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THE PREACHER'S COMMENTARY

ON THE

BOOK OF LEVITICUS.

THE
Preacher's Complete Homiletical
COMMENTARY
ON THE
OLD TESTAMENT

(ON AN ORIGINAL PLAN),

With Critical and Explanatory Notes, &c., &c.

BY
VARIOUS AUTHORS.

London :

RICHARD D. DICKINSON, 89, FARRINGTON STREET.

1885.

THE
PREACHER'S COMMENTARY
ON THE BOOK OF
LEVITICUS:

CONTAINING

SUGGESTIVE READINGS: Being comments on each chapter, Didactic and Experimental.

HOMILETICS: Consisting of three hundred and fifty Breviates and Outlines on *Sections, Topics, or Verses* of each chapter.

ILLUSTRATIONS: Furnishing apt incident or quotation on the Homiletic Themes.

BY THE

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Assisted in the Homiletics by

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PREFACE.

HAVING regard to the Commentaries on Leviticus already in existence, ponderous with erudition and criticism, claiming also to be literary and exegetical, this "Homiletical Commentary" has deliberately shunned the profundities of scholarship, and works along practical and experimental lines. From first to last, distinctive in this intent, it has quietly kept to its homiletical aim. Perhaps it may be found, on that very account, none the less serviceable as a help towards pulpit preparations. In its Readings, Homilies, and Outlines it seeks throughout to be suggestive and didactic, searching amid Hebrew ordinances for universal obligations, and gospel teachings in the sacrifices and rites of the Wilderness.

To read the book of Leviticus in its rich significance, the Tabernacle Revelations must be pondered in connexion with the "Word made flesh who tabernacled among us"; its Altar Sacrifices be read in the light which radiates from the sacred Cross: its Priestly offices and sanctions be viewed as foreshadowing the Christian's privileges and ministries; and its Moral Enactments be regarded as affirming those virtues essential through every age in man's relation to man. The Levitical ceremonies and ritual are picturesque delineations of the doctrines and duties of Christianity.

A cursory survey of this book of the Decalogue might dispose preachers to conclude that it contains few themes suited to present day needs; this error may explain why sermons on texts in Leviticus are so strangely rare. Closer acquaintance with its contents, and the appliance of a steady interpretative faculty to its symbols, will reveal that scarcely a Doctrine of Grace is lacking in those sanctuary ceremonies, whilst a wealth of Ethical Instruction dwells in the regulations of the Israelitish Camp.

The endeavour to force a homily from any and every text has been honourably abandoned. Whatever verses or themes presented a natural basis for homiletic effort, there an outline or breviary has been furnished. If this Commentary were compacted of homiletics which no preacher could use and no congregation would hear, it would merit the rebuke—"To what purpose is this waste?" The age is greatly too earnest to greet or value mere dexterous products which can serve no practical end.

Each chapter opens with Suggestive Readings, which it is hoped will afford

guidance to suitable expository comments in the services of the Sanctuary. They are, therefore, not critical and analytical, but didactic and experimental.

The Commentary contains three hundred and forty-nine Homilies and Outlines : of these, 35 have been condensed from printed sermons, a further 35 are homilies constructed from books on Leviticus which are not homiletical ; the remaining 247 are original contributions for this book. Those prepared by our co-labourer, the Rev. Frederick W. Brown, are subscribed with his initials. Where no name or initials appear, the reader may justly ascribe the homily to our own pen : this applies also to all the Suggestive Readings, as well as to the Illustrative Addenda. And in those instances, where a name is undersigned to a homily or outline, one of two processes must be credited to our account. Either the homily is a creation based upon some note-book on Leviticus, in which the author's ideas and words are given as nearly as practicable, with addition of our own to complete the homily ; or it is a condensation of some published sermon on a text in Leviticus, which it has been our personal task to prepare for the pages of this Commentary.

Among the books specially suggestive of these homilies may be mentioned, "Jukes on the Offerings"; "Thoughts on Leviticus," by B. W. Newton ; "Notes on Leviticus," by C. H. M. ; "Christ is All," by Dean Law ; "The Doctrine of Sacrifice," by Maurice ; "The Levitical Priests," by Curtiss ; and Atwater's "The sacred Tabernacle of the Hebrews."

By summarizing or reconstructing sermons it has been possible to enrich this Commentary with the quickening thoughts of such preachers as Edward T. Atwood, A. Coquerel, Albert H. Currier, A. E. Dunning, James Fleming, D.D., H. M. Grant, D.D., D. C. Hughes, M.A., G. R. Leavitt, David O. Mears, C. H. Spurgeon, W. Stephenson, Samuel Thodey, Lewis O. Thompson, W. Wayland, Jno. Wesley, and others.

The Illustrative Addenda to each chapter will afford choice quotation or apt incident with which to enforce a truth.

Three Indices, with exact and detailed classifications of topics, analysis, and illustrations are supplied, by which access to the contents of this volume for every purpose is rendered simple and direct.

To the generous appreciation with which the larger and more laborious *Homiletical Commentary on Jeremiah* was received, we venture to commend this companion volume, with this testimony—that no joy so deep and true comes to any worker for Christ as that of knowing his labours are found helpful to others amid the stress of their public toils, and that the Word of God is opening its stores of truth more freely to students in consequence of his honest, though humble, endeavours to serve them in the Divine Master's name.

A

HOMILETIC COMMENTARY

ON THE BOOK OF

LEVITICUS.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

i. Concerning the book itself. Because it is occupied mainly with directions respecting the offerings and services of the sons of Levi, it is called the Book of Leviticus. Under the very shadow of Mount Sinai Jehovah gave these ecclesiastical enactments for Israel. The entire contents of the book are included within the brief term of about one month, viz., from the erection of the Tabernacle to the numbering of the people. The historical occurrences which it narrates are few; the consecration of the priesthood (chaps. viii., ix.), God's destruction of Nadab and Abihu for profanation (chap. ix.), and the magistrate's punishment of Shelomith's son for blasphemy (chap. xxiv.). Evidence the most valid connects Moses with the *authorship* of Leviticus, who most probably wrote these divinely given regulations during the fifty days preceding the starting of the Israelites from their encampment near Sinai upon their wilderness journeyings.

ii. Its natural position in the Pentateuch. Exodus closes with the record of the Tabernacle being completed; the shrine was ready for the worship of God. Leviticus follows with directions for that worship; gives Divine regulations for sacrifices and services, whereby man might acceptably and appropriately "come before the Lord." The sacred house being reared, now ensue the orders of that house. God Himself designed the holy fabric; He also prescribes the ordinances for approaching Him therein.

iii. A general summary of its contents. Minute institutions and regulations are given concerning the *altar sacrifices* in chaps. i. to vii., the consecration and conduct of the *priesthood* in chaps. viii. to x.; enactments respecting the *purification of uncleanness*—in chap. xi. of animals, and chaps. xii. to xv. of men; the *Day of Atonement*, ordained to propitiate for all omissions and faultiness in sacrifice during the year, is appointed in chap. xvi., and varied statutes are prescribed relating to the *rectitude of the people* among themselves (chaps. xvii. to xx.), the *purity of the priesthood* in their ministrations (chaps. xxi., xxii.), the hallowed observance of the sacred festivals (chaps. xxiii., xxiv.), supplemented with directions concerning the land, vows, etc. (chaps. xxv. to xxvii.).

iv. The spiritual significance of its sacrifices and ceremonies. Jehovah had erected His sanctuary in Israel's midst; His people must now understand and observe the solemn *sanctities essential to access and fellowship* with Him. A place for worship, and arrangements for altar sacrifices, were matters of inferior

importance to the spiritual condition of those who should come before the Lord. Hence the sacrificial enactments of Leviticus show how acceptance with God and ceremonial purification should be sought by Israel. But additional to that immediate purpose of these Levitical arrangements, the appointed offerings presented on that altar were all made typical and suggestive of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and the sacred festivals ordained for the Tabernacle indicated the gracious ordinances of the future Gospel age. Thus, in its altar types and symbolic ceremonies, Leviticus prefigures the efficacy of the Redeemer's substitutionary death, and the spiritual privileges which should be enjoyed in the Christian Church.



CHAPTER I.

The Law of the Burnt Sacrifices.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 1.—Lord called . . . and spake. From within the Tabernacle: God's first habitation among men. Never before had He "dwelt with men on the earth"; He speaks now for the first time from His holy tent in Israel's midst. It foreshadowed the "*Word tabernacling among us*" (John i. 14). "*The Lord called*" is a phrase specially used when important communications were to follow; as from the burning bush (Ex. iii. 4), and from Sinai's heights (xix. 3-20). The law of *commandments* was given to Moses amid flames and thunder, as being condemnatory of man's sin. Now, the law of *sacrifice* is given in gracious communication through Moses, as revealing God's plan of mercy. For *us*, in these Christian times, the gentler teachings of the Mount of Beatitudes form our law of duty and of life.

V. 2.—If any man of you bring. God assumes—

(1) *That men would seek Him*; would draw near to Him in the sacred tent, wherein He had come so near to men. If so, surely more readily and gratefully we should seek Him in Jesus. "God was in Christ," etc. (2 Cor. v. 19). (2) *That men will seek Him, bringing offerings*; some presentation as a token of homage and gratitude for His gifts to them; or some propitiation, as a lament over their sin and an appeal to His mercy. God still looks for offerings as we "come before His presence"; what shall we render? what worthiest presentation can we take?

V. 3.—A burnt sacrifice. This expressed the offerer's *surrender of himself* unto God as "a living sacrifice" (Rom. xii. 1). The victim must have *no blemish*, must be the choicest product of his pastures; for God asks, and will only receive, our *best* (Mal. i. 14). It must be offered "*of his own voluntary will*," or rather "*for his own acceptance*," expressing his great concern to win God's gracious regard; and indeed, we ought to concern ourselves supremely for this; "*in Thy favour is life*." And he must offer it "*at the door of the tabernacle*," as being unworthy to enter. With humility and reverence, and a lowly sense of demerit, we should venture near God.

(a) *Christ* is herein typified; our Sacrifice "without blemish," offered for man's "acceptance," ere He "entered the holy place" (Heb. ix. 12-24).

(b) *The Christian* is prefigured; "yielding himself alive unto God," "holy

and acceptable," ere he is admitted into covenant privileges within the Church now, and finally into God's presence in heaven.

V. 4.—Put his hand upon the head. An act of transfer: threefold; signifying transference of his *right of possession* in the victim, his *sense of sin* to the victim, and his *substitution for suffering* of the victim. Thus the Christian gives up all rights of self-possession ("Ye are not your own"): thus also the sinner lays all his sin, and the believer all his hope, on Christ his sacrifice and substitute. It must be the individual's own act, none can do it for another; every one must himself lay "*his hand*" on Christ.

V. 5.—He shall kill the bullock. Thereby he identified himself with the victim designated to die, and thereby claimed the "atonement" effected by its sacrificial substitution. To be saved we must also be identified with Christ in His death, and thereby inherit His atonement. "*The priest shall bring the blood,*" not the offerer; for the priestly offices of Christ are essential; man must let Jesus do all the work of propitiation. "*Sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar*"; attesting thereby that life had been given up in sacrificial suffering unto God. Christ's death is the sinner's death, and "the blood of sprinkling" testifies that "He made His soul an offering for sin." Diffused "round about upon the altar," the blood is the memorial of an accomplished atonement, the seal of an accepted sacrifice.

Vv. 6-9.—Fire upon the altar . . . an offering made by fire. Once lighted, that fire was never more to go out (ch. vi. 13). Yet every part of the victim must be "*washed*" faultlessly clean before being placed on the altar: only the absolutely clean can be acceptable to God. And then the entire victim, every part thereof, must ascend in sacrificial fire unto God. Thus (1) Christ our atonement-offering must Himself be "holy, harmless, undefiled"; and must also be completely sacrificed for man's sin. And (2) *Christian life* must likewise be both thoroughly sanctified and wholly devoted unto God. "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. vi. 20).

A sweet savour unto the Lord. The very virtue and essence of the offering ascended by fire from the altar on earth to God in heaven. Duly offered by fire, the sacrifice was "a sweet savour" to the Lord. *Christ's* sacrifice was: "He gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2). Christian self-consecration is: "For we are unto God a *sweet savour of Christ*" (2 Cor. ii. 15). Christian life perpetuates on earth and yields continually to heaven the incense of a pure offering, "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" (Phil. iv. 18).

Vv. 10-13.—A burnt sacrifice of the flocks. Only the wealthier offerers could bring the costlier sacrifice "of the herd" (v. 3). God equally provides for the less opulent among the people; gives directions for their sacrifices just as specific, denoting that He valued their presentation as much as the costlier offering. Our straitened lot does not release us from God's claims, neither is our humbler gift depreciated by God. But He requires entirety in all our sacrifices, that we devote to Him our utmost, our all. "Bring it *all* and burn it upon the altar."

Vv. 14-17.—A burnt sacrifice of fowls. Thus God, with minute care, arranges for the poorest, that none may feel God's requirements too heavy for them to meet, or deem their poverty a disqualification for approaching Him acceptably. In this instance, however, the *priest* was to bring the bird to the altar and slay it (v. 15), thereby giving peculiar importance to the poor man's offering as worthy special attention; for God has always put honour on the sacrifices of the poor, as our Lord did on the widow's mite. Yet insignificant as was the offering of the poor, it must as fully denote entire self-devotion to God. He prizes the love which shows itself in our casting in "all our living" (Mark xii. 44).

INTRODUCTORY HOMILIES.

(A). THE LEVITICAL RITUAL.

That Moses was the author of this Book is acknowledged by most competent scholars. The events of the Book cover only about a month of time, *i.e.*, from the erection of the tabernacle to the numbering of the people, and they relate to the establishment of sacrificial worship among the Hebrews in the wilderness of Sinai.

I. Although the words of Leviticus were written by Moses, they were dictated by the Lord.

The first verse of the Book decides this point, Moses records the utterances that proceeded from the tabernacle. So far then as Leviticus is concerned, we have the thoughts of God in the words of God, and, as such, they deserve our reverent attention, as indicating Jehovah's desire for our acceptable approach to Him.

Note that (1) *the pure ethical teaching of the Levitical ritual could not have been invented by a people so perverse and prone to corruption as Israel; (2) and they would not voluntarily have put themselves under such restrictions if they could.* The revelation of God to Israel, through His servant Moses, was the outcome of the Divine disposition to communicate to and commune with man, of His deep concern for human holiness and happiness; this the basis and spring of all revelation and blessing to our race. [See Illustrative Addenda, p. 18, *Revelation.*]

II. Although the rites of Leviticus have been superseded, its moral teaching has not been abrogated.

If read in connection with the Epistle to Hebrews (which is its best commentary) lessons upon Christian work, worship, witnessing may be gathered. Christ came not to destroy the law, but to give it a fuller and deeper significance, to exemplify and enforce the principles therein taught. The perfect ethics of the Gospel have their germs and roots in the law, both enjoin holiness to the Lord.

III. Although the sacrifices of Leviticus have been discontinued, the one offering of Christ abideth for ever.

We need no material altar or sacrifice; and, therefore, no human priest. Christ finished His atoning work upon the Cross—appears now as "Lamb in the midst of the throne," showing that while He was once a *victim* ("Lamb") He is now a *victor* ("throne"). The law is our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. Except read in light of the New Testament, Leviticus becomes a form without power, shadow without substance. With joy we may draw water out of these wells of salvation. In its typical rites we may apprehend Him who hath obtained eternal redemption for us.—*Rev. F. W. Brown.*

(B). COMMUNION WITH GOD BY A REDEEMED PEOPLE THROUGH ALTAR OFFERINGS.

The *Exodus* sacrifices, those offered by the children of Israel while *in Egypt*, *i.e.*, the paschal lamb and unleavened bread, had reference and significance wholly to their *redemption*: deliverance from death and bondage. The *Levitical* sacrifices were those of a *saved people*, and were appointed for their *acceptable approaches to God* their Saviour. Instead, therefore, of seeing Christ as redeeming us, we see Him in His work for those already redeemed; bringing them into fellowship with God and restoring them when they fail or fall. To hold communion with God they need Christ both as Offering and Mediator, Sacrifice

and Priest; thus He appears in the tabernacle services. Gathering all the tabernacle offerings into one view, remark that :

I. Altar offerings and tabernacle ministries all reach their completion in Christ.

He is the Burnt Offering, Meat Offering, Peace Offering, Sin Offering, Trespass Offering for His people. "When He said, sacrifice and offering and burnt offering and offering for sin Thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law; then said He, Lo I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second" (Heb. x. 8, 9). By the one oblation of Himself He has stood in all those relations; relations precious to God, needful to His Church.

1. In each offering *three distinct objects* are present: *the offering, the priest, the offerer*. Christ is each of and all these. So manifold are the relations in which Christ has stood for man and to man that all types are required to represent His fulness. First He comes as *Offerer*; but we cannot see the Offerer without the *offering*; and the Offerer is Himself the Offering; and He who is both Offerer and Offering is also the *Priest*. (1) As offerer, we see Him our *Substitute*, "fulfilling all righteousness." (2) As priest, we see Him our *Mediator*, ministering between God and Israel. (3) As offering, He is seen the *Innocent Victim*, a sweet savour to God, yet bearing the sin and dying for it. (1) The offerer sets forth Christ in *His Person*; who became man to meet God's requirements. (2) The offering presents Him in *His character and work*, as the victim by which atonement was ratified. (3) The priest shows Him in *His official relation* as the appointed intercessor.

2. The *difference in the several offerings* asks notice; the *Burnt*, the *Meat*, the *Peace* offerings, etc. They represent *different aspects* of Christ's offering. [For their different meaning compare Homilies on each.]

3. The *offerer* himself also reflects Christ in *His diverse aspects*. The faithful Israelite stands, in one instance, as a *sinless offerer*, presenting a "sweet smelling savour" for acceptance with God, not propitiating for sin; in another as a *convicted sinner*, offering an expiatory sacrifice which bears the pain and penalty of his transgressions.

The offering of Christ was but one, and but once offered; but as Christ's fulness and relations are so manifold, all aspects are needful to represent Him in those manifold relations and His various work for us.

4. The *different grades* in the various offerings is equally significant; the *bullock*, the *lamb*, the *dove*. And these denote the different *estimates and apprehensions* formed of Christ by His people. Christ's work is so complete that each aspect may be differently apprehended according to the measure of light in the believer. Some never go beyond the conception of Christ as their Paschal Offering, securing their redemption from Egyptian bondage and death. Others, however, see Him as their *Burnt Offering*, wholly devoted to God for them; while to others He is as the passive Lamb silent and submissive in affliction; and to others the mourning Dove gentle and sorrowful in His innocency.

II. *Altar offerings and tabernacle ministries* were designed for Israel's acceptable communion with God.

The types of Leviticus, in distinction from the types of redemption or deliverance from doom, give us the work of Christ in its bearing on worship and communion.

1. They meet the needs of a ransomed people in providing for their access to God. If they come for consecration they bring the burnt offerings: if for grateful acknowledgment of Divine bounty and graciousness, they bring the food offerings; if for reconciliation after ignorant misadventure or neglect of duty or temporary transgression, they bring their peace or trespass offering, &c. But they all provide a basis for access to and acceptance with God.

How thoroughly all these qualities unite in the one offering of Jesus is manifest ; so that we, redeemed by Him, come before God with His merits and graces, and are accepted in Him. "Therefore, *being justified by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *also we have access by faith into this grace* wherein we stand . . . and not only so, but we *also joy in God* through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. v. 1, 2, 11).

2. Christ's work as connected with the communion of His people, *must be viewed under manifold representations*. The Offering first : for His one oblation

"Provides for those who come to God
An all-prevailing plea."

Yet how few believers enter earnestly into the manifold aspects and aims of Christ's one offering represented in the various victims and the arrangements for their sacrifice. They read of Him as the *Sin Offering*, the *Burnt Offering*, &c., but no corresponding thought is suggested to them by this distinction. It is enough for them that the blood of the Paschal Lamb has been sprinkled on their door post and they are saved : they inquire not more concerning Him. But they who would know *the joy of communion* must go from strength to strength in the knowledge of the grace and work of Jesus. Have they known Him as the Paschal Lamb? They will then seek to know Him as the offering *within the Tabernacle*. Have they learnt Him in His different relations as offering? They will then seek to know Him in His Offices as Priest : His ministrations for us within the Holy Place : His grace and acceptableness as our Mediator at the altar : His free entrance on our behalf into the presence of God.

Thus, redemption being known, the Levitical sacrifices relate to the access of a chosen people to God : and show Christ as He is discerned by one who already knows the certainty of redemption ; Christ the Priest, the Offerer, the Offering : Christ as meeting all that a sinner saved needs in approaching to God : Christ for the believer, and all that Christ is to the believer as keeping up his daily communion with God, meeting his needs in his access to Jehovah.—Homiletically arranged by Editor from "*Jukes on the Offerings*."

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic.—WORSHIP BY SACRIFICE (Vv. 1-9).

A great change had now occurred in the conditions of worship. God had hitherto declared His will amid terrible manifestations. The people had stood afar off in fear. Only through Moses, as a daysman betwixt them, had God spoken to men, or men approached Him. Now the Lord had commanded, "Build Me a tabernacle that I may dwell among them" (Ex. xxv. 8). Within their camp was a smoking altar, whose incense was a voiceless but constant prayer ; and a Holy of Holies, in whose mysterious recesses dwelt the unseen Jehovah. To Him all the people were to approach, presenting their sacrificial offerings to Him for propitiation and consecration.

I. ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP MUST BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH DIVINE DIRECTION.

1. Many approach God with the feeling that He is glad to have the attention of men, and *will welcome them under any circumstances*. But He has made conditions for acceptable worship. It must be with

(a) *An obedient spirit*. "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, etc., but he that doeth the will of My Father."

(b) *A reverent spirit*. "Put thy shoes from off thy feet."

(c) *Faith*. "He that cometh to God must believe," etc.

The people who had been so awestricken by the voice from the Mount that "they entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more" would not venture to approach Jehovah unless called, nor in any way than the appointed. *God has a right to prescribe the methods by which He shall be worshipped*, and it is a proof of His mercy that He entered into minute details.

2. In any way that God commands, *worship is a priceless privilege*.

Here He appoints approach through sacrifices. Origin of sacrifice seems to have been man's feeling of sin and need, and conviction of obligation to God. First recorded sacrifice is Abel's offering. From that time sacrifice became a common method of worship. God took this method of expressing religious feelings and thoughts, and taught the people to use it in approaching Him, but in elevated and refined forms. It was figurative and symbolic.

3. God's appointed way for the approach of men to Him has *always been by sacrifice*. The object of sacrifice was to awaken and maintain reverence for God, and express men's feelings towards Him. Not now by the blood of bulls and goats, but the blood of Christ is the sacrifice by which we come to God. "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." But except through sacrifice no man may draw near. True religion is a revealed way of approach to God.

II. SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP WAS ORDAINED AS EXPRESSIVE OF THE WORSHIPPER'S VOLUNTARY AND ENTIRE DEDICATION TO GOD.

The burnt offering was the oldest symbol by which was sought communion with God. Its Hebrew name means "an ascending." They declared by it

(a) *Their aspiration after Him*; (b) *Their desire to do His will*; (c) *Their self-surrender to Him*.

It was this devotion of soul which made the offering a "sweet savour unto Him." Therefore the *worshipper took prominent part in the act of sacrifice*. Laid his hand on the victim to make it his representative. Then slew it. Priest dashed its blood against the altar, then cut it up and burned it. Blood signified the life, that by which life is supported. The word used for "blood" in earliest Old Testament times was "soul." Blood was "holy"; never to be taken as food; was symbol of the *immaterial and immortal*. It meant, when dashed against the altar, that the real inward life must be devoted entirely to God; that the sacrificer offered himself, soul and body, in submission to God's will.

III. SYMBOLIC WORSHIP BY SACRIFICE FINDS ITS FULL ELUCIDATION IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

1. The burnt offering suggests *the holiness of God*. All Jewish sacrifices express the feeling from which a religious life flows as its source, the sense of sin and of the divine holiness. That ritual is pervaded with this recognition of holiness. The tabernacle, vessels, garments, the priests who minister and the people who worship, all must be holy. But in the burnt offering this was concentrated. Infinite holiness claims the life of men. Mounting upwards towards God by self-sacrifice; that is His will. That is the central idea of Christian living—"present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy," etc.

