and much lower than the Galatians; he has lost the fundamental truth of Christianity, and is far more guilty than those who have never heard the Lord's name. The root principle, if not an anti-Christ, is anti-Christian.

It was a sad oversight that English Protestants allowed "priest" to represent "presbyter," and that the Reformed abroad called their ecclesiastical buildings "temples." An equivocal word is a compromise, of which error always takes advantage when the fresh power of truth fades. But if

the N. T. carefully eschews "temple" or even "church" for the place in which the faithful might assemble, it is explicit in the apostles' teaching, that believers are now priests, and made already more free than Aaron himself, to enter boldly into the true sanctuary where the Lord is on high.

It is of course sound that there is no priest on earth between God and the saints. But the effect of Christ's work announced in the gospel goes much farther, and constitutes every Christian a priest, exhorted day by day to draw near through the rent veil. Having therefore, brethren, boldness for the entrance of the holies by the blood of Jesus (a fresh and living way which He dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say His flesh), as well as a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith. A little priest here below is a delusion, a barrier, and an outrage on Christ's official glory, and on the nearness which God has made ours already in virtue of the blood of Jesus. Eph. ii. 13-18, Heb. x. 18-22. Let us then not only abjure and denounce an imposture but appropriate what divine grace has made us.

THE PRIESTHOOD.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRIESTHOOD CONSECRATED.

Lev. viii.

HAVING had the offerings and sacrifices with their laws fully laid down in the preceding chapters, it was meet that the priesthood should be shewn us and duly established. We shall see that in these shadows, as in those, the Lord Jesus was contemplated by the inspiring Spirit of God. There is divine order and nothing desultory, save in that judging according to sight, which in scripture especially is not righteous judgment. Jehovah regulates all things here also; and it is blessed for us if we learn of Him.

“¹And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, ²Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil, and the bullock of the sin-offering, and the two rams, and the basket of unleavened [bread]; ³and gather thou all the assembly together at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁴And Moses did as Jehovah had commanded him; and the assembly was gathered at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁵And Moses

said to the assembly, This [is] the thing which Jehovah hath commanded to be done. ⁶And Moses brought Aaron near, and his sons, and bathed them with water. ⁷And he put on him the coat; and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him, and girded him with the curiously wrought girdle of the ephod, and fastened the ephod on him. ⁸And he placed the breast-plate on him; and in the breast-plate he put the Urim and the Thummim. ⁹And he set the mitre on his head, and on the mitre in front did he set the golden plate, the holy diadem; as Jehovah commanded Moses. ¹⁰And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. ¹¹And he sprinkled thereof on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its vessels, and the laver and its base, to sanctify them. ¹²And he poured of the anointing oil on Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him" (vers. 1-12).

The immense and personal importance of the priesthood was marked by the gathering of all Israel to witness their inauguration. For they effected the intercourse of the Israelite with Jehovah in the sanctuary, as the high priest its most solemn part in the holiest. When Moses was enjoined to take Aaron and his sons with him, the garments, the oil, the victims, and the unleavened bread, all the assembly must gather together at the entrance of the tent of meeting to behold the great sight (1-5). It concerned deeply both Jehovah and His people, every one.

The first thing done was to bathe Aaron and his sons (6). For mortal and sinful man purifying is indispensable, what the apostle calls "the washing of water by the word," not by a rite however impressive and requisite in its place; but as the Lord said of the eleven, "Already are ye clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you." They were begotten by the word of truth. It was the gift of life eternal; and thus no type of Aaron or any other could express the truth of Christ, Who *was* that life eternally. But seeing that His own receive it in receiving Him, even here we see that Aaron and his sons were alike bathed with water; Christ only is the life which we have in having Him. Hence says the Lord in John xiii. 10, "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet." There is no repetition of that first and absolute cleansing of the person. If the feet get defiled in walking through a miry world, this defilement must be removed; for it hinders our communion with Him. And this He sees to, being Advocate with the Father (1 John ii. 1), if one sin. He is the propitiation, as He is the Righteous One. The firm foundation of God stands, and our standing abides; but He deals with us, if we defile our feet, by His word and Spirit, and thus restores the communion that had been interrupted. For if He wash me not when defiled, I have no part with Him: to this need is His advocacy applied now that He is on high.

The garments, whether coat and its girdle, or robe and ephod with its skilfully woven girdle to

fasten both firmly, the breast-plate with the Urim and the Thummim, and the turban or mitre with the golden plate, were not those of the atonement-day—of linen only, but “for glory and beauty.” They express what Christ is and does for us as the great High Priest before God. Thus does He represent His own. The ephod was pre-eminently sacerdotal; and on its shoulder-pieces were the two onyx or beryl stones on which were graven the names of the children of Israel, six on each: all borne up before Jehovah for a memorial, as we are told in *Exod. xxviii.* The breast-plate of judgment was on his heart for a memorial continually, with the still more precious token of twelve stones of rare value, upon each a name of Israel’s sons; and therein Moses put the Urim and the Thummim, the lights and the perfections, for Aaron’s approach to Jehovah, that he might bear their judgment on his heart before Jehovah continually.

Very striking is the testimony to Christ in this preliminary scene in the twofold fact, that thus far we have no shedding or sprinkling of blood, as we see where the type of sinfulness comes before us in the leper’s cleansing (*chap. xiv.*); and in this further, that we have the anointing oil freely used in verses 10-12. When Aaron’s sons are brought near, as they are next, the Sin-offering is brought near too, and the hands of all were laid on the bullock’s head; and when slaughtered, its blood is brought into a conspicuous use. But the absence of this in the verses before us is the witness to Christ’s excellency. The tabernacle and all that

was in it are anointed with the unction that bespeaks the Holy One. The altar was sprinkled seven times to anoint it and all its utensils, with the laver and its base; and, what confirms this exceptional aim, the anointing was poured on Aaron's head. It was not the purifying action of the Holy Spirit, but His energy, in witness of Christ's title to have and fill all with the power of God. But again this was not all. If He was the sinless One, and this could not be forgotten, He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and this also must be attested in its place.

It was here that we sinned; and here was sent Christ to die as propitiation for our sins; though the value of it immediately penetrated the heavens, as it was witnessed by the veil rent, the earth quaking and the graves opened. Here too was the efficacy of the sacrifice made know by those that evangelized by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven. Based on His sacrifice, which makes perfect those that are set apart to God, "the sanctified," Christ exercises His priesthood for us on high. We are His house, partakers of a heavenly calling in contrast with Israel whose calling was earthly, who needed a carnal priesthood, and who had ordinances unable to perfect the worshipper's conscience, with the sanctuary, a worldly one. God was hidden; and His people were excluded from His presence. It was a provisional system, imposed until a season of setting things right. Christ, coming in grace and by righteousness on His redemption, brought in

eternal things ; an everlasting salvation, an unchangeable priesthood, an everlasting redemption, an everlasting inheritance, an everlasting covenant ; and no wonder, seeing that He who has done God's will whereby we have been sanctified is constituted Priest according to power of indissoluble life, and the Spirit who wrought in Him and in us is eternal.

Therefore it is written, that it became *Him*, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make perfect the Leader of their salvation through sufferings. For in that Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to help those that are being tempted. But this is not all. For such a High-priest became *us*, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens, a Son perfected for ever.

Our exercise of priesthood, as Christians, consists of praises and thanksgivings, supplications, prayers, and intercessions. 1 Tim. ii. 1, Heb. xiii. 15, 1 Pet. ii. 5-9.

CHAPTER II.

CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS.

Lev. viii.

WE read in ver. 6 that Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. The true High Priest was the Holy One of God. The Holy thing born of the Virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit knew no sin; for in Him was none. The sinner needs to be born anew, the Saviour did not, being thus born holy as was none other. He therefore is as pure in His humanity as of course in His Deity; we require to be purified by grace. Hence to mark the result, however distinct the way of it, all were washed in the type together, He the sanctifier, and they the sanctified. But He was the life, and gave them His life to be theirs.

Now we are to see the sons of Aaron clothed as their father had been, according to Jehovah's command. Not only was man not left in his nakedness, but grace invests, as it pleased Jehovah, for His presence in the sanctuary.

“¹²And Moses brought near Aaron's sons, and clothed them with the coats, and girded them with the girdles, and bound the bonnets (or, high caps) on them; as Jehovah commanded Moses. ¹⁴And he brought near the bullock of the sin-offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the

head of the bullock for the sin-offering; ¹⁵and one slaughtered [it]; and Moses took the blood and put [it] on the horns of the altar, round about with his finger and cleansed the altar from sin, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar and sanctified it, making atonement for it. ¹⁶And he took all the fat that was on the inwards, and the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat; and Moses burned [them] on the altar. ¹⁷And the bullock and its skin and its flesh and its dung, he burned with fire outside the camp as Jehovah commanded Moses. ¹⁸And he brought near the ram of the burnt-offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. ¹⁹And one slaughtered [it]; and Moses sprinkled the blood on the altar round about. ²⁰And he cut up the ram into its pieces; and Moses burned the head, and the pieces, and the fat; ²¹and the inwards and the legs he washed with water; and Moses burned the whole ram on the altar: it [was] a burnt-offering for a sweet odour, a fire-offering to Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses" (vers. 13-21).

What a blessed privilege to have Christ as life and righteousness and propitiation! But God makes Him much more to us even now, as well as in the glory to come. As the night is far spent and the day is at hand, we are exhorted to cast away the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light. But in drawing near to God, it is not armour we want, as in conflict with the enemy. Still it is Christ we have to put on; and Christ we

put on, as many as were baptised to Him. What have we any more to do, if we have Him, with what we were in the flesh or in the world? Is not Christ incomparably better than all? His is the one display that we all have in Him. Here it is shown in the priests clothed according as Jehovah commanded Moses. They received their appropriate vests, and their girdles, and their sacerdotal head-gear. Without doubt the greatest stress was laid on the dress of the high priest. His were holy garments, for glory and for beauty; his sons had theirs.

This accordingly is intimated here when Aaron's sons were brought near and clothed with their priestly attire (13). Immediately follows the bullock of the Sin-offering also brought near, on which Aaron and they laid their hands (14). Christ, though He needed nothing of the sort for Himself (Heb. vi. 27), was made sin for them, and once for all. For every notion of either continuous or repeated offering Himself up is rigidly excluded by God's word, as indeed it would disparage and annul the revealed efficacy of His death. The blood here however was put, not within the holiest (as on Atonement-day), but on the altar's horns, and the rest poured out at its base, to sanctify that which had to do with sin and reconciliation thereby (15). But all the inward fat was burned on the altar, the unfailing and eloquent witness of the intrinsic excellence of the offering for sin, as Christ alone and fully made evident (16). For Him, Who did not even know sin, God made sin for us; and this was the more manifested here

in the burning of the bullock and its skin, &c., outside the camp, as Jehovah commanded Moses (17).

But Christ secures personal acceptance with God, no less than the doing away with sin and its consequences; and so we have in ver. 18 the ram for a Burnt-offering. For in consecrating the priests no alternative was permitted as in ordinary holocausts. The ram for that or other special cases was required, as we have already remarked in its place; and so on its head also Aaron and his sons laid their hands, not for the removal of human evil but for the transfer of Christ's sweet savour. So here the blood of the slain ram was sprinkled all about on the altar (19); and its body was cut into its pieces and burnt, fat and all, with its washed inwards; for every animal thus offered needed washing to figure His purity (20, 21).

But the priest and his sons were clothed suitably to the sanctuary by no less a command of Jehovah. Essential purity was in Christ; in us who believe all is conferred through His grace. Not only are we in Him, but He was made to us from God all that we want for His holy presence. Of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace.

Yet type as he was, Aaron needed offering for sin and sacrifice no less than his sons: no sinful man could stand on other ground before Jehovah. So in ver. 14 we have Aaron and his sons laying their hands on the head of the bullock for the Sin-offering, which was slaughtered and its blood applied by Moses, who here represents Christ. The priests indeed more than any ordinary Israelite

must be atoned for: how else could they approach Jehovah without defiling His sanctuary?

But this righteous necessity only the more brings into relief the anointing disclosed in ver. 12. Not only was the anointing oil applied to the tabernacle and all that was in it, and the altar sprinkled with it seven times, the altar with all its utensils anointed, and the laver and its base, to hallow them, but Moses poured of it on Aaron's head and anointed him, to hallow him. Thus Christ is here unmistakably before us, as far as a type could intimate, in the anointing of Aaron alone, apart from his sons, but with the tabernacle, altar, and laver. Jehovah could not, we may say with reverence, withhold this the highest witness of His satisfaction and delight; for is it not in the energy of the Holy Ghost thus given? It was accomplished literally in our Lord without His blood-shedding, indispensable for every other. For on Him did the Holy Spirit descend in a bodily form as a dove, while the Father's voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son: in Thee I found my delight. This was at the precise moment of His life here below, when men might have been tempted to conceive unhallowed thoughts. For it was when He was baptised as others were, and was praying. It expressed really perfect moral beauty.

As the tabernacle, altar, and laver too typified offices that He fills as to creation, and had nothing in themselves of moral evil like Israel or mankind, we see that they were in the type associated with Him in the power of the Holy Ghost. All

belonged to Him on every ground; and He was personally entitled to fill all with the power of divine blessing. When the priests are in question, blood must be shed, as they were sinful men like others. Indeed the Epistle to the Hebrews is careful to impress on the reader that so was Aaron in fact, as we are told in chaps. v. 1-3 and vii. 27, 28. But typically of Christ there was no less care in Exod. xxix. and Lev. viii. to represent the high priest as alone anointed with the holy oil *before* the Sin-offering and the other sacrifices which followed. As to this wondrously unique fact it is of the deepest moment, both for His personal glory and immaculate excellence as well as for our faith and the honour and reverence due to the Son, that we take diligent and constant heed. It is the confession of His true Deity and His holy humanity in one Person, the rock on which He was to build His church, and the greatest of safeguards against the deadly enmity of Satan, ever working on the unbelief of fallen man.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRIESTS CONSECRATED.

Lev. viii.

THE Saviour then is of such positive and overflowing excellence in His person and ways that He is entitled to fill creation with the power of the Spirit, as well as to enjoy its fulness Himself. And to this we have seen a striking testimony even in the type, as there was in fact when He walked here below in the days of His flesh.

Yet was it too true that man, its head, was utterly fallen, and that Israel, priesthood and all, were no exception. And this is clearly intimated when the priestly family were distinctly treated, as seen in vers. 13-21. But there is more to follow.

“²²And he presented the other ram, the ram of consecration; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram; and one slaughtered [it]. ²³And Moses took of its blood, and put [it] on the tip of Aaron's right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. ²⁴And he brought near Aaron's sons, and he put of the blood on the tip of their right ear, and on the thumb of their right hand, and on the great toe of their right foot; and Moses sprinkled the blood on the altar round about. ²⁵And he took the

fat, and the fat tail, and all the fat that [was] on the inwards, and the net of the liver, and the two kidneys and their fat, and the right shoulder (or, thigh). ²⁶And out of the basket of unleavened bread that [was] before Jehovah he took one unleavened cake and one cake of oiled bread and one wafer, and put them on the fat and upon the right shoulder; ²⁷and he gave them all into Aaron's hands and into his sons' hands, and waved them as a wave-offering before Jehovah. ²⁸And Moses took them from off their hands, and burned [them] on the altar over the burnt-offering: they [were] a consecration (or, filling of hand) of sweet odour; it [is] a fire-offering to Jehovah. ²⁹And Moses took the breast, and waved it as a wave-offering before Jehovah: of the ram of consecration it was Moses' part; as Jehovah commanded Moses. ³⁰And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood that [was] upon the altar and sprinkled [it] on Aaron, on his garments, and on his sons, and on his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him" (vers. 22-30).

We have had Aaron alone anointed with oil in witness of Christ the true Priest and of His personal perfection; now we see the blood of the ram of consecration, on the head of which Aaron and his sons laid their hands, applied first to Aaron's right ear, right thumb, and right great toe, then to the same parts of his sons, as well as sprinkled upon the altar round about. For indeed Christ by His own blood entered once for all into

the holies, having found an eternal redemption. Otherwise He had abode alone ; now the grain that died bears much fruit, Christ as Son over His own house, Whose house are we, if we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm unto the end. It is not only that He loves us and washed us from our sins in His blood, but He made us kings and priests to His God and Father : to Him the glory and the might unto the ages of ages. Amen. So in this type Aaron's sons were consecrated by the ram's blood which undoubtedly took account of their sins, but went much farther, even to the glorifying God in His own nature, as John xiii. 31 tells us. So glorified was He in the Son of man's death for sin, that it became righteous for Him to set Christ at His own right hand in heavenly glory, and to associate us who believe in the same blessedness and eventually in the same glory. "As He is, so are we in this world ;" and soon will He come to fetch us that, where He is, there we may be also (John xiv. 2, 3).

The blood put upon the priestly company means the virtue of Christ's sacrifice consecrating them for all they heard, for all they did, and for all their walk. The whole of their practical being was thenceforth to be in the virtue of His death to God. It is not that Christ needed aught for Himself, or had the least flaw to purge ; but all turned for us in His obeying unto death, yea, death of the cross, for God's glory. His obedience was unreserved and at all cost from first to last. The preparation of the body for Him, as the Sept. puts it and so

quoted in Heb. x. 5, is in the Hebrew of Ps. xl. "Mine ears didst thou dig." In every other they were heavy and closed through sin. The words too which the Father gave Him He has given to us, that our service and walk should be formed by divine communications, and these of the highest intimacy (John xvii. 8).

Next came the Wave-offering of all the ram's fat, and one unleavened cake and one cake of oiled bread and one wafer, representing the internal energy of Christ's sacrifice, and His unblemished living excellence in the Spirit's power, which had been put upon the hands of all and waved before Jehovah; then taken off their hands which they "filled" as the essential idea of consecration, they were burnt upon the altar over the Burnt-offering. How blessed the qualification for drawing near to God, and offering the praise sacrifice continually to God, that is, fruit of lips confessing His name!

For as they had not only the Sin-offering in its largest form but also the Burnt-offering too in the special way of a ram, so that of consecration gave fulness and precision, as was due to the priestly office and so graciously directed by Jehovah, with its accompanying Meal-offering, that the completeness of Christ's offering and sacrifice might be their inauguration. And all this and more form the Christians' portion, even now a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, which are certainly not less but more acceptable to God through Jesus Christ than any material ones ever were in the past. Nay, answering to Rev. i. 5, we are a royal priest-

hood ... that we may show forth the excellencies of Him that called us out of darkness into His marvellous light, as we read in 1 Pet. ii. 9.

The breast too as Moses' part (ver. 29) of the consecration ram was no unmeaning sign, as representing Christ's deep interest and satisfaction in their consecration, as well as His own.

No doubt it is a position of the utmost nearness to God by faith, not by appearance like the typical priesthood. But that only enhances the blessing in God's eyes, and to our hearts if we have communion with Him. Anything of a visible nature attaching to a Christian is the least precious of his possessions. Every spiritual blessing with which we are blessed in heavenly places in Christ rises far above what man can see or estimate.

But we must not overlook the remarkable action of the mediator that follows in ver. 30. "Moses took of the anointing oil and of the blood which was upon the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, and on his sons and on his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments with him." It is the unction of the Spirit, as well as the death of Christ in power. And what a striking answer to it is Rom. viii. 2-4! "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and [as offering] for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteous requirement of the law

might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Thus as the life of the Spirit is one of deliverance, so is Christ made sin our release from all its evil ; and this to the display of the Spirit's power in our ways, which would seem to be portrayed in the garments.

There is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. The first reason alleged is that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set us free from the law of sin and of death. God therefore will not condemn us who are animated by that life which is most acceptable in His eyes, a life which the Christian has in the power of resurrection and of the Spirit. But there is another and no less cogent reason why condemnation is not for us : if we have an old nature far different from Christ our life, God, having sent His Son in likeness of flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh (that is, on the cross of Christ) ; in order that what law righteously required should be fulfilled in us who walk not according to flesh but according to Spirit. How this corresponds with Moses taking of the oil and of the blood, to sprinkle on Aaron and his sons, as well as on their garments !

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLY ATTIRE.

Lev. viii.

It may be well here to say a little on the dress of the priests, especially of the high priest, even beyond the general terms of our chapter.

The ephod was the garment properly sacerdotal but merely of linen for a priest. For Aaron it was made of gold, of blue, and purple, scarlet, and twisted byss, as we are told in Exod. xxviii.; and its girdle, or woven band was of the same. To the ephod was attached the breastplate of judgment, into which were put the Urim and the Thummim (or, Lights and Perfections). It had also two shoulder-pieces joined to the two ends of the ephod; two onyx stones being the clasp, graven each with six names of the children of Israel, and set in enclosures of gold. The breastplate was made like the ephod, but square and doubled, with four rows of precious stones set in it and enclosed in gold, each stone of the twelve having one name of Israel's tribes so that all were engraved on it distinctively. Besides two rings and two wreathen chains of gold which connected all, there was a lace of blue which bound the rings of the ephod on the band or girdle, so that the breastplate should not be loosed from

the ephod. Then the robe or cloak, as distinct from the inner vest or shirt of chequered work, was blue and on its skirts pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, and bells of gold between each pomegranate, round about. On a plate of gold was graven HOLINESS TO JEHOVAH, and put on a lace of blue on the mitre or turban, upon Aaron's forehead bearing the iniquity of Israel's holy things, the turban like the vest being of byss.*

Observe that the ephod consisted of the same materials as the veil (Exod. xxv. 31). There is however a notable difference on either side: the ephod had no cherubim made on it; the veil had no gold, which has the first place in the ephod. As gold represents divine righteousness, so does the veil (as we are authoritatively told) the flesh of Christ. The cherubim symbolised God's judicial authority which was given to Him, because He is the Son of Man. If the veil indicated Him as the executor of judgment, the ephod marked the absence of this as unsuited to His priestly character while He sits on the Father's throne. Here divine righteousness in grace is predominant, yet in man, and with the blue which is heavenly. There were also the kingly and imperial glories and titles, with every form of practical righteousness. He was born "king"; and the still larger authority was the answer to His sufferings, though He did not nor will exercise these powers, till He shall sit on His own throne. Compare Ps. cx.

*This was fine cotton, as in Rev. xix. 8 and 14, not really "linen" (as for the vial-angels in Rev. xv. 6).

The people of God were represented by the high priest, not only in general, but expressly and in a minute and striking way. For the clasp of the ephod had six names of Israel's sons graven on each onyx for each shoulder. Aaron shall bear their names before Jehovah upon his two shoulders, bearing them up before Jehovah. Yet more impressively the breastplate presented them. For there they all twelve shone, each with a distinctive splendour. "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart when he goeth in unto the holy place for a memorial before Jehovah continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before Jehovah; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah continually." If it be granted that all for Israel failed through sin (in priests as well as people), what blessedness is typified for us who believe on Him to Whom all pointed unfailingly! How immense the favour that as He died in expiation of our guilt, He lives for us before God on high, bearing our judgment on His heart, not as if ashamed of us, but gloriously and continually!

Under it was the long robe of the ephod, "all of blue." It was the colour here most characteristic of Christ. If faith could say of Him even here, "the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13), how incontestably so now that He has passed through the heavens, and entered in once

for all into the holies, having found an eternal redemption! Hence the prevalence of "blue" throughout those types, if other glories appear. But the purple and the scarlet did not fade, because the blue prevailed. He is the King and King of kings, though acting in other relationships as yet.

By the way, it is not perhaps wonderful that Josephus could not conceive other interpretation for the bells and pomegranates on the skirts than "thunder and lightning"! He was ignorant of the True Light Who makes it plain that the testimony and the fruit of the Spirit are in the train of His priestly grace. For it is to be observed that the bells gave their sound when He went into the sanctuary, as they will when He comes out; so the Holy Spirit was poured out, and will yet be when He comes again. And abundant was, is, and will be the acceptable fruit by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.

But if these significant tokens followed duly as it were in the hem of His garment for those that were His, how precious the pledge in the innermost vest that He is Jesus Christ the Righteous, the Advocate that we have, as unchanging as His propitiation! and that on His head, typically, is the golden plate graven Holiness to Jehovah, with its lace of blue, bearing the iniquity of our holy things! Truly Christ is all for us evermore when saints and priests, as once for all for us when lost sinners. Yet we must not forget that all types are but shadows, and fail to convey the fulness of grace as of glory in Him. The Second man is of

heaven in contrast with the first of dust. Thence He came, though truly on earth woman-born; thither when risen is He gone, and exercises His priestly office for us in heaven, minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man.

It may be noticed that in the garments of the high priest linen drawers are not included. Being expressly to cover "the flesh of nakedness," we can appreciate the omission by Him Who had Christ in view. Still, as Aaron was a sinful man no less than his sons, we can equally understand that, when the garments for Aaron's sons are afterwards described, these necessary coverings are carefully prescribed. There and then it is added, that "they shall be upon Aaron and his sons when they enter into the tent of meeting, or when they come near to the altar to serve in the sanctuary; that they may not bear iniquity and die: an everlasting statute for him and his seed after him" (Exod. xxviii.).

The general truth that the Christian has even now clothing given of God and suited to his new relationship is clearly stated in scripture. Thus the prodigal (when he turns to God and finds in Him the Father and in a truer and fuller way than before he turned aside) is clothed for the first time with "the best robe," yea adorned throughout with honour. We are exhorted in practice, not only to cast off the works of darkness but to put on the armour of light, and, yet more generally, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. xiii. 12, 14);

as in principle all the baptised are said (in Gal. iii. 27) to have put on Christ. So in Ephes. iv. we are viewed as having put off the old man, and put on the new man ; while Col. iii. exhorts us to put off the vile ways of both violence and corruption, as we have put off the old man and put on the new. The N. T. truth no doubt goes more deeply into our need and our blessing. Still the O. T. figure of attire is kept up.

So it is for the day of glory. We shall put on our house which is from heaven (2 Cor. v.), and shall not be found naked then, or yet later when all that have not Christ must be to everlasting shame. Mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Individually we shall walk with Christ in white ; and as the Bride we shall be clothed with bright pure byss ; for this byss is the righteousnesses of saints (Rev. xix. 8).

CHAPTER V.

THE CONSECRATION.

Lev. viii.

THE close of this chapter has its importance like every other part. We have seen the washing of all and the robing of Aaron, and the anointing of the tabernacle and all therein, of the altar and all its vessels, and especially of the high priest's head before the sons had their official clothing (1-13). We had next the bullock for the Sin-offering on which Aaron and his sons laid their hands before it was slain; then the ram for the Burnt-offering; then the other ram of consecration, blood of which was put on the right ear, right thumb, and right toe; the right shoulder, and its accompaniments, with the breast, Moses' part, being waved before Jehovah (14-30). But there remains the eating of the flesh as an essential observance.

“⁸¹And Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons, Boil the flesh [at] the entrance of the tent of meeting; and there eat it and the bread that is in the basket of the consecration-offering, as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it.
⁸²And that which remaineth of the flesh and of the bread shall ye burn with fire. ⁸³And ye shall not go out from the entrance of the tent of meeting seven days, until the day when the days of your

consecration are at an end: for seven days shall ye be consecrated. ⁸⁴As he hath done this day, Jehovah hath commanded to do, to make atonement for you. ⁸⁵And ye shall abide at the entrance of the tent of meeting day and night seven days, and keep the charge of Jehovah, that ye die not; for so I am commanded. ⁸⁶And Aaron and his sons did all things that Jehovah commanded by the hand of Moses" (31-36).

Communion with Christ Who gave Himself for us is the precious privilege set forth by eating the flesh. It was boiled at the entrance of the tent of meeting; and it was eaten with the bread in the basket of the Consecration-offering. All was to be separate from the common nourishment of man. Yet was the bread of the offering made by fire to Jehovah no less really for the priests to share, as well as the flesh. It was the expression of fellowship, remote from all the associations of nature, but peaceful and intimate as well as holy. It is appropriately the last thing presented before the eighth day. How foreign to the divine mind to have begun with such a feast!

Jehovah had expressed His sovereign will in separating one family to draw near to Him. They were washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God; for so we may rightly interpret and apply the typical form of the chapter. A new and holy nature is the prime necessity. Christ had this in His person, displayed it perfectly in a world of evil, and gave it to all that believe. But they needed

His death also in all its atoning efficacy, and this not only to blot out their sins but to invest with His positive acceptance. This is marked with fulness and precision in the chapter. The Sin-offering and Burnt-offering were duly slain and burnt. God was thus glorified in every way as to sin; beautiful shadows of what was found perfectly and only in the death of the Son of man, God's Son.

But the second ram of consecration distinctly severed to God by its blood the entire priestly family: as has been shewn already, their service in the inner and the outer man was henceforward to be according to Christ's blood. No less a standard could God allow in those that enjoy access to Him in the sanctuary. Consecration means the hands filled. It is not man's desire, purpose, or effort, but that which the inward energy of Christ in His offering up to Jehovah, and of His active life in the power of the Spirit, put on the hands of Aaron and his sons (Christ and His own house), and waved before Him.

The flesh of the ram (besides what had been excepted) was also to be eaten where it was boiled, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and along with the bread of consecration also. It is Christ in death as in life, not as our deliverance from judgment, or as the means and measure of our acceptance, but as the object for our souls to enjoy and feed on together. It is Christ and His own sharing this joy in common, as indeed God does. For our fellowship is with the Father, and with

His Son, Jesus Christ. And His will is not withheld or dubious. These things He has had written in the inspired word, that our joy might be fulfilled.

Further, the priestly family were not to go out during the seven days of their consecration. It is the circle of man's walk here below ; and it applies no less to the priests. Night and day they were to abide at the entrance, and keep the charge of Jehovah that they die not ; "for so I am commanded," as Moses adds, lest any should impute a charge so solemn, all-engrossing, and peremptory to himself. And so was it done.

To appropriate the priestly place to ministers in the word, denying this nearness to the church as a whole or to every Christian, is an error that makes the gospel void. It is the ruin in particular of those who set up a claim so baseless, arrogant, and anti-scriptural. Ministry is the exercise of a divine gift, in some, for the good of all ; priesthood is of all saints to draw near into the holies. There is no other priesthood, save of Christ alone the Great Priest for all His house. Here the Puritan Matthew Henry confounds things that differ essentially, only a little less grossly than the Puseyites, as any one may find in his Commentary on this passage. Still more daring are the modern Ritualists, who are guilty of the gainsaying of Korah. The truth is that all the faithful even now are both a holy and a royal priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9).

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRIESTS CONSECRATED.

Lev. ix. 1-6.

THERE is an "eighth day" here, as for the leper's cleansing in chap. xiv. 10-20. It was the day of circumcision also. These instances suffice to show that we do not wait till the millennial morn or even the day of our resurrection glory to enjoy the privileges which they severally express. They are ours in virtue of Christ risen and glorified Who has given the Spirit from on high, both for our communion and for our communication in testimony of His grace. No doubt in that day what is perfect will have come, and we shall know as we are known.

"¹And it came to pass on the eighth day, Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel, ²and said to Aaron, Take thee a bull calf for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, without blemish, and present [them] before Jehovah; ³and to the children of Israel shalt thou speak, saying, Take a buck of the goats for a sin-offering, and a calf and a lamb, yearlings, without blemish, for a burnt-offering; ⁴and a bullock and a ram for peace-offerings to sacrifice before Jehovah; and a meal-offering mingled with oil; for to-day Jehovah appeareth to you. ⁵And they brought what Moses commanded before the tent of meeting; and all the

assembly drew near and stood before Jehovah. "And Moses said, This [is] the thing which Jehovah commanded that ye should do; and the glory of Jehovah shall approach you" (vers. 1-6).

It was on that day which inaugurates a new and heavenly order of things, and looks on to the appearing of the glory. But our Lord has taught us in John vii. 37-39 how it can bear on us now, were it even the last and great day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the closing scene of the Jewish holy year. For He Himself, rejected here, was about to be glorified, and the Holy Spirit was to be here as He never had been nor could be, to work in virtue of His ever and all-efficacious death. Hence all things are ours who now believe on Him and have received the Spirit, not things present only but things to come also. As at the beginning (viii. 3, 4), all the assembly was there, as well as Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel. But first Moses directed Aaron to take a Sin-offering and a Burnt-offering, without blemish, and offer them before Jehovah. Then he was to bid the children of Israel bring their suited Sin-offering and Burnt-offering, with Peace-offerings for sacrifice before Him.

Thus it is not only for the ordinary days and their necessities, being what they were, that sacrifice and offering were needed. In view of that day and the glory to follow they are presented with all care and solemnity. Priests and people, all were made to feel that they are at least as requisite if we look on to glory; whether those

who had the entry into the sanctuary, or those who were outside. On that sacrificial basis of divine righteousness all enjoyment of God hangs for heaven or earth, now or evermore. Without Christ and His work, no sinful man can stand, still less in view of the glory of God. For all sinned and do come short of the glory of God, as the apostle puts it in Rom. iii. 23. When man fell by sin from innocence, earth was lost, and the question is of fitness for God's glory. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus alone can fit for such a place. But grace justifies freely by faith in Him. This gives its title for faith to boast in hope of divine glory. Nor will its fruition cause any emotion to His own but of joy, thanksgiving, and praise.

In this connection we may profitably weigh the words of the apostle Peter in his Second Epistle (chap. i. 3, 4): "As his divine power hath granted to us all things that are for life and godliness through the full knowledge of him that called us by (or, by his own) glory and virtue, through which he hath granted to us the greatest and precious promises," &c. It is not by present things God acts on the soul but by glory, on which faith lays hold and forms the moral courage that refuses the allurements of the enemy, who seeks to counteract faith by sight and sense, by lust and passion. In the gospel is revealed God, and Jesus our Lord, as indeed just before He is said to be "our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." On the one hand His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain unto life and godliness; on the other we

through His greatest and precious promises (far above the earthly grandeur pledged to Israel) which He has also granted to us, become partakers of a divine nature (as this life is with the godliness attached to it), having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Thus does faith answer to God's call armed by divine power. Compare 1 Pet. i. 5. His glory is the goal set before us, and virtue is the guarding means along the road; as both find their perfect display in Christ. Such in principle was that which wrought in Abel, Enoch, Noah, and all the elders who obtained witness through faith. But in the gospel it is set forth in full light for our full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. Thus have we the light of heaven shining on us here before we go to heaven. It is day dawning and the Day-star arising in our hearts, and thus distinct from and superior to the lamp of prophecy, however excellent this may be for the squalid place of the earth as it is.

CHAPTER VII.

OFFERINGS FOR PRIESTS AND FOR PEOPLE.

Lev. ix. 7-21.

Now we have, not Moses acting as well as directing, but Aaron ministering as high priest of the Jewish confession. It was the inauguration of the priesthood in full standing.

“And Moses said to Aaron, Draw near unto the altar, and offer thy sin-offering and thy burnt-offering, and make atonement for thyself, and for the people; and offer the offerings of the people, and make atonement for them, as Jehovah commanded. ⁸And Aaron drew near to the altar and slaughtered the calf of the sin-offering which [was] for himself; ⁹and the sons of Aaron presented the blood to him, and he dipped his finger in the blood and put [it] on the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar. ¹⁰And the fat and the kidneys, and the net above the liver, of the sin-offering, he burnt on the altar, as Jehovah commanded Moses. ¹¹And the flesh and the skin he burned with fire outside the camp. ¹²And he slaughtered the burnt-offering; and Aaron's sons delivered to him the blood which he sprinkled on the altar round about. ¹³And they delivered to him the burnt-offering piece by piece, and the head; and he burnt [them] on the altar. ¹⁴And he washed

the inwards and the legs, and burnt [them] upon the burnt-offering on the altar" (vers. 7-14).

Accordingly Aaron and his sons offered the calf as Sin-offering for himself, putting of its blood presented by his sons on the horns of the altar and the rest at its base, and burning the fat and the kidneys and the net above the liver on the altar; but the flesh and the skin without the camp as prescribed. But nothing is said here, as in chap. viii. 14, of laying their hands on its head, though there is the same witness borne to Christ's sacrifice in the acceptance of the inwards as holy and precious on the altar, but the body reduced to ashes without as identified with sin. His work explains the seeming inconsistency but bright witness, that though He knew no sin, God made Him sin for us.

Again, we should note, that atonement was not complete according to God without the Burnt-offering as well as that for sin. This at once followed; and Aaron sprinkled its blood too, delivered by his sons, on the altar round about, and burned it all, piece by piece, with the head, on the altar, even the inwards and legs when washed, burnt on the Burnt-offering. It was for acceptance and not only covering sin. The very words for "burnt" in verses 10 and 11 are here as elsewhere pointedly different, as often noticed.

"¹⁵And he presented the people's offering, and took the goat of the sin-offering which [was] for the people, and slaughtered it, and offered it for sin, as the first. ¹⁶And he presented the burnt-

offering, and offered it according to the ordinance. ¹⁷And he presented the meal-offering, and took a handful of it, and burnt [it] on the altar, besides the burnt-offering of the morning. ¹⁸And he slaughtered the bullock and the ram of the sacrifice of peace-offerings which [was] for the people. And Aaron's sons delivered to him the blood, and he sprinkled it on the altar round about; ¹⁹and the fat pieces of the bullock and of the ram, the fat tail and what covereth [the inwards], and the kidneys and the net of the liver. ²⁰And they put the fat pieces on the breast pieces, and he burnt the fat pieces on the altar. ²¹And the breast pieces and the right shoulder Aaron waved, a wave-offering before Jehovah, as Moses commanded" (vers. 15-21).

Next, Aaron presented the people's offering, the young buck-goat for sin, then as Burnt-offering a bullock, as Peace-offering a ram, with an oil-mingled Meal-offering. Here each class of the Levitical offerings was represented on behalf of the people. They mean Christ in the fulness of His work and person as well as His grace.

How lamentable to read what a good and learned man (as was Dr. Chr. Wordsworth) remarks on the chapter! "Since therefore even Moses, who had been employed to consecrate Aaron, did not venture to perform any priestly function after Aaron had been consecrated, it is evident that no one else might do so," citing Heb. v. 4, Acts xix. 15, Jude 11, as well as Exod. xxix. 11, and Num. xvi. 1-43. He would not have denied that all Christians have free access through the blood of

Jesus into the holies, and that all saints can now through Him offer up a sacrifice to God continually, that is, fruit of lips confessing to His name. What could he himself or any one else do more priestly? Preaching or teaching is a different question, and neither of them is worship or priestly.

When will men live above prejudice and learn that through faith of the gospel and in virtue of Christ's death there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in of a better hope through which we draw nigh to God? Who on earth draws so nigh to God as the Christian? Two barriers once blocked the way: the comparative nearness of the Jew outwardly; and the absolute distance from God of the sinner, Jew or Gentile. But through our Lord Jesus we both have access by (ἐν) one Spirit unto the Father. The assertion of an earthly priest denies this rich and essential privilege of Christianity, little as they think it who are beguiled into sacerdotalism. "Rejoice in the Lord alway," said the apostolic prisoner. How could it be, till we have had and have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God? This favour belongs to every Christian, and it transcends the privilege even of Aaron, leaving no room for an earthly priesthood between God and us.

CHAPTER VIII.

GLORIOUS RESULTS.

Lev. ix. 22-24.

THE closing verses have their own interest, after we were shewn how the blessing of the future day with its manifestation of glory hangs on Christ's sacrifice. But there is no entering within the veil, no putting of the blood in the holiest as on the day of atonement. The blood is not carried beyond the brazen altar. It is the same blood and of equal efficiency, and in a far higher way, when we have the grand central type of Lev. xvi.

“²²And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them ; and he came down from offering the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings. ²³And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and came out, and blessed the people ; and Jehovah's glory appeared to all the people. ²⁴And there went out fire from before Jehovah, and consumed on the altar the burnt-offering and the fat ; and all the people saw it, and they shouted, and fell on their faces ” (vers. 22-24).

On the day of atonement there was a manifested basis of sacrifice with singular solemnity. It was the one standing fast of the holy year, a sabbath of rest, where all Israel abstained from all work and afflicted their souls on pain of being

cut off. It was the sole day in the year when the high priest entered the holiest where he put the blood of the bullock for himself and for his house, and the blood of the goat for the people; as he made atonement also for the sanctuary and for the tent of meeting. Then followed his confession of Israel's iniquities over the living goat's head, before it was sent away bearing them into the wilderness. The slain bullock and goat were carried outside the camp and burnt with fire.

In the first ministration of Aaron after the consecration, as our chapter records, there is the remarkable difference that the blood of the Sin-offerings whether for the priest or for the people was put, not within the veil, but on the horns of the altar (the brazen altar) and poured out at its base, and the fat, &c., as usual burnt thereon, as Jehovah commanded Moses. On this occasion there was thus a signal difference, not only from the statutes of Atonement-day in Lev. xvi. but also from the requirement in Lev. iv. for sin, whether for the anointed priest (or high priest), or for the whole assembly. In either case the blood was sprinkled before the veil seven times, as it was also put upon the horns of the altar of fragrant incense, besides pouring out the rest of the blood at the foot of the brazen altar.

We are thus taught the external character of what was done on the day when Jehovah appeared to Israel. It was grounded on sacrifice, as it could not be otherwise. But there was no action in the holiest as in laying the basis of atonement, nor yet

in the holy place as in making good the communion when interrupted. It was simply the acceptance of priest and of people, on the ground of which "Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and came down after the offering of the sin-offering and the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings." They are here therefore enumerated in the order, not of Jehovah's point of view, looking at Christ (as in Lev. i. and following chapters), but of man's need, where the Sin-offering takes necessary precedence, the Holocaust follows with its Meal-offering, and the sacrifice of Peace-offerings concludes the rite. The last two were for the people expressly; for God takes especial care of the weaker sort. It may be for a similar reason that the same emphatic phrase, which occurs in Lev. vi. 26 in the law of the Sin-offering, is employed toward the end of ver. 16. "He sinned it (or made it sin)."

Then it is, that "Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and came out and blessed the people; and the glory of Jehovah appeared to all the people." It is the union of the kingly with the sacerdotal dignity which is here indicated; for Moses was "king in Jeshurun" (Deut. xxxiii.). This took place within the tent of meeting, and was then manifested. It is not man asking as in the disastrous day that Saul was chosen after man's heart and the outward appearance. Nor was there really such a junction in after times. But here it was typically pledged by Jehovah; and it awaits its accomplishment in Christ for the earth in days

rapidly approaching. "Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, a man whose name is Branch; and he shall branch up from his own place, and he shall build the temple of Jehovah: even he shall build the temple of Jehovah and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. vi. 12, 13).