2. The burnt offering suggests *the spirit of acceptable Christian worship*. It must be *pure*; and we are not pure. It is sacrilege to offer a polluted object in sacrifice to a holy God. New purposes, good resolutions, good acts, do not fit one already stained by sin to offer himself as an acceptable sacrifice. The burnt offering was always *preceded by a sin offering*. And "Christ has offered Himself a *sacrifice for sins for ever*"; we may therefore offer ourselves as living sacrifices, acceptable to God.

3. The burnt offering suggests *the character of the acceptable Christian worshipper*. He is indebted to Christ for access to the throne of grace; he knows that all his hope is in the sacrifice of Jesus. His only return, therefore, is the offering of himself as the sign and expression of the love of his heart. This

offering of ourselves is (a) a *whole self-sacrifice*; (b) a *continual sacrifice*—breathing life out in voluntary consecration. Such a breathing forth of self to Christ requires a constant kindling of spirit in love and devotion; a strong faith, and a habit of regarding one's self, in all relations, as created to live for His glory.

All the solemnity of the temple, all the significance of its worship, and all the glory of the Divine presence in it, are realised in every consecrated life.

“For man the living temple is:—

The mercy-seat and cherubim

And all the holy mysteries,

He bears with him.”—*Rev. Albert E. Dunning.*

Topic: A SWEET SAVOUR FOR ACCEPTANCE (Vv. 9, 13, 17).

Thrice reiterated: “*It is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.*”

Notable differences between the burnt offerings and the sin offerings: *Burnt offerings* were (a) *sweet savour* offerings (b) *for acceptance*; whereas *sin* offerings were (a) *not* of a sweet savour, and (b) were required as an expiation *for guilt*. (a) The sweet savour offerings, *i.e.*, the burnt, the meat, and the peace offerings, were offered *on the brazen altar*, which stood within the *court of the tabernacle*. (b) The unsavoury offerings, *i.e.*, the sin and trespass offerings, were *not* consumed on the altar, some being burnt on the earth without the camp, others were sprinkled by blood and ate by the priest. (a) In the “sweet savour” offerings *sin is not seen* or thought of; it is the *faithful Israelite* giving a *pleasant offering* to Jehovah. (b) In the sin offerings it is the reverse, it is a *sacrifice charged with the sin of the offerer*. Thus: in the “sweet savour” offerings the offerer comes for *acceptance as a worshipper*; whereas in the sin and trespass offerings he comes as a *sinner to pay the penalty of guilt*. Therein is suggested and pictured

I. A HOLY WORSHIPPER, PRESENTING BEFORE GOD A PERFECT AND PLEASANT OFFERING.

Not that the offerer himself is holy; but *his offering*, which God accepts in his stead, is a *representative of perfectness*, and its quality of perfection is transferred to the offerer. The act typifies a *perfect man*, in his approach to God, *standing the test of fire*, *i.e.*, God's searching holiness, *accepted as a fragrant savour*; the offering all ascending as a sweet offering to Jehovah.

1. The transaction represents *man giving to God what truly satisfies Him*. It is not a transaction symbolic of a sinner bearing his sin (that appears in the sin offering), but of man giving to God an offering so pleasing to Him that the “sweet savour” of it satisfies and delights Him. With our experience of what man is, it seems wondrous that he should ever perfectly perform his part. But *in Christ* man has so performed it; *His offering* was “a sweet savour unto the Lord.” Hence we are in the burnt sacrifice brought to consider, not Christ as the Sin Bearer, but

2. *Christ, as man in perfectness, meeting God in holiness*. The work of Jesus here is not “God hath made Him to be *sin* for us”; but rather, “He loved us, and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour” (Ephes. v. 2). He appears in the burnt offering for us as man offering to God something which is most precious and most pleasing to Him.

Here note:

- (a) The altar is “*the table of the Lord*” (Mal. i. 12); whatever was put thereon was “*the food of God*.” Here, therefore, God finds that which suffices His longings; an offering which satisfies Him.
- (b) *The fire from heaven*, emblem of God's holiness, consumes the offering; and it all ascends as sweet incense before Him; betokening that all was worthy His acceptance, without fault.

(c) The victim was "without blemish"; and because of Christ's unblemished sacrifice, His perfect spotlessness and devotedness was a sweet feast to the God of heaven.

II. A PERFECT AND PLEASANT OFFERING OFFERED TO GOD FOR HIS GRACIOUS ACCEPTANCE.

In itself "a sweet savour," the burnt offering was presented "for acceptance" [the words in v. 3 "of his own voluntary will" should read "to be accepted"; and are so rendered in the Sept. Vulgate, Targum, etc.]. It was offered to God to secure the acceptance of the offerer. Observe now *Christ's position as Offerer*. He stood as Man for man under the law; hence:

1. *His acceptance depended upon His perfectness.* God made man upright; he erred and fell. God gave him opportunities and aids, for age after age, that he might again *render himself acceptable* to God: but in vain his efforts. The law then came; it taught him the conditions of righteousness; but none could fulfil it, and "there was none righteous, no not one." How then could man be brought to meet God's requirements? One way only remained (Rom. viii, 3, 4): *the Son of God undertook it for us*. As man's representative, He took our place; and there offered a perfect obedience, "a sacrifice without blemish," for our "acceptance"; and thus answered the question and demand, *Could Man bring an offering so acceptable as to satisfy God?* He offered Himself; and His offering was accepted (Titus ii. 14).

2. *His complete acceptance guarantees His people's also.* And that it was *completely* accepted is assured by its being "all burnt on the altar"; nothing rejected, nothing left remaining. God gathered it all up in the incense of fire, as welcome and pleasant to Him; so that He received it all. All the virtue of that satisfactory offering is transferred *from the offering to the offerer*. And the *believer* is the offerer; his faith identifies him with Christ; he lays the hand of identifying trust on the Lord Jesus. Hence "by one offering He hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). "We are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus once for all" (Heb. x. 10). Christ's "atonement" was the satisfaction God receives for the perfectness which the offerer presents to Him. Christ only ever did this perfectly, and was accepted for us; and we are "complete in Him."—Developed from "*Jukes on the Offerings*."

Topic: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BURNT OFFERING (Vv. 3-9).

Probably we see the meaning of the Mosaic ritual more clearly than Hebrews did, for we look at it in the light of New Testament elucidation. Those who offered the sacrifices in the tabernacle knew only in part, and saw as through a glass darkly; now that the Great Sacrifice has been offered, we look at those rites face to face.

Among the Jews the burnt offering was the oldest and most significant, and announced, every day, truths of transcendent importance. *Such sacrifices were symbolic of the kind of worship God requires of the human race.* Notice:

I. THE NATURE OF THE BURNT OFFERING. Neither valueless nor unclean creatures were to be presented, but living, wholesome, sound, and valuable gifts; the pride and prime of the flocks and herds, "a male without blemish." So God demands, as well as deserves, the first and best of all that we possess. He will not accept the refuse and dregs of our time and talents. Youth, strength, worth, and beauty are to be ungrudgingly, unreservedly given.

II. THE CHARACTER OF THE BURNT OFFERING.

(a) *Voluntary.* "He shall offer it of his own voluntary will." Though commanded, it was not extorted; obedience was to be willing, not compelled. God treated Israelites as men, not machines; as servants, not slaves; Men have

always been allowed to "choose whom they would serve"; it is so still, we may accept or reject the Great Sacrifice; we must present ourselves voluntarily to the Lord, none other is acceptable service.

(b) *Vicarious*. "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him." This act indicated the identification of the offerer with the offering, and the transference of his *guilt* to it. The perfect suffered for the imperfect, the guiltless for the guilty. So Christ suffered in our stead, and bore our sins, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." As we lay our hand, by faith, upon the spotless Lamb of God, we become identified with Him, and our guilt is transferred to Him. [See Addenda, p. 19. *Propitiation*.]

III. THE MANNER OF THE BURNT OFFERING. Not only strict injunction about what to be offered, and when, and where, but *how* the offering was to be presented.

(a) *Orderly*. "Order Heaven's first law." Minute directions given even to washing inwards and legs of victim, the plucking away of the crops of the pigeons and doves. Thus *obedience was enjoined, resignation taught, and respect paid to Divine sovereignty*. Voluntaryism was not to be latitudinarianism; God still requires order in our worship; forms may exist without frigid formality; and method, without mechanical monotony. Unrestrained religious fervour is only fanaticism or "will worship" and "strange fire."

(b) *Openly*. "At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation," not secretly in the tent, not away from open gaze in some hidden place, but publicly. Thus the worshipper became a *witness* and *confessor* before God and man. Witnessing for God, confession of Christ still required of all who profess to believe and worship. Our light is to "shine before men," we are to be "living epistles known and read of all men."

(c) *Devoutly*. "Before the Lord." This expression repeated to remind the offerer he was observed and judged by the searching Eye that looks into the secrets of the heart. Consciousness of being "before the Lord" would beget *humility, sincerity, solemnity*. Let us remember that all we think and say and do is in the light of God. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do"

(d) *Cheerfully*. "A sweet savour unto the Lord." As the fragrant flame ascended from the sacrifice, gladness and gratitude were symbolised, indicative of a joyful heart, and willing mind. God still requires sincerity and truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden parts we need to know wisdom. The holocaust thus taught the need of ardent love, aspiring desire, entire surrender, as the first essentials of real religion. In the self-sacrificing life and love of Christ these features meet in harmony and perfection. Though we are exempted from repeating the burnt offerings, we may present to God the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart with the assurance it will not be despised.—*F. W. Brown*.

Topic: VARIETY IN SACRIFICES (Vv. 10-17).

He who had, in Egypt, appointed for every household the one sacrifice of the Passover, now directs sacrifices of a wider and various order, graduated to the personal ability, and spiritual condition of each worshipper. These sacrifices which are to be brought to the Lord to propitiate His graciousness to them, are themselves the appointment of His graciousness to them. So absolute are His decrees concerning what is to be presented, and how, when and by whom to be presented, that to vary them at any suggestion of priest or priests, under any impulse of devotion, gratitude or fear, or through sense of dread and distress, would be to commit one of these transgressions which the sacrifices themselves were provided to meet. [See Maurice, *Doctrine of Sacrifice*.]

I. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN AND NEED FOR PROPITIATION PERVADES THE VARIED RANKS OF HUMAN SOCIETY.

Guilt is universal. "Rich and poor meet together," in sense of personal transgression and necessity for a sacrifice. Hence the *wealthy* who could offer "sacrifice of the *herd*," the *middle class* who could only bring "offering of the *flocks*," and the *poorest* whose impecuniosity compelled them to bring an "offering to the Lord of *fowls*," are all provided for in God's arrangements for propitiatory sacrifices. [See Addenda, p. 19, *Sacrifices of the Poor*.]

1. The condition and history of *every people showed the desire for sacrifice*; that it could only be stilled when the strongest and deepest convictions of humanity were stilled. But where there was sense of guilt, dependence, obligation, thankfulness, there sacrifices were offered.

2. The *entire Jewish people*, irrespective of social gradation, *had experienced God's redeeming mercy*, which constrained them all to seek Him with offerings. The Lord had ransomed them all, and was now drawing them into privileged relationship with Himself. He was "no respecter of persons": all alike were within Divine grace. And equally "the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men" (Tit. ii. 11).

3. In *every human heart* there dwells the *condemnation for sin and the promptings to seek propitiation with God*.

For though each man bears his own special sin, and each class in society carries its own distinctive transgression; yet all know that "all have sinned," and that God requires of every "wicked man that he forsake his way and return unto the Lord" (Isa. lv. 7).

II. DIVINE PROVISION FOR PROPITIATION IS VARIED TO SUIT ALL GRADATIONS OF HUMAN SOCIETY.

In no demand He makes does He "exact more than our iniquity deserveth." Nay, He relieves the weight of requirement that none should find the yoke other than easy, and the burden light.

1. *The resources and ability of the offerer* are considered. God is no "hard taskmaster." None can be discouraged by sense of inability.

2. *No one is exempted from the demand* of a propitiatory offering. The poorest are included in God's arrangement equally with the wealthiest.

3. *Liberty of choice is allowed that each may prove his sincerity* by bringing his utmost and best. God tests us thus.

4. *Humblest offerings were as acceptable with God as the costliest*: evidenced in the minuteness of God's directions for the poor man's offering of the fowls.

5. Supreme importance was attached to *the spirit in which the offering was brought* (v. 3). Thus "let us draw near with a pure heart" (Heb. x. 22).

III. AMID ALL VARIETY IN SACRIFICES THE ONE QUALITY OF PROPITIATION WAS CONSPICUOUS AND INHERENT.

1. *The quality of the offering*, as faultless, was specified, indicating that substitution could only be effective as giving to God a *sinless victim* in place of a sinful offerer.

2. *The identifying act of the offerer* denoted his sense of deserving the fate of the victim about to die.

3. *His being detained at the door of the tabernacle* until the sacrifice was offered impressed the truth that God was too holy for sinful man to approach until propitiated by sacrifice.

4. *By the process of cleansing, flaying, and burning*, a typical foreshadowing was enacted of the atoning sufferings of Christ, as the world's atonement, the "propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). And in that all-inclusive sacrifice every variety of the human family has a share; none too poor to be excluded, none too wealthy to be exempted; for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

OUTLINES ON VERSES.

V. 1.—*Theme:* GOD WITHIN THE TABERNACLE. “*And the Lord spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation.*”

The tabernacle was erected in the midst of a people supernaturally separated from the rest of mankind to be the recipients and mediators of a revelation which Jehovah would make of Himself to the world. In it a constant worship was to be maintained by the priests in the name of the holy nation.

I. *Within the sanctuary* God makes His presence known.

He may do it by “*calling*” men to Him there, or by “*speaking*” to them in messages of truth and life. Many have found, who entered the sanctuary, “surely God is in this place.” He is there—

1. *Invisible.* Moses saw not God; but “no man hath seen God at any time.” He is the “King immortal, invisible.” Yet there are solemn realities which eye hath not seen. The *material world* has in it many invisible facts: forces and agencies hidden from physical sight. *Life* also is crowded with invisible activities, energies of vast influence which elude vision. *Holy places* are not void scenes, an Unseen Presence is there.

2. *Recognised.* A solemn symbol dwelt in the tabernacle: the shekinah cloud. We have no visible sign; but none the less God makes His presence realised in His tabernacles now. He has spiritual resources for attesting that He is amidst “the congregation” still.

3. *Gracious.* Not as on Sinai, too awful for men to bear the sight; but gently dwelling above the mercy-seat. How graciously the Lord reveals Himself in His holy place now; to arouse the heedless, allure the sinful, heal the stricken, reveal His compassion, cleanse the contrite, save the trustful soul.

II. *Within the tabernacle* God sends His messages of redemption to the congregation.

Here the Lord sent directions for

sacrifices which should be for an “atone-ment.” The messages through Moses contained a system of religious truth answering all the spiritual necessities of Israel, revealing:

(1) *The nature and character of God.*

(2) *The covenant relation between Him and them.*

(3) *Provision for the pardon and restoration of the penitent transgressor.*

(4) *The condemnation of the wilfully and persistently disobedient.*

In these Christian times He sends tidings and offers of redemption unto His people; gracious messages of salvation in Christ to the congregations who gather.

1. *By His minister and representative:* as by Moses.

2. *Based upon the merits of atoning sacrifice.*

3. *Requiring man's response and co-operation.*

III. *Within the sanctuary* God is willing to meet every soul who will seek Him.

“*If any of you,*” etc. No restriction. True we may meet the Lord elsewhere than in His sanctuaries now; yet none but *may* find Him there. Only in order to meet Him acceptably, now as then, each must

1. *Come with sacrificial offering:* i.e., resting on the atonement of Christ.

2. *With thorough earnestness of desire.* Not prefactorily, not in alien mind, but “of his own voluntary will,” i.e., with personal effort to meet Him acceptably, and in His own way.

3. *With self-dedication.* Suggested in the burnt offering. Lay yourself before God, He will “receive you graciously.”

V. 2.—*Theme:* REVELATION OF PROPITIATION. “*Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall bring your offering of the herd and of the flock.*”

1. *The Author of Divine Revelation—God.* “The Lord called unto Moses.”

God could reveal: He knew what man needed: would not remain silent, and let man perish for want of *light* additional to that of Nature.

II. The Medium of *Divine Revelation*—*Man*. To a representative and brother of our race Divine communications came. Most *reasonable* and *appropriate* vehicle. Glorifying to God: dignifying to man.

III. The Scene of *Divine Revelation*—*Tabernacle*. Sacred place fitted to be audience chamber with Deity. Revelations given in sacred spots, as well as to select persons.

IV. The Means of *Divine Revelation*—*Speech*. The Lord “spake” unto Moses, used human speech, though imperfect; other language would have been unintelligible and useless.

V. The Purpose of *Divine Revelation*—*Redemption*. To sanctify from guilt, to save from consequences of sin, to recover holiness in man here and for ever. Such redemption (1) *Mediatorial*—through priest; (2) *Sacrificial*—through oblations.—F. W. B.

V. 2.—*Theme*: THE WAY OF ACCESS TO GOD. “If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock.”

Human liberty is here recognised, but it is a liberty emphatically *restricted*. Any man *might* bring an offering if he desired; but if he did, he must bring it according to absolute directions. In our dealings with God there must be acceptance of a Will beyond our own will; obedience to commands; reverent and humble observance of Divine authority. “Who art thou that repliest against God?” “Hath not the potter power over the clay?” etc. “Whatever He saith unto thee, do it.” “If ye be *willing* and *obedient*,” etc.

I. In our approach to God nothing is left to human invention.

1. There are conditions to our acceptable approach. Therefore, he who would draw nigh should pause and ask solemnly: “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, or bow before the high

God?” Do not “rush in where angels fear to tread.” Think Whom you approach, and inquire how to draw near aright.

2. There are *minutely revealed* conditions for our approach. Neither priest nor people might take one step except as directed (chap. viii. 36; ix. 6, 7). We may be sincere and even devout in spirit when adopting methods and ideas of our own in spiritual behaviour; but God will not have *our* way, but *His* way. It must be according to the revelation of God.

II. For our rightful approach to Him God has made full and gracious provision.

1. A place for meeting God (v. 1). Within the *sanctuary*; at the mercy-seat; in the “secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High.” God asks us apart. “Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” Israel had a “worldly sanctuary,” because then “the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.” Now there is no *outer court* for the people and *inner temple* for the priest; all may meet God in “heavenly places, in Christ Jesus”—drawing near God in blessed privacy.

2. A *sacrificial basis of acceptance*.

Being guilty man needs propitiatory sacrifice. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” This basis of a propitiatory sacrifice constituted Israel an acceptable people with God. The atonement of Christ is the guarantee of our welcome also. “Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” we may approach “in full assurance of faith.”

3. A *mediatorial ministry*. “The priests shall bring the blood” (v. 5). “We have such a High Priest . . . a minister of the sanctuary,” etc (comp. Heb. viii. 1, 2). Jesus represents us there continually; “in the presence of God for us”; and He presents to God our sacrifices and gifts; “by Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice,” etc. (Heb. xiii. 15).

III. By such arrangements for our acceptable approach, God has laid us

under most solemn obligations to seek Him.

1. Shall God wait in vain within the holy place, and *none draw near*? He says, "Seek ye My face." Surely our "hearts shall say to Him, Thy face, O Lord, will I seek."

2. Can sinful man *despise the sacrifice of Jesus* offered for his propitiation? Nay! "My soul looks backs to see," etc.

3. With such a Priest within the Holy Place, have we *no mediation to ask, no sins to confess, no offerings to bring*?

V. 3.—*Theme: NECESSITY OF SACRIFICE.* "If his offering be a burnt sacrifice."

The fall of man necessitated "the republication of the religion of Nature (as Butler says) with additional truths and additional proofs." Man required to be taught how depraved he had become, and how he might be delivered from the guilt and consequences of that fallen state. The burnt offering was eminently calculated to impress upon worshippers in the tabernacle services

I. *The heinous nature of sin.*

II. *The wickedness of idolatry.*

III. *The oneness of Israel's nationality.*

IV. *The duty and privilege of Divine worship.*

V. *The need of substitutionary sacrifice in order to salvation.*

VI. *The sovereign claim of Jehovah upon His people's life and love.*

The doctrine of mediation and vicarious sacrifice is taught in Nature, we get the principles there; but the eternal and spiritual truths, which those principles illustrate, are presented in the Levitical Ritual; and pre-eminently in the Redemption wrought by Jesus Christ. The directions concerning the burnt offering show that the recognition of the existence of sin and the need of its removal in order to acceptable service lies at the foundation of the Mosaic and Christian economies.—F. W. B.

V. 3.—*Theme: VOLITION IN WORSHIP.* "He shall offer it of his own voluntary will."

As expressive of *our Saviour's act in devoting Himself* to be man's sacrifice, it accords with the grand statement, "Lo I come to do Thy will, O God; Thy law is within My heart." And as expressive of the *soul's act in coming before God* with his own offerings of love and service, or with the free exercise of trust in Jesus' atonement, it suggests the right state in which to seek God. The offering is not the chief thing in the transaction, but the spirit of the man occupied in it.

I. True worship springs from the soul. Should be—

1. *Spontaneous.* As a joy, not constrained, not reluctant.

2. *Grateful.* Recognising the privilege, seizing the gracious opportunity.

3. *Earnest.* With a whole heart in the act.

II. Acceptable worship depends on the offerer's will. On—

1. *The thoroughness of his purpose.* Christ asks, "What wilt thou?" and makes His answer wait upon our desire.

2. *The ardour of his approach.* Come with intensity of aim, ask large things, cry, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."

3. *The individuality of his suit.* Every man must be himself in worship, not echo others' prayers, not repeat others' acts, but stand before God as a worshipper, having something which is "his own"—to repent of, to ask for, to offer.

III. Sacrificial worship is the transgressor's personal transaction.

1. *The victim* must be one which *the offerer himself brings*. We must "bring" our sacrifice now, come before God with the mention and merits of Christ.

2. *The offerer* must exert his own faith in the act of substitution. Claiming Christ's merit, identifying himself with the atonement of Calvary by his appropriating faith.

3. *The transaction* must be wholly one of volition. God does not force us unwilling. We must act with a prompt and earnest spirit, or miss the precious benefits of the Redeemer's sacrifice.

Note: *Faith*, when real, acts eagerly. *Love* is always swift in volition. *Misery*

(as over sin) goes willingly to the Lord with its "sacrifice of a broken heart," or with trust in the redemption of the Cross.

IV. Self-dedicatory worship draws its virtues from the free will which prompts it.

1. Only thus is it *sincere*. Yet some offer themselves to God moved by example, induced by companions, under transient excitement, agitated by alarm, but void of full, and earnest, and determined action of the will.

2. Only thus is it *pleasing to God*. He "loveth a cheerful giver." Whatever we bring, it should be with entirety, resoluteness.

3. Only thus can it *gain us spiritual benefit*. "With what measure we mete it shall be measured to us." If we are heedless and heartless in going to God, He will return leanness to our souls. But He has "abundant pardon," "plenteous redemption," "abounding grace," for earnest souls.

They who give themselves *wholly and voluntarily* to the Lord, He "receives graciously and loves freely." [See Addenda, p. 19, *Consecration*.]

V. 4.—*Theme*: ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD. "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the offering."

This book might be called the Gospel according to Leviticus, for it exhibits the gospel in its spirit, though under figurative rites. One of the fathers says that *every syllable of this book contains a mystery*, and Paul tells us that "*the law was a shadow of good things*," etc.

If a man happen to find a monument of antiquity with inscriptions of old letters and characters, how anxious is he to decipher the meaning and reveal the hidden mystery! Much more should we be anxious to examine and investigate the figures of this book. Every sacrifice was a kind of silent sermon presented to the eye, indicating the nature of Christ's office and the design of His death. And by such visible signs the gospel was preached, just as when John said, "*Behold the Lamb of God*."