How appropriate that at this point "there went out fire from before Jehovah and consumed on the altar the burnt-offering, and the fat pieces!" "Jehovah, he is God, Jehovah, he is God," cried the people even in the day of their idolatrous apostacy, when He answered by fire, as He now proffered the sign. Christ is the true Melchizedek, and shall reign over the earth in righteousness and peace. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this; for the counsel of peace is between Them both. How awful that what the priests of Baal failed to do in Elijah's day, the second Beast, or Antichrist will be allowed to do, at least "in the sight of men," among the signs done in the sight of the imperial or first Beast, deceiving those that dwell upon the earth! It is the short season of the devil's great wrath, when the restraining person or power is no longer there.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRIESTHOOD FAILING AND JUDGED.

Lev. x. 1-3.

HERE we have a signal crisis in Israel, the utter ruin of the priesthood before God, however much and long He might bear with them in His long-suffering; as in Exodus xxxii. is seen the ruin of the people with even Aaron at their head.

It is alas! the humbling tale of man failing everywhere and from the first. So it was with Adam and Eve in the paradise of Eden when all around was good, and they themselves innocent. But the serpent tempted through the weaker vessel, and both fell through unbelief of God and His word. So, though in another way of shame, broke down Noah, after the mercy shewn to him and his in the deluge. The governor in the earth renewed under sacrifice failed to govern himself, object of pitiful shame to some, but of scorn to others—his own near kin shameless and dastardly. Need one point out the blots on the fathers, or the sons of Israel? Cannot all see in the light of scripture the mournful dereliction of the kings, not only from the first but also of the most honoured, David and Solomon? Then if divine patience forbore till "there was no remedy," and if world-power, on their ceasing for the time to be

God's people, was given to the Gentiles, what became of the golden head, of the silver breast, of the brazen middle, and of the iron legs with the feet of iron and clay? Were they not all morally viewed as "four great beasts"? as empires lacking intelligence of God, and dependence on Him?

The Second man is the blessed contrast of them all and in every respect. He Who is both Son of man and Ancient of days, as Rev. i. proves, will surely have dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages shall serve Him as no world-ruler ever made his own, and this an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away. Him too will Jehovah set as His king on His holy hill of Zion, great David's greater Son Who played Jehovah false in nought small or great, and will judge uprightly but cut off all the horns of the wicked when the horns of the righteous are lifted up. He also shall build the temple of Jehovah, and be a priest upon His throne, with counsel of peace between Them both. The government shall be upon His shoulder Who had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. For indeed unlike Adam that sinned, He had proved Himself altogether victor over the Serpent in the wilderness when without food for forty days. Thence He began His public service, and closed it holy, guileless, undefiled, not swerving however He might suffer (as He did to the uttermost) under God's judgment of our sins on the cross unto God's glory, the perfect manifestation and deepest issue of divine love to us, lost as we were heretofore.

Let us turn from the adorable Lord to the priests just consecrated.

"¹And the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, took each of them his censer, and put fire in it, and put incense on it, and presented strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them. ²And there went out fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah. ³And Moses said to Aaron, This [is] what Jehovah spoke, saying, I will be hallowed in those that come near me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron was silent" (vers. 1-3).

Grace had wrought wondrously through righteousness just before. No token could match what was given in Jehovah's acceptance of the sacrifice. It was not only that the glory of Jehovah appeared to all the people. There came forth fire from before Jehovah, and consumed upon the altar the Burnt-offering and the fat; and when all saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces. Who should have appreciated this so signal mark of Jehovah's grace? The priests above all. They were the very men who even at such a time betrayed the unbelief and ingratitude of their hearts. The elder sons of Aaron took each of them his censer, and put fire therein and laid incense thereon, "which He had not commanded." Oh, what contempt of fire from Himself! It was insulting to the divinely given supply and to the sacrifice it consumed. Strange fire, the ordinary fire of nature, was good enough for the incense in the

sanctuary! It was heedless profanity, and heartless indifference to Jehovah's favour and glory.

Cain was the leader in that evil "way" against which Jude warns solemnly, as a woe that concerns Christendom. But he was in nature. The priests were not so much here in law as in grace, for such was sacrifice at least typically; and the circumstances were beyond measure awe-inspiring. But Nadab and Abihu turned their back on the Burnt-offering which the fire from Jehovah was consuming, and presumed to burn incense separated from the provision Jehovah had just given, from the sacrifice which gives man his only acceptance atoningly. If the priest's lips should keep knowledge, how much more should he draw near with reverence and fear! Was this the beginning and bearing of the priests toward Jehovah? But Israel's God, and our God, is a consuming fire. "There went out fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah." Their judgment was immediate and final; all the more awful, because it was in presence of His grace reigning through righteousness in the sign before all the people.

Grace was never meant to dispense with holiness, but to produce and nourish it. So we read in Tit. ii. 11, 12; and again our very chastening under His fatherly hands is declared in Heb. xii. 10 to be for profit, in order to the partaking of His holiness. Without faith in Christ and His suffering work for our sins, all is vain; but with it we are exhorted to pursue peace with all, and holiness,

without which no one shall see the Lord. It could not, ought not, to be otherwise.

“And Moses said to Aaron, This is what Jehovah spoke, saying, I will be hallowed in those that come near me, and before all the people I will be glorified.” If it be in His saving grace instructing and forming us in practical righteousness, it must be in judgment; and judgment will not be less terrible, because it may be hidden for the present. “Of some men the sins are manifest beforehand, going before to judgment; and some also they follow after.” In Israel, as an earthly people under Jehovah’s public government, it was consistent to impress priests and people alike with a sense of Him with Whom they each had to do. God in no case can be a consenting party to His own dishonour. So we see at the beginning of the church’s history in Acts v. Was it not divine wisdom, as well as mercy, in thus dealing with man, at the very beginning of God’s ways, first with the priests in Israel, afterward with those just favoured with the presense of the Holy Spirit? It was God no doubt vindicating in both cases holy but despised majesty. It was man judged in this world, because of the sin in deed and in word, which unbelief laid them exposed to, and all the more because they failed to bear in mind the nearness into which His favour had brought them.

Here in Israel “Aaron was silent.” So, we may perhaps say, was the Advocate with the Father, when Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, and the indignant apostle was led of Him

to pronounce sentence of death on the spot. Nor was it otherwise, though not so conspicuously at Corinth when many among the saints were weak and infirm, and not a few falling asleep. For there is sin unto death; and we too in this case are not to pray for life. We need spiritual discernment for such a thing.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRIEST ABOVE GRIEF.

Lev. x. 4-7.

OUR relationships whether with God or with man determine our duties. The more intimate they be, the call is proportionate. Jehovah had chosen Aaron and his sons to draw nigh to Him, as none could even of the tribe which had charge of the sanctuary. Therefore would He be sanctified in the persons so privileged, who must walk consistently with holy nearness. If they became through any cause insensible to His majesty, He would not fail to make them feel that they had to do with One Who never slumbers or sleeps, dwelling among the sons of Israel, after having brought them forth out of the land of Egypt to walk among them as Jehovah their God. If the priest forgot what is due to Him, what could be expected of the people? There must be on the one hand no respect of persons: God cannot abdicate; on the other the priest typically stood for Christ Who acted for man with God in His grace. And what can be more heinous then to despise grace? In the most solemn way the elder sons of the high priest had profaned the name of Jehovah. Now "if one man sin against another, God will judge him; but

if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall intreat for him?" Even Aaron held his peace.

"And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Uzziel uncle of Aaron, and said to them, Draw near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. And they drew near, and carried them in their vests out of the camp, as Moses had said. And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and to Ithamar his sons, Uncover not your heads nor rend your clothes, lest ye die, and lest wrath come on all the assembly; but your brethren, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which Jehovah hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tent of meeting, lest ye die; for the anointing oil of Jehovah [is] upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses" (vers. 4-7).

Even in circumstances so unexpected and appalling, all things must be done decently and in order. The guilty priests forthwith perished for their profanity before the sanctuary; and the Levites, their near of kin, must carry them forth out of the camp. And so they did in their vests. It was all the more an affecting and impressive sight. We do not hear the like in any other instance; but this was only right in presence of a sin so unexampled and heinous.

Nor was this all. Moses proceeds to lay an injunction on the priestly family, which was followed up afterwards in detail (chap. xxi.), and worthy of all heed. The priests of Jehovah were liable to the ordinary sorrows of humanity; yea

their office, as we have seen, laid them open to peculiar dangers from which others were exempt. But their position of nearness to Jehovah precluded them from the usual manifestation of grief. The occasion was a crucial one, and the word plain and imperative. Natural feeling might plead loudly; but what had nature to do with nearness to Jehovah in the sanctuary? It was He Who deigned to bring them nigh to Himself. Only grace conferred such a title. They were in themselves sinful men, and deserved to be far from His presence like others. What possible claim of his own had any sinner to draw near Him?

It is true that the sanctuary as a whole and in all its parts was significant of what God is in Christ. In the holiest the ark and its covering mercy-seat, with the veil; in the holy place the golden table with its twelve loaves, the golden stand with its seven lamps, the golden altar of incense, and the screen of the door as well as the hangings, and the very sockets, boards, bars and pillars, to say nothing of the anointing oil, or the cloud that covered the tent of meeting and the glory that filled the tabernacle. But what did any then know of their meaning? Even now that the true light already shines, how few saints read all or any of these things aright?

But this they all had heard and sung, from the passage of the Red Sea, "Who is like thee, Jehovah, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" If they understood not that the sanctuary and its

vessels and appurtenances spoke only of what God is to His own in Christ, and what He is for them to God, they could not be ignorant from Sinai, that fear was owed by all, and that holiness especially befits the priests that draw near to Jehovah (Exod. xix. 11-25). "Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thy house, O Jehovah, for evermore" (Ps. xciii. 5).

The Hebrew in the charge to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar is open to the question, whether it means letting the hair loose, or uncovering their heads; for both were signs of mourning. The A.V. prefers the latter, the R.V. the former. Certain it is that the command forbids any such token of grief in those who drew nigh to Jehovah. He claims and must have on their part what is due to His presence. If the death of Christ was the basis of all blessing there, the death of the first man can have no place before Him. The sorrows and horrors of sin are supplanted by the witness, as yet unbelieved by man, of grace reigning through righteousness unto life eternal by Jesus Christ our Lord; believers should enjoy it. Divine righteousness shines in the sanctuary.

Yet, far from suppressing grief in others, the whole house of Israel was encouraged and expected to bewail the solemn fact before all, the burning which Jehovah had kindled. Nature is there allowed to vent its feelings.

Again, the priests were forbidden to go out from the door of the tent of meeting on pain of death; for the anointing of Jehovah was on them.

They were not their own but His; and they had that unction which pointed to the gift of the Spirit, and is absorbed in God's will and glory.

1 John ii. 20 sets out clearly and beyond controversy that even the babes (*παιδιά*) of God's family are thus characterised by the last inspired apostle, writing expressly to warn the saints against the seductions of the last time. How striking that he should comfort, not the *τεκνία* or entire family, but the least mature part of that family, with the assurance of possessing the great distinctive privilege Christ went on high to send down to be in and with them, as they wait for His coming, with all the power of the world and the wiles of Satan arrayed against them. If the babes have, as he declares, an unction from the Holy One, and in virtue of His indwelling energy can be said to know all things, how much less can it be denied to the young men and the fathers in the household of faith?

The Gospel of John in chaps. xiv. to xvi. affords direct proof, that it is not merely an immense power and privilege, "an unction from the Holy One," but the Holy Spirit personally given and sent. How momentous for faith is this fact! The Lord Himself has made it clear and certain. For He calls Him "another Advocate" (xiv. 16) given that He may abide with them for ever; and He says that the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, should teach them all things, and bring to their remembrance all that He had told them. It is therefore, not merely a gift, but a Giver, a Divine Agent per-

sonally present and active (ver. 26). In xv. 26, 27, this is made still more emphatically evident: "But when the Advocate shall have come, whom I will send to you from my Father, the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness concerning me; and ye too bear witness because ye are with me from the beginning." More explicit if possible is xvi. 7, 8: "For if I go not away, the Advocate will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And having come, he will convince" (or, afford proof), &c. Again (in vers. 13, 14), "But when he shall have come, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak from himself, but whatsoever things he shall hear, he will speak; and he will announce to you the things to come. He will glorify me, because he will receive of mine, and will announce [it] to you." The proof of personal presence and action is abundant and conclusive. What can be more precious or comforting?

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRIEST TO BE ABOVE EXCITEMENT.

Lev. x. 8-11.

WE have seen how the priest is called to respect the presence of God supremely, even if death touch ever so closely: Jehovah will be hallowed in those that come near Him. None can enjoy this privilege without the obligation it involves. Not only is sense of bereavement allowed, but bewailing is enjoined on all others even where it was the evident stroke of God. For He abides in His own majesty above sin and its effects; and those chosen to minister in the sanctuary must yield witness to that nearness by their bearing according to His will.

They were no less warned against all natural excitement in the performance of their proper functions. Permissible at other times, it is strictly precluded from the sanctuary. The injunction is remarkable as the first to Aaron after his consecration.

“⁸And Jehovah spoke to Aaron, saying, ⁹Thou shalt not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tent of meeting, lest ye die: an everlasting statute throughout your generations, ¹⁰and that ye may put

difference between the holy and the unholy, and between the unclean and the clean, "and that ye may teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken to them by the hand of Moses" (vers. 8-11).

Literal as the prohibition was to Aaron and his house, it has of course a large and momentous meaning figuratively to the Christian. "Wine and strong drink" cover the wide circle of all incentives to fleshly exhilaration. The most refined are as much proscribed as the gross, and manifold are its kinds which lie between. The first man, in his evil or its consequences, its sorrows or its joys, has no right to intrude into the sanctuary.

There is One, and but One, Who suits God's presence; but He is the Second man. Only the offering of Himself for us truly fits us for it. His sacrifice is our sole, our sufficient, and our perfect title to draw near; and this is most pleasing to the God Who gave and sent Him expressly for this end, though for others worthy of both. Therefore God would have us filled with His praise when we thus approach. Have we not boldness to enter into the holies in virtue of the blood of Jesus, a new and living way which He dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh? Nor this only; for we have Himself there, a Great Priest over the house of God. We have thus the same object of delight as our God and Father. What communion! The Holy Spirit too, Who beareth witness with our spirit that we are His children, is

our power of worship ; as it is written, we worship by God's Spirit, and boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in flesh (Phil. iii. 3). Does He not abide in and with us for ever for this as for all else ? It is heavenly joy.

But for this very reason fleshly pleasure, human gratification, earthly satisfaction, natural joy, all that answers spiritually to the effect of wine or strong drink on those who thus indulge, is abhorrent to God's presence. There is, there ought to be, joy in the Holy Spirit. And so the Ephesian saints were exhorted to be filled with the Spirit, speaking to themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with their heart to the Lord, giving thanks at all times for all things to the God and Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. God cannot but be jealous that the Holy Spirit be honoured here as Christ is on high ; and the Spirit is here to glorify Christ. Yet praise should be holy.

But it is easy to be excited by a multitude keeping holiday, by a grand building with religious associations, by music pathetic or overpowering, to say nothing of the display of wealth, rank, or fame. Even if one begin in the Spirit, how readily one may slight the divine thanksgiving and praise by admiration of the singing or even the music ! Fine appeals may be a feast to the taste, and eloquence may fire the spirit ; but these excitements, what are they but veritable draughts of wine and strong drink ? They are alien to the sanctuary and forbidden.

Nor is this only aimed at, but its consequence. The priests were charged to "put difference between the holy and the unholy, and between the unclean and the clean." No doubt here was a question of meats and drinks, of ordinances of flesh, as Heb. ix. 10 calls them in accordance with Israel's standing as an outwardly holy people. Equally sure is it that we as Christians are sanctified by the Spirit to obedience and sprinkling of Christ's blood, which imports a far deeper and higher holiness typified thereby. Excitement would unfit for spiritual discrimination. Practical life would thus be ruined as well as worship. It was not so that the apostle sought the Corinthians, as he tells us in 1 Cor. ii. Nor did he gratify Athenian vanity by his appeal in Acts xvii. but spoke to conscience.

So here we see the type pursued in this abstinence, "that ye may teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken to them by the hand of Moses." Still more is spiritual abstraction needed for the vast and profound range of Christian truth.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRIESTS' DUE.

Lev. x. 12-15.

THE next direction is positive rather than negative; it expresses, first, the communion of the priests, of the high priest and his sons, as far as this could be with the offerings to Jehovah; then of their families. Eating is the well-known sign of fellowship, as none can deny.

“¹²And Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar his sons that were left, Take the meal-offering that is left of Jehovah's fire-offerings, and eat it with unleavened bread beside the altar; for it [is] most holy. ¹³And ye shall eat it in a holy place, because it [is] thy due and thy sons' due, of Jehovah's fire-offerings; for so I am commanded. ¹⁴And the breast of the wave-offering and the shoulder of the heave-offering ye shall eat in a clean place, thou and thy sons and thy daughters with thee; for thy due and thy sons' due [are they] given of the sacrifices of peace-offerings of the children of Israel. ¹⁵The shoulder of the heave-offering and the breast of the wave-offering shall they bring with the fire-offerings of the pieces of fat to wave as a wave-offering before Jehovah; and they shall be thine and thy sons' with thee for an everlasting statute, as Jehovah commanded” (vers. 12-15).

As the priests were those chosen for the services of the sanctuary, their failures and their dangers were measured by that standard in a way peculiar to themselves. Again also they had privileges, or dues, in which others could not share, suitable to such as drew near into the divine presence. The measure for an Israelite was what Jehovah claimed from man; for the priest there must be fitness Godward. Certainly no less than this is the holiness of the Christian; for he is a priest more really and fully than Aaron himself, for whom the office was but shadowy and ceremonial. Christ is the truth; and as in all other respects, so evidently and expressly in priesthood for the heavens now, as by-and-by for the earth also when He sits on Zion's throne. He therefore makes priesthood as real for the Christian as sonship is, though unbelief in Christendom makes the priestly place a vague name for all but the clergy.

Thus is confounded priesthood with ministry, which is in its worst form to repeat the gain-saying of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Of this imposture the Epistle of Jude declares the woe and end. But unbelief cannot alter or efface the truth; and Christians are shown in the N.T. to be the only persons on earth who now exercise priestly functions. They, having the only Great Priest over the house of God, are exhorted to approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, "sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience, and washed as to our body with pure water" (Heb. x. 21, 22). Who but they have the

entrance with boldness into the holies in the power of the blood of Jesus? For any minister to claim this as the title, and the exclusive title, of his class, is to convict himself of presumptuous ignorance and profanity. It is meddling with Christ's rights, and with His grace to His own.

Christ as the Burnt-offering rose up wholly consumed to Jehovah. Man was in no way to partake: "It shall be accepted to make atonement for him" (Lev. i. 4). "The priest shall burn all on the altar" (9). With Christ as the Meal-offering or Oblation, it was different; for here it is He, as alive in flesh and obedient in holy love, yet offered up to Jehovah. Of the fine flour with the oil, but all the frankincense put on it, the priest took his handful, and burnt it on the altar to Jehovah. The remainder was for Aaron and his sons, who were the priestly company and symbolise "all the saints" here below. "Most holy" as it is, and thus rebuking every thought that tends to lower the Word become flesh, it was priestly food. Jehovah has the memorial thereof, a Fire-offering no less than the Burnt-offering; but the priest partook of the rest. If Jehovah had His delight in that blessed life of absolute devotedness to His will, have not we who believe and know ourselves brought to God (purged from every sin) the privilege of enjoying that oblation in peace and thanksgiving?

But it was to be eaten "in a holy place," as only the priests partook of it, not even their families. It is only in God's presence that we can

enjoy in communion what Christ was each day on earth and all through to God: elsewhere we reason or imagine, and in either way must sully what is "most holy." It is the power of the Spirit that enables the believer to appropriate Christ thus, without mingling his own thoughts. For none rightly knows the Son but the Father; and before Him we presume not, but receive what He gives in unfeigned faith and worship. All the frankincense was for Jehovah.

On the other hand, while ver. 13 restricts the remainder of the Meal-offering to the eating of the priests "in a holy place," ver. 14 opens participation in the due portion of Peace-offerings for their sons and daughters to eat freely, but "in a clean place." For this they had the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder. They were all entitled to share the joy of counting on the affections and the power of Christ as their portion.

In Lev. vii. we see liberty to enjoy a more widely extended fellowship; for the offerer and his guests had the remainder as a feast. Thus Jehovah, the offering priest, the priestly house as a whole, and the offerer with his company, had each the appropriate part, in a communion large and varied, yet nicely ordered of God. Christ in His fulness answers to its every part: a striking contrast with the first and sinful man in his narrow selfishness or vain lavishness. Only "cleanness" was indispensable. "As he who called you is holy, be ye also holy in all conduct, because it is written, Be holy, because I am holy." The simplest be-

liever, however unintelligent of his high and holy privileges, is responsible to cleanse himself from every pollution of flesh and spirit, in order to enjoy it. Grace when believed produces vigilance in our new responsibilities as God's children; but the forgetfulness or abuse of it admits of licence and leads to lawlessness.

It is of much interest to notice these varied ordinances introduced at this time. Jehovah intended the sin and the judgment of the elder priests with which the chapter opens to be deeply felt, and thus work for God like all else. Therefore also He would sanction no feeling of distrust in Himself, nor consequently of dependency on themselves. On the contrary, by guarding against excitement in His presence, He forearms them of a snare dishonouring to Him and perilous to them. And He follows up that holy caution with reminding them of the privilege peculiar to those who draw near Him in the sanctuary, that it is theirs to eat the remainder of the Meal-offering without leaven beside the altar; for it is most holy. It is Christ as God saw Him incarnate here below in the beauty of holiness; and He thus gave them to have communion with Him in His own delight in the Son. Christ's manhood, a continual savour of rest to Him, was all the more acceptable; indeed it explains, if it does not wholly account for, God's complacency in men, rather than angels, as a multitude of the heavenly host unjealously expressed it in praising God.

Not less admirable in its place is the festive and

more unrestricted privilege of the other "due," for their sons and their daughters to join their priestly sires in partaking of the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder, when the children of Israel offered Peace-offerings to Jehovah ; but this necessarily was not in the holy place, but "in a clean place." Grace maintains purity, but considers those who enter not into the fuller privileges it confers. They may and should enjoy all that God gives them.

CHAPTER XIII.

NOT EATING THE SIN-OFFERING.

Lev. x. 16-20.

IN the opening of the chapter we have seen God's great dishonour by man's great transgression, in presence of signal grace and not merely of creature responsibility. To this the priests were exposed, and therein the elder sons of Aaron fell. It was despising the Burnt-offering, and God's fire in its acceptance. Then came instruction to guard them against the expression of grief or the allowance of excitement. In these others might indulge, but not those who had the privilege of drawing near to His sanctuary. Their communion too with the holy oblation to Jehovah, and with the more freely enjoyed sacrifices of Peace-offerings, was duly explained. There remained the solemn injunction that the priests should eat the Sin-offering. Their failure in this respect closes the chapter, deeply appealing to us who, though of a heavenly calling, are no less apt to forget what it speaks to our souls and means before God.

“¹⁶And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin-offering, and, behold, it was burnt up; then he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons [that were] left, saying, ¹⁷Why have ye not eaten

the sin-offering in the place of the sanctuary? For it [is] most holy; and he hath given it to you, that ye might bear the iniquity of the assembly, to make atonement for them before Jehovah. ¹⁸ Behold, its blood was not brought in within the sanctuary: ye should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary, as I commanded. ¹⁹ And Aaron said to Moses, Behold, to-day have they presented their sin-offering and their burnt-offering before Jehovah; and such things as these have befallen me! And had I to-day eaten the sin-offering, would it have been good in the sight of Jehovah? ²⁰ And Moses heard, and it was good in his sight" (vers. 16-20).

Thus the rest of the priestly house, though not guilty of the error fatal to Nadab and Abihu, broke down in a weighty part of their obligations; and all this was, sad to say, at the very start. So humiliating is God's history of man everywhere and at all times, as we may trace from the first Adam to the Second man Who never failed. How blessed for God is His coming and work, and for us who so deeply need it!

Perhaps it would not be possible to find a more wholesome warning for our souls in relation to our brethren, alike set free by the work of Christ to draw near to God, and exhorted as having boldness to enter through the rent veil into the holies by virtue of His blood. It is no presumption, but the "boast of hope" which we are called to hold firm unto the end, that we are in very deed His house, as truly as, and far more blessedly than, the priests were Aaron's. It is a real and rich

part of the harvest of blessing we reap through redemption; for the Aaronic house was comparatively imperfect.

But if we are entitled even now to far greater boldness and access in confidence through the faith of Him, we are bound to identify ourselves in grace with the failures of our brethren, as they with ours. None but the Saviour could atone for us. His sufferings on the cross could alone avail to bring us to God. Whatever we had been, He now did reconcile us in the body of His flesh through death; and in Christ Jesus those who were far off are become nigh by His blood, Who is our peace and made the most opposed one, having broken down the middle wall of partition and annulled the enmity in His flesh, that He might form the two in Himself into one new man. Thus it is through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Yet as a fact we all and often offend; and we are exhorted to confess our sins or offences to one another. Is this all? Far from it, we have to fulfil the type before us, to eat the Sin-offering in the sanctuary, to make the offence of a saint our own seriously in grace before God.

This goes far beyond the kindest feeling. It is so both in the deep sense of what is due to God, and as if we ourselves had offended. This is to bear the iniquity of the assembly, savouring the things that are Christ's, not those of men who would palliate and excuse. Hence it was to be eaten, not in a clean place only like the Peace-offering, but in the holy place. Propitiation had its unique moment;

but priestly grace has also its due place and season in nearness to God.

It is equally plain as in the call for the priests to eat the residue of the Meal-offering, that eating the Sin-offering was only for them, not for their sons and their daughters. How many real believers who have now the title of priests (for it is certainly what the atoning work of the Lord Jesus gives to all that are His) fail to make it good as a matter of communion and practice! For this reason they can not appropriate the spirit of these commandments of Jehovah for the priests. They are thankful for the mercy of God in Christ's death, though even there it is rather as the offering for sin and trespass of which they feel the necessity, than as the Burnt-offering in its acceptance. Hence they fail through their weakness of faith, to know what answers in their case to eating, either of the Meal-offering on the one hand, or of the Sin-offering on the other. Both can be eaten in the holy place only; and the entry there they have not learnt and made their own as a present reality. They are therefore in this respect more like the sons and the daughters of the Aaronic line than the priests themselves. But even so they partake (if feebly enough) of the witness of Christ's love and power, and this in the communion of saints as the Peace-offering means. But blessed are they who know what it is to approach God through Christ, and can identify themselves with Him on behalf of one overtaken in some fault (Gal. vi. 1).

So the Lord, when indicating by His symbolical

action in John xiii. the gracious but indispensable work He, on departing to the Father, was about to carry on for saints, lets them know that they too were to wash one another's feet. In this it is communion practically with Himself. But here we are as apt to fail through ignorance or carelessness, as Peter did doubly on that occasion.

The apostle Paul too at a later day, who could not but censure the insensibility of the Corinthian saints in 1 Cor. v., had the joy of learning that they were made sorry according to God, as he expresses it in 2 Cor. vii. 9. "What earnest care it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what longing, yea what zeal, yea what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter." Again, to the Galatian saints he writes, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," instead of meddling with the law of Moses to the hurt of themselves and of each other. Individual responsibility remains true: each shall bear his own burden; but grace would bear one another's burdens.

Intercession with our God and Father is a precious privilege which it is our shame to neglect. It keeps God's rights undiminished, and exercises the heart in saintly love. Let us never forget that grace condemns evil far more profoundly than law did or could; but it holds fast Christ in life and death and thereby the erring believer's title, as it is in unison here below with what He is doing on high as Advocate with the Father. It delivers from a

hard spirit on the one hand, and from a merely human leniency on the other ; neither of which is compatible with Christ. His alone it was to atone ; but He also felt and confessed the evil, and herein as priests we are called in the presence of God to bear the burden on our souls and to mourn for a brother's sin as our own.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAW OF LAND BEASTS, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

Lev. xi. 1-8.

THE preceding chapter announced that the priests were to differentiate between the holy and the unholy, and between unclean and clean. Here we have details pointed out among the living creatures of every sort, and first among the beasts on the earth. Those who drew near to God as their standing privilege were to decide according to the divine word.

“¹And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, ²Speak to the children of Israel, saying, These [are] the animals which ye shall eat among all the beasts that [are] on the earth. ³Whatsoever hath cloven hoofs, and feet split open, bringing up the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat. ⁴Only these shall ye not eat of those that bring up the cud, or of those with cloven hoofs; the camel, for it bringeth up the cud but hath not cloven hoofs, it [is] unclean to you; ⁵and the rockbadger, for it bringeth up the cud but hath not cloven hoofs, it [is] unclean to you; ⁶and the hare, for it bringeth up the cud but hath not cloven hoofs, it [is] unclean to you; ⁷and the swine, for it hath cloven hoofs and feet split open, but it

bringeth not up the cud, it [is] unclean to you. "Of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcasses ye shall not touch, they [are] unclean to you" (vers. 1-8).

Eating here as elsewhere is emblematic of communion. One appropriates what is thus taken in. But, sin having entered with all the disorders which ensue, it is given to God's people to have His gracious and wise direction, instead of being left to themselves and the varying caprices of independent judgment. As a general principle the difference of clean and unclean was known in early days. So we find Jehovah directing Noah to take to him of all clean animals by sevens, but of those not clean two, a male and its female, to enter the ark. And on this Noah acted when after the deluge he built an altar as his first recorded act, and offered up holocausts of every clean beast and of all clean birds. For the tenure of the post-diluvian earth hung on sacrifice.

But now that the priests were consecrated, particulars follow. Israel must have no fellowship where the outward walk was not firm, and this associated with the inward work of full digestion. The two requisites among the land animals are here marked respectively, by the hoofs not cloven in part, but feet quite split open, and by chewing or bringing up the cud. One only is insufficient. Both must co-exist to meet His mind for His people. Hence the cases are explained of animals familiarly known to them.

On the one hand the camel must be unclean to them, because it had not cloven hoofs, though a

ruminating animal. The rock-badger, in the Authorised Version called the coney, was in the same predicament; and similarly, as it appears, the hare. On the other hand stood the swine, which did not chew the cud but swallowed its food voraciously, though it had cloven hoofs and feet quite split open; it should be unclean to them. They must neither eat the flesh nor touch the carcase.

Scripture is explicit on these qualities. A walk not according to flesh but according to Spirit is indispensable in those whom the law of the Spirit of life in Christ emancipated from the law of sin and death (Rom. viii. 2). That the Spirit of God dwells in the Christian is a great and sure truth; but it is the very ground on which he is to glorify God in his body. We are exhorted to cleanse ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear; and this as having the promise of His dwelling in us, and of receiving us as a Father, on our coming out from those not of Him, separate to Him, and touching nothing unclean (2 Cor. vi.). Thus the inward reception and effect of the truth must go along with outward and holy decision, in order to form and manifest what God sanctions.

They that are of Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. But is this all that is requisite? Surely not. "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man shall sow, this also shall he reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh from the flesh shall

reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit from the Spirit shall reap life eternal. And let us not lose heart in doing well, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Here again we see the absolute necessity of combining a clean walk with the inward principle of a life nourished by the word of truth, by which we were begotten by God's will unto Himself. New creation alone has value in His eyes; for the old is fallen through sin, out of which is no way save by that cross of Christ, which proclaims the love and light of God in Him Whom the world hung there, as loudly as it does to the end its own fatal evil and ruin in so treating Him.

Hence it is as vain to rest on inward meditation, as on outward mortification, alone. For by itself either is but self, a vain boast in the flesh, in total ignorance of both God and man. But His grace meets man unclean, wilful and proud, in and by His Own Son, the Man without sin, to die for him and suffer for his sins. In resurrection a new condition enters, wherein He gives those who believe to live of His life and receive the Spirit of God, that we may walk accordingly, as we await His coming to take us to His own abode, the Father's house at His coming.

Such love in God is the source, not only of faith, but of life in those that believe. So the apostle prayed that love might abound more and more in full knowledge and all intelligence (or, discernment), so as to approve the things that are excellent, in order that we might be pure and without a stumble unto Christ's day, being filled with the

fruit of righteousness that is through Jesus Christ unto God's glory and praise. Nothing less than this could satisfy the heart's desire that knows Christ. It is therefore clean opposed to nature's walk in those whose God is the belly, and glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. It is to win Christ in heaven—this one thing, forgetting all behind, and pressing on goalward toward the prize, to apprehend that for which also one was apprehended by Christ (Phil. iii.).

So the apostle did not cease to pray for the Colossians, though they had not seen his face in flesh, that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. But was it to end in that inward enjoyment? Not so. It was "to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing in every good work, bearing fruit and growing by the full knowledge of God." Thus is the believer to unite making the truth his own by inward digestion, and walking with firm and vigilant steps the path of Christ in a world of slippery places and of manifold defilements. We need to be strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory (and not only by His grace) unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father, that qualified us for sharing the inheritance of the saints in light, Who rescued us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The truth is very wondrous and blessed. How

could it be otherwise, seeing it is Christ, whose twofold glory is unfolded in the verses that follow (Col. i. 15-19). As therefore we received Him, the Christ, Jesus the Lord, the exhortation is, In Him walk, rooted, and being built up in Him, and confirmed in the faith, even as we were taught, abounding therein in thanksgiving. Here we read distinctly that God will have, not only a holy walk, but this based on the faith of His Son. This only is a sound, steady, and clean walk, the expression of a life flowing from Him Who is the truth, and nourished by it. •

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAW OF CREATURES IN THE WATERS.

Lev. xi. 9-12.

THE second class of liberty or of prohibition relates to the creatures which people the waters, salt or fresh, in seas and in rivers.

“⁹These shall ye eat of all that [are] in the waters : whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas and in the rivers, these shall ye eat. ¹⁰But all that have not fins and scales in seas and in rivers, of all that swarm in the waters, and of every living creature (or, soul) that [is] in the waters, they [are] an abomination to you. ¹¹They shall be even an abomination to you: of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcase ye shall have in abomination. ¹²Whatever in the waters hath no fins and scales, that [shall be] an abomination to you ” (vers. 9-12).

Here the principle is plain. The Israelite was free to eat of the abundance of the sea whatever had fins and scales. In fact such fish were wholesome; and the marks were easy to discern, like the rules as to land animals. But what believer doubts that a deeper bearing lay under that which is written? As the apostle asked in 1 Cor. ix., Is

it for the oxen that God careth, or doth he say it altogether for our sakes? Surely for our sakes was it written. And so we may be assured is the direction here. The moral truth figured by these regulations was what He had chiefly at heart, the spirit, not the letter (save in executing the law on the lawless).

The line had to be drawn here too where the Jew might and where he might not freely partake. A fresh lesson is taken from the denizens of the waters. As Israel was not to eat of every sea or river fish, the believer is again instructed what he ought to avoid. Two marks are specified without which he was forbidden to eat. If they had not fins and scales, he must not make them his own. Both divine direction and divine protection are required in all things and at every step.

As the fins were the organs which directed and balanced the movements of the fish, we can readily discern what the possession or the lack, corresponding to these, means spiritually. The word applied to the way in the prayer of faith seems to answer to the provision for the fish in both the prescribed respects. For it is not enough to be born of God, nor yet more to be justified by faith. Beyond controversy to have a new nature from God and to be rescued from the burden of a sin-oppressed conscience are indispensable. We also need a living and constant power of direction that we may know and do His will, to move where He desires or refrain according to His bidding. Who or what is sufficient for these things? Only

in subjection to His word can we find ourselves obedient, as the Lord Jesus was; and to this obedience we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his path? By taking heed according to thy word."

Hence the all-importance of prayerfully using scripture, as we may read in Luke x. 39—xi. 4, and Acts vi. 4. "Let my cry come near before thee, O Jehovah; give me understanding according to thy word." This is as necessary to glorify Him in our souls as in our service of His name. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Zeal and energy otherwise expose to habitual danger. As men of God, we ought to trust neither our own hearts nor the direction of others. We ought to obey God rather than men. It is due to Him that we thus honour Him; and, looking to the Lord, we are entitled to count on the Holy Spirit to join His help to our weakness. Is He not a spirit of power, of love, and of sobriety? He will not fail to guide sons of God who distrust themselves and cry to our God and Father in the Lord's name. But it is through His word, and not our feeling and ideas. "I have refrained my feet from every evil path, that I might keep thy word."

And what is there to compare with God's word against the enemy? "By the word of Thy lips I have kept from the paths of the violent." It only is the sword of the Spirit; but here too we need all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, in order to wield it with effect. "Through faith" are we

guarded by the power of God unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. But faith ever supposes and relies on His word. Otherwise one is prone to self-deception. Satan is as strong as we are weak; yet the word is, "Whom resist, steadfast in faith." For the word assures us, that, so believing, we have the Lord to stand with us, to deliver from every evil work, and preserve for His heavenly kingdom. "Princes also did sit and talk together against me: thy servant doth meditate in thy precepts. Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors."

To feed on anything which leaves Christ out, to do without His direction and preserving care, is and ought to be an abomination to our souls. So the finless and scaleless creatures that moved and were in the waters the Israelite was to shun; alive or dead, they must be had in abomination by him. If they were destitute of the normal guidance and protection, which that twofold provision represents, he was not only not to eat but to hold them as a horror. But all that had divine direction and protection, he could freely use and appropriate fearlessly. "I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts. The wicked have awaited to destroy me: I attend unto thy testimonies. I have seen an end of all perfection: thy commandment is exceeding broad." "Many are my persecutors and mine oppressors: I have not declined from thy testimonies."

CHAPTER XVI.

BIRDS UNCLEAN.

Lev. xi. 13-19.

THE next division handled is of the birds proscribed, which left other kinds free to the use of Israel.

“¹³And these ye shall have in abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the osprey, and the sea eagle; ¹⁴and the falcon, and the kite after its kind; ¹⁵every raven after its kind; ¹⁶and the ostrich, and the night hawk, and the seagull, and the hawk after its kind; ¹⁷and the owl, and the gannet, and the ibis; ¹⁸and the swan, and the pelican, and the vulture; ¹⁹and the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat”* (vers. 13-19). Of course the rendering in many cases is but approximate, some of the names occurring nowhere else. Nor is there any aim at scientific terminology, but a practical direction for Jehovah's people, with a moral application now for faith.

Many birds of the heaven are characterised by qualities hateful to God for those He takes into relationship with Himself; others are unsuited to

* The bat brings up the rear as a flying creature frequenting the air, not the sea nor the earth, though neither feathered nor strictly a bird.

be the food of mankind. What can be more opposed to His character than fierce rapacity toward the living, and insatiable greed toward the dead? The utility of these last as scavengers, in the actual condition of a fallen world, may be of no small value for men who settle down in the earth as it is, denying a primeval paradise for our first parents, or striving to blot out the proofs of their exile through rebellion against God. If the Israelite was forbidden to make such birds his food, the Christian is to have no fellowship with ways morally analogous; but to avoid and reprove them. If some of these birds boldly seek their prey by day, others find their congenial pursuits in the darkness of the night. There are birds as remarkable for lack of family affection as others for loving care. But in man what is even this without the fear of God? Some are of towering pride, others of loathsome lust after the unclean; some are known as of plain exterior, others of attractive beauty; some have quiet habits and natural kindness; others are boisterous, tricky, or otherwise offensive. But all symbolise traits with which we should eschew all communion. Christ is to be our food.

“Have the same mind one for another, not minding high things but going along with the lowly. Be not wise in your own eyes, rendering to no one evil for evil, providing things honest before all men. If possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men, avenging not yourselves, beloved, but give place to wrath” (Rom. xii. 16-19).

“And such were some of you; but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. vi. 11).

“Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands what is good, that he may have to distribute to him that hath need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but whatever is good for needful edification, that it may give grace to those that hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye were sealed unto redemption’s day. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you. Be ye therefore imitators of God as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be even named among you, as it becometh saints; and filthiness and foolish talking or buffoonery which are not befitting, but rather thanksgiving Be not ye therefore fellow-partakers with them; for ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light . . . and have no fellowship with the fruitless works of darkness, but rather also reprove them” (Eph. iv. v.).

But why cite more, when scripture so largely speaks similar language? Having Christ as our

life, we are taught to feed on that heavenly bread, yea, to eat His flesh and drink His blood ; for His flesh is true food, and His blood is true drink. He that eateth His flesh, and drinketh His blood, abideth in Christ, and Christ in him. As the living Father sent Christ, and He lived on account of (not merely "by") His Father, so, said He, he that eateth Me shall live on account of Me. Such is the communion that sustains the Christian. What is of the first man is mere offal, wholly unsuited and injurious to the new man.

Nor can there be a more defiling and destructive error among Christians than to substitute sacraments for Christ Himself and His precious sacrifice of Himself, not incarnate only but in death to God's glory and our redemption. Baptism and the Lord's Supper have their blessed place, one at the start, and the other not individual, but constant and in the fellowship of those that are His all through. But it is Christ *Himself* (and this He taught in John v. 32-58) who gives and maintains the value of all else in its place, and preserves from the delusion of making an idol of any Christian institution. This indeed would be to feed on garbage to His dishonour.

CHAPTER XVII.

WINGED REPTILES.

Lev. xi. 20-25.

HERE we have a brief prohibition of winged creatures that crawl. It is so comprehensive that the only need is to specify the few exceptions of which the Israelite might eat: all the rest were regarded as abominable for them.

“²⁰Every winged insect (or, crawling thing) that goeth on [all] four [shall be] an abomination unto you. ²¹Yet these shall ye eat of every winged insect that goeth on [all] four: those that have legs above their feet with which to leap upon the earth. ²²These shall ye eat of them: the arbeh (or, locust) after its kind, and the salam after its kind, and the chargol after its kind, and the chagab after its kind. ²³But every winged insect that hath four feet [shall be] an abomination unto you. ²⁴And by these ye shall make yourselves unclean: whoever toucheth their carcase shall be unclean until the even. ²⁵And whoever carrieth of their carcase shall wash his garments, and be unclean until the even” (vers. 20-25).

We may assuredly dismiss from ver. 22 “the beetle” of the A.V. and “the cricket” of the R.V.

The coleoptera are not to be mixed up with the orthoptera saltatoria. Nor is "locust" and "bald locust" a satisfactory specification, if there be good ground to believe that all the four here named are varieties of locust, which we do not know enough to distinguish with confidence. Hence, as in not a few cases through the O. T., it seems safer to retain the Hebrew terms. The first "arbeh" is the more ordinary appellative derived from its great numbers (compare Jer. xlv. 23); the second, from its voracity, for it means "devourer"; the third, from its leaping, for it is equivalent to "hopper"; as the last seems called from its veiling the sun's light. But this is all we have for defining the species. It would seem that Joel i. 4 does not refer to the palmer-worm (gnawer), the canker-worm (licker), and the caterpillar (consumer), but rather to the locust generally, and probably in the different stages of its growth, all of which were most destructive to vegetable life as a scourge from God.