I. That God alone is competent to

reveal the nature of the sacrifice and the method of our acceptance.

He strongly resents every neglect of His prescribed institutions and every invasion of His prerogative.

"*The Lord called to Moses and spake unto him*," etc. In the setting up of the tabernacle, every particular is closed with "*As the Lord commanded Moses*." Learn, then, how sweet *commanded obedience* is. "*In vain do ye worship by tradition*."

If none of the *outward* offices were left to human invention, how much less able is man to originate the *terms of acceptance with God*! None but God knew the evil of sin, the value of the soul, the conditions of worthy approach, etc. God prescribes a method of acceptance and worship for all classes. All stand in equal need of an interest in the atonement; all must seek it on the same terms, by God's prescribed rule; all shall derive the same benefit. The rich were to present a bullock; but where the ability differed the offering differed. Those next in degree were to present a sheep or goat, and those poorer still were to present turtle doves or young pigeons.

It should be remembered that the offering of the Virgin Mary at the birth of our Lord was not a costly, but a simple, one—the humblest; no more than a turtle dove and two young pigeons. To put honour on humble poverty Jesus was born in a borrowed manger, and was buried in a borrowed grave. "*Foxes have holes*." "God dwells with the poor in spirit."

II. That God prescribes not only the offering itself but the spirit in which it should be presented.

1. *It was to be a bullock*, to show that the *best* of our possessions are to be offered to the Lord; and *without blemish*. God condemns those who brought the blind and lame. And it intimates, too, the purity of the appointed sacrifice. "*Such an High Priest became us*," etc. The excellency and perfection of Christ had much to do with the efficacy of His sacrifice. "*A lamb without blemish or spot*." "*Who through the Eternal Spirit*," etc.

Some are desirous of a *cheap religion*, but when God provided a sacrifice it was the most costly; "*not silver and gold, but precious blood.*" As God deemed nothing too precious for us, we deem nothing too precious for Him.

2. *It was to be freely offered.* "Of His own voluntary will." To show that God does not accept constrained service. "*The people offered willingly.*" "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.*" "*With my whole heart have I sought Thee.*" "*I beseech you,*" etc. (Rom. xii. 1).

3. *It was to be openly presented*—to show that we publicly confess Christ before men. "At the door of the congregation." "*I am not ashamed of the gospel.*" "*Whosoever is ashamed.*" A public avowal—for the good of others and for the glory of God.

4. *The offerer must take a distinct personal part in the transaction.* "He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering," to show that he was deeply sensible of his need of mercy; to show that he fully concurred in the appointed sacrifice, that he was anxious to transfer all his guilt to the victim, and derived all his hope from it. "*My faith would lay her hand.*"

Our devout affections must centre in Christ; our only trust be reposed in Him. "*We receive the atonement.*" Not merely driven by the stress of necessity, but a hearty concurrence.

5. *Not only was the victim slain, but the blood sprinkled.*

6. *The whole was to be presented by the priest.* Not only at the altar, but within the veil.

III. That God has left us in no doubt of our acceptance when thus approaching Him in faith and prayer. "It shall be accepted for him, to make an atonement for him."

1. *The substitutionary offering is allowed by God to stand in the sinner's stead*—"accepted for him."

2. The provision of the substitute is *even a more welcome arrangement* than that the sinner should bear his own punishment. "It shall be *accepted.*" God "desires not the death of a

sinner," is well pleased that we find escape by laying our hand on the Sacrifice of Calvary.

3. *It effects a full "atonement" for the soul, satisfies the Divine requirements, and secures the justification of the believer.* "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

4. *It makes the offerer himself an object of pleasure in God's regard.* Not merely is our substitutionary offering "*accepted*" by God, but we become *ourselves beloved for the sake of our trust in the Sacrifice.* "I will accept you, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel xl. 27).

V. 9.—*Theme: THE ALTAR FIRE*
"*An Offering made by Fire.*"

The flame devours. The victim is consumed. Seek the truth reflected from the altar fire. The Cross flashes it out vividly. The fire consumes the sacrifice.

I. *That fire tells what is sin's due.*

It portrays what the guilty must bear. Look on the consuming blaze, and think how the "fire shall be ever burning, it shall never go out." Remember Christ's picture of the sinner's doom—"everlasting fire"; "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Ponder, therefore, *sin's sure doom!*

II. *That fire suggests the anguish of Christ.*

Type of the Cross is that altar; and of the sufferings of Jesus, that burning fire. "He made His soul an offering for sin."

"O, the pangs His soul sustained!"

His anguish was as a "consuming fire," it raged within Him as a scorching blaze. It was as though God's wrath was hot and devastating upon Him. Mark, therefore, the *Saviour's redeeming grace!*

III. *That fire portrays the fervour of Christian consecration.*

With burning devotion, and flaming zeal, and self-consuming love, ardent, glowing, manifest. Shall *Christ's* "zeal consume Him," and *ours* lack intens-

ity? The entire life of a Christian should be one continuous blaze of flaming love and ardent devotion. [See Addenda : p. 19, *Consecration.*]

V. 9.—*Theme*: THE SPIRIT'S EFFICACY. "An offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord."

The Holy Spirit is symbolised by fire. All the grace and virtue of sacrifices depend upon the Spirit.

I. Altar sacrifices were consecrated by the element of Divinely kindled fire.

The fire came from heaven (comp. chap. ix. 24): and any fire not thus supernaturally originated was offensive (comp. chap. x. 1). That fire coming "out from before the Lord" symbolises the Holy Ghost, which came as *fire from God* on the Pentecost. Only through the Spirit's sanctifying could those offerings have become holy.

II. Christ's sacrifice was rendered efficacious through the energy of the Holy Spirit.

He suffered in the spirit. "Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." That Divine fire burned within the soul of Jesus: the Spirit was given without measure unto Him; and His sacred unction consecrated the sufferings of Jesus to be a perfect atonement for human sin.

III. Spiritual sacrifices depend for their sanctity on the Spirit's grace.

Of Jesus it was declared "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Is not that the "*Spirit of burning*" which rendered "holy" everyone "written among the living in Jerusalem"? [See Isa. iv. 3, 4.] This "manifestation of the Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 7, 11) is the occasion of all Christian sanctity and of all acceptable sacrifice and service. His glowing grace and energy within the soul constrains and seals our devotions; and "the unction from the Holy One" (1 Jno. ii. 20) makes our lives and offerings "a sweet savour unto the Lord."

IV. All sacrifices sanctified by the Spirit rise as a delightful incense unto God.

When Noah, saved by the ark,

burned his sacrifice of gratitude upon the altar he reared, "the Lord smelled a sweet savour" (Gen. viii. 21).

So from the holocaust in the tabernacle there arose "by fire a sweet savour unto the Lord." The ransomed Israelites, brought again from captivity to God's "holy mountain," should once more offer their oblations, and God would "accept them with their sweet savour" (Ezek. xx. 41). Supremely the *Lord Jesus Himself* was "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Ephes. v. 2). And we, whom God "causeth to triumph in Christ," are "unto God a sweet savour of Christ" (2 Cor. ii. 15).

Every sacrifice which is the outflowing of our love and zeal for the Lord, becomes, through the virtue of the Spirit consecrating our gifts, "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God" (Phil. iv. 18).

The Holy Spirit is the sacred fire in the Christian life, by whose gracious influences our offerings ascend in sweetness and acceptableness "unto the Lord." "Quench not the Spirit." [See Addenda p. 19, *The Ascending Fire.*]

V. 11. *Theme*: A LIFE-OFFERING. "He shall kill it on the side of the altar."

I. Its substitutionary significance

1. That the offerer *deserved to forfeit his life.*

2. That he *sought escape from the penalty of his sinfulness.*

3. That he *believed God would accept the victim* in lieu of himself.

4. That substitution not alone sufficed Jehovah, but was *more acceptable* to Him than the sinner's death.

II. Its practical interpretation.

1. *Life peculiarly belongs to God*: it is supremely His part in creation. Lower things He gives to man; but life is His.

2. Representing thus His claim on His creatures, it stands as *the emblem of what we owe Him*. What we owe we ought to pay. We should give our life to God. It is our *duty*.

3. It denotes that *what is most precious in us*, and forms the supremely

valuable element in our being, should all and *wholly be the Lord's*. Not the inferior part, not the less essential qualities, not "part of the price," but everything in us of worth: our *life*.

III. Its Gospel foreshadowing.

1. *The body of Jesus* is the offering portrayed. "A body hast Thou prepared Me."

2. He yielded to God *man's duty*; the *dutiful life* man had failed to surrender to Him.

3. He gave *life in its perfectness* to God. In Himself perfect, He offered Himself wholly and absolutely and perfectly to God: and the perfectly obedient *Man* then "seeing that all things were now accomplished, cried, It is finished, and gave up the ghost."

V. 13.—*Theme: COMPLETENESS IN SELF DEVOTION.* "The priest shall bring it all, and burn it on the altar."

1. In this particular the Burnt offering differed from the Meat offering and Peace offering; for in these *only a part* was burnt with fire.

2. It differed also from the Sin offering, which though wholly burnt, was *not burnt "on the altar."*

I. *Man's duty to God* is the absolute surrender of all.

Not of one faculty or several; but the entirety.

1. This *accords with Christ's summary of the first commandment*: which demands all the *mind*, all the *soul*. all the *affection*, all the *strength*. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all*," etc. (Matt xxii. 37).

2. The *minute and all-inclusive devotion of the victim* affirms the same truth. The "head," the "fat," the "legs," the "inwards" all are enumerated. Symbolic: "head" of *thoughts*; "fat" of *vigour*; "legs" of *walk, conduct*; "inwards" of *affections and emotions*.

II. *Christ's performance of Man's*

duty to God was characterised by *absolute surrender of all*.

1. *Jesus reserved nothing*; He gave up all. Had there been but *one thought* in the mind of Christ not perfectly given to God, one *affection* in His heart not yielded to His Father's will, one *step* in the walk of Jesus not taken for God but for His own pleasure, then He would not have offered Himself, or been accepted, as "a whole burnt offering" to Jehovah. But all was *offered*, and all was *consumed* on the altar.

2. *From first to last, in Jesus, self had no place*. So entirely was His whole life devoted to His Father that it *almost seems He could have had no will of His own*. Everything He did or said was for God. His *first* recorded words were, "I must be about My Father's business"; His *last*, "It is finished." Yet as perfect man, He had a *human will*, and human *affections*. But no one hour was spent, nor act performed for His own advancement or gratification; all was given in entire devotedness to God.

III. *Christian self devotion* will attempt to re-produce Christ's absolute surrender of all.

1. True, this is a *conception of life repudiated by the world*. "Men will praise thee when thou doest *well to thyself*" (Psa. xlix. 18).

2. *Few Christians exhibit such self devotion* to God. Our thoughts are for *self*, our ease, our interest, etc. But if *David* resolved "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord of that which doth *cost me nothing*"; if *Ananias* was punished for grieving the Spirit by "*keeping back part of the price*"; surely we whom "*the love of Christ constraineth*" should rise to highest devotion of our all to God; and, like our Lord who "gave Himself" (Ephes. v. 2) in all His perfectness, "*yield ourselves unto God.*"

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER I.

Revelation. Varro, a Roman writer of the first century B.C., states, that in his day he had been at pains to

collect the various opinions on the question "What is the true object of human life?" and had reckoned up

as many as *three hundred and twenty different answers*. How much we need "the wisdom which is from above," teaching from God! He reveals what we need to know for our truest good on earth, our acceptance with Him now, and our entrance at last into His presence. We are to listen to Him, and obey His word.

"Tis revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries except her own,
And so illuminates the path of life
That fools discover it, and stray no more."
—Cowper.

Dr. Taylor of Norwich once said to me (wrote John Newton), "Sir, I have collated every word in the Hebrew Scriptures seventeen times, and it is very strange if the doctrine of the atonement you hold should not have been found by me" "I am not surprised at this" (John Newton answered); "I once went to light my candle, and could not, for the *extinguisher* was on it. Now prejudice, from education, learning, etc., often proves an extinguisher; it is not enough that you bring the candle, you must remove the extinguisher."

The Ascending Fire. "The symbolism of this combustion (upon the altar) is manifest. It was a *sending of the gift to God*. After arranging the divided or the selected portions of the carcass in the heaven-born fire, which had issued forth from the Divine presence at the consecration of the tabernacle, they were burned, that is to say, they were *etherialised* and they *rose to heaven* as 'a sweet savour.' To burn was to effectually present."—*Principal Cave*.

Sacrifices of the Poor. The Jews at Jassy still bring *offerings of the fowls*. "In one house" records those who were observers of the incident, "we came to the window of the house and saw distinctly what was going on within. A little boy was reading the prayers, and his widowed mother stood over him with a white hen in her hands. When he came to a certain place in the prayer, the mother lifted up the struggling fowl, and waving it round her head, repeated these words: '*This be my substitute,*

this be my exchange: this fowl shall go to death and I to a blessed life.'" This was done three times over, and then the door of the house was opened, and out ran the boy carrying the fowl to the shooet, or slayer, to be killed by him in the proper manner." This occurred on the eve of the Day of Atonement.

"Sacrifice is the first element of religion, and resolves itself in theological language into the love of God."—Froude, "*Short Stories*."

Propitiation. Cowper, the poet, speaking of his religious experiences, says, "But the happy period which was to shake off my fetters, and afford me a clear opening of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus, was now arrived. I flung myself into a chair near the window, and seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the 25th of the 3rd of Romans: 'Whom God hath set forth *to be a propitiation* through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.' Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the *sufficiency of the Atonement* He had made, my pardon sealed in His blood, and all the fulness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed and received the Gospel."

Consecration. "And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto Thee," etc.—*Communion Service*.

"From henceforth thou shalt learn that there is love to long for, pureness to desire, a mount of consecration it were good to scale."—*Jean Ingelow*.

On the seal of the Baptist Missionary Society is the figure of an ox, standing patiently, with a *plough* on one side, and an *altar* on the other, with the inscription beneath: "*Ready for either,*" to serve or suffer.

Calvin's motto was: "*I give Thee all; I keep back nothing for myself.*"

CHAPTER II.

Bloodless Sacrifices : The Food-Offerings.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 1. His offering shall be of fine flour.—Sacrifices for the “meat offering” were from the vegetable, not animal, kingdom. *Food offering* more expresses the idea. Prepared from wheat, and presented in various forms; fine flour, and cakes of four different kinds, and wheat in the grain. These were products of husbandry, not spontaneous growths entailing no anxiety in provision, or labour in preparation; they represent human labour; were the daily food of man, essential to his life; suggestive, therefore, of his *dependence* on God, to whom he offered them, his *gratitude* to God, from whom he received them, his *dedication* to God, whom he worshipped in the act of sacrifice. As typical of Christ: His *excellency* is indicated in the quality of the flour, “fine,” and His *sufferings* in the disposal of it. God looks for grateful returns from those who share the gifts of His bounty in Providence: “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?” How much more He should receive responses of our thankful love for His greatest Gift whose worth and virtue are prefigured in this “fine flour burned upon the altar” as “a thing *most holy* of the offerings of the Lord made by fire.”

Oil and frankincense.—Symbolic of the Holy Spirit’s grace, and the sacred joy of a consecrated life. If “flour” suggests the product of human labour, the “oil” points to the added sanctity of the Spirit, needful in order to our offering being worthy a place on God’s altar; and “frankincense” denotes the devout gladness with which we should make fragrant every act of sacrifice and service to the Lord. Compass God’s altar, enriched by the Spirit’s unction, and inspired with *holy fervour*; thus our consecration becomes “a sweet savour unto the Lord.”

V. 2. Burn the memorial of it.—As a heavenward appeal to God that He would *remember* both the offerer and His “word unto His servants on which He had caused them to hope.” So David pleads—the Lord “remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice” (Psa. xx. 3); and thus the prayers and alms of Cornelius rose up “for a memorial before God.” We may send up to Heaven our “incense of a pure offering,” and keep a memorial continually before God of our enduring hope in Him and of His covenant engagements for us.

V. 3. The remnant.—The priests of the tabernacle lived upon these consecrated gifts. As “priests unto God” (Rev. i. 6) we Christians have a share in all the provisions of God’s house: the Bread of Life, the grace of the Spirit, the delights of Divine fellowship. This is “the feast of fat things” which they within the Church enjoy. “Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness” (Isa. lv. 2).

V. 8. Bring the Meat Offering.—Choose which kind of offering you prefer (three kinds are specified in vv. 4-7), then come with it “unto the Lord”; through the mediation of our *Divine* “Priest”; and He who prizes the “prayers of the saints” and loves the “sacrifices of joy,” will seal our offerings with acceptance, and “hear from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand” (Psa. xx. 6).

V. 11. No offering with leaven nor any honey.—They would produce fermentation. “Leaven” is symbolic of pride and hypocrisy, malice and wickedness; and “honey,” though sweet to the taste, soon begets sickness, thus suggesting a

soul quickly satiated and nauseated. God desires "truth in the inward parts," worship from a "honest heart," sacrifices from those whose delight in Him is not quickly reversed, whose love changes not. A mingling of corruption and insincerity spoils our finest offerings. What need to pray, "Create in me a clean heart," etc., and to examine ourselves and our motives when employed in sacred occupations, lest we offend with leaven and honey.

V. 13. *Season with salt.*—It preserves from putrefaction; renders food savoury; denotes uncorruptedness, durability, constancy; was and is an oriental symbol of hospitality and amity. "Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt," says Christ (Mark ix. 49): there must be no corruptness allowed in the individual Christian life; and all our services should be savoured with the precious qualities of enduring fidelity and constant love. Salt, too, betokens the perpetuity of the Spirit's grace; and because of His abiding presence (glad fact in the Christian's experience, "He dwelleth with you and shall be in you") the consecrated soul retains its sweetness with God and its healthful influence on men. "Ye are the salt of the earth."

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: HOMAGE GRACED WITH EXCELLENCIES (Vv. 1-3).

In seeking God it should be our aim to press much into the act of adoration: not to approach Him with a poverty of graces, but with every virtue combined in the service; thought and feeling, desire and devotion all being of the highest, the finest and most fragrant. Not with one excellency alone beautifying our homage, but with manifold excellencies combined. "The *preparations* (plural) of the heart" are desirable; all our resources of devout feeling and intelligence; the soul's fulness of gracious yearnings and aspirations; so that our offerings are rich in excellent qualities of homage: these make worship and service "things most holy" unto the Lord.

1. EVERY ELEMENT OF WORTH AND ATTRACTIVENESS SHOULD CONCENTRATE IN OUR WORSHIP AND SERVICE OF GOD. "His offering shall be of *fine flour*; and he shall *pour oil* upon it, and put *frankincense* thereon." By all these combined ingredients a total result would be produced which constituted the offering one of a sweet savour unto the Lord."

1. *Solitary graces are not despised* by Him we worship. We may take Him *gratitude*, as did Noah when he burnt his sacrifice upon quitting the Ark; our *appeasement* sacrifices, as did Balaam on Pisgah; our *penitential* oblation, as David did in the threshing-floor of Araunah; we may take Him our *look of faith*, as did the Israelites suffering from the serpent-bite; our *tears*, as did Peter when he "wept bitterly"; and none of these sacrifices are rejected. For he condescends to our low estate, and accepts the one ruling feeling or desire which prompts us to seek His face.

2. Yet worship should be *the outflow of all noble affections and aspirations* of the soul. "Fine flour, oil and frankincense," all should mingle, all should blend into an offering "of sweet savour." As when the woman "who was a sinner" brought her "alabaster box of ointment," and besides this, "washed His feet with tears," yea, and "kissed His feet," and then "anointed them with the ointment" (Luke vii. 37-8)—all passions of penitence, gratitude, adoration, trust, love, combining and concentrated on Jesus!

3. *Preparation for such a blending of graces in worship* is our evident duty. We ought not to enter God's presence with a poverty of homage, with hearts cold and heedless, with no affection astir, with no sacred graces alert; but with all holy emotions and desires awake, and intelligent perceptions quickened by *forethought and pre-vision*. God emphatically directs this preparatory arrangement

for a right offering: "When any will offer, etc., he shall take thereout the flour and the oil and the frankincense" (vv. 1 and 2). [See Addenda, p. 29, *Sweet Incense.*]

So David arouses and prepares himself: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and *all that is within me*, bless His holy name." Having no occasion in this age of the Spirit to seek God with material presents, we may and should take Him the realities they symbolised; so that as from "golden vials *full of odours*" the prayers of saints might "ascend up before God" (Rev. v. 8; viii. 5). All this should enforce upon worshippers a deeply earnest concern to go in unto the King with their *purest, holiest, devoutest* feelings and thoughts. "Let not thine heart be *l'asty* to utter *anything* before God" (Eccles. v. 1, 2). He asks of us "whatsoever things are true, venerable, just, pure, lovely," etc.

II. ADORABLE PRESENTATIONS TO GOD SECURE HIS GRACIOUS APPRECIATION AND LAVISH PRAISE.

What a richness of approving words we have here! "An offering . . . of a *sweet savour* unto the Lord." "It is a thing *most holy* of the offerings," etc. (Vv. 2, 3).

1. *No poverty of approval ever repels a fervent worshipper.*

Affection may be wasted upon the unappreciating; pearls cast before swine will be trodden under foot; Art's beauties are insipid to the unsympathetic soul. To the imbecile and the eye void of discernment,

"A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose is to him,
And it is *nothing more.*"

Much that is beautiful in the world, and in human life, misses recognition; eyes and hearts are closed to their preciousness. But "God *knoweth the heart*"; sees the motive of action, the meaning of sighs and tears, the graces of desire and design in our feeblest and frustrated efforts. "It is well that it was *in thine heart.*" "The Lord loveth a *cheerful* giver." "It is accepted according to *that a man hath.*" Nothing escapes Him. Jesus *so instantly saw the charm of Mary's act*, though against it the "disciples murmured" (Mark xiv. 6, 8, 9). God "*smelled a sweet savour*" when Noah sacrificed.

2. Offering such excellency of homage we *shall assuredly realise that God is well pleased.* If "the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering," because "by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, *God testifying of his gift,*" will He fail to seal His favour upon the soul who "worships Him in spirit and in truth," seeing "the Father *seeketh* such to worship Him"? Did there not come transfiguration glories upon Jesus "*as He prayed*" (Luke ix. 29), followed by the inspiring testimony, "This is My beloved Son"? "In everything by *prayer and supplication with thanksgiving*, let your requests be made known unto God; and *the peace of God*, which passeth all understanding, *shall keep your hearts and minds* through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6, 7). God will make us glad, assured that we are "*accepted of Him.*"

III. *Excellences in typical offerings* FORESHADOWED THE BEAUTIES AND WORTHINESS OF JESUS.

1. The quality of the flour bespeaks the *intrinsic excellence of Christ.* He is the faultless One, "holy, harmless, undefiled"; God's most gracious Son; "fairer than the children of men." Inheriting His virtues by faith, we are beauteous in His beauty, faultless in His perfection, "accepted in the Beloved," "made the righteousness of God in Him," so as to stand at last "perfect before Him in love."

2. The pouring oil thereon denotes the *anointing of the Spirit.* For the Holy Ghost descended on Him; "baptised with the Holy Ghost," Jesus was enriched

with the Spirit's grace. And as "heirs of Christ" we also "have an unction from the Holy One"; and "the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you" (1 Jno. ii. 27).

3. The added frankincense, creating a pleasing odour through the tabernacle, tells of the *delightfulness of Christ*; His joy-inspiring grace. Is not His name "as ointment poured forth"? He gladdens all who share in His sacrifice. And He adds the beauty of spiritual delightfulness to the believer, so that God joys in us; and we are both to Him and among men as "the sweet savour of Christ."

Our approach to God *in the excellences of worship* becomes acceptable and well-pleasing to Him only because of *Jesus' merits and virtues*, which add all the worth to every accepted service men can render to the Lord. [See Addenda, p. 28, *The Beautiful in Worship*.]

Topic: MAINTENANCE OF PRIESTLY MINISTRATION (Vv. 8-10).