But there is no doubt whatever that the locust is edible, whatever the Palestinians dreamt in their effort to substitute the fruit of the carob-tree. They have been and are esteemed a delicacy in the East. Drs. Kitto and Tristram pronounce them good when simply cooked, and not unlike our shrimps. So that the plain meaning of the text is vindicated beyond legitimate doubt. The believer needs no confirmative proof beyond Matt. iii. 4, Mark i. 6. Rapacious as they were, their food was vegetable. They were not unclean; whereas the

other members of the insect realm that flew and crawled on their feet were unfit for food, and an abomination for Israel.

The spiritual lesson couched under the permission to eat at any rate some species of the locust here specified is not so easy to say. It would not become the present writer to give his thought with any pretension where other servants of God persevere silence. But as communion is certainly taught by the figure of eating, here too it can mean nothing else. God then employed these creatures as a scourge, not only for His enemies as we see in Egypt but for the chastening of His people, ungrateful and rebellious as they too often were. May we not view the eating of these locusts as meaning that, while called to patient grace in our own walk across a world wholly and incurably opposed to God as it is, we may have fellowship with His inflictions from time to time, in reproof of audacious self-will and its hostility to the name of the Lord, to His word, and to His followers?

Never have Christians meddled with governing the world, save to His dishonour and their own shame. They are now called to suffer with Christ; by-and-by they shall reign with Him. Even He has not yet taken His great power for reigning. He sits upon His Father's throne, as the earth-rejected Christ, waiting the word from His Father to execute judgment and sit on His own throne (Rev. iii. 21). Hence we learn that, whatever God's providential dealings (and they are admirable), it is an error to talk of "the Lord reigning"

as yet. He awaits the time, which, when it comes, will leave not a soul in doubt of its actuality and power. When He reigns in the Psalmist's sense, all creation will rejoice, instead of groaning as now. But He does chastise from time to time even now, and will still more manifestly when the Apocalyptic judgments follow the translation of the heavenly saints, as in Rev. vi.—xviii. And assuredly the saints, cognisant of His scourges, join their Amen, and worship, though they take no direct part in inflicting any. But it is, or will be, a permitted and appropriate fellowship. Let every believer judge before Him, what the intended instruction is.

There is no obscurity however in what defiles (vers. 24, 25). To touch the carcase renders unclean till even; to bear aught of the carcase entailed the necessity of washing the clothes and of uncleanness till then. Death came through sin, and Jehovah would have it felt by His people. Heathen feeling sought to hide it under flowers; but Israel were taught its defiling effect. So are we exhorted to touch no unclean thing, as well as to come out and be separate to the Lord according to our new and near relation to Him. Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works, not benevolent only but honourable in His eyes. Therefore, having promises of His love and blessing, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in His fear.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEFILEMENT OF TOUCH, AND THE CREEPING THINGS.

Lev. xi. 26-31.

HERE the beginning of the prohibition is not a reflex of what we have already in vers. 3, 4, but regards their own cases according to ver. 24; see also vers. 27, 28.

“²⁶ Every beast that hath cloven hoofs, but is not quite split open, nor cheweth the cud, shall be unclean to you; everyone that toucheth them shall be unclean. ²⁷ And whatever goeth on its paws, among all beasts that go on all four, those are unclean to you: whoever toucheth their carcass shall be unclean until the even. ²⁸ And he that beareth the carcass of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: they are unclean to you” (vers. 26-28).

Death was the great defiler, death as the wages of sin, the greatest defiler of all. Yet it was not left to a general principle; in these verses the Israelite was expressly told that a touch of those carcasses unfitted him for his usual communion of privilege under the law. No one that did but

touch was exempt from the consequence; no contact could be passed over with impunity. "Bearing a carcase" might be to remove it out of the way, without any wish to use it for purpose of gain or any other selfish end. Even so the bearer must take the place of defilement, wash his clothes, and be himself unclean till even. The requirement was inflexible.

It is not for the Christian a matter of eating or drinking. "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch" are legal ordinances cited in Col. ii. 21 in order to the apostle's peremptory denial that we are subject to such injunctions. The Christian does not belong to a Jewish Messiah alive according to flesh; but the Jews were a people living in the world. We died with Christ from the elements of the world. They had their fitting place when Jehovah governed His earthly people tried under law. The result of the trial was their guilt and ruin, even so far as crucifying their own—Jehovah's—Messiah by the hands of lawless men. Carnal ordinances are thus shewn to be no honour to God any more than real good to man. The people so distinguished were those most distinguished for their hatred of the Holy and the Righteous Servant, the Anointed of Jehovah. Yet His death of the cross is not only the extreme of man's wicked rejection, but the atoning basis, as His resurrection was the starting-point, of Christianity. And the initiatory institute, the baptism of water, is the symbol, not only of His death, but that we, Gentile or Jew, who confess Him also died with Christ. Hence

restrictions of touch, taste, and the like are for us passed away. We by faith stand on the resurrection side of Christ's grave; yet none the less but the more are we exhorted to cleanse ourselves, as God's children here below, from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. vii. 1).

“²⁹ And these shall be unclean to you among the creeping [or, swarming] things that creep on the earth: the mole, and the mouse, and the tortoise after its kind; ³⁰and the gecko, and the land-crocodile, and the lizard, and the sand-lizard, and the chameleon. ³¹These shall be unclean to you among all that creep: whoever toucheth them when they are dead, shall be unclean until the even” (vers. 29-31).

In this regulation creeping things without wings are forbidden. The creatures that burrow were unclean for the people of old separated to God, as were those that devoured and destroyed in the field. So were such as flitted in the sun, silent or crying, that hid in the sand, or that dived into congenial rubbish. Some too might enjoy the grass or the shrub or the tree, and not without lively activity after its insect prey, and with beauty of colour too. They might not all grovel on the earth. But they were to be alike unclean. Whoever touched them when dead should be unclean till even.

Thus had Israel to learn how universally the creature was defiled through man's sin; for this he was taught of God as no other nation knew,

nor even the most thoughtful of philosophers ever guessed. Yet till it be known, all is darkness before us, and man walks in a living lie amidst the defilements of death. Israel alone were made to feel it in an external way by ordinances which made the burden press, save on such hardened men as turned the legal yoke into a claim of self-righteousness and glorying over others.

We as Christians are sanctified in a more excellent way, as having not the mere restraint of laws which negatives the unclean and unwholesome. We have the truth fully revealed in all its positive objectiveness and the immense penetration of its principles, which apply to every detail of life and relationship. Hence did our Lord ask of the Father, "Sanctify them by (or, in) the truth: Thy word is truth"; but He also added, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified by (or, in) truth." Christ not only brought them down the truth in His own person and teaching here, but now He crowned it by setting Himself apart in heaven that they might enter it still more deeply and in the heavenly form and character which His ascension imparts. For as is the Heavenly One, such also are the heavenly ones, albeit still on earth, and not yet of course bearing the image of the Heavenly One.

CHAPTER XIX.

DEFILEMENT THROUGH DEAD CREATURES.

Lev. xi. 32-40.

In the verses that follow the Israelite was instructed, as to another class of pollution, through the touch of these creatures when dead. This must have caused the yoke of the law to press heavily on their neck ; for they were not moral delinquencies but ceremonial only, and at the same time of inevitable and most frequent occurrence. It was the law of Jehovah, under which they lived, and which claimed their implicit obedience. Nothing could righteously deliver from it, save His death Who honoured it to the uttermost. For He not only died *for* us when we were mere and lost sinners, but we died with Him, and thereby, had we been Hebrews of Hebrews, we were made dead to the law by the body of the Christ. Henceforward we belong to Him in another condition, even to Him Who was raised up from out of dead persons, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

“³²And on whatever any of them when they are dead falleth, it shall be unclean ; all vessels of wood, or garment, or skin, or sack, every vessel wherewith work is done, it shall be put into water,

and be unclean until the even; then shall it be clean. ³³And every earthen vessel, whereinto [any] of them falleth, whatever is in it shall be unclean; and ye shall break it. ³⁴All food that is eaten on which [such] water hath come shall be unclean, and all drink that is drunk shall be unclean in every [such] vessel. ³⁵And every thing whereon [aught] of their carcase falleth shall be unclean; oven or range shall be broken down: they are unclean and shall be unclean to you. ³⁶Nevertheless a spring or a well, a collection of water, shall be clean. But he that toucheth their carcase shall be unclean. ³⁷And if [aught] of their carcase fall on any sowing-seed that is to be sown, it is clean; ³⁸but if water be put on the seed, and [aught] of their carcase fall thereon, it is unclean to you. ³⁹And if any beast die that is to you for food, he that toucheth the carcase thereof shall be unclean until the even; ⁴⁰and he that eateth of its carcase shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even; he also that carrieth its carcase shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even" (vers. 32-40).

Here we read the application of all three rules, Handle not, nor taste, nor touch. Indeed the first of these prohibitions goes yet farther, for if any of them when dead were to *fall* on another thing, it became unclean: vessels of wood, raiment, or sack, every vessel for work had to be put into water, and be unclean till evening. Even involuntary contact with these dead things defiled; so that the vessels described in ver. 32 must be put in water for

cleansing, and those in ver. 33 must be quite broken. Not Rabbis, but the apostle Peter tells us the truth : it was a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. Every form of service, and the means of living, contract pollution in a scene where death reigns.

Two exceptions are specified in vers. 36, 37. First, a fountain or well, a quantity of water resisted pollution from this source ; but that which touched the carcase was unclean. Next, seed for sowing was not thereby defiled, if aught dead fell on it. The cleansing by the word, and the life that quickens, were superior to death, the figure of what is special to Christ and His own. But if the seed were for other use, it was rendered unclean.

Further, not merely the forbidden creatures, minute as many are, but even such as might be eaten were defiling if they "died." This appears, not if killed duly but dying : he that touched its carcase, he that eat of it, and he that bore it off, were severally unclean till even (vers. 39, 40).

Our purity has its source in Christ, Who is not only life to us by faith, but washes us by the word, and purifies us by the hope of His coming. And the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by showing us Him and His things to preserve us from evil and promote our growth till we shall be like Him when He is manifested. Only then shall we be conformed to His image, however we abiding in Him ought now to walk as He walked. His commandments are not grievous. We live of His life, and would walk in dependence, obedience, and con-

fidence of His love. Yet how peremptorily the Spirit warns against participation in lawlessness, in fellowship with darkness, in concord with Belial, in sharing with an unbeliever. Babylon is the caricature of the bride, the Lamb's wife, and is the great centre and seat of corruption, mingling things holy and profane. The bride is espoused to one man, in faith, love, and heavenly separateness, longing to be presented a chaste virgin to Christ.

But it would be a self-deception to assume or suppose that those who take the [right place of separateness to the Lord's name are not exposed to this danger. None in fact are more tempted by the enemy whose great aim is, through such as profess the truth, to tarnish the excellent Name. Satan is ever on the watch to entangle and undermine, to corrupt and to destroy; and the fond fancy that Christians, and in particular Christians gathered to His name, cannot be drawn into such an evil, is a delusion which paves the way for any and every failure.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CREEPING NOT TO BE EATEN.

Lev. xi. 41-47.

HERE the things that crept on the earth are forbidden to be eaten. It is a lower grade than in ver. 2, and ver. 9; for these flew or hopped. Those which now come before us crawled and went on their belly. Nor is it touch we read of here, but eating.

“⁴¹And every creeping thing which creepeth, (or, crawleth) on the earth shall be an abomination; it shall not be eaten. ⁴²Whatever goeth on the belly, and whatever goeth on all four, and all that have a great many feet, of every manner of creeping thing which creepeth on the earth, these ye shall not eat; for they are an abomination. ⁴³Ye shall not make yourselves abominable through any creeping thing which creepeth, nor shall ye make yourselves (souls) unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. ⁴⁴For I am Jehovah your God; and ye shall sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy; and ye shall not make yourselves unclean through any manner of creeping thing which creepeth on the earth. ⁴⁵For I am

Jehovah who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (vers. 41-45).

We turn from the touch of death to the eating of crawling things, which is pronounced an abomination and utterly forbidden. Man depraved by sin is easily led to feed on the loathsome. Jehovah takes note of the meanest creatures, such things as crawl on the earth, to prohibit them as food for His people. Creatures that go on the belly, or on all four, or with numerous feet, have their place and function in the realm of nature; but they are denounced for Israel's use: even all crawling things that crawl on the earth, these ye shall not eat, for they are an abomination. "Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any crawling thing that crawleth, nor shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby." Nature has no power against the fall or its effects; nor has the law power save to prohibit, and if violated to condemn. Such was Jehovah's attitude as thus putting Israel to the proof by the law. "For I am Jehovah your God: sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy, for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of crawling thing that crawleth on the earth. For I am Jehovah that brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." But law gave power no more than life, which are alone given in Christ received by faith. Therefore all was unavailing for unbelieving Israel, themselves the most unclean of all.

Immense and fundamental is the change brought about by Him Who came in love and went down for the guilty and lost to the dust of death, yea under divine judgment beyond all man can see or realise. And this was significantly brought before the vision of the apostle of the circumcision, and with express bearing on the uncircumcised Gentile. Hence he was given to behold heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as a great sheet, by four corners let down on the earth, in which were all the quadrupeds and creeping things of the earth, and birds of heaven. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, By no means, Lord ; for I never ate anything common or unclean. And there was a voice again the second time to him, What things God cleansed, do not thou call (or, make) common. And this took place thrice, and the vessel was taken up into heaven. The fullest witness was given.

Thus grace accomplished what was impossible for the law ; and this, because God condemned sin in the flesh, and sacrificially for sin, in His own Son. There is too sanctification for the foulest in the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus ; and He proclaims it to every creature that whosoever believes may be saved. For as law was just an earthly dealing at Sinai (but the Saviour was from heaven), so the issue is heavenly. Thus God in Christ has wrought for His own glory, where man proved a total failure, as He knew from the first it must be so.

Hence while sanctification is an immutable

truth of God since sin entered the world, it has now a divine character by grace, instead of being a moral requirement and ineffective under law. So we see in 1 Peter i. 2 sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, which is the principle of vital work from the start; and the practical exhortation follows in vers. 15-21 to holiness in all manner of conduct grounded on redemption. For it is no longer external or fleshly but a living reality, which takes account of man as he is, guilty and sinful, and can reach equally to the most distant and dark; for God acts in sovereign grace through our Lord Jesus and by His quickening Spirit.

CHAPTER XXI.

BIRTH UNCLEANNESS.

Lev. xii. 1-8.

JEHOVAH here gives a moral lesson of the deepest moment. Man since the fall is radically unclean. None slower to learn, or readier to forget, than Israel, yet neither son nor daughter was born without the continual memento. The mother who in this case was immediately concerned had to feel its consequence, and was even reminded of woman's part, when sin first entered, by the added sentence awarded if the babe were a female.

Sin is not at all limited to crime, or to glaring evil. What a mischievously and unequivocally false version is that given in the A.V. of 1 John iii. 4, where we read that "sin is the transgression of the law!" Millions have thence derived their notion of sin, and have thereby been misled into the great error, on the one hand, of ignoring a vast deal of real sin, and on the other of arguing that all men must be under the law, inasmuch as it is certain that all sinned. But any such reasoning proceeds on a false principle. For the true meaning of the apostle's statement is, that "sin is lawlessness," the far wider and subtler evil of doing one's own

will without the check of divinely imposed authority. In the R. V. it is properly rendered, "sin is lawlessness," which is absolutely true, and applies to all mankind whether they did or did not know the law.

All transgression of the law is sin, but all sin is far from being transgression of the law. Hence the Jews are called "transgressors," for they distinctively were under law; whereas scripture speaks of the Gentiles as "sinners," not as "transgressors," which they must have been if all men were alike under law. But this is expressively disproved by Rom. ii. 12, where Gentiles are distinguished from Jews on that very ground: "for as many as have sinned without law shall perish without law; and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law . . . in a day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, through Jesus Christ." If Gentiles had not law, they had conscience, which made them feel guilty in dereliction of a natural duty, as is shewn in the same context.

Here it is rather uncleanness before God as the universal effect of the dark inheritance of sin. One could not speak of sinning in babes male or female, but there was uncleanness in all. And Jehovah took care that from Himself Israel should know of it as to their own offspring. Here it is not about the nations He speaks but of the chosen people, that no flesh should boast.

"¹And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, ²Speak to the children of Israel, saying, If a woman conceive seed, and bear a male, then (and) she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of the

separation of her infirmity she shall be unclean. 'And on the eighth day shall the flesh of his foreskin be circumcised. 'And she shall continue thirty-three days in the blood of her cleansing; no holy thing shall she touch, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her cleansing are fulfilled. 'And if she bear a female, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation; and she shall continue sixty-six days in the blood of her cleansing. 'And when the days of her cleansing are fulfilled for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, to the entrance of the tent of meeting to the priest. 'And he shall offer it before Jehovah and make atonement for her; and she shall be clean from the fountain of her blood. This [is the] law for her that beareth male or female. 'And if her hand cannot find enough for a sheep, she shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her; and she shall be clean" (vers. 1-8).

Thus was the uncleanness of man turned to divine account and mercy withal. The evil was owned before Jehovah. On the eighth day was the male child separated to Him by the sign of death to the flesh. Such was the covenant token, even before the law, though maintained by it, till a better circumcision not made by hands. But the mother continued for thirty-three beyond the seven days, apart from holy things or place, and then

brought her Burnt-offering and her Sin-offering, which the priest offered in atonement, and she became clean. In case of a female child, the time of abiding unclean was doubled. The apostle even would not have us forget that Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman having been deceived was in transgression. Grace reigns through righteousness unto life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord. A better sacrifice, a fuller holiness, and a higher life should then be given in sovereign grace, and this to all, Greek or Jew, who believe; for all were then proved alike lost sinners, now alike saved by faith in Jesus.

What a contrast is this chapter with the Rabbinic corruption of the law by tradition of man! What contempt of women and children, to say nothing of slaves! "Gather the people together" (says Deut. xxxi. 12), "men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Jehovah your God, and observe to do all the words of this law." This the oral law abjures. "A woman's wisdom," says R. Eliezer in the Talmud (Joma, fol. 66, col. 2), is only for the distaff;" and what is worse, he cites Exod. xxxv. 25 for his unbelieving folly and presumption. Had he forgotten so many that were highly favoured, and even vehicles of the Holy Spirit's power? A woman specially suffered in moral government. Jehovah here proves His gracious consideration in an ordinance expressly marking

His concern that they should be purified from that which recalled sin and entailed uncleanness. Sacrifice alone could effect this; yet not a Sin-offering only but the Burnt-offering in full acceptance.

Such was the tender care of God, that poverty was comforted in His receiving a pigeon or a turtledove for a Burnt-offering, whereas the richest could not boast of more than a pigeon or a turtledove for a Sin-offering. What was imperative for the atoning clearance of the evil was the same. Rich and poor stood on the same level. For the joy of acceptance the pigeon of the poor was as valid as the rich woman's sheep. What a rebuke to every form of respecting persons! What grace that the Lord of glory was born of a virgin mother, whose poverty was shewn in the offering proper to it! What a chasm separates the "Daily Prayers" of the Jew from the scriptures! "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast not made me a heathen." "Blessed &c. who hast not made me a slave." "Blessed &c. who hast not made me a woman." The inspired wisest of men says, "A foolish man despiseth his mother" (Prov. xv. 20); indeed the Ten words commanded from the first, "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exod. xx. 12).

With such shameless contempt for women, slaves, and Gentiles, none can wonder that the sons of Israel claim for themselves exorbitant honour. Thus in the Pentecostal Prayer of their Liturgy, they are taught to believe, that at Sinai were set all the generations of the people (*i.e.* their

souls) with those who stood before the mountain, and to say, "there was no blemish in them, for they were entirely perfect." The Talmud seeks to explain this egregious fable in the words, "why were the Gentiles defiled? Because they did not stand upon mount Sinai, for in the hour that the serpent came to Eve, he communicated a defilement which was taken away from Israel when they stood on mount Sinai; but the defilement of the Gentiles was not removed, as they did not stand on mount Sinai."

The oral law, as we are assured, was bold and bad in our Lord's day, when He denounced it as making void the word of God; but it did not fail, as with Gnostics and others heterodox in Christendom, to increase to greater ungodliness. Yea, the very generation, that stood and heard the Ten words, set up the calf of gold and worshipped it directly after, before the tables of stone were brought down by Moses; and he, instead of regarding them as "healed from every blemish," told them in his closing words (Deut. xxxi.) "I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck. Lo! while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against Jehovah, and how much more after my death? . . . For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and will turn away from the way which I have commanded you" (vers. 27-29).

It is in vain that the Rabbis invent such fictions and teach the Jews to believe in themselves, instead of in the Saviour and redemption through His blood. Only faith supposes and produces

repentance. This the natural heart abhors. From nothing does man shrink more than truly acknowledging his own badness ; but God leads him to it, and Jesus gives to the labouring and burdened soul rest. But to deny uncleanness even in a babe or its mother, to deny its universality, is Satan's lie, and as opposed to the Law and the Prophets as it is to Christianity. Grace demanded a sacrifice here, as it gave one infinitely better in Christ ; but even a babe is unclean in itself through the fault of the first parents.