I. APPROACH TO GOD'S ALTAR THROUGH GOD'S PRIESTHOOD.

1. *Their office and ministers were Divinely ordained.* (a) As to the *office*: "No man taketh this honour to himself but he that is called of God" (Heb. v. 4). Christian preachers must hear God's call to the ministry. "Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son" (Heb. v. 5). (b) As to the *ministrations*: Every act of the priests is here minutely prescribed. So of *Christian ministers* (1 Cor. ix. 16-23). And our Lord's ministrations equally so. (See Heb. vii. 24, &c.)

2. *Without their mediation none could approach God.* Nor may any come nigh His presence now except through the priesthood of Jesus Christ (John xiv. 6), "No man cometh to the Father but by Me"; and (Heb. iv. 15, 16), "Having a High Priest, &c., let us therefore come boldly," &c. The Christian ministry does not reproduce and perpetuate a human priesthood. No sacrifices are now offered (Heb. x. 11, 12); but "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though *God did beseech you by us . . . be ye reconciled to God.*"

II. MAINTENANCE OF GOD'S PRIESTS BY THE PEOPLES' GIFTS.

1. A *Divine ordinance* that they should be *generously supported while sacredly employed.* Not *supernaturally.* God did not feed them with angels' food, nor from the skies, nor from other than human resources, but by the *offerings of individual worshippers.* It left them free for their hallowed work. It called out the *generous thoughtfulness* of those whom they sacredly served. It knit priest and people together in *mutual dependence* and *mutual helpfulness.*

2. *Individual responsibility to support God's servants and maintain His sanctuary.* Not a single sacrifice could be laid on the altar, of any kind, without some part being assigned to the priests. This affirms our duty to give of our life and love to *Christ* while we approach His Sacrifice to draw atonement from Christ. It also pronounces against a *selfish spirit*, concerned only for personal gain, in seeking salvation. The offerer must consider others' wants as well as care for his own soul. And equally it teaches that they who enter God's house and benefit by the *ministration of the Christian pastor* should contribute to his comfort and support (1 Cor. ix. 11, 13, 14; Phil. iv. 18). [See Addenda, p. 29, *God's Ministers.*]

III. PRIESTLY MINISTRATIONS PROTECTED WITH UTMOST SANCTITY.

1. Closed within the sacred precincts of God's house, *they lived apart from the world.* God's witnesses to a *spiritual* life, and to a "life hid with Christ in God." "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate."

2. Ceaselessly employed in sacred services, they *summoned men to a self-surrendered career*, glorifying God in their body and their spirit which are His."

“Ye are a holy priesthood, a peculiar people” (1 Pet. ii. 5-9), “zealous of good works.”

3. Living in the very scene where God dwelt, they *pledged to all sanctified souls a home with God*. “*These are not of the world.*” “I will that they be with Me where I am” (John xvii. 16-24). “Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve Him *day and night in His temple,*” &c. (Rev. vii. 15).

Topic: SUGGESTIVENESS OF THE MEAT OFFERING (Vv. 8-10)

I. ITS HUMAN ASPECT.

The Burnt Offering indicated consecration to, reconciliation with God; transference of guilt to victim slain. The meat offering points to *restoration* after reconciliation, the introduction of the worshipper to favour and friendship of the Lord. At the Lord's Table, we may remember, the associations are Eucharistic as well as Sacrificial. What did the meat offering teach the offerer concerning himself?

1. *That he was dependent upon God.* As he prepared and presented the finest of the wheat, made the pure white flour into cakes such as formed his daily meal, he would be reminded of his dependence upon God who makes the corn to grow, and crowns the year with His goodness. This offering, suggestive of the *social meal*, would remind the worshipper that he sat at the board of his heavenly Father who gave him daily food, and loaded him with life's bounteous blessings.

2. *That he was under obligation to God.* The offering acknowledged his duty and indebtedness. Though small, yet it was of the best. Not *chaff, husks, or bran*, but “*fine flour.*” The obligation was to be discharged with (a) *Cheerfulness.* Oil was to mingle with offering, suggesting gladness in the worshipper, grace and favour in the worshipped. (b) *Devoutness.* “*Frankincense,*” an emblem of prayer and praise ascending like sweet incense to the sky.

We are prone to forget the goodness of God as exercised and exhibited in our unceasing Providential supplies. He gives us necessaries and luxuries. Yet some (a) *forget Him* amid the excitements and enjoyments of life. Some (b) *ignore Him* in their exclusive attention to the laws and agencies of nature. Some (c) *insult Him* by denying His existence, and attributing all phenomena and providence to chance. But some (d) *adore Him* by grateful hearts and obedient lives. We should thankfully partake of His temporal mercies, but with supreme gratitude accept “*His unspeakable gift,*” the true Bread from heaven.

II. ITS SACERDOTAL ASPECT; or, What did the meat offering teach concerning the Priests?

1. *Their office was worthy of respect.* Selected by the Lord, they were His special servants, and were appointed to perform sacred duties which the people could not do for themselves. They were God's priests, and as such deserved the considerate regard of the people. Though Christian ministers are not priests, yet they are ambassadors for Christ, and stand, as it were, in His stead, beseeching men to be reconciled unto God; and, as such, are to be held in high esteem for their work's sake.

2. *Their services commanded recompense.* Being withdrawn from secular engagements, and giving their time and thoughts to sacerdotal duties, they had a cogent claim (a) *to live in the affections and sympathies of the people;* and (b) *to be supported by them* (Ezek. xliv. 27-30; 1. Cor. ix. 13). In connection with the sacrifices there was the priest's portion (v. 3), so that their physical wants might be supplied. The New Testament teaches that “*the labourer is worthy of his hire,*” and “*those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel.*”

3. *Their sacredness claimed for them no worship.* No sacrifice was offered to the priests. They had to seek forgiveness and offer sacrifices for themselves.

Till the worship had been completed they partook of nothing offered in sacrifice to God; then it was their privilege to share what remained. Under the New Testament dispensation ministers are not priests. They occupy no such unique position, and have no priestly functions to fulfil. Yet, the minister of the Cross—if he be true and faithful—is worthy of the highest esteem, as well as worthy of his hire, though unworthy of worship, as the Levitical priests. Through relationship to our Great High Priest the whole company of the faithful become “kings and priests unto God”; though not even “the glorious company of the apostles” would receive homage, but would exclaim with one voice, “*Worship God.*”

III. ITS THEOLOGICAL ASPECT; or, What did the meat offering teach the offerer concerning God?

1. *That He greatly valued His own gifts to man.* “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein”; and yet He holds His smallest works and common gifts to man in great esteem. His directing the priests about their offerings with such minuteness of detail shows that the works His hands had made are worthy being presented with scrupulous care and order in His service.

2. *That He reclaims and accepts His own gifts from man.* He had the right to do so, and to have them offered and disposed of as He saw fit. All objections about waste and uselessness in the sacrifices vanish when we remember this. When the people offered of their flocks and crops they only gave back a small portion of what they had received in abundance; so that their offerings were (a) *provided by God*; (b) *belonged to Him*; and (c), *however great, were below His deserts.* We cannot offer to the Lord anything that is absolutely our own, for all we have and are belong to Him. “Not your own, bought with a price.” God has a right to our service and sacrifice. If we present ourselves as living sacrifices He will accept and appreciate them as His own gifts restored.

3. *That He may be propitiated by such offerings of His gifts by man.* Offerings of the produce of the earth (such as Cain’s), unassociated with substitutionary sacrifice, fall below what God requires of man. Hence the Deist leaves out of his worship the essential element to efficiency and acceptability. The hand of faith must first be laid upon the head of the burnt offering, and an atonement be accepted for him, before other services and sacrifices can be well pleasing to God. We cannot enrich the Lord by our gifts, yet He accepts them as expressions of our fealty and faith. Such offerings of our gratitude and trust will be unto Him a “sweet savour.”—F. W. B.

Topic: CHARACTER AS QUALIFYING SACRIFICE (V. 1-3 and 11-13).

“*Fine flour, oil, frankincense, it is a thing most holy unto the Lord. No leaven nor any honey. Every oblation season with salt.*” Beyond all dispute the *frankincense* and *salt* indicate certain moral features of *good*; and *leaven, honey, &c.*, certain moral features of *evil*. This specification of the excellent, this prohibition of the deleterious, denotes how the *qualities* which enter into our sacrifices and services are considered by God.

I. Symbolised here we behold THE GRACES AND FAULTLESSNESS WHICH DISTINGUISHED JESUS.

1. *His life was sacrificial.* Bruised corn suggests suffering, and our Redeemer knew such bruising from God and man “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him,” &c. “Reproach hath broken My heart.” But a crushed and suffering Jesus is man’s salvation. “By His stripes we are healed.”

2. *Yet His sacrifice was full of grace.* “*Fine flour, oil, frankincense, salt.*” (a) Highest qualities of person and character distinguished Jesus. No husk, no common quality in the flour; “that *Holy Thing* which shall be born of thee shall

be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). "It is a thing most holy." (b) The sacred oil of the Spirit enriched the character of Christ. "Pour oil" (v. 1) "Grace is poured into thy lips." "The Word became flesh, full of grace and truth." "The Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost," &c. [See Acts x. 38.] (c) The delightfulness of a perfect willingness, the fragrance of a zealous consecration crowned His sacrifice: "Frankincense." "Thy law is within my heart." "His zeal it consumed me." "My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

3. In His character there was no fault. (a) No corruption tainted His sinless nature and sacrifice. "No leaven." "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." "I find no fault in this man." (b) No mere earthly sweetness which might become sickly; no weak sentiments of feeling; no low or fitful affections of the heart; no private preferences or fleeting fantasies. His soul was moved alone by loyalty and love to God and His high work for man.

4. Perpetuity and unchangeableness of excellence distinguished Christ's character and sacrifice. "Seasoned with salt." His devotion to man was an incorruptible and invariable principle. His saving grace is an enduring and inexhaustible quality in His sacrifice.

II. Indicated here we recognise THE QUALITIES OF CHARACTER GOD DESIRES IN SACRIFICIAL LIVES.

This offering was to present on the Lord's altar what would be grateful and savoury to Him. Such is the aim of the Christian life: to consecrate to Him a "sweet savour of Christ."

1. An even devotion, genuine and excellent throughout, like "fine flour."

2. An anointed character, beautified by the Spirit; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His."

3. A sweet fervour of soul. For as the fire brought out the aroma of frankincense, so should affliction exhibit Christian sweetness and grace. God desires, too, a glad and grateful spirit in service. "Giving thanks to His name." Also qualities which spread pleasure around, as did the frankincense. "To do good and communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

4. Uncorruptedness of heart. "No leaven, nor honey." Void of selfishness and guile; neither insincerity nor mere natural sweetness, which may decay; but the abiding graces of the Holy Spirit; having an "unction from the Holy One."

5. Enduring integrity of heart and life. "Salt." Counteracting the putrefactions of sin. Maintaining perpetuity of sacred love and consecration. "Showing forth the virtues of the Lord."

Holy and consecrated lives; the noblest qualities of heart; the incorruptible graces of the Spirit; these make our services and sacrifices "in the sight of God of great price." [See Addenda, p. 29, Character.]

Topic: RESURRECTION EMBLEMS. "The oblation of the first-fruits" (Vv. 12-16).

The order in which this offering came is given in chap. xxiii. First the *Passover*, then the *Wave-sheaf*, then the *Pentecost*. The "sheaf of the first-fruits" might be burnt as a sweet savour to the Lord, but the "oblation of the first-fruits" might not be burnt on the altar (chap. ii. 12). The reason for this being that the "sheaf" was unleavened, whereas the "oblation" was mixed and made with leaven (chap. xxiii. 17).

I. OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION presented the "Sheaf of the first-fruits" unto the Lord.

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep" (1 Cor. xv. 20).

1. "In Him was *no sin*"—no leaven. 2. He was Himself a "*sweet savour*" to God. 3. He therefore *rose to God* in His pure humanity as incense from the sacrifice.

II. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST was the "*oblation* of the first-fruits."

"We are a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (Jas. i. 18).

1. This offering, *having sin in it*, "*mixed with leaven*," could not stand the test of fire, God's searching holiness.

2. Yet it was to be *consecrated to God*. "Ye shall offer it, but it shall not be burnt" (Lev. ii. 12).

3. And was *both offered and accepted*. For along "*with it*" was presented a burnt offering, a meat offering, a peace offering, and a sin offering: symbols of Christ's *propitiatory atonement*. The Church comes before God *with the merits of Christ*; and is offered with *all the value of His work associated with it*. Though in itself unable to stand the fire of God's holiness; yet, with Christ's virtue added, it is accepted even as the *Sheaf* was accepted.

4. All the *merits of the propitiatory sacrifices were needful* to secure the *acceptance* of the leavened oblation. All the *virtues of Christ's sacrifice and offices of His priesthood* are needful to ensure our acceptance with God, in consequence of the *sin intermixed* with our redeemed humanity. "The priests shall *wave them with the bread of the first-fruits*" (xxiii. 20). [Compare *Jukes on the Offerings*.]

III. ALL THE OFFERINGS OF FIRST-FRUITS APPEARED BEFORE THE LORD.

1. *Christ Himself entered into the Holy Place* before the Lord. He ascended to the heavenly places.

2. *His redeemed Church also entered accepted* into the very presence of the Lord. "These were redeemed from among men, being the *first-fruits* unto God and to the Lamb" (Rev. xiv. 4).

3. Identified with Him in consecration to God, we shall be *united with Him in the temple of God*. "Where I am there also shall My servants be." "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am." "By Man came also the *resurrection of the dead*." "So shall they be for ever *with the Lord*." [See Addenda, p. 29, *Resurrection Emblems*.]

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER II.

V. 1.—*Theme*: THE PERFECT SUBDUEDNESS AND MEEKNESS OF CHRIST. "*Fine flour*."

The types supply various aspects of Christ's one work. "The Holy Spirit takes truth in portions, and seems sometimes to turn our eyes away from one portion of truth to let us see better some other portion, by keeping our attention for a time fixed on that alone" (Bonar). The Burnt offering has shown us Christ as the *Devoted One*, dedicating Himself and all His powers always to God. Now the Meat offering will reveal to us Christ in *meek subduedness*.

I. CHRIST WAS HERE TO DEVELOP A CHARACTER OF PERFECT SUBJECTION TO GOD.

1. Men had through all their history been *marked by self-will and arrogant insubordination* to God. "Cedars of Lebanon high and lifted up." "Pride compassed them about," &c.

2. Among such Christ came to *manifest implicit obedience and subjection*. "Lo I come to do Thy will, O God."
"Not My will but Thine be done." Cheerful

subservience to Another's will, even through bitterness of suffering; meek submission to insult and reproach; gentle patience and kindness even to enemies—such were His characteristics

II. CHRIST'S QUALITIES OF MEEKEST SUBDUEDNESS ARE TYPIFIED IN THE FOOD OFFERING. "*Fine flour*."

1. There is *no suggestion in the type of subduedness conferred*. No millstone is seen *grinding the corn* into its smoothness. The flour is brought perfected in its fineness. Such was Christ *as He came into the world*: perfect in meekness and lowliness and every quality of submission. Affliction and suffering found these qualities *in Him*, as the fire on the altar found them in the flour; it did not produce them.

2. *The invariable evenness of Christ's submission* is suggested. The meekness He manifested in the judgment hall and on the Cross was not more perfect than that which marked Him as He grew up in the home of Joseph and Mary, sharing their low estate. "He was subject unto them." The excellen-

cies of His character were intrinsic and essential. "*Fine flour.*"

(a) How contrasted is this excellency of Christ with the *variable spirit and behaviour of His followers*. John wished to call fire from heaven on others! Paul spake in anger, "God shall smite thee thou whited wall!" But the equability of Jesus never failed.

(b) Yet we may cultivate "*the meekness and gentleness of Christ.*" Guard against the hindrances to graciousness of character and the irritations which molest the spirit, and "learn of Him who was meek and lowly of heart." [Compare *Newton's Thoughts on Leviticus.*]

V. 3.—*Theme*: CHRIST THE FOOD OF PRIVILEGED SOULS. "*The remnant of the Meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons.*"

Before any portion went to supply the necessities of the ministering priests, note—

I. IN THE OFFERING OF CHRIST WHICH IS DESIGNED TO SUSTAIN MAN'S LIFE, GOD HAD A PORTION. "A handful," "the memorial" of the offering was first burned upon the altar. Even in devoting Himself to meet the hunger and wants of humanity, Christ did it as "an offering unto the Lord." He did all with His Father in first and highest thought.

II. IN THE OFFERING OF CHRIST PROVISION IS MADE FOR THE SPIRITUAL WANTS AND NEEDS OF MEN.

1. In Christ Jesus will be found *man's sufficiency*. The soul's wants are all supplied in Him. Whoever drew upon Him and went away unsatisfied? What need, what trial, what demand of our manifold life does Christ not meet? He will satisfy us in every condition: when poor to give us succour, when weary to give us strength, when sorrowful to give us joy. Christ is our Food.

2. Yet it is limited to those who are in *priestly relation to Him*. Those who are "priests unto God"; all *sanctified souls*, who live to God, they will find in Jesus every true need met. Others may wander elsewhere crying, "Who will show us any good?" but "they who are *Christ's* have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts," and these find "Christ is all in all."

V. 9.—*Theme*: A MEMORIAL ON GOD'S ALTAR. "The priest shall take of the meat offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar." Consider—

I. ITS CONTRAST WITH A MEMORIAL OF INIQUITY.

In Numb. v. 11 we read of "an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance."

That was a food offering of barley meal, without oil, and without frankincense.

No intrinsic virtue, no sacred anointing, no pleasing grace.

The memorial was associated with sin, and the forerunner of a curse (Numb. v. 18).

How appalling if Christ's offering were to—

1. Memorialise our guilt before God; and
2. Evoke a curse upon our conviction of wrong.

II. THE GRACIOUS SIGNIFICANCE IN CHRIST'S MEMORIAL OFFERING.

In this instance of the "memorial"—

1. It was rendered sweet to God by admixture of oil, frankincense and salt. A pleasant offering to Him, therefore. And assuredly no memorial of iniquity could be pleasant to God; it was a remembrance of the sacred grace of Christ for man.

2. It was designed to bring righteousness to remembrance. Christ's precious merits. And going up before the Lord for us they represent the truth that by imputation those merits become ours, on whose behalf "the memorial" is burned on the altar.

V. 9.—*Theme*: THOROUGHNESS IN SERVICE FOR THE LORD. "It is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord."

I. COMPLETE CONSECRATION. Fire absorbs, transforms all.

II. ARDENT ENTHUSIASM. Fire intense, demonstrative, aggressive.

III. DIVINE APPROBATION. "The Lord."

(a) Recognises such thorough service.

(b) Rejoices in such thorough service; "a sweet savour."—*F. W. B.*

V. 11.—*Theme*: PURITY IN SERVICE OF THE LORD. "Ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey."

Service for the Lord to be—

I. *Unmixed with impure influences*. "Leaven" penetrates, and permeates, and transforms the meal into its own nature; evil spreads rapidly when entertained, has power to vitiate the heart, and corrupt religious work and worship.

II. *Unmixed with sensual indulgences*. "Honey" suggestive of self-gratification, of luxury to satiety. Appetites must be curbed, selfishness crucified; not the sweet and safe sought so much as the right and true. We need the thoughts of our hearts cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that motives and desires may be pure; for the outward act of service, however costly, is only an abomination if not offered from a sincere and sanctified heart.—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER II.

THE BEAUTIFUL IN WORSHIP.

No sacred lore, how'er profound,
Nor all the long and varied round
Of sacred rites, can bliss procure
For worthless man, in heart impure.

Altho' a man with zeal and skill
Should all external rites fulfil,
He reaps no fruit of all his toil
If sin his inner man should soil.

E'en he his all in alms who spends,
With heart defiled, secures no meed;
The *disposition*, not the deed,
Has value—on it all depends.

Vayu Purana, viii. 190.

See *Bonar's*

"'Tis first the true and then the beautiful,
Not first the beautiful and then the true."

"Onward, onward may we press
Thro' the path of duty;
Virtue is true happiness,
Excellence true beauty.
Minds are of supernal birth,
Let us make a heaven of earth."

James Montgomery.

The *merely* beautiful, *external* and *aesthetic*
in worship is not enough, and is perilous
when, as expressed in *Aurora Leigh*,

"The beautiful seems right

By force of beauty."

"In the spirit of that significant Oriental
usage which drops its sandals at the palace
door, the decent worshipper will put off his
travel-tarnished shoes, will try to divest him-
self of secular anxieties and worldly profits,
when the place where he stands is converted
into holy ground by the words, "Let us wor-
ship God!"—*Dr. Jas. Hamilton.*

SWEET INCENSE. Worship is the compound
of many gracious ingredients—repentance,
faith, contrition, desire, love, joy in God, and
other graces. Offered daily and inspired by
the Spirit, such worship is no intrusion, but
welcome before the Eternal Throne, performed
with all the precious sweetness of the meri-
torious grace of Christ.

GOD'S MINISTERS.

"The man who has adopted the Church as
a profession, and goes through the routine of
his duties with the coldness of a mere official
—filled by him the pulpit seems filled by the
ghastly form of a skeleton, which, in its
cold and bony fingers, holds a burning lamp."
—*Dr. Guthrie.*

"A minister's credentials as a pastor will
be most readily accepted who shows himself

the follower of One who turned and said to
His disciples, 'But I have called you friends.'
—*Anon.*

"The Apostle saith that they are worthy of
double honour, an honour of reverence and
an honour of maintenance; and, doubtless,
the very heathen shall rise up in judgment
against many who profess the truth in this
respect; for the heathen themselves did show
such honour to their devilish priests that one
of the Roman consuls seeing a priest and
some vestal virgins going on foot, and he
riding in his chariot, descended, and would
not go into it again till those votaries were
first placed."—*Bishop Reynolds.*

"The spirit and manner of a minister often
affects more than the matter."—*Cecil.*

It is said of *Whitefield*, "So close was his
communion with God before preaching, that
he used to come down to the people as if
there were a rainbow about his head." And of
the *Rev. J. H. Stewart*, "He was a precious
box of ointment in a wounding world." And
of the *Rev. J. H. Forsyth*, "He did what
thousands do, but he did it *as not one in a
thousand does.*"

RESURRECTION EMBLEMS. "The very first
employment of Israel in *Canaan* was prepar-
ing the type of the Saviour's resurrection, and
their first religious act was holding up that
type of a risen Saviour."—*Bonar.*

"The wheat sheaf was an *earnest* that the
whole field should be reaped, as well as a
sample of the harvest. . . . The ideas of
pagans respecting the dead are suggested by
the *broken Corinthian pillar* or the *stringless
harp*. . . . The word *cemetery*, which
means a sleeping-place, gives us the Christian
idea, for He 'giveth His beloved sleep.'"
—*Pilkington.*

CHARACTER. "Character is higher than
intellect."—*Emerson.*

"A soul of power, a well of lofty thought,
A chastened hope that ever points to
heaven."
J. Hunter.

"When character is lost all is lost."
German Motto.

CHAPTER III.

The Peace Offering of Thanksgiving.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 1.—A sacrifice of peace offering. Happy are the truths made evident in
this peace sacrifice; delightful to God, blessed for man. Peace is established
between God and the soul, reconciliation is realised; and the offerer comes to
the altar with festive gladness in his heart. Yes, and God also, and the priests,

and the offerer's friends, all join in *the sacrificial banquet of joy over peace restored*. Its completeness was realised in Christ: "For *He is our Peace*, who hath made both one" (Ephes. ii. 14). The angels' carol has become translated into Christian experience—"On earth *peace, goodwill toward men*." He who would enter into and enjoy "peace with God," must bring the Redeemer's "sacrifice of peace offering" (Rom. v. 1).

Whether male or female. Unrestricted freedom in choice of the victim; as though God was so desirous of peace with man that every possible opportunity and convenience should be arranged for effecting conciliation. That is the lesson: and in the atonement of Calvary the plan of appeasement and acceptance is ready of access to every one. No difficulty, no embarrassment, is left by God in the way of our obtaining reconciliation and fellowship with Him.