And is it not of all moment for souls apt to follow the Jews to profit by their fatal error, that standing on Mount Sinai could remove defilement from Israel or any others ? For the evident truth set out at Sinai was, that *no* sinner could stand there before God. There He was making known to Israel that *they* should not go up into the mount, or touch the border of it : "whosoever toucheth the mount be surely put to death." No wonder that the whole people that was in the camp trembled ; for mount Sinai altogether smoked, because Jehovah descended on it in fire ; and its smoke rose up as the smoke of a furnace ; and the whole mountain shook greatly. And when the people saw the thunderings and the flames, and the sound of the trumpet increasing and become exceeding loud, who can wonder that they trembled, and *stood afar off*, and said to Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear ; but let not God speak with us lest we die ?

Alas ! these later Rabbis are more insensible

and senseless than the people who durst. not touch mount Sinai, instead of standing in the conscious and comfortable knowledge that their defilement was taken away. Not so, vain men, and blind leaders of the blind. You misread your own law: else ye would more than ever tremble at the recollection of Sinai. For the law works out wrath, not the removal of defilement save provisionally and for the flesh, leaving the conscience uncleansed. It was on another mount, even Calvary, that the true and only efficacious work was wrought by the Messiah on the cross for finishing transgression, and making an end of sins, and purging away iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness. But Him your fathers seeing saw not, darker and more guilty than Gentiles there, who before that asked, Are we also blind? And Jesus said to them, If ye were blind, ye would not have sin; but now ye say, We see; your sin remains.

CHAPTER XXII.

LEPROSY.

Lev. xiii. 1-8.

WHAT a voice to all is the next appalling type of sin, as a living death, and an uncleanness which God alone could meet! For there was no healing naturally. It was for the priest to pronounce on; but not a word about a cure: if healed by preternatural means, offerings were prescribed for cleansing, and this in a wonderfully precise and careful way. It is the standing type of sin in the law; to which the Gospels add palsy, as destroying all strength. Luke, the great moralist among the Synoptics, brings the two together in his chap. v. 12-26, as was his manner, guided by the inspiring Spirit. Here it is set out in a fuller form than any other subject singly in the book; and no wonder: sin in the first man is all pervading, and has dismal consequences in his surroundings and his home.

“¹And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ²When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a swelling, or a scab, or a bright spot, and it becometh in the skin of his flesh a stroke of leprosy, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest, or to one of his sons the priests. ³And when the priest

looketh on the stroke in the skin of his flesh, and the hair in the stroke is turned white, and the stroke looketh deeper than the skin of his flesh, it [is] the stroke of leprosy; and the priest shall look on him and pronounce him unclean. ⁴But if the bright spot [be] white in the skin of his flesh, and look not deeper than the skin, and the hair be not turned white, the priest shall shut up [him that hath] the stroke seven days. ⁵And the priest shall look on him the seventh day; and, behold, in his sight the stroke remaineth as it was, the stroke hath not spread in the skin, then the priest shall shut him up seven days a second time. ⁶And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day, and, behold, the stroke [is] become pale, the stroke hath not spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it [is] a scab; and he shall wash his garments, and be clean. ⁷But if the scab have spread much in the skin, after he hath been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen again by the priest; ⁸and the priest shall look and, behold, the scab hath spread in the skin; then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it [is] leprosy" (vers. 1-8).

Even in the type it was a holy rather than a medical question. Leprosy was not a malady so much as a stroke or plague; and the priest looked on the suspect with minute direction from Jehovah. It was not the diagnosis of a physician. As the consequence was most serious to an Israelite, the most scrupulous care was due in the priest. Uncleaness from birth was a fact patent, and there

Jehovah spoke to Moses for what concerned every mother and child. For leprosy He spoke to Moses and to Aaron. The leper represents, not a Christian but man in the flesh, Israel under the first covenant. Sin works and manifests itself; but haste to pronounce on evil when manifest or at work, is as far from God as indifference to it; both the reverse of grace. The priest, or spiritual man conversant with the presence of God, judges according to the written word.

There might appear in the skin of the flesh a swelling, or a scab, or a bright spot. The issues of leprosy differed in look like the motions of sin; but any of them indicates what is hateful to God; and the man must be scrutinised by Aaron or one of his sons. For us it is the mind of Christ, and as the judgment is of those within divine privilege, it involves the responsibility of pleasing God. We are not in the flesh like Israel, but the flesh is in us; and therefore we must mortify our members which are on the earth. All scripture is profitable to us, even if it be not about us.

The priest then was to look on the suspected plague or stroke in the skin of the man's flesh; and if the hair in the stroke were turned white, and the appearances of the stroke were not superficial but deeper than the skin of his flesh, leprosy was too surely indicated. Jehovah requires, not report, but personal inspection on the priest's part; and if there be proof of a present energy of evil at work, and yet more of no mere passing outbreak, but of persistent and deliberate and deeply

penetrating evil, doubt is precluded, and the man must be pronounced unclean. There might be "the bright spot," but no deep purpose underneath, and no active evil in result. In this case the priest shut up the case seven days, though he could not dismiss it as clear, for there was an appearance of evil plainly enough; but as there was no more, he waits patiently. On the seventh he looks again, and if there be no spreading in the skin but the stroke be at a stay, he shuts the man up seven days more. Then he looks, and if the stroke be pale and dim, and no spread of it in the skin, the man is pronounced clean. It is but a scab; and he is to wash his clothes, and be clean. But if the scab spread, after he had shown himself to the priest for cleansing, he shall show himself to the priest again, and the priest sees the spreading, the truth must be spoken, for the evil is at work; and the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is leprosy. It must not be hid. "Thy will be done."

We are thus taught, as having access to God, to judge according to the light of His sanctuary; but in that judgment due patience is enjoined, in care for man that there be no exaggeration, and in reverence for God that His rights be maintained faithfully.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LEPROSY TRIED, AND ALL OUT.

Lev. xiii. 9-17.

HERE we have on the one hand cases where the priest has only to see and pronounce unclean: so distinct are the symptoms. On the other hand others are presented of the saddest appearance when the priest on looking has to pronounce the person clean. How important to have sure instruction from above! To judge by appearance, and not by the word, is sure to be unjust and unwise. We have to walk by faith, and this can only be by God's word and Spirit.

“⁹ When a sore of leprosy is in a man, he shall be brought to the priest; ¹⁰ and the priest shall look on [him], and, behold, [there is] a white rising in the skin, and it hath turned the hair white, and a trace of raw flesh [is] in the rising: ¹¹ it [is] an old leprosy in the skin of his flesh; and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; he shall not shut him up; for he [is] unclean. ¹² And if the leprosy break out much in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of [him that hath] the sore, from his head even to his feet, wherever the eyes of the priest look, ¹³ and the priest looketh, and, behold, the

leprosy covereth all his flesh, he shall pronounce clean [him that hath] the sore: it is all turned white; he [is] clean. ¹⁴But on the day when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean. ¹⁵And the priest shall look on the raw flesh, and shall pronounce him unclean; the raw flesh [is] unclean; it [is] leprosy. ¹⁶But if the raw flesh change again and be turned white, he shall come to the priest, ¹⁷and the priest shall look on him, and, behold, the sore is turned white, then the priest shall pronounce clean [him that hath] the sore; he [is] clean" (vers. 9-17).

In the first instance the combined proofs of leprosy rendered the priest's sentence indubitable. There was a white tumour in the skin, the hair was turned white, and a trace of raw or living flesh was in the tumour. All pointed to the fatal evil in the man, and an actual activity of evil. Waiting is needless in such circumstances. It is too plainly an inveterate and energetic plague in the man. To shut him up would mislead: he is unclean, and the priest pronounces so. To wait, when evil is manifest, is trifling with God and man.

Immediately follows what to most would seem utterly hopeless; yet Jehovah prescribes quite a different judgment. Here the leprosy has broken out much in the skin, and covered it all from the man's head to his foot, so that before the priest's eye the leprosy has overspread all his outside, and all is turned white. Yet, strange to say, the priest on looking at a sight so deplorable was directed to pronounce him clean, as indeed he was. Where

sin abounded, grace over-exceeded. It is the denial of sin, and the assertion of one's own righteousness, which cut off hope. Where there is no hiding, but the sin is out and the sins laid bare all over, God delights in saving. So it was that the cross displayed all the iniquity of man, and God's love to the uttermost. See in the crucified robber a living application of this great principle: "We indeed justly" adjudged to a death of torture; yet the man who concealed nothing of his sins going that day to be in Paradise with the Saviour Son of God.

Quite different is it when "raw flesh" appears in the man (ver. 14). For the evil is active then, and indicates a deep-seated source. Sin is still reigning within, a surer sign of ruin than any thing on the surface. "He shall be unclean," says the word; and the priest when he sees the living flesh can but pronounce him unclean; for so it is, leprosy beyond mistake.

But after that we hear in ver. 16 of the raw flesh changing again, and turned white. This is encouraging enough for the man to "come" to the priest; who sees him, and that the sore is really turned white, whereon he pronounces him clean. The sore instead of working with energy within is turned white without; and he himself comes in the consciousness that he is clean, that it may be certified according to God's will. Divine healing produces liberty of spirit.

Do not err: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor pathics, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers,

nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And these things were some of you; but ye got washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. vi. 9-11). How real and great is the depravity of man left to himself and Satan! How real and still greater is the delivering grace of God in the name of the Lord Jesus and by His own Spirit! In Jesus He has revealed Himself to us; and, as we were the slaves of lust and passion under the power of Satan, He by Jesus wrought a work to rescue all who believe with a sure title, and made it good in our souls by His Spirit. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, as well as power, love, and a sound mind.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OCCASIONS OF LEPROSY.

Lev. xiii. 18-28.

BUT we have next to consider how leprosy might disclose itself, and the care which should be taken not to confound other symptoms with that loathsome sore. Zeal for God is not to extinguish tenderness toward man: Jehovah Himself maintains and requires both.

“¹⁸And when the flesh hath in the skin thereof a boil, and it is healed, ¹⁹and in the place of the boil is a white rising, or a white reddish bright spot, it shall be shewn to the priest; ²⁰and the priest shall look, and behold, it looketh deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof is turned white; then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it [is] the sore of leprosy broken out in the boil. ²¹But if the priest look on it, and, behold, no white hairs [are] therein, and it [is] not deeper than the skin, and [is] pale, the priest shall shut him up seven days; ²²and if it spread much in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it [is] a sore. ²³But if the bright spot have staid in its place and have not spread, it [is] the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.”

“²⁴Or when the flesh hath in the skin thereof a burning inflammation and the place of the inflammation becometh a bright spot white-reddish or white, ²⁵then the priest shall look on it, and, behold, the hair is turned white in the bright spot, and it looketh deeper than the skin, it [is] a leprosy that is broken out in the inflammation; and the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it [is] the sore of leprosy. ²⁶But if the priest look on it, and, behold, no white hair [is] in the bright spot, and it [is] no deeper than the skin, but [is] pale, the priest shall shut him up seven days. ²⁷And the priest shall look on him the seventh day, [and] if it have spread much in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it [is] the sore of leprosy. ²⁸But if the bright spot stay in its place, not spread in the skin, and [is] pale, it is the rising of the inflammation; and the priest shall pronounce him clean; for it [is] the scar of the inflammation” (vers. 18-28).

An ebullition of temper or other extreme excitement, when passed, may leave effects in evil ways and words, and not a few might be disposed to judge severely. But here the standard is the sanctuary of Jehovah, and the judge is he who is familiar with His presence. In the case first named the boil is healed; but in its place there may be a white rising, or a bright spot white-reddish. This is too serious to pass over. It must be submitted to the priest. The boil was not to prove, but it may give occasion for, leprosy, hitherto latent, to betray itself. And there is enough ground to

call for the inspection of the priest: for indifference is according to God as intolerable as the meddling of what has no divine sanction.

Merely human considerations are out of the question; even to be an Israelite cannot bar the due intervention, but rather the contrary. The word and will of Jehovah must rule in His appointed way. And the priest must submit to the divine directions as carefully as the Israelite. Does the mischief look deeper seated than the skin? Is the hair turned white? If so, the energy of evil lies therein and works; and the priest shall pronounce the man unclean. It is the sore of leprosy broken out in the boil. On the other hand, if the inspection of the priest finds no white hairs, and nothing but a superficial appearance, there is no off-hand clearance, but a remand for seven days, when the suspected person is again examined. Then if there be much of a spread in the skin, the sore is plain, and the priest must not hesitate to say so; but if there be no spread and the bright spot remain simply as before, it is only the scar of the boil, and the priest shall declare him clean.

The next case is not that of an ulcer, said to be healed. There is a burning inflammation, and the raw flesh that burns has a bright spot, white-reddish or white, for symptoms may differ a little. Here again the inflammation is no more leprosy than the boil or ulcer; the suspicion of worse is in the bright spot. Here too the priest must look on according to the command of Jehovah. Is there an active energy at work turning the hair white?

Does it seem deeper than the skin? These indications tell the fatal tale. If so, it is a leprosy that is broken out in the inflammation. The priest cannot rightly shirk from his painful but bounden duty. Magnanimity in such a case is wholly misplaced, and a yielding to the devil. It is the sore of leprosy, and the man must be pronounced unclean. But if when the priest looks, and there is no sign of activity or of an evil seat underneath the surface, but rather of a fading away, the priest is entitled to wait and hope that it is but a passing evil and not a persistent habit. After the seventh day that the suspect is shut up, he looks again, and if it has spread much in the skin, it is too clearly the sore, and the man is unclean. Whereas, if there was no such spread, but the bright spot remains in its place, the priest is called to pronounce him clean.

Compare with these cases the brother sinning "against thee" in Matt. xviii. 15-17. It may be a fault unknown to any other soul; and grace goes and seeks the erring man's good. But he refuses, not only the one, but one or two more, and at last to hear the assembly. Slight as the occasion may have been, the issue is to prove self reigning, sin unjudged and increasing, and the man disqualified for all fellowship of saints. "Let him be to thee as the Gentile and the tax-gatherer." It is quite a different occasion from that of which we read in 1 Cor. v. where the wickedness was plain and known, and not a sin against another, unsuspected by others.

CHAPTER XXV.

LEPROSY OF THE HEAD OR THE BEARD.

Lev. xiii. 29-44.

ANOTHER case appears, evil indications on the head or on the beard. This at once arrests attention. For the comely was thus turned into its opposite, and deadly evil darkened what should manifest beauty of its kind.

“²⁹And if a man or a woman hath a sore on the head or on the beard, ³⁰and the priest look on the sore, and, behold, it looketh deeper than the skin, and yellow thin hair [is] in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it [is] a scall, leprosy of the head or of the beard. ³¹And if the priest look on the sore of the scall, and, behold, it looketh not deeper than the skin, and no black hair [is] in it, the priest shall shut up [him that hath] the sore of the scall seven days. ³²And when the priest looketh on the sore on the seventh day, and, behold, the scall hath not spread, and no yellow hair is in it, and the scall doth not look deeper than the skin, ³³he shall shave himself, but the scall shall he not shave; and the priest shall shut up [him that hath] the scall seven days a second time. ³⁴And the priest shall look on the scall on the seventh day, and, behold, the scall hath

not spread in the skin, nor looketh deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; and he shall wash his garments and be clean. ³⁶But if the scall hath spread much in the skin after his cleansing, ³⁶and the priest shall look on him, and, behold, the scall hath spread in the skin, the priest shall not seek for yellow hair: he [is] unclean. ³⁷But if in his eyes the scall be at a stay, and black hair hath grown up therein, the scall is healed, he [is] clean; and the priest shall pronounce him clean."

"³⁸And if a man or a woman, hath in the skin of their flesh bright spots, white bright spots, ³⁹and the priest look, and, behold, in the skin of their flesh [are] pale white spots, it [is] an eruption that hath broken out in the skin; he [is] clean. ⁴⁰And if a man's hair have fallen off his head, he [is] bald; he [is] clean. ⁴¹And if his hair be fallen off from the front part of his head toward his face, he [is] forehead bald; he [is] clean. ⁴²And if there be in the bald head or bald forehead a white-reddish sore, it [is] a leprosy that has broken out in his bald head or his bald forehead. ⁴³And the priest shall look on it, and, behold, the rising of the sore [is] white-reddish in his bald head or in his bald forehead, as the appearance of leprosy in the skin of the flesh, ⁴⁴he is a leprous man, he [is] unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his sore [is] in his head" (vers. 29-44).

The suspected evil here infected what in part characterised a woman, as it wholly did a man. The priest must see to it and discern. Was it in appearance deeper than the skin? Still more, was

there in it yellow hair? If so, there was an energy of mischief at work, contrary to the constitution in its normal state. As the presence of black hair was an indication of health, yellow thin hair showed the fell disease in an active form, and the priest had only to pronounce unclean. It was not only a scall but leprosy of the head or of the beard. If however the priest on looking saw the sore to be on the surface, though no black hair was in it, there was hope. But he was to be shut up for a full term of waiting; and if on the seventh day under the priest's inspection, there was no spreading and no yellow hair, and the scall was only skin deep, he must shave himself (not the scall), and again be similarly shut up. If after the fresh time of seclusion, the priest on looking found neither spreading of the sore nor deepening, the person was entitled to be pronounced clean, as he was called thereon to wash his clothes and be clean.

Every thing, it is plain, marks the holiness Jehovah demanded in His people; and this, not under a man's estimate of his own state, nor yet on the perfunctory opinion of a fellow Israelite. What was offensive in His eyes and unfitted for any part in His congregation must be subjected to him who was used to His sanctuary and bound to judge by His word according to that standard; for there Jehovah dwelt. The same principle applies still, and more fully since Christ came and accomplished redemption. He too is the ever accessible and vigilant priest who cannot fail to discern and act to God's glory.

But there is also provision against a morbid judgment and despair, which Satan knows how to work for injury and ruin, as well as the more common danger of too light and self-sparing a scrutiny. A man or a woman might have in the skin of their flesh "bright spots, white bright spots." Here again priestly discernment is prescribed; and if they were of a pale or dull hue, it was not leprosy, but a different eruption that had broken out in the skin. The person was clean. Grace is as opposed to severity as to laxness. It is holy, but neither hard nor careless or compromising. God is light, and God is love.

Another case comes next, which there was still less reason to confound with leprosy. Weakness is nothing of the sort. A man's hair might fall off his head in general, or from the parts of his head toward his face. He might be bald, or forehead bald; but in either instance it was no more than infirmity; and infirmity is not sin, any more than sin should be called infirmity as is too often done. The apostle gloried in his infirmities, his trials and sufferings. No saint could make light of a single sin; still less could he glory in sins. Whoever does so proclaims himself a leper; and his pretension to be a saint is utter delusion.

But where there is weakness, as here in a bald head or forehead, there might be worse, "a white-reddish sore." Then it is most serious, and none other than leprosy breaking out there; and the priest looks on him, and sees it to be really so. "He is a leprous man; he is unclean: the priest shall

pronounce him utterly unclean ; his sore is in his head." It is a hopeless case. Delay was uncalled for ; waiting, an idle form. Human mercy, or magnanimity, in such a case would be of Satan. "Holiness becometh thy house, O Jehovah, for ever."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LEPER OUTSIDE.

Lev. xiii. 45, 46.

IN these verses is set out the diseased condition of the convicted leper. It was, while he lived, death to all the privileges of the people of God; the standing type of a sinner, not only before Him, but under command to declare it to man.

“⁴⁵And the leper in whom the sore is,—his garments shall be rent, and his head shall be uncovered (or, go loose), and he shall cover his upper lip or beard, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean!
⁴⁶All the days that the sore [shall be] in him, he shall be unclean: he [is] unclean; he shall dwell apart; outside the camp his dwelling [shall be]” (45, 46).

Thus vividly did Jehovah, while prescribing for the solemn separateness of an Israelite under this fell disease, look onward to the discovery of what every man is in the light of Christ. For He alone gives us the full truth of every one and of every thing. It is not that the law did not indicate much that was true, and the prophets yet more. But, as John i. 9 so strikingly tells us, the Word, even Jesus, is the true light, which, coming into the

world (for this is the only legitimate rendering), pours light on every man. It is not limited like the law to Israel. It shines on Gentile as well as Jew. It is no lightning flash as of death like the effect of the same law; yet it discovers, fully and at once, the true state of each. No prince is exalted above its penetrating power, any more than the most abject slave is beneath it. It was the Word incarnate here below, divine light yet in man, having its range universal on the race here below. Far from any boasting of Him as Light of east or west, north or south, such was the unbelief that not even Palestine owned Him, though born its King with a title pure, perfect, and indisputable, alike human and divine, Immanuel. He was in the world and the world had been from Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to what was His own, and His own people received Him not, guiltier than the besotted world. Yet was He love, as well as light; grace and truth (in contrast with the law) came into being through Jesus Christ; and thus was "every man" the less excusable. None received Him but such as were born of God; only these were enlightened by Him.

Yet here the shadow is now at least plain enough. The sinner according to God's figure before us is of all men most miserable; and now we can say that such in God's estimate are all men, if we read the type in the light of Christ. Hence the leper's apparel was to declare his misery and his grief. "His garments shall be rent, and his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his upper lip,

and shall cry, Unclean, unclean!" Sorrow for others or at their evil it is not, but the deepest mourning for himself. The goodness of God leads the sinner to repentance. Despise not then the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering: why in presence of this, if hitherto unconcerned, perish for ever? Why, according to one's hardness and inpenitent heart, treasure up to oneself wrath in a day of wrath? It is the way of mercy, because it is the way of truth; and if one be in the humbling truth of his sins before God, will not He be found in the truth of His grace? The Lord Jesus gives the soul both repentance and faith. To be a sinner, refusing to own it at God's call, is a place of the utmost danger. The presence of Jesus the Son of God lays bare my real evil; His going away to the Father, the rejected One, demonstrates righteousness only there, and nothing but sin left in the world. If I heed God's word, I cease to deny or excuse my sins, frankly confessing my ruin, with the cry, Unclean, unclean, in His ears.

To be light-hearted and indifferent is to defy the just sentence of God. Nor will it do to betake oneself to the external trappings of woe. We are not Jews: rites and ceremonies are but letter, and avail not. The gospel meets the sinner expressly as lost, powerless, ungodly, and His enemy; but all this is dire reality, and no mere form of speech. If we are insensible to our state, it is worse than form; it is hypocrisy. Christ came not to call righteous ones; but He will have sinners feel and own their sins; and if they do not, a worse thing befalls them than if

they professed not His name. Hence the all-importance of life, eternal life, which where possessed makes our evil intolerable; and whether at the beginning for our state, or afterwards for particular acts, it leads the believer to be grieved unto repentance. For grief according to God works out repentance unto salvation not to be regretted; whereas the grief of the world works out death.

Where the conscience answers to God's call, the outer signs of the leper's distress are reproduced in the depths of one's moral being. As the Corinthians broke down and cleared themselves in the matter of their sin and shame, which, if unjudged, would have unchurched them as corporately denying Christ's name, so one only bears aright His name individually as a Christian by inward and true renunciation of evil, each of his own. Where faith is genuine, repentance is; and this makes the truth taught by the bearing of the leper as plain as it is impressive and important. It is rending of the heart for the converted soul, rather than of his garments; real acceptance of his dishonour by his sins, bitter as it is, instead of claiming honour for his "head"; it is the "beard" no longer a display of his vigour as a man, but covered in spirit with shame. He owns himself defiled irreparably as far as he is concerned. He betakes himself to solitary confession, instead of presuming to mingle with the faithful; he truly feels that he is but a dog, and not a sheep. So the Canaanite woman was brought by grace to own the simple truth, and thereon was

blessed beyond her hopes. It is the turning-point for establishment in grace, and spirituality of mind, though dependence withal on God is ever requisite.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LEPROUS RAIMENT.

Lev. xiii. 47-59.

So apt to spread is the taint of sin, that the concluding paragraph of our chapter is devoted to leprosy in raiment made of any material, or a skin serving the like purpose.

“⁴⁷And if a sore of leprosy is in raiment, in woollen raiment or linen raiment, ⁴⁸either in warp or in woof, of linen, or of woollen, or in a skin or anything made of skin; ⁴⁹and the sore is greenish or reddish in raiment or in the skin, or in the warp or in the woof, or in any thing of skin; it [is] the sore of leprosy and shall be shewn to the priest. ⁵⁰And the priest shall look on the sore, and shut up [what hath] the sore seven days. ⁵¹And he shall look on the sore on the seventh day: if the sore have spread in the raiment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in the skin, whatever work is made of skin, the sore [is] a corroding leprosy; it [is] unclean. ⁵²And they shall burn the raiment, or the warp or the woof, of woollen or of linen, or any thing of skin, wherein the sore is; for it [is] a corroding leprosy; it shall be burned with fire. ⁵³But the priest

shall look, and, behold, [if] the sore hath not spread in the raiment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any thing of skin, ⁵⁴then the priest shall command that they wash [the thing] wherein the sore [is], and he shall shut it up seven days a second time. ⁵⁵And the priest shall look on the sore after the washing; and, behold, [if] the sore have not changed its appearance (lit. eye), and the sore have not spread, it [is] unclean: thou shalt burn it with fire: it [is] a fret [on what is] threadbare or napless (lit. bald in head or forehead). ⁵⁶But if the priest look, and, behold, the sore be dim after the washing thereof, then he shall rend it out of the raiment or out of the skin, or out of the warp or out of the woof. ⁵⁷And if it appear still in the raiment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything of skin, it [is] a breaking out: thou shalt burn with fire that wherein the sore [is]. ⁵⁸But the raiment, either the warp or the woof, or whatever thing of skin which thou hast washed, and the sore departeth from them, it shall be washed a second time, and be clean. ⁵⁹This [is] the law of the sore of leprosy in raiment of wool or linen, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any thing of skin, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean" (vers. 47-59).

Thus according to the law of Jehovah leprosy might betray itself in a man's external circumstances, typified by his apparel, whatever this might be, as well as in his person. Everywhere it must be dealt with, but not on such moral grounds as an Israelite might apply. Its appearance was

for the priest to discern. It was for him to see and pronounce according to the law of Jehovah which bound him as well as the suspected thing. The appearance of leprosy externally as well as in the person were too serious to be ignored or put off. In Israel the priest must be consulted without fail or delay; but he must look into it as before God and speak accordingly.

We have the authority of the inspired Jude (23) for giving this type a present bearing. For what else is the allusion in "hating even the raiment spotted by the flesh?" Of course the language is figurative in the Epistle; but figures are used in scripture as in all other communications, not for enfeebling the sense but to make it vivid and impressive. So it is in the scriptural phrases, derived from O. T. types of washing us, whether in water or in blood: both are used and carefully distinguished, and the truth meant by each is of the greatest moment. But the allusion in that solemn warning of the departure, not only from righteousness but from grace and the faith once delivered to the saints, may help souls to see that every scripture is not only God-breathed but profitable as the apostle says.

The surroundings of a man lay bare his leprosy. Our ways may display even more than our words. People talk about the heart being all right as an excuse for what stumbles in the eye, the hand, or the foot. The Lord, who really searches the heart and can alone judge as He soon will, pronounces now that each or all must be got rid of at all cost,

rather than keeping all to be sent into the everlasting fire, the Gehenna of fire. Habits disclose the deadly taint very plainly; but it is the spiritual man who alone can truly discern. Such have the mind of Christ, who indeed is "the priest" to pronounce absolutely. But even with Him, though unfailing, there is no haste. He did not speak from Himself, but the things which He heard from His Father. He would impress on us the divine authority of the word, that what we say or do be in obedience. If the circumstances are persistently bad, they must be absolutely judged. Nothing less than "burning" will do as ordered by the priest on God's part. If "washing" avail to correct, a further application is enjoined, and if the change more appear, the priest pronounces clean. If not, all is wrong, for it is leprosy. The standing type of sin, at least in the O.T. aspect, is thus carried out beyond the person to his environment; and there the surroundings might disclose the fatal taint. Wherever it was discerned by the spiritual eye, immediate and unsparing judgment must follow.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE LEPER PRONOUNCED CLEAN.

Lev. xiv. 1-7.

Now we come to the other side, the grace that can and does cleanse the leper. What a mercy in a world of misery and suffering through sin! There is no desert in man; there is love in God. Yea God is love. Here it appears in His dealings as Jehovah with Israel. They are without doubt as the leper. Their unbelief owns not the truth: else they would now cry, Unclean, unclean, as they surely will in a day that hastens. They are without their inheritance, though Jehovah gave it to them; but their sins and iniquities, their uncleanness in a word, made it a righteous necessity that they should be chased out of it, deprived quite of their land and national being, and out of that sanctuary in the place which Jehovah chose to cause His name to dwell there. No judgment of expulsion more certain and clear than that now lying on His ancient people. Their pride rebels; their distance from Him seeks to disguise it even from themselves; but it is written indelibly on their past and present history: thank God, not for ever. Leprous Israel shall assuredly be cleansed, as

prophecy declares in sure and abundant and glowing testimonies.

Here however the type is so abstract that we are entitled in no way to narrow the application, but to see how grace adapts it to the need of every and any ruined sinner.

“¹And Jehovah spoke to Moses saying, ²This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest, ³and the priest shall go out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, the sore of leprosy is healed in the leper; ⁴then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two living clean birds, and cedar wood and scarlet and hyssop. ⁵And the priest shall command to kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over living water. ⁶As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird killed over the living water; ⁷and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let go the living bird into the open field” (vers. 1-7).

Typically viewed, the priest is the Mediator, the Saviour. As the leper could not come where He was, the priest must go out of the camp to the leper. Indeed “the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” It was not only that the sinner needed such love to reach a heart steeped in the selfishness and distrust which sin produces in man, along with known rebellion against God and guilty conscience, the sad monitor

of coming judgment. Infinite mercy belongs to God; and who could possibly manifest it like His own Son emptying Himself to take a bondman's form, and humbling Himself in obedience even unto death, ay, death of the cross? Thus it was that in Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile . . . , having made peace by the blood of His cross.

Here then the priest is said to look, "and, behold, the sore of leprosy is healed." How this was does not enter into "the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing" beyond the fact here notified. In the application it is a new life given. But the day was not come to reveal such a boon. It awaited Christ, the True Light, in Whom was life, and the life was the light of men. Life and incorruption He brought to light through the gospel. The explanation was left in abeyance. But the arrest of the plague was manifestly effected before him who saw according to God; and thereon followed the means ordained for the leper's purification. It was an immensely serious work, and thus the shadows here seen are pregnant with deep interest and weighty truth.

On the face of it, the work first of all was done for the leper, not in the least degree by himself. The priest commanded to take for him that is to be cleansed two clean living birds, and cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. Then he commanded further that one bird be killed in an earthen vessel over living water. The living bird he took with the cedar wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop, and dipt them

all in blood of the bird killed over the living water ; and lastly he sprinkled upon the man to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, pronouncing him clean, and letting the living bird free.

The two clean birds thus set forth Christ dead and risen, the one killed, the other let loose into the open field. But there is far more here ; for the bird to die was killed in an earthen vessel over living water. How plain the indication of Him who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself spotless to God, deigning to be crucified in weakness ! Again, what can be more evident than the pains taken to identify the living bird with the slain one by dipping it in the blood of the one killed over the living water ? So Christ was given up for our offences and raised for our justification, as says the apostle (Rom. iv. 25).

Nor was this all the truth presented in this pattern of things to come. The taking of the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, the dipping them also in the blood of the bird that was slain, has a worthy meaning and like the rest is written for our admonition. The death of Christ has pronounced for him that is cleansed death on all with which man is here conversant. The chosen emblems of the highest in nature and of the lowest, along with that which figures the conventional glory of the world, were dipped in the blood ; just as in Num. xix. 6 they were cast into the midst of the burning of the Red Heifer. In what had not man corrupted himself, perverting all that God gave and sanctioned to His dishonour ? But every

evil is counteracted for the believer in Christ's atoning death. The leper was himself sprinkled with the blood seven times in token of complete cleansing, and was formally pronounced clean by the priest, with the significant mark of the living blood-sprinkled bird let go into the open field.

Yet much more, as we are told, had to follow. How sedulous is scripture to impress the solemn ways of God, even when a soul is supposed to be converted, and the deadly evil of sin no longer active but at a stay, before it can enjoy the full place and privileges of salvation! How little is this understood by revivalism or even evangelicalism!

Indeed under grace, as we are, the deep moment of God's ways with the soul ought to be readily felt. For in the current preaching and faith of Christ, how little is understood the distinct truth taught so elaborately in the latter half of Rom. v. to the end of chap. viii.! Yet how marked is the care of the Holy Spirit in the discussion of chap. vii. to bring home the need of it to the individual in a way beyond all other examples in the N.T.! This is undone by Arminians, who try to persuade themselves and others that the "I" of Rom. vii. 7-25, or at least 24, is an unconverted man whom Paul personifies; by Calvinists, that it is the normal state of the apostle and of all Christians.

But God will have us, not only to confess our sins, our guilt, in order to forgiveness; He leads us into a more or less profound sense of ourselves, of indwelling sin, without which the half of Christian

blessing is unknown, and this the better and more positive half in which we know, not Christ dead for our sins only, but ourselves dead with Him to sin. And this, though of course a matter of faith, has to be learnt experimentally in order to our being brought out of bondage into liberty and the blessed sense that we are "in Christ" where is "no condemnation."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE "LEPER WASHES.

Lev. xiv. 8, 9.

THUS we have seen that in the first place all was done for the leper, not by him. Another was active, not himself. He was to be brought to the priest; and the priest had to go forth out of the camp. The all-important thing was, not that the leper, but that the priest should look and ascertain that the sore of leprosy was at a stay, or rather healed in the leper. The priest had to direct the means then to be employed; and when one of the clean birds was killed in an earthen vessel over living water, it was he that took the other live bird with the various accompaniments he had prescribed, dipt them and the live bird in the blood of the killed bird, sprinkled the leper therewith, and pronounced him clean, letting the live bird go free. Now, and not before, we are told of the leper's activity.

“⁸And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave all his hair, and bathe in water, and he shall be clean; and after that he shall come into the camp, but shall dwell outside his tent seven days. ⁹And it shall be on the seventh day that he shall shave all his hair off his

head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair shall he shave: and he shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and he shall be clean" (vers. 8, 9).

The blood shed and sprinkled, precious and efficacious as it is judicially for the unclean, is not all. There is and must be a moral cleansing also by the water of the word applied to the sinner. Out of the pierced side of Jesus flowed not blood only but water, of which the inspired witness bore record. To this John also refers in his First Epistle, chap. v. "This is he that came through water and blood; not by water only, but by water and blood." The sinner needs for blessing not only expiation, but purification.

Here it is typically presented. We know that all is vain unless our hearts are purified by faith; but these shadows as usual do not rise above external actions. "And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water, and he shall be clean." However strange it may appear for the priest to have pronounced the leper clean in ver. 7, this is the sure and cheering ground for beginning the practical work of cleansing himself as in vers. 8, 9. To be pronounced clean by divine authority affords the highest assurance; but it does not supersede the moral cleansing which Jehovah enjoins in all respects. On the contrary it gives invaluable encouragement to enter on and go through every detail as here. "His garments," what is displayed to the eye, are at once to be dealt with, and the

Spirit applies the word to cleanse them. Former things must be judged by the expressed will of God. But there is much more to be heeded. "All his hair" he had to shave. This belongs to his person; the natural comeliness attaching to man's head must be shorn, and himself must bathe in water. There is no sparing of aught wherein impurity might lurk. The efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection, by which alone one could be pronounced clean before God, only makes it the more incumbent to cleanse oneself from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in fear of God. Then is it added, "and he shall be clean."

"And afterwards shall he come into the camp, and shall abide out of his tent seven days." Even so, though made free of his public position, he cannot enjoy his individual place till the purifying is complete. With such nice care as to every minute source of defilement is the full cleansing of the leper guarded. Now there is in the gospel what meets each and all more thoroughly than any of these requirements of the law; and this, by a redemption which is "eternal" and thus superior to legal demands of time. Of this the robber saved on the cross is a clear proof and witness; for his case is really an example, though unbelief of God's grace and Christ's work treats it as an exception to the deprivation of a vast deal of the blessing. So naturally do saints swerve, from the light which already shines, to the shadows of the law.

Verse 9 makes plain that the purifying goes on to the last. "And it shall come to pass on the

seventh day that he shall shave all his hair, his head and his beard, and his eyebrows, even all his hair shall he shave, and he shall wash his clothes, and shall bathe his flesh in water, and shall be clean." It is open to our notice that on the last day of the set term the washing is ordered still more minutely than ever, the beard and the eyebrows, no less than the head, and "his flesh" to make the bathing explicit. How blessed for us that we have One to apply the word to our souls and ways in the power of God's Spirit! If the fathers of our flesh chastened us for a few days as seemed good to them, the Father of our spirits so does for profit, in order to the partaking of His holiness.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE LEPER ON THE EIGHTH DAY.

Lev. xiv. 10-20.

HERE we have the shadow of truth, both of high import, and unthought of since the apostles passed away, when men took their place whose scanty faith fell woefully short of the inspired deposit. Thus we need peculiarly that we be on our guard and looking up for divine guidance so as to read the written word with that discernment which only the Holy Spirit can give.

“¹⁰And on the eighth day he shall take two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenths of fine flour mingled with oil for an oblation [or, meal-offering], and one log of oil. ¹¹And the priest that cleanseth shall present the man that is to be cleansed and those things before Jehovah at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ¹²And the priest shall take one he-lamb, and present it for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before Jehovah. ¹³And he shall slaughter the he-lamb at the place where the sin offering and the burnt offering are slaughtered, in a holy place; for as the sin offering, so the trespass

offering is the priest's ; it is most holy. ¹⁴And the priest shall take of the blood of the trespass offering and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. ¹⁵And the priest shall take of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand ; ¹⁶and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before Jehovah. ¹⁷And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand the priest shall put on the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering. ¹⁸And the remainder of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, and the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah. ¹⁹And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness ; and afterwards he shall slaughter the burnt offering. ²⁰And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the oblation upon the altar ; and the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean " (vers. 10-20).

The ritual of the eighth day foreshadows the work of Christ in the light of His resurrection, the Christian's rich appropriation, and the consequent gift of the Holy Spirit. It is not merely the general and indispensable efficacy of Christ's blood with the [action of the Spirit as living water in order to purification morally as well as judicially.

Here we have the conscience cleansed from dead works to serve or worship a living God, and be at home as it were, coming not merely into the camp but into his tent. It is in its measure a consecration like the priests'. Only here it is founded, not on a sin offering (Lev. viii. 14, ix. 2) but on a trespass offering (xiv. 12, 13); for there had been a violation of a holy relation to meet. And the priest applied its blood to the right ear, right thumb, and right great toe (14). All the man is brought under the most holy blood, what he hears and does, with his walk; he belongs wholly to God in thought, work, and way. In the case of the priests it was the blood of a peace offering.

Then follows the unction from the Holy One (15-18). The waving too of all was before Jehovah, so was the application, as with the priestly consecration. The oil was put where the blood had been. How clearly was prefigured the full blessing first enjoyed at Pentecost. Not only was Christ's death for removing evil, but entered into in all its fulness as before God, and in the Holy Spirit's power to give personal consciousness and enjoyment of it all, as having redemption in Christ through His blood, as well as priestly access to the sanctuary, we may add. We are meant to be already in known and near relation to God. Whatever be the intrinsic efficacy of Christ's work (and here it is viewed in its various value as it is really infinite), how much we owe to the Spirit sent personally to abide in and with us! For thereby we dwell in God and God in us, as 1 John iv. says of the Christian.

The heart is thus free intelligently to realise God's righteousness and grace in Christ's work to His glory, when the worshipper once purged has no more conscience of sins. But this can never be rightly or safely unless the conscience has first been searched and cleansed in the light of God.

There is great force in the figurative state of ver. 18, crowning the previous details. Yet when the completeness of the Spirit's power is thus set out, how sedulously God takes care to mark after this in ver. 19 the sin offering offered, as well as the burnt offering and its accompanying meal offering, each essential to make atonement for him that was to be cleansed from his uncleanness, and all offered that he should be clean and know it with the utmost assurance. For atoning virtue Christ is the all; yet has the Spirit His own blessed function. What a testimony to that which God is in grace and truth and righteousness withal on behalf of the evil and lost!

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE POOR LEPER.

Lev. xiv. 21-32.

HERE, as elsewhere, appears the gracious consideration of God, not for the poor only, but also for what is so represented typically. Jehovah at least does care for such as have no earthly resources; and this is attested in the strongest way when they suffer from an extreme evil which leprosy was and figures. Does He not compassionate the poor in faith, due in general to defective teaching?

“²¹And if he [be] poor, and his hand be not able to get it, then he shall take one lamb a trespass offering, a wave offering to atone for him; and one tenth part of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal offering; ²² and a log of oil, and two turtle doves or two young pigeons, as his hand may be able to get: the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering. ²³ And he shall bring them on the eighth day of his cleansing to the priest unto the entrance of the tent of meeting before Jehovah. ²⁴ And the priest shall take the he-lamb of the trespass offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them a wave offering before Jehovah. ²⁵ And he shall slaughter the he-lamb of the

trespass offering; and the priest shall take the blood of the trespass offering, and put [it] upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of the right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. ²⁶And the priest shall pour of the oil into the priest's left hand, ²⁷ and the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger of the oil that [is] in his left hand seven times before Jehovah. ²⁸And the priest shall put of the oil that [is] in his hand upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering. ²⁹And the remainder of the oil that [is] in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed to atone for him before Jehovah. ³⁰ And he shall offer one of the turtle doves or of the young pigeons, of what his hand was able to get; ³¹ of what his hand was able to get the one a trespass offering, the other a burnt offering with the meal offering; and the priest shall atone for him that is to be cleansed before Jehovah. ³²This is the law [for him] in whom [is] the sore of leprosy, whose hand cannot get what is for his cleansing" (vers. 21-32).

The allowance of grace here is solely for the falling short on the eighth day; and it is here where poverty is now and long has been found. Few rise up to the riches of God's grace in its Christian form and fulness. But the principle must be maintained if the right measure is

deficient. If unable to take two unblemished he-lambs and one like ewe lamb, with three measures of fine flour, with oil for the oblation, and a log of oil besides, the poor leper was to take one lamb with one deal of oil mingled for the oblation, with a log of oil. This was indispensable for rich or poor alike. The priest began with the lamb slain for a trespass offering, and not a sin offering simply, still less a ram of consecration of sweet savour. Such was the blood sprinkled on each characteristic organ of his body; nothing other or less was permitted. The defilement must be felt and met adequately. Intrinsic cleansing by blood over the living water to be sprinkled did not suffice.

There is judicial cleansing in the sprinkled blood of the trespass offering, which is the leper's consecration to God, suited to the new creation, and hence applied to the renewed mind, as for work, and for walk. Then and not till then, for poor as for rich, is the unction from the Holy One. Not life only nor redemption or rather purification by blood which dedicates to God, but divine power is figured by the oil which follows the blood; and this oil is completely sprinkled before Jehovah anterior to putting it on each member of the poor leper, and the rest poured on his head. For the priest did all as punctiliously for him as for the richest. But two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, such as he could get, were sufficient, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. His poverty must not hinder his full cleansing and acceptance.