V. 2.—Lay his hand on . . . and kill it. Here is the crowning act of the sinner: act of identification with the very death of the victim. Who slew the Sacrifice? even he who lays his hand on Him in order to be saved; yes, saved by the *death the sinner himself inflicted!* Jesus claims the victim's place; gives His life for man. Each altar sprinkled with blood proclaims the *peace* thus bought, peace bought by death. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him."

V. 3.—All the fat that is upon the inwards. In the *burnt offering* it was the fat connected with the limbs and *external* parts of the victim which God required; but in the *peace sacrifice* He specifically asks the *inward* fat which covers the vitals. This denoted inward health; and typified the *inmost excellency of Christ*. And as this was to be *for God*, placed and consumed upon His altar, it bespeaks how all the virtue and grace of Jesus in His own essential perfectness and preciousness were necessary to a satisfactory peace between God and man. For what inferior sacrifice could suffice? The enmity and outrage wrought by our sin and sinfulness were such that the most absolute excellence was essential in our propitiatory offering. But Christ offered "*all*" His virtue to God for us.

V. 5.—On the altar upon the burnt sacrifice. *Peace* is not the first thing for man to seek with God, but *satisfaction*: that having been made in the burnt sacrifice, he may "burn" his peace offering "*upon the burnt sacrifice*." No basis for peace except the sufferings of Christ. He having been offered in substitution for guilt we may lay our peace offering *upon* that Sacrifice.

V. 11.—The food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord. God finds "*food*"—satisfaction, gratification—in the altar offering, in the excellencies of Christ devoted in sacrifice to win man's acceptance. Grand truth: the presentation of atonement by Jesus for man's peace yields to God a satisfying "*food*," a substantial joy, which both fills all the Divine desires and answers all the Divine demands. The Saviour's sacrifice was very precious to the holy God.

V. 17.—Eat neither fat nor blood. As the "fat" symbolised the inmost virtue, this law claimed the *best* as God's portion: and as the "blood" represented the life of the victim, this law claimed *life* as inalienably God's. You owe Him your inmost affections, the most precious qualities of your being; yea, your whole life. Jesus gave them *all* to His Father: and we should also yield our noblest, our all.

EXPLANATORY HOMILY.

i. The spiritual standing, or sacred qualification of the offerer. Peace offerings could be presented only by persons who had already *obtained forgiveness of sins* (by the sin and trespass offerings, comp. chap. vi. 7), and had *consecrated themselves* as on the altar to *Jehovah* (by the burnt offering, comp. vii. 12), and were thus at *peace with God*.

This sacrificial regulation indicates an enduring spiritual law: that he who would enter into a state of friendship with God must first have secured expia-

tion of his sins (sin offering), and have consecrated himself (burnt offering) and his substance (meat offering) to the Lord.

ii. Propitiation and self surrender are not absent even in presenting *peace offerings*. The *blood* of the victim was sprinkled on the altar, and *portions* of the carcass were burnt in the fire. Whereas the *imposition of hands* and *slaughter of the substitute* by the offerer betokened sense of condemnation and appeal to sovereign grace.

We cannot acceptably offer even sacrifices of peace and praise apart from the meritorious death and substitutionary atonement of Jesus.

iii. Peace offerings were various, both in the *victims chosen* and in the *purpose for which they were offered*. (1) The *victims*: from the herds or flocks, male or female. (2) The *purpose*: thank offerings, votive offerings, free-will offerings. The first expressed gratitude for God's gracious favours; the second fulfilled a vow made on condition of receiving God's goodness; the third entreated a mercy, but without conditions, as in a vow, retaining freedom to make return to the Lord as occasion served.

Great variety may mark our thank offerings to God, but the liberty leaves us without excuse if we render nothing to the Lord for all His benefits towards us.

iv. In the *distribution of portions of the peace offering a sacrificial feast of fellowship* was enacted.

A part to Jehovah, other parts to the priests, and the remainder to the offerer, all meeting in amity and peace, and joyously sharing in the sweet savour offering.

For the reconciliation of man to God, and Divine fellowship with man, occasioned heart gladness to the Divine Father (see parable of Prodigal Son), to the reinstated worshipper, and to the Daysman betwixt them who laid His hand on them both—the mediating Priest.

v. *The part of the divided victims were specially apportioned*, establishing a law of priority in sacred claims. To God the choicest parts first. These were burned on the altar, and became a "sweet savour unto the Lord." To the *community of priests* ("the breast"), and to the *officiating priest* ("the right hind leg") next, indicating grateful recognition of Priesthood ministries, specially *Christ's*, and fellowship with the sacred priesthood of believers. The *sacrificer retained the rest*, but only that he, *with his friends*, might join the *sacred repast*, and thus emphasize the truth of the communion of saints; they and God's household, and God Himself, all partaking of the one offering, as a feast of friendship and communion.

Our first aim should be to offer the worthiest to the Lord; next to own grateful obligations to the mediatorial service of Christ; then to establish festal relationship with the household of God, the household of faith. Self last in fellowship, no man living to himself. Christian life joyously communing with the *Father*, the *Mediator*, and the *Church*.

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: PEACE-OFFERING SACRIFICES (Vv. 1-5).

Consider—

I. HISTORIC INSTANCES OF PRESENTING THE PEACE OFFERING.

Scripture records of these occurrences are instructive. Some of the occasions when the offering was presented were *Divinely appointed*.

(a) At the consecration of priests for their holy office and ministry (Lev. vii. 30-34). (b) At the completion of the term of a Nazarite's vow (Numb. vi. 14). (c) At the dedication of the completed tabernacle (Numb. vii. 17). (d) At the

feast of the first-fruits (Lev. xxiii. 19); and (e) At the joyful opening of Solomon's temple (1 Kings viii. 63).

Others were *spontaneous*—

1. *For signal experience of Providential deliverance.* Thus (a) David in the hour of victory, when "his head was lifted up above his enemies round about him," resolved to "sacrifice in God's tabernacle *sacrifices of joy*" (Psa. xxvii. 6). (b) Amid *merciful rescues from peril*, enumerated in Psalm cvii., as when guided through a lone wilderness (v. 4), or brought out of sore oppression (vv. 10-14), or upon recovery from wasting sickness (v. 18), or when the haven is reached after terrible voyage (v. 30), etc. Then "let them *sacrifice the sacrifice of thanksgiving*" (v. 22).

2. As the *fulfilment of vows* made in troublous circumstances. Thus Jonah "prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly" (Jonah ii. 1), and vowed, when "salvation came to him of the Lord" (v. 9), that he would *sacrifice unto Him* with the voice of *thanksgiving*, and pay that he had vowed" (v. 9). [See also Psa. cxvi. 3, 17-19.]

3. *As a seal of fervent and trustful prayer.* So did the confederate tribes before going to battle against the victorious Benjamites. They "went up and came to the house of God and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and *peace offerings* before the Lord" (Judges xx. 26). [See Adlenā, p. 33, *Sacrifices of Peace.*] Consider again the—

II. SACRED SENTIMENTS PROMPTING TO THE OFFERING OF THE PEACE SACRIFICES.

Noting the attitude of thought, the feelings of heart, with which the sacrifices were presented, we shall realise the religious affections which found expression in this form of altar offering.

1. Prominent, as a motive to the peace offering, is *thanksgiving*. It presented a *sacrifice of praise to God*; it yielded an offering to Jehovah's glory. This implies a heart of gratitude in man; a reverent sense of the goodness of God; a desire to perform some act to His glory and praise. In chap. vii. 12 it is distinctly marked as intended "*for a thanksgiving.*" The worshipper should seek God not alone with requests, and under sense of danger or need, but with the *homage of joy*. "I will sacrifice *sacrifices of joy*. I will sing," etc. (Psa. xxvii. 6). "God hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." "What shall I shall render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?" "Bless the Lord, O my soul," etc. "*Thanks be unto God* for His unspeakable gift." We are to *glorify God* with praises. Hence the exhortation, "By Him, therefore, let us offer the *sacrifice of praise* to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Heb. xiii. 15). [See Addenda, p. 38, *Thanksgiving.*]

2. Equally manifest, as a motive to the peace offering, is *dedication*. Thus it is provided that "the sacrifice of his offering [may] be a *vow*" (Lev. vii. 16). This means a consecration to some *act of service* for God. As the "sweet savour" ascended to God it bore to Heaven a hostage and pledge of practical godliness and grateful obedience which should follow. "Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion, and *unto Thee shall the vow be performed*" (Psa. lxxv. 1). "I will go into Thy house with *burnt offerings*, I will pay Thee *my vows which my lips have uttered*, etc. I will offer unto Thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams," etc. (Psa. lxxvi. 13-15). Christian life should assuredly be yielded in devotion to the Lord in return for the grace we have received.

III. GOSPEL REALISATIONS OF THE TYPICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PEACE OFFERINGS.

1. *The varieties in the victims* symbolise the *manifold aspects of Christ's gracious offering*. As in the burnt offering. [See on Chapter I.]

2. *The different motives prompting* the offering suggest the *various purposes*

Christ's sacrifice effected. His peace offering both was for *God's praise*, in sinners reconciled; and for *man's dedication*, in Christian lives being vowed and devoted to His service. For when "made nigh" in Christ it is our joy to live unto God in loving, willing obedience. Christ's sacrificial life represented both significant aspects of the peace offering: it was an offering to *Divine praise and glory*, and an enactment of *man's grateful consecration* to God.

3. *The blessed reconciliation of God and man* was sealed in the peace offering of Jesus. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself," etc. (Colos. i. 20).

IV. PRESENT-DAY OBLIGATIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE ANCIENT PEACE OFFERINGS.

1. He who would offer *praise* to God must *do so at the altar*. That was the place where the offering was made. Nothing, no grateful affection, no dedicatory vow, may go from man to God irrespective of the altar. Nothing can be accepted, nothing is permitted, apart from Christ's sacrifice. The peace offering must be "on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice" (v. 5); something additional to and following upon Christ's atoning merits. Gratitude is beautiful, dedication is right; but God will have neither—from sinful man—apart from the Saviour's grace. These are lovely flowers which can only properly unfold and bloom under the radiance of the Cross.

2. Divine graciousness summons us to *the sacrifices of thankful devotion*. Not a moment but our hearts and lips should be pouring out streams of praise, the sweet savour of love, the homage of joy, the evidence that we are the Lord's: "wherefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

3. *Peace with God in Christ is the basis of a joyful godly life*. Praise can only be where peace is realised and enjoyed. All our happiness rests on our being in Christ, partakers of "peace with God through Jesus." Then we can "also joy in God" (Rom. v. 1 and 11). And Christian life should "*show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness*," etc. (1 Pet. ii. 9). Blessed peace which imparts such joy and inspires such praise!

Topic: THE FEAST OF MAN'S FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (Vv. 3, 9, 14, 16).

"He shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering unto the Lord." Not the whole, but a *part* was to be burnt on the altar fire, and "Aaron's sons shall burn it—i.e., the specified portion which God required (see v. 4). And this *part participation* by God is further particularised in v. 16—"The priest shall burn them upon the altar; it is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savour; *all the fat is the Lord's*."

The remaining parts (chap. vii.) were distributed to the *priests* who ministered and the *offerer* himself. Thus the peace offering was *shared* by God with man; they *met together in a sacrificial feast*, and partook of the same altar oblation. To eat together is a sign of friendship and fellowship.

I. SUCH PRIVILEGED COMMUNION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN IS ESTABLISHED ON SPECIAL CONDITIONS.

Who is the man who thus is admitted to feast with God? May anyone adventure into such privilege? Are there no restrictions or conditions regulating so wondrous an incident?

1. Fellowship between God and man must be *at the altar of sacrifice*. There, where sin is acknowledged, atoned and purged; where substitution is accepted for the life of sinful man; where "no condemnation" is attained by penalty having been laid upon the Victim. Only there can God meet man in friendship. *Sacrifice* must go first.

2. Fellowship proceeds on the recognition that *we yield our highest affections*

and virtues first to God. That victim being offered is in the offerer's stead, and represents man. What part of the man does God require? *The very choicest part*; just as He was to have the *inmost vitalities and fat* of the sacrifice. It means that *before* God can have blessed communion with man, man must give God his inmost affections and noblest powers in ready consecration; that, indeed, it is only *in the act of such dedication* of our highest qualities to Him God comes into fellowship with man at all. God would have refused to partake of the feast if any inferior part had been presented Him. We must bring our first energies, our purest love, if God is to "sup with us and we with Him" (Rev. iii. 20).

3. Fellowship can only be enjoyed in connection with *intervening priestly services*. "Aaron's sons," etc. (vv. 2-4). No communion, no acceptance with God apart from the mediation of Jesus.

4. Fellowship with God requires that we *associate His priests with us in the feast*. [Compare chap. vii. 14, 31-35.] The lessons of this enactment are (1) *Generous attention* to and support of those who *minister to us in holy things*. We "reap their spiritual things," and should show appreciation. (2) *Communion with the saints who unite with us in temple service*. All fellow Christians are "priests." (3) *Largeness of heart in sharing* with others the blessings we enjoy. Give a better portion to them than that we retain for ourselves. "Hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Peter iv. 9). In a feast the host gives the best to his guests. The idea is *regal*. We entertain *the King and His courtiers*, and place the choicest part of the banquet first before the King; then the best remaining portions we serve to His attendant ministers; for ourselves, happy and honoured that we may sit down at such a banquet and entertain such guests. [See Addenda, p. 38, *Blessedness of Peace*.]

II SUCH PRIVILEGED COMMUNION POURTRAYS THE JOYOUS EXPERIENCE OPEN TO MAN IN CHRIST.

Felicity is the prevalent sentiment in such a feast. Joy with God; joy in Jesus; joy among fellow saints. But all this blessedness is in connection with a *sacrificed life*. As all our felicity springs from the redemption of Jesus.

1. *God's satisfaction and delight with the choice virtues of Jesus*. Christ, as our Representative, is here giving Himself to God for us, and He finds *sweet savoury food* in the offering (vv. 11, 16). "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." For the *inmost affections* of Jesus were all supremely consecrated to His Father. Yet there was also another cause of God's delight in Jesus—that He offered Himself as the sacrifice for man's salvation: "*therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life*." God looked on the altar, saw that to Him were yielded the best affections of His Son, and saw equally that His life was readily offered as a Peace Sacrifice for sinners, that the *Father and the family might be again at one*.

2. *Man's blessedness in the experiences of fellowship in Christ Jesus*. *Peace* is not all we find in Him, but happiness, "*joy unspeakable and full of glory*": "a feast of fat things." Christian life is a banquet. "Eat, O my friends." And it is a feast, not upon faulty and false diet, which mocks the cravings and hopes of men, but is upon an offering "*without blemish*," the choicest of the flock. Christ Himself is the food of the believer.

"Yes, Thou art precious to my soul."

Happy they who are "partakers of Christ Jesus," and live upon Him. He "satisfies our mouth with good things," and so daintily feasts the heart's longings that "His joy remains in us, and our joy is full."

Note: This feast of fellowship was both an *expression of love* by the offerer of the sacrifice, and in turn *nourished that love* in him by communion with God and His Church.

3. *Christ's own happiness in the feast of man's fellowship with God.* The priest had a choice part in the sacrifice. He who is "Priest over the house of God" shares in this glad banquet. Himself the Victim sacrificed, He is also the mediating and partaking Priest. How does this open to view the heart of Christ: He as mediating Priest joins in the gladness of the event of communion reinstated between God and man: feasts with us as the intervening Friend, and is satisfied with the portion which is His. For can our Lord be other than satisfied with His part in the transaction? It is through His mediation that God and men feast together. And in the *delighted love of the Father* and the *grateful happiness of man* Jesus finds a rich satisfaction: it is "the joy set before Him" for which He "endured the cross, despising the shame."

(1) Into such a feast He asks to be admitted, as He appeals *at the sinner's heart*: "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear My voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with Me."

(2) To such a feast He comes when His saints gather *at the sacramental table*. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you." "This do in remembrance of Me." "There am I in the midst of you."

(3) For such a feast He is preparing *in the Father's house*. That "supper of the Lamb" was often in His thoughts when on earth (Luke xiv. 15; xxii. 16, 18). "He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. xix. 9). Joy will indeed fill the Saviour's heart then; for "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied" (Isa. liii. 11).

Topic: PEACE BY FULFILLING DIVINE CONDITIONS (Vv. 2-5, etc.).

Temporal blessings God showers down alike upon the evil and the good. Unsolicited He loads mankind daily with His benefits. But for spiritual blessings He will be inquired of. Specified means must be employed that pardon and peace may be enjoyed. The first part of the peace offering was expiatory; then came the Eucharistic feast.

I. THE OFFERING WAS TO BE CAREFULLY CHOSEN. The strongest, best and purest parts were to be kept exclusively sacred to the Lord. Everything was to be done in order, and according to minute directions.

II. THE OFFERING WAS TO BE PERSONALLY APPROPRIATED. No offering by proxy; each offerer to offer for himself with his own hands. Not enough to purpose in the heart, to have sound views and clear knowledge of what required. The act must *promptly, personally* be performed.

III. THE OFFERING WAS TO BE CHEERFULLY PRESENTED. (This fully shown in chap. vii.) All not to be consumed as in holocaust; the offered had anticipation of partaking with priests of residue in joyful fellowship.

Our inestimable privilege is to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Christ Jesus, who has left to the world through His Church the Divine legacy of Peace. He is our peace, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us and God.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: PEACE RESULTING FROM PROPITIATION (Vv. 1-17).

Reconciliation and restoration to God bring peace; hence the peace offering, so peculiarly significant of tranquil joy, follows the burnt and meat offerings. In this festival God, the priests, and the people partook together. It signified *to complete, to make whole*, and was therefore a symbol of *fulness, fellowship, and friendship*. In it God showed not only that He is to be ministered to *by man*, but also that He delights to minister *to man*. The great truth taught is, that reconciliation to God leads to intimate communion with Him.

I. *Great freedom was allowed in selection of the Offerings.* Any sacrificial animal of either sex, or of any age, might be offered, so long as it was without blemish. The worshipper could suit his own convenience, the demand made was in no way exacting or irksome. The commandments of God are not grievous: we are only expected to offer according to our ability, but what we offer must be the best we have, and offered in a right spirit. "Whether we eat or drink," etc.

II. *Great freedom was allowed in participation of the Offering.* Part was to be presented to the Lord, part eaten by the priests, and part by the people; so that God and man, Heaven and earth, would hold festival together, in one solemn covenant. Such a condition of peace was one of the great moral wants of man, for sin had estranged man from God and thrown discord into the human family. This offering proclaimed peace on earth, goodwill to men. Christ our Peace invites us to His table to hold communion with Him, and feed by faith on the sacrifice He has provided. This life of happy communion with God in Christ is the prelude of, and preparation for, the marriage supper of the Lamb.—F. W. B.

OUTLINES ON VERSES.

V. 1.—*Theme: FAULTLESSNESS IN SACRIFICE.* "He shall offer it *without* blemish unto the Lord."

I. AS REPRESENTING THE PURITY OF HIM TO WHOM THE OFFERING WAS PRESENTED.

II. AS PRESHADOWING THE PURITY OF HIM WHOM THE OFFERING TYPIFIED.

III. AS SYMBOLISING THE PURITY DESIDERATED BY THE OFFER OF THE SACRIFICE.

Our offerings to the Lord must be *complete* and *pure*—by association with the merits of Christ's perfect sacrifice, and prompted by motives made pure by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.—F. W. B.

V. 2.—*Theme: IDENTIFICATION OF THE OFFERER WITH THE OFFERING.* "And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" (v. 2).

I. ACTUAL CONTACT.

"Lay hand on," sig. (a) *apprehension*, (b) *appropriation*, (c) *identification*.

II. ACTUAL COMMITTAL.

"And kill it," offerer's *own act*, acknowledging he deserved to die as the victim, his substitute, died. This would (a) *teach the heinousness of sin* that it needed the sacrifice of life, (b) *beget hatred for sin* upon which Jehovah thus placed Divine displeasure.

By act of faith we must lay our hand upon the sacred head of Christ, and have a personal interest in His life and death.—F. W. B.

V. 3.—*Theme: GOD'S POSITIVE COMMANDS.* "And he shall," &c.

God's commands to Israel peremptory. How they were to worship, what they were to sacrifice, arbitrarily stated. Though commands are imperious, people are under moral obligations to obey. No room for option or exception when precept associated with unequivocal "*shall*." Such commands—

I. EXHIBIT THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LORD' He has right to command without giving reasons or explanations. He has right to do what He pleases with His own.

II. EXERCISE THE FAITH AND PATIENCE OF THE WORSHIPPERS. To obey precepts the reasons for which were hidden would show greater confidence and resignation than were reasons seen.

III. EXALT THE OBEDIENCE OF THE LIFE. The people not required to offer that which cost them nothing, or they would have had mean ideas of worship. God demands large things of us, and "blessed are they that do His commandments."—F. W. B.

V. 8.—*Theme: PEACE ASSOCIATED WITH PENITENCE AND PRAYER.* "He shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering."

Until sin is pardoned there can be no real peace, no real enjoyment of the Divine presence. This truth comes out in all the offerings, for every sacrifice was to be the symbol of the broken and contrite heart of the offerer. God was pleased with the sufferings of the victims slain and the savour of their burning carcasses only as they represented the self-surrender of the worshipper, and the incense of holy prayer ascending from the penitent spirit.

I. *In the peace offering the offerer acknowledged his guilt.* As he laid his hand upon the head of the victim at the Tabernacle door, he owned that he was guilty and deserved to die. It would be a public confession of guilt and the need of atonement for offences.

II. *In the peace offering the offerer transferred his guilt.* God accepted a substitute for the guilty one who deserved to die. Probable that the Hebrews felt more was included in their offerings than they could then see, that they pointed to a greater sacrifice yet to be offered in God's good time, upon whom would be laid the iniquity of us all.

The privileges associated with Peace offerings would awaken praise. The offerer would stand in the attitude of prayer, as with eyes lifted to Heaven he presented his oblation; *he would be filled with praise*, as in the house of the Lord he enjoyed peaceful communion. When we commune with God, let us blend *penitence, prayer, and praise*, remembering blessings received, anticipating blessings to come. With such sacrifices God is well pleased, and in association with them he imparts his own peace, which passeth all understanding.—F. W. B.

V. 5.—*Theme: SUCCESSION IN SACRIFICES.* "Burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire."

There is order established by God in—

I. THE SUCCESSIVE SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS REQUIRED.

1. First on the altar must be laid the *burnt offering*, which must "all" be burnt, for God required complete consecration of Christ in death to satisfy the fire of His holiness, the demands of His righteous law.

2. Then follows the meat offering, which signifies the presentation of the *best and richest life* in substitution for man. It asserted His requirement of the first and finest qualities of humanity. Christ must offer His perfect manhood in living form as an obedience offering. Which means, that when God's holiness finds satisfaction in Christ's death, Jehovah still demands the full offering of the redeemed man's living obedience.

3. The peace sacrifice then may be presented, and the man who has *satisfied Justice in the death of Christ*, and yielded obedience in the life of Christ, may enter into *fellowship and peace through Christ*. [See Addenda, p. 38, *Terms of Fear.*]

II. THE SUCCESSIVE SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENTS REACHED.

1. Whole *surrender* to God. The burnt offering required and enforced that attainment. The redeemed soul lays itself wholly on the altar, is wholly consumed in dedication to God.

2. *Perfectness of character*; the excellencies of obedience; pure uncorruptness of heart; the submissiveness of will. These are reached in succession, and are suggested in the meat offering.

3. *Fellowship with God*. Feasting in the blessedness of peace and acceptance with Him in and through Christ Jesus. "O God I will praise Thee, for though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me."

III. THE SUCCESSIVE REALISATIONS OF CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGE.

1. *Acceptance*. That is assured as the fruit of the burnt offering. It is offered "for acceptance" (see on i. 5), and God does accept the entire sacrifice for atonement.

2. *Spiritual graces*. The beauties of Christ become ours; the charms of the anointing Spirit rest on us. "The frankincense, oil, salt," etc.

3. *Joyous communion with God*. Raised into blissful privilege, feasting with the Lord and His priests. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

IV. THE SUCCESSIVE RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS URGED.

Not fellowship and privilege first, but first *entire dedication*.

Then *cultivation of spiritual excellencies*.

Following these comes *glad fellowship with heaven*.

V. 16.—*Theme: GOD DESERVES AND DEMANDS THE BEST.* "All the fat is the Lord's."

I. Not the mere *bones* of rigid formalism.

II. Not the mere *sinews* of strenuous observances.

III. Not the mere *skin* of outward profession.

IV. Not the mere *blood* of ardent enthusiasm, but the—

V. "*Fat*"—the *richest, fullest, best* that we can offer: not lean, shrivelled work or worship, but "the fat for the Lord," the most prime and precious we can procure. Let us give our youth and strength, our richest love and fullest fervour to Him who is worthy of all.—F. W. B.

V. 17.—*Theme: OBEDIENCE THE TEST OF FAITH.* "It shall be a perpetual statute."

It would require *faith* to constantly obey, for the offerings would *seem* to be—

I. AN INFLICTION OF NEEDLESS PAIN.

II. A WASTE OF VALUABLE LIFE.

III. UNEQUAL TO THE END DESIGNED:—that there should be any correspondence between the physical suffering of brutes and atonement for moral guilt of man.

We cannot formulate a rationale of the great Peace offering presented in the Gospel. It is beset with formidable difficulties. *Faith*, not reason, must lead us to the Cross, the hand of simple trust must appropriate the blessings of salvation.

Note: The *CULPABILITY OF DISOBEDIENCE*.

To omit obedience to the statutes of Jehovah was sin, because of transgression of His law.

Omission would spring from (1) *indifference*, (2) *independence*, (3) *disloyalty*, (4) *rebellion*. So now to invitations and commands of Gospel. Christ taught that sins of omission were culpable and condemnatory. The rich man in the parable omitted to care for Lazarus. The man who *did not* use his talent was punished. The wicked in the day of judgment are represented as being punished for omissions (Matt. xxv. 31-46).—F. W. B.

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER III.

SACRIFICES OF PEACE. "They were either attended to testify thankfulness for blessings already received, in which view they are called 'thank offerings' in Coverdale's translation; or were else votive, being offered with prayer for future blessings. No doubt they were sometimes both in one. . . . Only the fat parts were consumed on the altar. A small portion was appropriated to the priest, the rest being allowed to the offerer and his guests as an offering feast. Whence Dr. Boothroyd, following Michaelis, prefers to translate *Shelamim* by 'feast sacrifice' rather than 'peace offering.'"—*Kitto*.

PEACE OF THE GOSPEL. It is a great mercy to have the Gospel of peace, but it is far greater to have the peace of the Gospel.

BLESSEDNESS OF PEACE. "If joy be love exulting, peace is joy reposing. It is love in the green pastures and beside the still waters."—*Dr. James Hamilton*.

Father of life and light! Thou good Supreme!

Save me from folly, vanity and vice,
From every low pursuit; and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue
pure,
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!
THOMSON'S *Seasons*.

ON EARTH PEACE. "People are always expecting to get peace in heaven; but you know whatever peace they get there will be ready made. Whatever, of making peace they can be blest for, must be on the earth here."—*RUSKIN, Eagle's Nest*.

TERMS OF PEACE.

"The consciousness of faith, of sins forgiven, Of wrath appeased, of heavy guilt thrown off. Sheds on my breast its long-forgotten peace."

L. J. HALL, *Miriam*.

THANKSGIVING. "Praise is the rent we owe to God, and the larger the farm the larger the rent. The Lord has many fine farms from which He receives little rent. Thanksgiving is a good thing; thanks-living is better."—P. HENRY.

Life work. "Let not thy praises be transient—a fit of music, and then the instrument hung by the wall till another gaudy day of some remarkable providence make thee take it down. God comes not guest-wise to His saints' house, but to dwell with them. David took this up for a life work: 'As long as I live I will praise thee.'"—*Gurnall*.

Constant. "There was a beautiful tradition among the Jews which Lancelius quotes from Philo. It is to this effect: When God had created the world, He asked the angels what they thought of the work of His hands. One of them replied that it was so vast and perfect that only one thing was wanting to it, namely that there should be created a clear, mighty and harmonious voice, which should fill all the quarters of the world incessantly with its sweet sound, thus day and night to offer thanksgiving to its Maker."—F. W. FABER.

"And touched their golden harps, and hymning praised
God and His works."

MILTON, *Paradise Lost*.

"Now God be praised, that to believing souls
Gives light in darkness, comfort in despair."
Henry VI. ii. 3, § 1.

CHAPTER IV.

Sacrifices for Sins.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—If a soul shall sin. Be it noted that the foregoing sacrifices are specified as sacrifices already *familiar* to the Hebrew people. In distinction from those, the sin and trespass offering are for *the first time mentioned*. The law only just given on Sinai created a new standard of obedience and righteousness; thus, "by the law is the knowledge of sin." It is here defined as "against the commandments of the Lord," etc.; and to meet this new disclosure of human frailty and guiltiness, God appointed the sin and trespass offerings. Shall we not welcome a full discovery of our sinfulness, since it both disposes the sinner to *despair*

of self-justification and constrains him to seek the redemption divinely provided? When God reveals sin it is to show its antidote; and "with Him is plenteous redemption."

Through ignorance, *i.e.*, inadvertently, as distinguished from deliberate and defiant disobedience (comp. Numb. xv. 30), for which there was no expiation. Are these of small import? Shall we think them of such inferior consequence as compared with sins done wilfully? Let it then be recalled that *Christ was crucified* by inadvertence! That greatest act of human wrong was done "through ignorance" (Acts iii. 17): "Had they *known it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8). Hence, though great the crime, it may be forgiven mankind; as a wilful sin, done in the full light of knowledge, could not; but man's guilt at the Cross was a vast sin of inadvertence: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" (Luke xxiii. 34). Alas! for such as "sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth! there remaineth for such no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. x. 26).

Vv. 3-12.—The priest that is anointed, etc. Thus it is affirmed that even the highest personage in the priestly ranks is frail and as liable to sin as the commonest of the people; he may "do according to the sin of the people" (v. 3). Shall Christ's ministers, then, dare assume to possess superior spiritual sanctity? [See Heb. vi. 27, 28.] The "*anointed*" priest was the high priest (chap. viii. 12); other priests were only consecrated. Yet, though he was frail as ordinary persons, his sacred office and privileges made *his sin so much the greater* that he had to bring a far more costly sacrifice for his atonement. [See vv. 27, 28.] God distinguishes concerning the criminality of sins: they who live nearer the light have less excuse for "ignorance." So here, God requires most solemn arrangements for expiation: the blood is to be sprinkled "seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary," *i.e.*, in front of the holy of holies, and even be smeared upon the golden altar itself! thus setting his sin in the very light of God's countenance! How would this fill the anointed priest with self-reproach and shame! God cannot deal leniently with elevated souls. We shall be "judged according to that we have."

V. 7.—Pour all the blood at the bottom of the altar. By this rite the sinner acknowledged that he *deserved to have his blood thus poured out* like water. It likewise signified the pouring out of the soul before God in true repentance; and typified our Saviour's pouring out His soul unto death.—Henry.

V. 12.—Without the camp. As being *accursed*, for it symbolically held the sinner's guilt, he having laid his hand (v. 4) thereon. So did our Sin-Bearer "suffer without the gate" (Heb. xi. 11-13). Thus, too, is *sin removed from God's presence* by expiation, carried into oblivion, and consumed out of existence. Jesus "*put away sin* by the sacrifice of Himself."

Vv. 13-21.—If the whole congregation, etc. Crime may spread itself throughout a community, a state, or a nation; and equally, a congregation or a church may lapse into evil conduct and contract iniquity. When the sin becomes "*known*" to them (v. 14), an expiation must be made with a solemnity equal to the high priest's. Guilt is not less guilty because of its being prevalent in a community. God has declared against wrong-doers that "though hand join in hand they shall not be unpunished." Sanctioned wrongs, evils connived at, customary misdemeanours, immoralities and impieties which find currency, popular sins, all are hateful to Jehovah, and none the less hateful because the moral or spiritual distemper rages amid the multitudes rather than confines itself to individuals. Nations have suffered God's displeasure for unrepented sins: and churches have been withered for cherishing impurities which have wounded Christ in the house of His friends. True patriotism should bemoan and seek to remove the evils which degrade the national life; and earnest piety will show itself in endeavouring to arouse a lukewarm Church to "repent and do her first works."

Vv. 22-26.—When a ruler hath sinned. They who dispense laws are amenable to the Lawgiver; they who call others to account are themselves accountable to the Supreme Ruler. The word “ruler” is rendered “king” in 1 Kings xi. 34, Ezek. xxxiv. 24, etc.; but God is “King of kings, and Lord of lords”; and before His bar they must stand in judgment if before the Cross they do not bow in penitence and faith. “Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,” etc. (Psa. ii. 10-12).

Vv. 27-35.—One of the common people sin. The lowest are not overlooked by the searching eye of God. Though in his humble station he may be less instructed, less responsible for error, less blameworthy for sin, yet God demands expiation. If none are exempted from the sinfulness of his deeds, surely each should *watch* against sin, never excusing himself that he “did it ignorantly,” but seek to inform himself of God’s requirements, and thus come to “understand his errors.” Yes; and leaving his evil state, every one should seek the altar with his sin offering; go to Calvary with meek contrition and an upturned look of prayerful trust. “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: SINS COMMITTED IN IGNORANCE (Vv. 1-12).

Our evil nature does not slumber; it acts. “Dead” as regards all power of living to God, it is full of untiring energy in living “according to the prince of this world, the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience.” Cain and his children were “dead” towards God, yet full of activity in wrong, they builded cities and invented arts, living to Satan and themselves. So we are *committers* of sin, doers of iniquity. No remedy, therefore, would be commensurate with our need which failed to meet the consequences of committed sin. Accordingly the sin offering and the trespass offering were appointed.

Committed sin may be distributed into those committed *in ignorance* (and of these this chapter treats), and those committed *consciously* (which are dealt with in chapter v.).

I. MAN’S OWN DISPOSITION IS TO CONDONE INADVERTENT SINS.

In the heart of many there is readiness to think of sins of ignorance as if they were no sins; or if admitted to be sins and need mercy, such mercy is regarded rather as a right than as the unmerited gift of grace.

1. *Ignorance* is treated as if *synonymous* with *guiltlessness*. To act conscientiously, however dark or dead the conscience, is, in the esteem of many, to act blamelessly. Hence

2. The *responsibilities* which attach to *knowledge* become secretly a reason why *knowledge* is *eschewed*. “Darkness is loved rather than light,” because darkness brings quiet; whereas light has an awakening and convicting power.

To these *errors of thought* the appointment of the sin offering is an answer: it is designed to meet sins committed in ignorance. No one who reverences the Word of God will speak lightly of sins of ignorance after reading, “If a soul shall sin through ignorance, etc. . . . let him bring for the sin that he hath sinned,” etc. (vv. 4, 5).

II. WHEREIN THE GUILTINESS OF INADVERTENT SINS CONSISTS.

The heinousness of such sins depends not so much on the character of the deed done as on that *condition of heart* which is *capable* of committing sin without knowing that it is sin; and commits it, perhaps, *exultingly*, triumphing in it as good! What must angels think of the state of that soul which is so *thoroughly*

blinded, so utterly astray from God, as to violate His commandments and resist His will in total unconsciousness that it is doing wrong!

1. *What such sinfulness has wrought.* It was thus that multitudes in Israel hated and persecuted the Lord Jesus, that Paul shed the blood of Stephen, resisting the testimony of the Holy Ghost from one whose face shone with heavenly brightness while he spake; that Paul again "verily thought he was doing God service" when persecuting the saints. All this argued thorough blindness of soul, thorough alienation of heart from God.

2. Sin in ignorance is *the embodiment in action of those dark principles of enmity against God* which lie embosomed in the human heart.

III. GOD'S EMPHATIC WITNESS AGAINST INADVERTENT SINS.

1. *Sources of Divine remonstrance* against such sins.

(1) In Nature. Throughout the heathen world the eternal power and Godhead are declared by the works of God's hands. "The heavens declare the glory of God," etc. (Psa. xix.) "He left not Himself without witness in that He gave them rain," etc. (Acts xiv. 17). "The invisible things of Him," etc. (Rom. i. 20).

(2) In Scripture. The Jews, in addition to the testimony of creation, had the written Word. "To them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2).

(3) By living preachers. From them came many a warning, "line upon line, precept upon precept."

(4) In conscience. The consciences both of Jews and Gentiles were often made to feel the appeals of God; as Paul made Felix tremble.

2. *Man's resistance of the Divine remonstrance.* Satan and man's own evil disposition quenched or obscured the light. As they turned from the light—

(1) Their conscience became more hardened. And as it hardened, sins of ignorance were multiplied, and

(2) Committed with a higher and more reckless hand.

3. Such daring ignorance, *how is it fostered?*

(1) By the perversion of revealed truth. Truth had been revealed to, received by, Israel; but received to be betrayed. Their imposing systems of worship and sacrifice were constantly distorted, were false renderings of Divinely given truth.

(2) Erroneous teaching was welcomed. In vain, therefore, the Scriptures spake of Jesus; in vain John, His forerunner, testified; in vain the Lord Himself proved by His words, His character, His miracles, that He was indeed the Son of the living God. The light of holiness and grace shone fruitlessly upon their hearts, whose *natural darkness* was *deepened* by the systematic influence of a religious corruption which had sanctified error by holy titles, and had blessed wickedness in the name of God.

Nor has it been otherwise in *Christendom*. The history of the Church of God supplies countless instances of souls so *nourished from childhood in error* as to be deadened in every power of right discernment and apprehension. What wonder, seeing that our hearts naturally love darkness, that sins of ignorance should abound!

IV. GODLY SOULS ARE BETRAYED INTO THE COMMISSION OF INADVERTENT SINS.

It would be happy could we assert even of real Christians that they were free from these fearful sins of ignorance.

1. *How are Christians betrayed thereto?* Whenever they give themselves up to the guidance of any individual, or of any system not strictly accordant with God's revealed truth, they will surely act against Christ and His commandments ignorantly. Hence nothing operates more terribly against the progress of truth than the misdirected energies of real *Christians ignorantly sustaining error*, ignorantly resisting light.

2. *Christians may therefore be beguiled.* Paul was keenly alive to their peril. He knew how easily the souls of believers can be bewitched. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" He knew how easily Satan can transform himself into an angel of light to deceive.

3. If *where there is most diligence and watchfulness* there may be sins of ignorance, how much more where there is negligence or slumber, or acquiescence in the prevailing evil of the age!

V. SINS IN THE GODLY ARE MOST HEINOUS IN GOD'S ESTEEM.

Addressed as is this chapter to those who were *ostensibly the separated people of God*, it teaches us especially respecting sins of ignorance committed by believers.

1. Sins are *greater in proportion to the spiritual status of those who commit them.* The loftier our privileges, the nearer we are brought to God, the more intimately we are connected with His service, the more terrible must be the consequences of transgression.

2. *God's name was more dishonoured.* The sins of an instructed Israelite throw discredit on the God he acknowledged.

3. *Sacred life was defamed.* With the priest or Israelite there should have been found understanding and the fear of the Lord.

Notes: (a) *God had a right to expect such sins to be avoided.* The priests were appointed that they might minister in the near presence of God: their employment was in holy things; their place the sanctuary. As instructed in the Word of the Lord, acquainted with the ways of His house, their lips were to keep knowledge; and others through them were to learn the ways of the Lord. Sins of ignorance were therefore the very sins that should have been absent from the priest.

(b) *Sin is to be estimated by a man's spiritual elevation.* As here; by the holiness of the things and places in which the priest ministered, and by the *disastrous consequences* to others, as well as to himself, that flowed from its commission.

VI. EXPIATION PROVIDED FOR SINS OF INADVERTENCE.

Sin, as in the priest, had invaded the holy place, had entered before the veil, had tainted the place of his ministration, had defiled the altar, had involved others in its consequences: *the stain must be effaced*, either by vengeance consuming the sinner, or be expiated by the blood of a substituted victim.

God, in the unsearchable riches of His grace, appointed the sin offering; on whose head the transgressor laid his hand, and whose blood was sprinkled before the Lord. Thus was denoted—

1. *Against Whom the sins were committed.* Seven times the blood was sprinkled "before the Lord." "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned," etc. (Psa. li. 4).

2. *The process of purging.* The ground on which the priest was accustomed to stand, the altar at which he ministered, were *covered with blood*: thus the taint was covered over, himself purchased back from destruction, the privileged place he had occupied preserved unforfeited.

3. *Its suggestion of death.* The remainder of the blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar, betokening that the just requisition of God's holiness had been met—met by death. It was the token of accomplished and accepted atoning death. It was blood *shed*.

4. *Its suggestion of wrath.* On fire, kindled not on the altar, not even within the camp, but "without the gate," the place of dishonour and reproach, like the fire of Gehenna, it was devoured as an accursed thing.

VII. TYPICAL INTIMATIONS OF CHRIST'S DEATH FOR MAN'S SINS.

1. *God's condemnation of our Substitute.* Faith, as it stands by the fire *without the camp*, and gazes on the devoted parts of the sin offering being consumed, beholds—

(1) The memorial of *what Christ became on account of His people.*

(2) Sees not only their sins, but *their sins judicially ended*.

(3) That their guilt is remembered no more as the subject of wrath—evidenced by the ashes; for ashes are the token of fire having burned itself out.

2. *God's acceptance* of our Substitute. The internal parts of the victim were *burned on the altar*; representing the inherent excellencies of Christ, and accepted as "a sweet savour" by God. Jehovah provided for us One whose excellencies are here presented for our vileness. In atonement Divine holiness requires in the Surety not only that He should bear every penalty, but that He should also present a substitutional perfectness for us. Thus, while *sins committed in ignorance* showed the inherent corruption of our inmost nature; the acceptance of the inmost parts of the sin-offering by God upon His holy altar declares the satisfaction made by Christ on our account.—Homiletically developed from *Thoughts on Leviticus*, by B. W. NEWTON.

Topic: SINAI'S LAW NECESSITATED THE ORIGIN OF THE SIN OFFERING (Vv. 2, 13, 14, 22, 27, etc.).

Revelation from God and religious feeling in man are not synonymous, are not synchronous. The religious feeling is *instinctive*. Revelation comes to inform and guide that instinct. Prior to any revelation, man was religious. Within himself, in the thoughts and fears and aspirations of his own soul, man possesses the incitements to religion, *i.e.*, to recognise and seek and propitiate God.

I. EARLIEST ANNALS OF HUMAN HISTORY SHOW MAN TO HAVE BEEN RELIGIOUS.

1. Touched by conscious *dependence*, man acknowledged it by *tributary gifts* to Deity.

2. *Grateful for enjoyed blessings* or providential deliverances, he brings to his altar a *thank offering*.

3. Troubled by *sense of error, wrong, guilt*, he rears an altar and offers some *propitiatory* presentation. Well nigh every ancient people thus expressed religious feeling, even where no revelation was given. Either these *votive* and *appeasement* offerings originated in—

(a) The outcry and *outlook of the human soul* for its unseen and unknown God; or—

(b) *An intimation, in some form, from Heaven* that men "should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after Him and find Him" (Acts xvii. 27).

But, whether by supernatural intimation or by spiritual intuition, man has always been religious.

Turning to the Hebrew scriptures we find offerings on some rude form of altar presented to God *by the children of the first human family*, Cain and Abel. And noteworthy: they bring their offerings not as if they were adventuring upon and originating a new mode of worship, but as if *in conformity with a custom already existing*.

Through the *antedeluvian period*, and following the dispersion of *Noah's descendants*, worship by altar offerings was preserved in all branches of the Semitic family. [Compare ATWATER on *Tabernacle of the Hebrews*]

II. PRIOR TO THE SINAITIC LAW NEITHER SIN OR TRESPASS SACRIFICES WERE INSTITUTED.

The early patriarchs were familiar with burnt offerings and meat offerings; but, until the Exodus, sacrifices for expiation seem to have had no specific existence.

1. *Subordinately* every ancient sacrifice of victims on the altar *intimated conscious sin* and desire for *expiation*. But it was only subsidiary. The sacrifice was not offered with the single and supreme thought of atonement for sin. Those remoter sacrifices expressed *self-surrender and allegiance* rather than expiation.

No sacrifice is recorded as a distinct effort to *expiate for sin* prior to the Sinaitic law.

2. *Until the law was given sin was not clearly realised and felt.* There was doubtless a vague and indefinite sense of wrong in men, but "where there is no law there is no transgression" (Rom. iv. 15). So also "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20); but "sin is not imputed where there is no law" (Rom. v. 13).

3. *The conviction of man of sin rendered the Sin-offering a necessity.* The law convicted man of sin; his inherent guiltiness had not been apprehended till it stood revealed in the light of God's holy commandments. Hence this provision of the sin offering has relation to a man "*sinning against any of the commandments*" (Lev. iv. 2, 13, 14, 22, 27, etc.). "The law entered that the offence might abound" (Rom. v. 20).

III. *In the Sin offering ASSURANCE OF SALVATION MEETS THE AWAKENED CONSCIOUSNESS OF GUILT.*

It seems evident that the sacrificial offerings of the Hebrews became modified and developed in order to meet the advancing consciousness of sin. With a nearer acquaintance with God came a keener sense of unworthiness and wrong. Hence their sacrifices became increasingly expiatory.

1. Sin, essential and inherent sin, was so pressed upon man's conscience by the standard of perfect and unattainable righteousness given in the law, as to render the *sin offering an absolutely necessary provision of God's mercy.*

2. Hence the *expiatory element in sacrifice*, which had been subordinate until the law, was *raised into eminence and vividness* in the newly and specially instituted offering of the sin sacrifice.

3. And in the sin sacrifice a prophecy of God's purpose was given to provide *the great expiatory sacrifice of Calvary*, in which all anticipatory sacrifices were to be completed and annulled.

Topic: IGNORANCE IN SINNING (V. 2, 13, 22, 27.)

"If a soul *sin through ignorance*"; but a soul should *not* be so ignorant as to inadvertently sin. Has not God plainly declared what "ought not to be done"? (v. 2). If therefore "they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which should not be done," they "*are guilty*" (v. 13). Such ignorance must be either from *carelessness*, which shows culpable neglect; or through *blindness*, which argues wilful repudiation of light. A perverse will, an "evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God," a refusal to "come to the light lest their deeds should be made manifest"; these are criminal, and are sternly condemned.

I. *MAN'S PERCEPTION OF RIGHT AND WRONG CANNOT BE AN ALLOWED STANDARD.* He may "*sin through ignorance.*"

1. Neither his *judgment* nor his *conscience* is an *adequate guide* in detecting sin. There are many wrong things which *escape man's cognizance*, many which *his conscience fails to condemn*, many which indeed "seem right unto a man" and *his heart approves*, which God cannot tolerate. [See Addenda, p. 57, *Ignorance v. Knowledge.*]

2. Hence the inquiry, What is sin? must be *determined from without a man, and not from within him.* God must be heard. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." He knows what is sin; and *He has revealed it in "the commandments of the Lord."*

3. The presence of sin in man, sin even ignorantly contracted, *imperils man's relationship to God.* He cannot look upon sin. It must be cast out from His presence. "*Carry it forth without the camp*" (v. 12). Sin, therefore, interrupts

man's *approach* to God, prevents his acceptable *worship* of God, and alienates his *relationship* with God.

II. GOD'S ESTIMATE AND MEASUREMENT OF SIN REGULATED THE ATONEMENT. "Bring for the sin which he hath sinned," etc. (v. 3). All the depths and subtleties of sin were in God's thoughts when He arranged for its expiation.

1. Man's faulty apprehension of sin would have *narrowed the atonement*. We should then have found our guilt exceeding the provisions; an unexpiated sinfulness would have remained beyond the appeasement we had made.

2. Sin has been expiated *according to God's measurement of sin*. Hence a full atonement for the believer's sins of ignorance as well as for his recognised sins has been made in Christ.