Thus what to the superficial reader seems strange if not tiresome repetition is in reality the witness of God's rich mercy and His loving the poorest with great love. But such a scripture ought also to be a serious guard from that levity which modern revivalism accentuates, though it has ever been the snare of those who are carried away onesidedly with the freeness of grace to forget its fulness. In reaction from a systematic putting under law as a preparatory course for due reception of this gospel, they confound conversion with salvation, and as it were argue the interested soul to believe and say, I am saved! I am saved! before the soul has any genuine sense of sin before God. Those who are strong have no need of a physician but such as are sick; and if the wounds are deep, it is well if they be probed without haste to cover them up. Repentance is most important, lest a crop of such faith arise as James ii. refuses to own. Consider the Prodigal in Luke xv. and indwellingsin dealt with, as well as sins.

The jailer, though speedily and truly converted (Acts xvi.), was not proclaimed as a saved soul there and then; nor does scripture ever speak with the hurry-scurry so popular among many excellent persons and ardent evangelists. What Paul and Silas said was, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. So the pious and prayerful Cornelius had to hear words whereby he should be saved, and his house. No doubt when he received the Spirit of adoption, he was duly enabled to know that by grace he *was* saved

as a continuous fact. It is well if the preacher is not precipitate, and that the work in souls be deeply laid and sure. It is not for forgiveness only but for deliverance, and communion with God, yea with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. There is a vast body of truth which the believer has to learn, and heavenly truth never revealed before Christ ascended up on high, stretching over to His coming again to receive us and present us where He is. But even the gospel has far greater depth than is ordinarily preached and known, if we go no farther than the first half of the Epistle to the Romans, consistent as it is with all the rest of that "better thing" which is our portion.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LEPROSY IN THE HOUSE, AND ITS CLEANSING.

Lev. xiv. 33-53.

WHAT we have seen is leprosy in the man and his raiment, and the cleansing of the leper. There is this further case, rightly reserved for the end, leprosy in the house. The preceding regarded the person, and his immediately surrounding circumstances. Here we have to look at the assembly typified, not of course in its full heavenly aspect in union with Christ, but in that which is formed on earth by the Spirit's indwelling. It therefore fittingly pointed to the land, not to the wilderness. Neither relation could be before Pentecost.

“³³ And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ³⁴When ye come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put a leprous plague in a house of the land of your possession, ³⁵then he whose house it is shall come and tell the priest, saying, It seemeth to me like a plague in the house ; ³⁶and the priest shall command that they empty the house before the priest go to see the plague, that all that [is] in the house be not made unclean ; and afterwards the priest shall go in to see the house. . ³⁷And he thall look on

the plague, and, behold, the plague [is] in the walls of the house, greenish or reddish hollows, and their look [is] deeper than the wall, ³⁸then the priest shall go out of the house to the entrance of the house, and shut up the house seven days. ³⁹And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and he shall look, and, behold, the plague hath spread in the walls of the house, ⁴⁰then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague [is], and they shall cast them out of the city in an unclean place. ⁴¹And he shall cause the house to be scraped within round about, and they shall pour out the dust that they scraped off, out of the city in an unclean place. ⁴²And they shall take other stones, and put [them] in the place of those stones: and they shall take other mortar, and shall plaster the house. ⁴³And if the plague come again and break out in the house, after he hath taken away the stones and after he hath scraped the house and after it is plastered, ⁴⁴then the priest shall come, and shall look, and, behold, the plague hath spread in the house, it [is] a corroding leprosy in the house; it [is] unclean. ⁴⁵And they shall break down the house, the stones of it, the timber of it and the mortar of the house, and shall carry [them] forth out of the city to an unclean place. ⁴⁶And he that goeth into the house as long as it is shut up shall be unclean until the even. ⁴⁷And he that sleepeth in the house shall wash his raiment, and he that eateth in the house shall wash his raiment. ⁴⁸But if the priest shall come in and look and, behold, the plague hath not spread in the

house, after the house hath been plastered, the priest shall pronounce the house clean; for the plague is healed.

⁴⁹And he shall take to purge the house the two birds and cedarwood and scarlet and hyssop; ⁵⁰and he shall kill one bird in an earthen vessel over living water; ⁵¹and he shall take the cedar-wood and the hyssop and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed, and in the living water, and shall sprinkle the house seven times; ⁵²and he shall purge the house from the defilement with the blood of the bird, and with the living water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar-wood and with the hyssop and with the scarlet; ⁵³and he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open field; and he shall atone for the house, and it is clean" (vers. 33-53).

Literally, as the Israelites dwelt in tents, and had no proper houses till they entered the land of promise, it is clear that the provisions here laid down could not apply while they were in the wilderness. But the typical force does apply to Christians while here below, because there is in Christ association with heaven also before going there themselves. It was not so while Christ was with His disciples, who were living stones indeed but not yet builded together. "Upon this rock," said He, "I will build my church." But men build too since His ascension; and hence there is room for what defiles and corrupts, as well as for what is precious and holy. There is collective evil as well as individual; and consequently God insists on

purity in that way no less than this. The allowance of evil is the plague spot for the assembly. Holiness becometh, not the believer only, but "thy house, O Jehovah, for evermore." Any evil may enter from time to time, none too flagrant or deadly; but if judged according to God and put out, the saints prove themselves pure in the matter.

It is altogether different when known evil abides in the midst. Then it is the leprous plague in the house. But even then it is "the priest" who is looked to in order to pronounce. He is over the house of God. Man is apt to be hasty and unreliable, whether lax or severe. Christ never fails, and makes His judgment felt by the spiritual, and knows how to warn in the Spirit all concerned. If the defilement be removed by the adequate means prescribed in His word, it is well: the house is again recognisable, though the atoning work of Christ is just as needful for it as for the sinner. But if the evil remains despite the scriptural measures to extirpate it, there is nothing for the faithful but its demolition. They must at all costs and in the most absolute way abandon what is incurably unclean. There is most solemn responsibility here in the Lord's name. Compromise is fatal.

Is it not striking and instructive to see how completely the truth of the leprous house is ignored by all who fail to recognise the church or assembly as taught in the New Testament? One need not quote names or books; this would be invidious indeed, where all is a blank or worse, as may be seen in the most celebrated, when compared with Scripture.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LEPROSY SUMMED UP.

Lev. xiv. 54-57.

THE subject concludes with a general summary. "This [is] the law for every sore of leprosy, and for the scall; and for leprosy of raiment, and for houses; and for a rising and for a scab, and for a bright spot, to teach in the day of uncleanness, and in the day of cleanness; this [is] the law of leprosy" (vers. 54-57).

God is intimating to us thereby how sin permeates the person, the immediate environment, and the collective or corporate responsibility. It is not only destructive but defiling, so that no earthly cleanness can avail: only Himself according to His word, and through Christ's holy sacrifice. We who believe are bound to spare it not in any degree or in any respect. There is a divine provision of grace to which He calls us to conform. Our own opinion or that of other men is nothing. Having a great High Priest, passed as He has through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we are therefore to hold fast our confession. For we have not a high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one that has been in all points tempted like-

wise, sin excepted. Let us therefore approach with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace for seasonable help. Yet more too, where sin has wrought its evil way, and not infirmities simply, there is not only a Saviour of the lost ; but the believer has, we have, an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Hence it is unwise as well as unholy and unbelieving to shrink from the humbling truth. For God commends His love to us, in that when we were still sinners Christ died for us. If upright by grace, let us not deceive ourselves, but submit to the light of God in which the true character of all things is exposed : for that which makes every thing manifest is light. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8); for if it were, we should speedily learn that we have still a nature, which if not discerned and disallowed would draw us away to gratify its will which is nothing but sin. Our having a new nature, which never sins and delights in God's will, makes us responsible as children to please our Father. But we are bound to take account of the old nature which is there still, and to judge it as incurably evil.

And we must not be hasty, nor trust our own thoughts. We have to do with the most accessible of priests. Neither Aaron nor any other was comparable to our Lord Jesus. If willing to judge ourselves thoroughly according to His word, we are all wrong to despair of His succour. If there be a common danger of self-love and shirking full self-

judgment, there may be an occasional tendency to exaggeration which is not the truth. We need Christ to secure it; and so grace has given Him. And it is ours, whether about ourselves or about others, to confide in the unerring judgment which He knows how to make us feel. For He is not dead but alive again for ever more, and ever lives to intercede for us in our weakness.

For feeble we are: it may not be any sore of leprosy, but the scall. We may err too as to raiment or the house. It may not be more than a rising in the flesh that alarms us, or a scab, or a bright spot; for to judge according to the reality we are not competent without Christ. And if we trusted to our judgment, it might soon prove not only hasty but unrighteous. He works in us by His word and Spirit; so that we can, if dependent on the Lord, look for His grace in the day of uncleanness and in the day of cleanness. The two conditions are found now in the evil day. We still wait for the good day of His manifested presence and power for the world to come, the habitable earth; when at least the dweller in the land shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity. Righteousness shall then reign.

But evil as the day is now, we have the very distinct certainty of grace reigning through righteousness unto life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. v. 21). None the less is Satan the god of this age, blinding the thoughts of the faithless so that they should not discern the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is God's image,

and in all possible ways both hindering His servants and maligning His saints. Blessed as these are by His redemption and with Him in every spiritual blessing on high, they are all the more peremptorily exhorted to cleanse themselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in fear of God (2 Cor. vii. 1). It is the possession of the blessing which is the expressed ground for the purifying.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FLUX IN MEN AND ITS DEFILEMENT.

Lev. xv. 1-12.

IN 2 Thess. i. 8, when the Lord appears in vengeance on guilty living men, the Gentiles are distinguished as those that know not God, the Jews as those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus. It was the privilege of Jews to have God in the world entering into every need and difficulty, every responsibility and danger, as the Gentiles had not. They had even the visible sign of His glory in the tabernacle till their apostasy. Hence they had Him enjoining what was due to His presence in their midst, although in a way altogether inferior to that enjoyed by the Christian and in the church.

But earthly and temporal as it was, it accounts for such requirements as we read here and elsewhere. We have had its application to human birth (in chap. xii.) and (in chap. xiii.) to sin in the life, as a deadly and defiling thing, a living death, which necessitated exclusion from tent, camp, and worship, and (in xiv.) the striking means required for cleansing him when cured without telling us how cure could be. Here we have other and lesser sources of defilement on which we may say a little. They indicate the sad and shameful effects of sin.

The principle is a great one. All is judged, even for fallen man, according to His presence who deigned to dwell there. A human standard, if indeed any pretended to have it, was well enough for a heathen. An Israelite was to submit to the God of Israel regulating the entire life, public and private, of His earthly people. Impossible, if Jehovah were their God and they His people, to evade those terms. Piety would welcome them with heart and soul.

So it will be finally under Messiah and the new covenant when He will write His law in their heart; and they shall know Him from the least to the greatest, for He will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more. Alas! they, ignorant of their sin, had at Sinai forgotten to plead His promise, and even taken their stand on their own obedience; so that ruin soon befell them, and all went on worse and worse, till there was "no remedy" on that footing. Then came the rejection of their only hope. A brighter day awaits them when their heart turns to the Lord (2 Cor. iii.), and He will save them with a divine salvation.

"¹And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ²Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, If any man hath a flux from his flesh because of his flux, he [is] unclean. ³And this shall be his uncleanness in his flux: whether his flesh run with his flux, or his flesh be closed from his flux, it [is] his uncleanness. ⁴Every bed whereon he that hath the flux lieth shall be unclean; and everything whereon he sitteth shall be unclean. ⁵And whosoever toucheth his bed

shall wash his raiment, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even. ⁶And he that sitteth on [anything] whereon he that hath the flux sat shall wash his raiment, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even. ⁷And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the flux shall wash his raiment, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even. ⁸And if he that hath the flux spit upon him that is clean, then he shall wash his raiment, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even. ⁹And what carriage (or saddle) soever he that hath the flux rideth upon shall be unclean. ¹⁰And whosoever toucheth anything that was under him shall be unclean until the even; and he that beareth those things shall wash his raiment, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even. ¹¹And whomsoever he that hath the flux toucheth without having rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his raiment, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even. ¹²And the earthen vessel that he that hath the flux toucheth shall be broken; and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water" (vers. 1-12).

Man is not as God created him; he is fallen: and here we read how God instructed the Israelite of old to judge his state. It was not nature, but nature ruined and unclean; so are its unclean emotions. They are tainted and defile. So Jehovah spoke to Moses and Aaron. The physical uncleanness speaks to us of a deeper evil. So the Lord taught even the multitude: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which cometh

out of the mouth, this defileth the man" (Matt. xv. 11). And when Peter, feeling Pharisaic opposition, asked more, the Lord replied, "Do not ye understand that all that entereth into the mouth goeth into the belly and is cast out into a sewer? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out from the heart; and those things defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, theft, false witnessing, blasphemies: these are the things which defile the man." The outside satisfies those who have not faith and count God as themselves. For as the Lord pointed out, Every plant which My heavenly Father planted not shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind leaders of blind; but if blind lead blind, both will fall into a ditch.

But a holy God will have us take account of the humiliating truth, if the uncleanness flow out, or even if suppressed within by night or by day (3, 4) as to things or persons (5-12). Every case demanded purifying. To the Jew it was water; to us the washing of water by the word, the water that flowed from Christ in death, to which the apostle who saw bears record in Gospel and Epistle.

Our word of confession is due to God; but Christ's word has virtue in it through the Spirit and His own advocacy. Thus is communion maintained. To be born again and forgiven is not enough. We are brought into divine fellowship, and all that is unsuitable in us God will have us to judge. It would be hard if He had not provided all that sus-

tains or restores. It is careless or unholy, now that He is at all the charge for our blessing, if we avail not ourselves of it conscientiously. Vigilance as well as dependence on Him and the heart's submission to His word with confidence of His love in Christ are ever needed. Weak, exposed with such a nature, and a subtle foe to take advantage, we are only kept by God's power through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

But the way is ordained of God as surely as the end is made secure. It is not enough to put to death our members that are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil lust, and the covetousness (or, unbridledness) which is idolatry; on account of which things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience, among whom we also once walked when we lived in these things. But now, as it is added, put off, ye too, all the things, wrath, fury, malice, blasphemy, shameful language, out of your mouth, no less than deceit. Lie not unto each other, as having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new, that is being renewed unto true knowledge according to His image that created him; wherein can be neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, free, but the all and in all [is] Christ.

The principle is as simple as it is sure. As He that called us is holy, so are we also to be in every manner of life, because it is written, Be ye holy, for that I am holy. Grace has brought us into our new and near relationship to God, and has even

given us His nature in the life we have in Christ. We come therefore under His fatherly dealing henceforth, Who without respect of persons judges according to the work of each.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE ATONEMENT FOR FLUX.

Lev. xv. 13-15.

It is of great importance and instruction to see how Israel were taught to regard these loathsome experiences according to their relationship with Jehovah. Other nations were occupied with second causes. They were taught that, as God had to do with them in these marks of humiliation, so had they to do with Him. And He condescended to signify His sense of their defiled condition by entering into every little detail of their movements by day and of rest by night, so as to impress them with what sin had brought on the guilty. Their wisdom was to heed these lessons, if strangers to Him despised His word and them also for submission to it.

When the day of Jehovah comes, how will they not rejoice in what grace will give them! Israel will then sing, "Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy

youth is renewed like the eagle's." As His earthly people they will enjoy the reversal of their old uncleanness, and infirmities, along with soul blessing and external power. As heavenly, the Christian is called to suffer now, yet knowing himself one spirit with the Lord, and awaiting His coming to be with Him in the mansions of the Father's house, as well as to share His exaltation over all things. The contrast is great: God has provided concerning us some better thing, not only than Israel's millennial place, but even than the elders who receive the promise in that day, though they will be perfected together in the bright day of blessing on all sides.

“¹³And when he that hath a flux is cleansed of his flux, then he shall count seven days for his cleansing, and wash his raiment, and bathe his flesh in living water, and he shall be clean. ¹⁴And on the eighth day he shall take two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, and come before Jehovah unto the entrance of the tent of meeting, and give them unto the priest. ¹⁵And the priest shall offer them, one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah for his flux ” (vers. 13-15).

Still more distinctly does the recognition of Jehovah rise when the flux ceased. A complete term ensued for his cleansing. His clothes were washed, and his flesh bathed in running water. Thus only did he become truly clean. Then on the eighth day he took an offering, expressly in other cases adapted to the poor in Israel, but here for all alike, when any were to be cleared from this

defilement. He took to him two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, and came before Jehovah unto the entrance of the tent of meeting, and gave them to the priest. And the priest was directed to offer them, small as they were with all due reverence, the one as a Sin-offering, and the other as a Burnt-offering. Nor was the offerer to doubt of the issue: the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah for his flux. It was due to Jehovah, and it was available for the cleansing of the flesh meanwhile: the shadow of that unfailing and everlasting atonement which the Lord Jesus alone could effect. For Him faith had to wait. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, come of woman, come under law, to redeem those that were under law, that we [Jews who believe] might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye [Galatian or other Gentile believers] are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts [that is, of both], crying Abba, Father.

How fitting that the day of resurrection should be the epoch of deliverance! Thenceforward the defilement was a thing of the past. If we need to feel the days of shame over uncleanness, God would have him who rests on Christ both for his own sin and for Christ's acceptance to enter into the joyful assurance that all is clear. But on the face of the ordinance while we have what typifies the washing of water by the word, which only the Holy Spirit makes effectual by recalling Christ to us, nothing avails without the one great sacrifice. And this is

both to efface the evil and to impart full acceptance in all the worth of Christ. What grace is in God to turn what is so humiliating into a deepening sense of what His work secures to faith!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OTHER IMPURITIES.

Lev. xv. 16-33.

THERE remains a still larger portion of these uncleannesses which divine wisdom did not scruple to notice, however humbling to men and women ; for as we have had the one sex, so now follows the other. Jehovah would compel His people to feel that He takes account, not merely of sin as typified in its most destructive shape as well as in the very ushering into the world of a child, male or female, but of such impurities as are of a more ordinary nature and frequent recurrence, proceeding from men and women as they are, and connected with that which is lawful and necessary. If the latter was for the earthly people, Christians are entitled to read these outward ordinances in the spirit. To the pure all things are pure ; but to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure ; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

¹⁶And if any man's seed of copulation pass from him, then he shall bathe his whole flesh in water, and be unclean until the even. ¹⁷And all raiment and every skin, wherein the seed of copulation shall be, shall be washed with water, and be unclean

until the even. ¹⁸And a woman with whom a man lieth with seed of copulation, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until the even.

¹⁹And if a woman hath a flux, and her flux in her flesh be blood, she shall be seven days in her separation, and whoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. ²⁰And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean ; and every thing that she sitteth upon shall be unclean. ²¹And whoever toucheth her bed shall wash his raiment, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. ²²And whoever toucheth any thing that she sitteth upon shall wash his raiment, and bathe in water, and be unclean until the even. ²³And if it be on the bed or on any thing on which she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even. ²⁴And if a man lie with her at all, and the uncleanness of her separation come upon him, he shall be unclean seven days ; and every bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean. ²⁵And if a woman have her flux of blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if she have the flux beyond the time of her separation, all the days of the flux of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation : she is unclean. ²⁶Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her flux shall be to her as the bed of her separation ; and every thing on which she sitteth shall be unclean, according to the uncleanness of her separation. ²⁷And whoever toucheth these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his raiment, and bathe in water, and be unclean until the even.

²⁸ And if she be cleansed of her flux, then she shall count seven days, and after that she shall be clean. ²⁹ And on the eighth day she shall take to her two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tent of meeting. ³⁰ And the priest shall offer the one as a sin-offering and the other as a burnt-offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her before Jehovah for the flux of her uncleanness.

³¹ Ye shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is in their midst.

³² This is the law of him that hath a flux, and of him whose seed of copulation goeth from him, whereby he is defiled; ³³ and of her who is sick in separation, and of him that hath a flux; of the man and of the woman, and of him that lieth with her that is unclean" (vers. 16-33).

Through law is knowledge, right knowledge, of sin (Rom. iii. 20), though Christ and the cross gave us it, as all else, still more and perfectly. And this was intended for Israel's good. No other people had God taking pains to show them where the race is through sin. No doubt it was a burdensome yoke: how could it be otherwise till a Saviour was given to save from sins? Those who confided in God, feeling their utter defilement, voluntary and involuntary, looked according to His word for Him who should come, defeat at all cost the enemy, atone for sin before God, and bring in everlasting righteousness. Those meanwhile were

objects of His mercy and gracious care. Such as felt only the present and saw no more than their uncleannesses, with sacrifices through the priest, rose not above the purifying of the flesh.

But the profit abides for those who through faith read Christ in what without Him are but ordinances of flesh (Heb. ix. 9, 10). They can pity and deplore the unbelief which is shocked that a divine revelation should lay bare Jehovah's notice of the vile and offensive workings of our fallen nature. But here was at least a testimony, though by no means a complete and final one, to man's innate evil. Israel stood in a relationship to Jehovah which required the serious acknowledgment of the sad facts, but with a provision of His direction which cleansed them for the then present time, till grace and truth came in perfection.

How infinite His love and work who bore our sins in His body on the tree! His death has for faith completely effaced the evil and cleared the conscience; and His resurrection has given us a new life and place into which evil cannot come, which the Holy Ghost strengthens as we lean on Christ to walk as He walked, judging as flesh (to which we died with Him) every working of the old nature.