(a) This, if apprehended, lays the ground of a *settled peace*. All may be left with Christ.

(b) This will exalt our conception of the *fulness and efficacy of the Saviour's sacrifice*.

(c) This will assure us of *acceptable and satisfactory fellowship* with God, since all sin is propitiated.

III. *Ignorance concerning sin* argues MAN'S REAL HELPLESSNESS IN DEALING WITH IT.

Even if he could, by any process, rid himself of sin, *what can he do with the sin of which he is not cognizant?* There is guiltiness in man which never comes (until he is Divinely enlightened) within the range of his own consciousness or conscience.

1. Man's ignorance of sin proves his total *inability to put it away*. He is like a physician, when himself so sick as to become *delirious*, attempting to prescribe and apply remedies for his recovery. [See Addenda, p. 57, *Perils of Ignorance*.]

2. Even the most elevated human conscience is *inadequate to determine and depose sin*. "Who can understand his errors?"

3. If there may be sin eluding our detection, how would the *dread of undetected and unexpiated guilt destroy all peace* were we left to deal with our sin?

4. *No happy communion with God would be possible* were a misgiving over lurking sin troubling our hearts. An uneasy mind, anxious on the question of sin, would mar all worship and blessedness.

(a) A happy spiritual life rests upon an *assured peace*.

(b) Assured peace must rest on a *perfectly purged conscience*.

(c) A purged conscience must rest on the foundation of a *perfect remission of all our sins*, whether sins of knowledge or of ignorance.

"And He is the propitiation for our sins."

Topic: DEFILED SANCTITIES (Vv. 6, 7.)

"The *priest* shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times *before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary*. And the *priest* shall put some of the blood *upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense* before the Lord," etc.

The *sin of a "priest"* marks the wrong-doing of *exalted and privileged souls*, and the defamation wrought by one so eminent in sacred relationship and service. In his misdemeanour a defiled foot would taint the holy ground on which he stood; a defiled hand would taint the altar at which he ministered.

1. Christians *occupying exalted positions*, enjoying elevated privileges, rendering distinguished service for God, may *fall into sin*.

2. They know that the *dishonour done to God is commensurate with the dignity of their position* and the *holiness of their profession*.

3. So acutely is their guilt felt by them when thus brought under conscious-

ness of sin, that its burden and bitterness would overwhelm them were there not *adequate grace* in the sin offering for even such sin as theirs.

Here, therefore, it is clearly shown by the Holy Spirit—

I. That **HOWEVER FAR SIN MAY HAVE PENETRATED**, even though to the very “veil of the sanctuary,” and **WHATEVER SOLEMN AND SACRED THINGS SIN MAY HAVE DEFILED**, even though it be the holy “altar” itself, thither **THE ATONING BLOOD FOLLOWS**, carrying full expiation where sin has carried defilement.

1. When sin enters *the inmost recesses of a Christian soul*, high in sacred relationship and godly service, into the *motives, thoughts, affections* of a holy man, it intrudes to the very “veil of the sanctuary” wherein God dwells. *Sin* thus invades scenes so hallowed, the very vestibule of the Divine indwelling.

2. When sin mars *the life and conduct and ministries of a consecrated servant of the Lord*, who had occupied high station in the church, and fulfilled prominent functions in the sanctuary, it profanes the very “altar” of Jehovah, for it casts a stain and defamation on the holiest solemnities of the Christian profession. In touching one who dwells so near God, and whose life is so devoted to Him, sin lays its defiling hand on that which on earth is most godly, which most represents God, and which is nearest God.

Can there be atonement and purifying for such desecration of most holy things?

Yes, the virtue of the Redeemer's blood penetrates to any shrine, to every object sin has reached.

And “where sin abounded grace doth much more abound.” [See Addenda, p. 57, *Pardon*.]

II. That **THE DISHONOUR DONE TO GOD**, to the **SANCTITIES OF A GODLY LIFE**, and to the **SOLEMNITIES OF SANCTUARY MINISTRIES** was compensated for in offering upon that “altar of sweet incense” the symbols of the **INHERENT AND INTRINSIC EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST**.

1. The inward excellency of the victim (represented in “the fat that covereth the inwards,” etc.) is laid on the sacred altar in lieu of, and as an appeasement for, the *inward impurity* of the sinner, whose *soul* had contracted defilement through ignorance. And in that precious excellency of Jesus as our Substitute God receives a perfectly satisfactory compensation. The ill savour of our sin dishonoured God and defiled His holy altar; but on the “sweet incense altar” Christ offered so fragrant a presentation as to answer for all the fallibilities and faults of man.

2. Especially is this *perfectly acceptable* offering of *Christ's excellence* a consolatory fact in contrast with the imperfection which discredits the most consecrated and sacred human life. Even a *priest* “anointed” with the holy oil (v. 3), called to minister at the altar and before the veil of the sanctuary, may “sin according to the sin of the people.” Alas! “there is none righteous, no, not one.” Men may be now “anointed of the Holy Ghost,” raised to a “holy priesthood” in Christ, elevated to loftiest spiritual privileges, made partakers of the heavenly gift, and yet may *defile all this sacred excellence* through sin. “The best of men are but men at the best.” But Christ was “holy, harmless, undefiled.” “In Him was no sin.” And in Him God's “soul delighted.” And in Him *God was honoured by a perfection so unsullied* as to obliterate the dishonour done to Him by man's faultiness and sin.

Topic:—**SIN'S FEARFUL ASPECTS**. “If a *soul* shall sin” (vv. 2); if a *priest* shall sin” (v. 3); if the *whole congregation* of Israel shall sin” (v. 13), etc.

Sin! The sound is brief. But it presents a dark abyss of thought.

I. Think much of sin: IT IS EARTH'S DEATH-BLOW.

It marred the beauty of a beauteous world; stripped it of its lovely robe;

caused life to wither and decay, etc. It placed its foot upon a perfect workmanship, and left it a disordered wreck.

II. Think much of sin : IT IS MAN'S RUIN.

Its most tremendous blight fell on our inner life. It drove the soul from peaceful fellowship with God ; changed the loving child into a hardened rebel ; robbed the mind of light ; made the heart a whirlpool of tumultuous passions, a spring of impure streams. It is the malady, the misery, the shame of our whole race. It is the mother of—*death* ; it digs each grave ; every widow and orphan tastes its gall. It fills each hospital with sick ; sows the battle-field with slain. It is the core in every grief, the worm that gnaws the root of peace.

III. Think much of sin : ITS TERRIBLE DESTRUCTION DIES NOT IN THE GRAVE.

There is a region where its full effects run revel. It kindled quenchless flames ; sharpened the undying sting of an upbraiding conscience ; bars the hopeless in that outer darkness, where weeping ever weeps, and wailing ever wails.

IV. Think much of sin : it works this bitter and eternal anguish *because* GOD'S CURSE ATTENDS IT.

It raised a rebel hand against His will ; dared to violate His holy law ; strove to lay His honour in the dust ; trampled on the statute book of Heaven. Therefore God's anger fiercely burns against it ; hence every misery follows in its rear. He must be wretched who has God against him.

V. Think much of sin : REGARD IT WITH AN EARNEST DREAD.

No power can over-paint the terrible reality of what *sin is*, what *sin has done*, what *penalties it evokes*. Those terrors of a human heart are the best prelude to the tidings of the sin offering. Tears magnify the Cross. Hell seen betimes is hell escaped for ever. Though sin is death, the sinner need not die. There is a way by which the vilest may stand pure. God's love decreed a plan. He willed a ransom, and His Son achieved it. Flee to the Sin Offering. Blessed are they whose curse descends on the Saviour's Cross.—From "*Christ is All*," by Dean of Gloucester.

Topic : HOW THE SIN OFFERING MEETS MAN'S INMOST NEED (Vv. 27, 35).

The *trespass* offering provides expiation for specific *acts* of transgression, for what man does ; the *sin* offering provides expiation for the evil inherent *in* man, for what he *is*. Our error is to see sinfulness only as it breaks into expression in deeds ; God sees that there is in us a sinfulness which is essential, and which is the *source* whence the evil acts proceed ; that so tainted is man's moral nature as that he may sin without even recognising his conduct to be sinful. It is a mere peradventure whether, having sinned, his sin will even "*come to his knowledge*" (v. 28).

I. MOURNFUL RECOGNITION OF THE SINNER'S INHERENT CORRUPTION.

Sin is in our very nature. The institution of the law of "commandments" does not create us sinners, it only *reveals* us to be sinners. It holds the standard up which discloses how void man is of righteousness, of rightness. This inherent corruption is—

1. *Not realised by the unenlightened.* Unconverted persons only apprehend sin as it appears in actions ; they repudiate, or fail to recognise, the fact that they are essentially, and in all the springs of thought and life, sinful.

2. *Faintly discerned at first by the awakened.* The young convert perceives and bewails his *trespasses* more than his sin. He deplors that he has *done* evil, but scarcely sees how really he *is* evil.

3. *Supremely apprehended by the most godly.* Those highest in grace, with conscience most illumined and heart most instructed through fellowship with God, and realisation of the beauty of Christ, and enlightenment of the Holy

Ghost, "abhor *themselves*" and not their acts only. "*In me*, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Most keenly is this realised by holiest men. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," so that "when we would do good evil is present." [See Rom. vii. and Gal. v. 17.]

II. JOYOUS SATISFACTION OVER THE INCLUSIVE ATONEMENT OF JESUS. "A sweet savour *unto the Lord*"; "an atonement *for him*" (v. 31).

When the painful fact is realised that *sin in us*, as well as *trespasses by us*, constitutes our condemnation, what consolation comes in the fact that an offering *for sin*, as well as offerings for trespasses, was appointed by God. Thus Christ was "made *sin for us*"; He "bore our *sin*"; as well as "was delivered for our offences."

1. *Because of our indwelling sinfulness* Christ was offered as our Sin Sacrifice (v. 29).

2. *Because Christ was offered as our Sin Sacrifice* we who trust in Him are saved from an indwelling sin (v. 35).

Note, therefore :

(1) When *the Spirit reveals to believers their deeper sinfulness* ("He shall convince of sin," John xvi. 8), it is not to destroy their peace in Christ, or rob them of joyful realisation of His full atonement; but to reveal how much Christ's salvation is needed, and to provoke to fuller gratitude and faith.

(2) To *doubt our justification and acceptance* because we see our "sin," betrays a low estimate of Christ's work for us, and reflects on the all-abounding graciousness of God in providing the sin offering. He "*put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*." "He by Himself purged our sins" (Heb. i. 3).

Topic: THREE ASPECTS OF SIN OFFERING (Vv. 3, 13, 22, 27).

I. THREE DISTINCT CLASSES OF TRANSGRESSION ARE SPECIFIED.

1. "*The priest that is anointed*" and "*the whole congregation of Israel*" are classed together as if identified. For the priest represented all Israel, and all Israel suffered in the error of the priest, so that the individual and collective sin are to be atoned for on precisely the same conditions and by precisely the same methods. This points to those transgressors who had enjoyed sacred privileges, and were in covenant relation to Jehovah, representing *godly souls* who yet had erred from their integrity.

2. The "*ruler*" represents the *civil and secular life of a people*, men of state dignity, social eminence, and foremost in patriotic affairs rather than in the church; statesmen, legislators, magistrates, civil functionaries. These may err from their uprightness.

3. "*The common people*" gather in the multitudes, who are distinguished by no eminence, burdened by no public responsibility, holding no office in Church or State, simple ordinary persons exposed to none of the temptations and perils of an exalted station. Yet these may err and lapse into wrong.

II. THREE ALIENATIONS WROUGHT BY SIN ARE INTIMATED.

1. *God's dwelling-place* in the tabernacle was rendered unsanctified. "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever." But instead of stainless sanctity sin had been carried by the priest "before the veil of the sanctuary." The holy place was sullied in God's sight.

2. *God's worship was marred*. The whole "congregation" had to pause in consecration and peace offerings, in the joy of adoration, and to assume the sad attitude of criminals suing escape from vengeance by bringing a victim which must be treated as "accursed" in order that sinful men might be spared. It turned aside the homage of a happy people from Jehovah, while they bowed in mournful prostration as a multitude of condemned transgressors.

3. *The individual conscience* was molested. Sin raised a barrier between the soul and God, separated the sinner from the Divine acceptance, and destroyed—so long as it lay on the conscience—all fellowship, all bliss.

III. THREEFOLD APPEASEMENTS WROUGHT BY THE BLOOD are suggested.

1. The blood being “sprinkled before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary,” secured *Jehovah’s relationship with His people* (which, but for this atonement, must have been severed) and *His continued dwelling in their midst*.

2. The blood being put upon “the golden altar” preserved the basis of acceptable worship, so that the flame of “the sweet incense” might acceptably ascend to God, He being propitiated by the atonement.

3. By pouring “all the blood” at “the bottom of the altar” the *claims of God on the individual soul* were met, for thereby substitutionary death was attested. [Compare *Notes on Leviticus*, by C. H. M.]

Topic: THE EMINENT SINFULNESS OF ERROR IN THE PRIEST (Vv. 1-12).

Contrition for sin must always have some proportion to its malignity and magnitude. In the gradations of the sin offering—as in all the other sacrifices—this truth is clearly taught. Not that any amount of contrition could really atone for any sin; but the contrition symbolised in the sacrifice was to bear some proportion to the character of the sin to be condoned. The same sin in the priest would be considered greater than in the people, from many considerations.

I. *From the superior position he occupied.* Placed in front of the people, and anointed to a conspicuous as well as dignified office, being mediator between God and man.

II. *From the superior privileges he enjoyed.* He had exemption from many secular anxieties that would irritate and embarrass others; was not exposed to many temptations that encompassed others; had more familiar and frequent fellowship with Jehovah than the common people; and was constantly coming in contact with influences in the discharge of his duties that would tend to render his falling into error inexcusable and very culpable.

III. *From the superior knowledge he possessed.* He would be intimately acquainted with the requirements of the law, having to expound and enforce it; and he would have ample means and opportunities for ascertaining the purpose of the precepts enjoined, and of avoiding omissions and mistakes.

IV. *From the superior influence he exerted.* The priest would be looked up to by the people as an example, and his influence would be very powerful upon Israel for good or for evil. The old saying, “Like priest, like people,” has much truth in it; and if sin had been allowed in the priest to be passed over and healed up slightly, it would have been like offering a premium to sin and proclaiming an indulgence to transgression. The sin of the priests would not only taint all the holy places that they frequented in the prosecution of their sacerdotal work and worship, but it would contaminate the magnetic circle of moral influence by which they were enveloped, and which necessarily affected the minds and morals of the people among whom they daily ministered. *Sin grows heinous according to the rank and influence of the transgressors*; and God acknowledged the exalted position of the priests by exacting larger sacrifice from them in the sin offering than from the common people. Sins in the priests—who were regarded as the theocratic earthly head of Israel—would tend to debase the moral sense of the whole community. The sins of the priest were conspicuous, and the sacrifice, therefore, was conspicuous too; and, as the unintentional offender brought the young bullock for an offering, we read in his obedience—anxiety and willingness to be forgiven, as well as confession of his sin. The fact that the offering was equal to that required for the sin of the whole congregation, and more than was

to be made for the sin of a ruler, showed how great the contrition and self-abasement were. There was no oil mixed with the sin offering to suggest gladness; no fragrance of frankincense; no festive joy or communion, as at the meat offering. Everything about it denoted sorrow and suffering on account of wrong-doing.—*F. W. Brown.*

Topic: THE SIN OFFERING OF IGNORANCE FOR THE CONGREGATION (Vv. 13-22).

The people were as liable to sin through ignorance as the priest, so provision was made for their forgiveness as had been mercifully made for his. The laws recently promulgated were so *many, minute, and complicated* that the people would be liable to misinterpret and misunderstand them. The Divine Lawgiver knew that; made provision to meet such liability by appointing an offering easily available and that would effectually atone. The people had mixed before their exodus with an idolatrous nation; their old propensities and practices would pursue them in the wilderness, as their old foes had pursued them even though they had been delivered from their final bondage. The offering for the sins of ignorance of the people teaches us—

I. *That error is so indigenuous to, and insidious in man, that a whole community may become the victim of it.*

(a) A whole community may sin ignorantly when—

1. *It unwittingly obeys unrighteous human laws.*
2. *When it misinterprets a righteous Divine law.*
3. *When it is misled by the incorrect interpretations of its leaders.*
4. *When it is unaware of the existence of the law.*

In any of the above instances the persons committing sin do so ignorantly, and such wrong-doing, though unintentional, may incur guilt, *i.e.*, may entail evil consequences. Let us pray and strive to be saved from such delinquencies.

(b) A whole community may sin ignorantly—

1. *Even when it has anointed and authoritative leaders.*
2. *Even when it has ample means of ascertaining the truth.*
3. *Even when it is surrounded by helpful and hallowed associations.*

We see these facts exemplified in the history of Israel. How constantly they went wrong wilfully, and frequently ignorantly, although blessed with peculiar and pre-eminent advantages. Notwithstanding our light and knowledge we are in danger of falling into error; our high privileges may even prove a snare to us, put us off our guard, and render us an easy prey to sin.

No nation is exempt from this danger. If God's ancient people were not exempt, where He specially manifested His presence and power, where His will was openly made known, no people at any subsequent period of the world's history can be exempt.

No church is exempt, for although the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto His people, and leads them into all truth, yet we only see as through a glass darkly, and "know in part." The Church has committed great errors in all ages, and no man, and no body of men, however saintly, are infallible. The larger the disc of light the greater the circumference of darkness.

No family is exempt. Where the best interests and welfare of each is sought there may be sins committed ignorantly, yet fraught with disastrous consequences. We may mislead by the advice we give, misjudge in the opinions we form; may omit to discharge our duty by neglecting judicious and necessary discipline and counsel.

II. *That when a whole community becomes the victim of inadvertent error nothing but a general expiation will atone for it.*

The elders of the congregation laid their hands upon the heads of the offering

to be presented to the Lord to denote that the whole people confessed their sin and desired its removal, and the priest did with the bullock as with his own sin offering. Thus he made an atonement for the people, and their sin was forgiven. Such a service and sacrifice would be equivalent to a *season of national confession and humiliation*, and would be accepted as such in the sight of God. We are not under the law, but under grace, yet the principle that was underlying these old rites exists still, and though we are called upon to offer no bullock for our individual or national sins, yet we are expected to present the sacrifice of broken and contrite hearts to the God against whom we have wittingly or unwittingly sinned, and to expect that our sacrifice will be accepted through the atonement of our great Redeemer, who is at once our Sacrifice and Priest. When sin is participated in by a *nation*, or *church*, or *family*, the whole community and circle should participate in the contrition, acknowledging complicity in the commission of the sin, and deprecating the consequences which, but for forgiveness, would inevitably ensue.

In our united and public worship we should unitedly and publicly confess sin, for if we are not conscious of any flagrant and high-handed sins, we are sure to have upon us the stain of some inadvertent offence against the Divine laws. In many things—yea, in all things—we all offend. There is full and free forgiveness for all secret and unknown faults as well as for open, unmistakable sins.—F. W. B.

Topic: THE SIN OFFERING FOR THE RULER (Vv. 22-26).

By the sin offering of the ruler being inferior in quality to that of the priest, the Lord taught the people that no secular position was so high as that of the priest's, and that no influence was so potent and extensive as that which he, by virtue of his person and position, exerted. The humblest sacred office is higher than the highest secular position, and the sincere believer and true disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven, though poor and obscure in the world, is a king and a priest unto God. We learn from this rite—

I. *That persons in the highest positions of secular authority among men are held responsible to God.*

It has often been said that "a king can do no wrong"; but the teaching of the old economy shows us that kings could do wrong, and that rulers could do wrong through ignorance, and that their ignorant acts of wrong-doing were not connived at or condoned by the King of Heaven. When they committed error, even by mistake or in ignorance, the law could not be broken without the Law-giver being slighted and insulted. The inculcation of this truth, and the institution of this rite, would arouse rulers to be circumspect in their conduct, and check them in the exercise of their regal authority, when tending to grow exacting and despotic.

II. *That persons in the highest positions of secular authority among men must humble themselves before God and men when they discover their public errors.*

The example of the ruler would influence the people injuriously. The atonement of his sin was therefore to be made in a public manner before the Lord, and in the presence of the people he must acknowledge his offences. Just as mercy adds lustre to crowned heads, so the acknowledgment of inadvertent errors or wilful sins will purify and dignify the conscience, and add to the glory of earth's mightiest potentates.

III. *That persons in the highest positions of secular authority among men—thus humbling themselves—obtain forgiveness of their sins and arrest the consequences of their guilt.*

God was just, and yet the justifier of the penitent sinner; He demanded atone-

ment that His broken law might be vindicated, and His slighted authority satisfied. The people would see the exceeding heinousness of sin, how exacting and inevitable its penalty, that a priest or a ruler could not sin ignorantly without having to humble himself and seek forgiveness from Him whose laws he had broken. The guilt of such sins would be arrested, their moral consequences would be removed. Such sins would not likely be repeated, they could not be ignorantly by the same persons, and they probably would not be wilfully, when they had been shown to be so offensive in the sight of God, and when for them such sacrifices had to be made. When a course of sin is arrested a multitude of sins are hidden—not only blotted out, but prevented—sins of the past removed and sins of the future restrained. Guilt removed here, and consequences hereafter.—F. W. B.

Topic: THE SIN OFFERING OF ONE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE (Vv. 27-35).

The law of the sin offering of ignorance included all persons and positions. *The sanctity of the priest* did not shield him from its demands and scrutiny. *The dignity of the ruler* did not hedge him in from its surveillance. *The multitude of the congregation* did not hinder the action of its claims; and the obscurity of any one of the congregation did not excuse or exempt an offender from its requirements. So soon as the sin was discovered to, or by the offender, expiation according to Divine direction must be promptly and penitently made for them. The sin offering for one of the common people teaches us—

I. *That obscurity of social position does not shut men out from the cognizance of the great God.* The requirement of an offering from a common person who might inadvertently sin, showed that none were too obscure to be observed by the eye of the Lord. Each member of the congregation of Israel was a creature of God, each had a soul capable of sinning, and needing forgiveness, and each one was recognised by and known unto Him. The actions of all men are not only seen, but their moral quality judged.

II. *That obscurity of social position does not shut men out from the government of the great God.*

Laws were imposed upon and obedience expected from each and all. The poorest might look at the manifestation of God in the shekinah cloud, and recognise Him as their King.

III. *That obscurity of social position does not shut men out from the clemency of the great God.*

The offering required from a common person was not so great and costly as that required from a *priest* or *ruler*; it was adapted to the humbler circumstances of the offerer. This showed that the great God was not willing that even the poorest among the people should perish, not willing that they should sin on without an offering, and so become reprobates. He restored—though they might have sinned—to His fellowship and friendship. “The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.” In the nature and extent of the sin offering we see foreshadowed the fact that in the great sin offering of the Lamb of God provision is made for the forgiveness of all. “We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”—F. W. B.

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER IV.

V. 2.—*Theme*: SIN THROUGH IGNORANCE.

1. *The seat of sin*. "If a soul," etc.—body with organs only instruments of soul.

2. *The source of sin*. "Ignorance"—of God—His love, mercy, grace, etc.

3. *The strength of sin*. Law, "commandments."

4. *The stain of sin*. Deep—requires blood to wash it away.

Temptation in itself not sin; yielding is sin. Ignorance of Israel inexcusable. They had sacred memories, public directions, repeated reminders. The Judge of all the earth will do right with those who have never heard His name; but those who know His will and do it not shall be beaten with many stripes.—*F. W. B.*

V. 3.—*Theme*: SIN IN THE PRIESTHOOD.

"If the priest that is anointed do sin."

I. A HOLY OFFICE DOES NOT ENSURE INFALIBILITY.

II. *Occupants of a holy office* are SPECIALLY CALLED TO SANCTITY. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

III. *Eminently privileged and enlightened, they who minister before God* SHOULD BE MOST VIGILANT LEST THEY SIN. To "sin through ignorance" should be impossible.

IV. Sin in God's priests had to be PURGED BY A GREAT SACRIFICIAL EXPIATION. Expressing—

1. The peculiar magnitude of sin in them.

2. The boundless sufficiency of redemption, even for them.

V. 6. *Note*: SEVENFOLD PURGING. "Sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord."

The different treatment of the blood is here to be noticed. Whilst in the case of the other sacrifices the priest threw the blood upon the walls of the altar of burnt offering (see chap. i. 5), in the sin offering the high priest is—

1. First, to dip his finger seven times in the blood, and sprinkle it before the Lord.

The finger, according to the rules which obtained during the second temple, was that of the right hand, as the blood was always taken and sprinkled with the right hand. [The right hand is the symbol of strength, as if denoting that the act was done with a resolute purpose to find purifying.—*Ed.*]

2. Seven, being a complete number, is used for the perfect finishing of a work.

Hence, the seven days of creation (Gen. ii. 2, 3); seven branches in the golden candlestick (Exod. xxv. 37; xxxvii. 23); seven times the blood was sprinkled on the day of atonement (Lev. xvi. 14); seven times was the oil sprinkled upon the altar when it was consecrated (Lev. viii. 11); seven days were required for consecrating the priests (Lev. viii. 35); seven days were necessary for purifying

the defiled (Lev. xii. 2; Numb. xix. 19); seven times Naaman washed in the Jordan (2 Kings v. 10-14); seven days Jericho was besieged, and seven priests with seven trumpets blew when the walls fell down (Josh. vi.); the Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God (Rev. v. 6); seven seals are on God's book (Rev. v. 5), etc.—*Ellicott's Commentary*.

V. 6.—*Note*: EXPIATION WROUGHT IN THE GAZE OF HEAVEN. "Before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary."

1. The phrase "BEFORE THE LORD" indicates that the act of expiation was to be performed in the immediate presence of (1) Him whom the sin had dishonoured; (2) Him whom the sprinkled blood was to propitiate; and on the very spot where the priest had ministered, and which—

(1) *By priestly sin* had been desecrated, and

(2) *By expiatory blood* was to be again sanctified.

This twofold effort of expiation, reconciliation to God, and sanctification of sacred scenes, suggests what the sinner has to secure through the blood of Christ, viz.:—

(a) Jehovah propitiated, so that man may stand unbuked in His presence.

(b) Defiled scenes reconsecrated, so that God may still dwell in the temple, in the human heart. That must be sanctified, for "ye are the temple of God."

2. The phrase "BEFORE THE VEIL OF THE SANCTUARY" indicates that the act of expiation was to be performed in the gaze of the angel hosts. That blue "veil" was all overwrought with cherubic and angel forms, typical of the firmament, the heavenly world, crowded with the angelic hosts.

1. For angelic beholders watch and bewail man's sin.

2. They joy in the presence of God over the sinner's repentance.

3. They "desire to look into" the wonders of redemption.

4. They "minister unto those who are heirs of salvation."

Hence—

(a) Having beheld God's holy place defiled, they watch its re-hallowing, and thus ponder how are justified the ways of God with men.

(b) Having witnessed the withdrawal of God from the defiled scenes (for "your iniquities have separated between you and God, and your sins have hid His face from you." Isa. lix. 2), they are eager observers of the renewal of favour and fellowship between God and the expiated soul. "The father ran and fell on his neck and kissed him"; and "the father said to his servants (comp. Psa. ciii. 20, 21; Zech. iii. 4, 5), Bring forth the best robe," etc.

V. 6.—*Theme*: SEVENFOLD SPRINKLING.

To denote completeness, perfection, to indicate how deeply dyed sin was, and impress the mind that it fully was forgiven: sprinkled "before the Lord." To teach—

- (1) That all sin is committed against Him.
- (2) That all sin must be forgiven by Him.

Atonement and mediation the basis and means of pardon.—*F. W. B.*

V. 12.—*Theme*: SIN LOATHED BY GOD.

"Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp," etc.

If the law reveals sin in man, it is to drive the convicted and condemned sinner to the sacrifice for sin. The law was not given to make men holy, but to prove us sinners. Deluded souls, "blinded" by the deceiver, try to keep the law and thus become righteous: in vain! For "the law makes nothing perfect"; it unveils man's deformity that he may hide himself in the redeeming merits of Christ.

I. SIN'S HATEFULNESS. "Carry forth without the camp."

Look at the sin offering, and see there how hateful sin is! See how the perfect Substitute, God's own beloved One, is cast out.

1. Our sin is repulsive, odious, an offence to God. He cannot bear it in His presence.

2. He in whom sin centres is repelled as loathsome, yes: be it Jesus, our Surety, on whom our sin is laid; or be it man himself, carrying his own unpardoned sins—the sinner is banished!

II. SIN'S ANNIHILATION. "Shall he be burnt." Nothing remaining.

1. Sin consumed. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Those dead "ashes" tell of sin's annihilation.

2. Sins cancelled. All our bewailing over our sins could never cancel one; if, therefore, they were not all cancelled when Christ "died for our sins" they cannot now be cancelled. "There remaineth no more offering for sin."

(a) If the sin offering has been sacrificed and accepted, we may joy in the fact of sin for ever expiated.

(b) We may rejoice, even when most convinced of sin, that God asks no penalty beyond the death already borne. [See Addenda, p. 57. Pardon.]

V. 12.—*Theme*: DISCIPLESHIP FOLLOWING CHRIST TO REPROACH. "The whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp."

This act is to be viewed as expressing—
a. The place which the Lord Jesus took for us, as bearing sin.

b. The place into which He was cast, by a world which had rejected Him.

The use which the Apostle, in Heb. xiii., makes of Christ's having "suffered without the gate" is deeply practical: "Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach."

1. The place where He suffered expresses our rejection from earth. Though His death has secured us a city on high, it has forfeited for us a city below.

2. In suffering "without the gate" He set aside Jerusalem as the present centre of Divine operations. There is no such thing now as a consecrated spot on earth.

3. Christ has taken His place as a suffering One, outside the range of this world's religion—its politics, and all that pertains to it. The world hated Him, and cast Him out.

Wherefore, the word is, "Go forth."

I. OUTSIDE EVERY RELIGIOUS CAMP.

You must "go forth" out of every "holy city," every religious system which men set up, to find the rejected Christ.

1. From the gross absurdities of ignorant superstitions.

Christ is not to be found amid the ruins of Jerusalem, amid the so-called sacred scenes and the relics of antiquity. A single ray of revelation shows that we must "go forth" from all such trifles to find communion with a rejected Christ.

2. So, when men set up "a camp," and rally round a standard on which is emblazoned some dogma of truth, or some imposing institution, when they appeal to some orthodox creed or splendid ritual—it then requires much spiritual discernment for the proper application of the words "let us go forth," and much spiritual energy and decision to act upon them. Still, they should be discerned and acted upon, for the atmosphere of a camp is destructive of personal communion with a rejected Christ.

3. It is the tendency of our hearts to drop into cold stereotyped forms. These forms may have originated from real visitations of the Spirit. The temptation is to stereotype the form when the spirit and power have departed. This is, in principle, to set up a camp. The Jewish system could boast a Divine origin—its temple, splendid worship, priesthood, sacrifices, etc. Where is the system which could put forth such powerful and lofty pretensions to-day? And yet the command was to "go forth." It is our proneness to slip away from communion with Christ, and sink into a dead routine.

II. Outside the Camp to the Lord Jesus "Unto Him."

Not glide from one system to another, from one set of opinions to another, from one company of people to another, but from all which merits the appellation of "a camp" to Him who "suffered without the gate."

1. The Lord Jesus is as thoroughly outside the gate now.

The religious world put Him outside eighteen centuries ago; and the religious world of that day is, in spirit and principle, the religious world of the present moment. The world has covered itself with the cloak of Christianity.

2. If we would walk with a rejected Christ we must be a rejected people.

Our Master "suffered without the gate," we cannot reign within the gate. If we walk in His footsteps whither will He lead us? Surely not to the high places of this Godless, Christless world.

"His path, uncheered by earthly smiles,
Led only to the Cross."

He was a despised Christ, a rejected Christ, a Christ *outside the camp*.

3. *Bearing His reproach*, let us go forth unto Him.

Not bask in the sunshine of the world's favour. Let us be faithful to a rejected Lord. While our consciences repose in His blood, let our hearts' affections entwine themselves around His sacred Person. We ask a bold separateness from the world, a joyous, living attachment to Christ.—Arranged from *Notes on Leviticus*, by C. H. M.

V. 13.—*Theme*: HIDDEN SIN.

Sin may be hidden, undetected by the doer; may be concealed from others; but cannot from God. The genesis of sin—(a) begins in secret chambers of heart, (b) proceeds to, exhibits itself in, words and deeds. No sin so secret and subtle but known fully to God. Thought, feeling, intention, are known to Him. Sins of heart need pardon—unfulfilled evil purposes need forgiveness.—F. W. B.

V. 20.—*Theme*: GOOD NEWS.

I. *Of appointment of mediator*.—"Priest."

II. *Of acceptance of sacrifice*—"Atonement."

III. *Of proclamation of pardon*. "Shall be forgiven them."

In the Gospel we have these glad tidings fully and freely proclaimed, and all centred in Christ.—F. W. B.

V. 27.—*Theme*: COMMON PEOPLE.

I. *No one so common as to be overlooked by God*.

II. *No sin so trivial as to be connived at by God*.

Life, then, is real, solemn, earnest, even in humblest. *Venial* as well as mortal sins to be deprecated and avoided.—F. W. B.

V. 20.—*Theme*: FORGIVEN. "It shall be forgiven them."

Based on the "atonement." No forgiveness otherwise. "The priest shall make an atonement for them and it shall be forgiven them." The terms of forgiveness are fixed; and the order in which forgiveness is gained is determined. Atonement first: then forgiveness.

I. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF FORGIVENESS: *how is it gained?*

The mind of the Jewish offerer was set at rest by the presentation of his sin offering. How did he know that the sin for which he brought his sacrifice was forgiven?

Because God had said "It shall be forgiven him."

1. His peace of heart rested on the testimony of God.

2. His peace of heart rested on the offered and accepted sacrifice.

It was a transaction with a covenant promise. The transaction effected ("atonement made for him", the promise was believed ("it shall be forgiven him"). Thus—

(a) FAITH in God's Word and in the Saviour's atonement imparts the peace and satisfaction of forgiveness to the sinner.

For an offerer of the sin offering *not to believe* that his sin was forgiven would have reflected on the truthfulness of God who had pledged forgiveness as the issue of atonement. To doubt is to "make God a liar." We must believe!

(b) Christ's crucifixion is a fact; as really so as the death of the victim for the sin offering. The blood of Christ is our satisfaction to justice: as the blood of the victim was. What then? *Sin is expiated*. That fact stands. The believer sees in Christ One who has been judged for his sin; One who made himself responsible for his sin. And, as God sealed His acceptance of that sacrifice by Christ's resurrection, the sinner's pardon and justification are truths to be held with the joy of faith.

II. THE REALISATION OF FORGIVENESS: *What it ensures?*

1. *All fear of judgment and wrath* is eternally set aside. God "made Him to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). Our judgment, the wrath due to sin, these were settled, effected, on the accursed tree, between Divine holiness and the Spotless Victim. Justice has no charge to bring against the believer, because it has no charge to bring against Christ. If a charge could be brought against a soul identified with Christ by faith, it would deny the perfectness of Christ's work on his behalf.

2. *Eternal life* is inherited: for the death which sin brings is escaped by its falling on the Substitute. The sin is gone, because the life to which it was transferred is gone. There is no other death required. The sinner does not die: for Christ has died his death. It remains to the forgiven and justified soul that *he lives*: "he that believeth in Me shall never die" (John xi. 26). The judgment and death of Christ on the Cross were realities; then the righteousness and life of the believer are also realities. Imputed sin—ours laid on Christ—was a reality; imputed righteousness—Christ's transferred to us—is a reality. The death of Jesus satisfies all the demands made as to human sin, satisfies them for ever. [Comp. *Notes on Leviticus*, by O. H. M.] [See Addenda, p. 57, Pardon.]

V. 27. *Theme*: CULPABILITY OF IGNORANCE. "If any one sin," etc.

The majesty of the law of God was exhibited, and declared, by the fact that it could not be broken inadvertently with impunity; and the mercy of God was displayed in that, for any transgression, an offering would not only be accepted, but was commanded. It is an eternal law that the moral quality of an action lies in the intention. Sins, committed through ignorance, may be fraught with disastrous consequences, as in the case of those who rejected and crucified Christ "through ignorance," for

whom He prayed on the Cross saying "they know not what they do." Their ignorance was not wholly excusable; they shut their eyes to evidences of the Messiahship; through pride and prejudice they regarded Him as an impostor and usurper, and had, as Jesus said, "no cloak for their sins."

Saul of Tarsus, though "blameless, as touching the righteousness which is in the law," yet his legal blamelessness did not exempt him from errors of ignorance, nor did his scrupulous conscientiousness prevent him from doing wrong; for he persecuted the Christians, and thought he was doing God service. The Pharisee in the Temple thought himself better than other men, and seemed unaware of the heinous pride and wicked self-righteousness that prevented him going down to his house justified as did the poor publican. Even conscience needs educating and enlightening; it has shared the fate of all the other faculties, and is liable to seriously mislead us.

We may commit sins of ignorance.—

I. *Through mere want of thought; through absolute neglect.*

II. *Through lack of knowledge that might have been acquired.*

III. *Through misapprehension of information, or direction given.*

IV. *Through defectiveness of memory, not retentive or ready at the needed juncture to prevent error.*

V. *Through not heeding protests and obstacles which God may have placed in the way, and presented against wrong-doing.*

The sacrifice provided for sins of ignorance shows that God does not connive at the errors and mistakes of any one; and, that for inadvertent wrong-doing, as well as for high-handed sins, pardon must be sought. We need to pray to be forgiven for unknown, as well as for known sins; and to be cleansed from secret faults, as well as to be kept back from presumptuous sins.—*F. W. B.*

V. 27.—*Theme: SCRIPTURE THE ANTIDOTE FOR IGNORANCE.*

"Sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord."

Honest-hearted reception of the Word of God can alone preserve us from ignorance.

I. **ACQUAINTANCE WITH SCRIPTURE:** This alone is the effectual remedy for the darkness of ignorance.

1. Is not the light of Scripture hidden to-day, other lights being substituted instead?

(1) Think of the manner in which ceremonial rites (many of them mere inventions of man), ministered, too, by unholy hands, have supplanted the true and saving ministrations of the Gospel of the grace of God.

(2) Think of multitudes while yet in their sins, because unsanctified by faith in Jesus, being taught falsely to say to the great Shepherd of Israel, "We are Thy people, and the sheep of Thy pasture."

(3) Think how many, uncommissioned by God, unacquainted with His truth, untaught

by His Spirit, have usurped the place of ministers of Christ, and are so owned and honoured.

(4) Think how professed discipleship of Christ has degenerated into seeking unholy place and gain, coveting the splendour of Solomon rather than the reproach of Jesus.

2. Is there not a natural tendency in the heart of man to bow to perverted and falsely assumed authority?

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and Thy people love to have it so."

(1) All such authority, neither based upon nor guided by truth, can only lead into the darkness to which itself belongs. What wonder, then, that ignorance should settle upon that soul which has made itself the slave of such authority! What wonder if it should welcome falsehood, and fight against truth, and congratulate itself most when furthest from the principles of Christ!

(2) *Individuals*, too, as well as collective bodies, may claim an authority which God has never given. And not unfrequently fear, or affection, or self interest, or a disposition to lean upon others, causes it to be gladly recognised. But such authority, seeing that it is not grounded upon truth, that it directs not to the Scriptures alone, can only lead towards, if not into, darkness.

II. **CLOSE ADHERENCE TO SCRIPTURE:** This alone will save us from the false leadings and lights of our age.

1. Is that which we hear true or false? Is it or is not the Word of God? Such are the great questions we have to ask ourselves now.

2. The faithful use of the Scripture will expose many an error, detect many a sin of ignorance, and show us much that we have not sufficient grace to attain.

3. Instruction and exhortation of the Scriptures is employed by the Lord to free His people from the sins of ignorance and their disastrous consequences.

III. **THE STEADY LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD:** This is appointed to shine on in the darkness, until the day dawn.

The energies of Satan, and the impelling of evil in us, are active to resist the Scriptures and quench the sacred light of truth.

1. The delusions of Satan and of the human heart struggle to increase darkness and confirm error. And we cannot wonder that they prosper in their plans during a period marked by our Lord Himself as one wherein "iniquity shall abound."

2. Yet the greater the darkness the more precious is any light that is available in our midst. Amid all the dark and stifling scenes through which the fierce passions of men, under Satan, are hurrying alike the Church and the world, the Word of God remains unchanged and unchangeable; the only one steady light.

3. Happy they who stand most apart from the tumults, and cleave most closely to the Scriptures, and most meditate therein.

4. If, as the history of Christianity pecu-

liarily shows, the *perpetual effort of Satan* to *hide, veil or distort* the light of Scripture, *let our effort be to unveil it*, and to give steady direction to its beams. He will not have lived in vain who shall have caused one ray of light from the Word of God to rest steadily on a heart that was dark to it before.

IV. SCRIPTURE LIGHT WILL SURELY MANIFEST SINS OF IGNORANCE: how, then, can we have courage to use, or to approach a light, so certain to reveal such sins both in ourselves and others, if there were no Sin Offering?

What hope could we have unless we were able to say that the whole family of faith are protected for ever under its efficacy? We

have not again to offer it: it has been offered, once and for ever offered, every ceremony fulfilled, every ordinance obeyed.

Let us use it, not to nurture ignorance, listlessness and slumber, but to encourage ourselves to cleave to and maintain the light of revealed truth, which, however beset by evil, however much it may be for the time shrouded, shall never have its essential brightness marred by one element of darkness, on to the hour when it mingles with the light of the eternal day.—Developed from *Thoughts on Leviticus*, by B. W. Newton, Vol. I.—[See Addenda, p. 58, *Scripture Light*.]

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER IV.

IGNORANCE. *Classical quotations*:—
Ignorantione rerum bonarum et malarum maxime hominum vita vexatur.—Cicero.

[Through ignorance of what is good and bad the life of man is greatly perplexed.]

O miseris hominum mentes! Oh pectora ceca!—Lucretius.

[How wretched are the minds of men, how blind their understandings.]

Quantum animis errois inest!—Ovid.

[What error there is in human minds!]

IGNORANCE *versus* KNOWLEDGE.

"When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it—this is knowledge."—Confucius: *Analects*.

"Wisdom is humble that he knows no more."
—Cowper: *The Task*.

"The first step to self-knowledge is self-distrust. Nor can we attain to any kind of knowledge except by a like process."—J. C. and A. W. Hare: *Guesses at Truth*.

"All things I thought I knew; but now confess
The more I know I know, I know the less."
—Owen.

"Ignorance is the curse of God;
Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to
heaven."—Henry VI.

"By knowledge we do learn ourselves to
know,
And what to man, and what to God we
owe."—Spencer: *Tears of the Muses*.

"Conviction of ignorance is the door-step
to the temple of wisdom."—Spurgeon.

PERILS OF IGNORANCE.

Modern science has shown that the seeds of epidemic and miasmatic diseases are generated and exert their activity *during the night*, and in places unvisited by the sun's beams—a true image of the evils developed from unilluminated ignorance.

"So long as thou art ignorant be not ashamed to learn. Ignorance is the greatest of all infirmities, and when justified the greatest of all follies."—Isaak Walton.

"Ignorance is the night of the mind, but
a night without moon or star."—Confucius.

"Ignorance, when voluntary, is criminal, and that man may be properly charged with that evil which he neglected or refused to learn how to prevent."—Johnson.

EXPLANATION OF MAN'S IGNORANCE.

"Ignorance of things very near to us, and in which we are nearly concerned, may be from two causes:

i. *From want of Light*. Nothing can be perceived in the dark. If you are in a dark room, though it be richly adorned and furnished, all is lost to you. If you stand in a dark night on the top of a hill that commands a fine prospect, still you are able to see no more than if you were in a valley. Though you were in a dangerous place, with pitfalls, precipices, thieves and murderers all around you, still you might imagine yourself in safety, if you had no light with you.

ii. It may be *from some ignorance or obstruction between you* and the object. Thus, your dearest friend or greatest enemy might be within a few yards of you, and you know nothing of it, if there were a wall between you.

These comparisons may in some measure represent our state by nature. *God* is near: "in Him we live and move and have our being! *Eternity* is near; we stand upon the brink of it. *Death* is near; advancing towards us with hasty strides. The *truths of God's Word* are most certain in themselves, and of the utmost consequence to us, but we perceive none of these things, we are not affected by them, because our *understandings are dark*, and because thick walls of *ignorance, prejudice and unbelief* stand before the eyes of our minds, and keep them from our view."

PARDON.

"*I believe in the forgiveness of sins*"—The article of the creed which brought peace to Luther's troubled mind when seeking the way of salvation. "Oh my sins! my sins!" was his cry, almost of despair; from which, however, he was greatly relieved by the good counsel and comforting advice of Staupitz. But the work was not yet finished. One day

all his fears and terrors had returned, when an old monk entered his cell, and Luther opened his heart to him. The venerable old man was unable to follow his soul in all its doubts as Staupitz had done, but he knew his *creed*, and found much consolation in it for his own heart; so he repeated to Luther the cheering article, "*I believe in the forgiveness of sins.*"

These simple words, pronounced with much sincerity in the decisive moment, diffused great consolation in Luther's mind. From that instant light sprang up in his rejoicing heart.

"I feel more sure than ever that the right thing is to take each sin the *moment the conscience feels it*, to the *blood of Jesus*, and there, having once purged it, to remember it no more. I don't think of one scriptural example of a sin once forgiven ever being charged upon the conscience again; and I suppose the yearly sins were never expected to be again brought to mind, after the scapegoat had borne them into the land of forgetfulness. Oh for grace to plunge into the ocean of Divine forgiveness."—A. L. Newton.

SCRIPTURE LIGHT.

At a missionary meeting in Mangaia, after the whole Bible had been received in their own language, an aged disciple rose up to exhort the people to read the whole Bible through. Lifting his own new Bible before the congregation, he exclaimed, "My brothers and sisters, this is my resolve: the dust shall never cover my new Bible, the moths shall never eat it, the mildew shall never rot it! my light, my joy!"

What ignorance of the Bible existed in Europe before printing was introduced! *Stephanus* relates of a certain doctor of Sorbonne, who, speaking of the Reformers, expressed his surprise at their mode of reasoning by exclaiming, "I wonder why these youths are constantly quoting the New Testament. I was *more than 50 years old before I knew anything of a New Testament.*" And *Albert*, Archbishop and Elector of Mentz, in the year 1530, accidentally meeting with a Bible, opened it, and having read some pages of it, observed, "I do not indeed know what this book is, but this I see, that *everything in it is against us.*" Even *Carolastadius*, who was afterwards one of the Reformers, acknowledged that he had never begun to read the Bible till eight years after he had taken his *highest degree in divinity.*

Dr. Samuel Johnson, distinguished as a writer on morals, and whose writings have seldom been excelled in energy of thought and beauty of expression, said to a young gentleman who visited him on his dying bed "young man, attend to the voice of one who has possessed a certain degree of fame in the world, and will shortly appear before his Maker: *read the Bible every day of your life.*"

Salmasius, one of the most consummate scholars of his time, saw cause to exclaim bitterly against himself: "O, I have lost a world of time—time, the most precious thing in the world! Had I but one year more, it should be spent in perusing David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles. O sirs"—addressing those about him—"mind the world less and God more!"

CHAPTER V.

Trespases Heedlessly Committed.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 1.—If the soul . . . hear the voice of swearing. Sins may be acted out consciously and defiantly; for such there was no expiation provided. But sins may be committed *without realising their sinfulness*; of these the preceding chapter deals, and for such there was expiatory sacrifice and assured forgiveness. Yet, also, sins may be *contracted* where *no volition or action* occurs, by passive non-resistance, by tacit connivance, by incautious heedlessness: and such are the sins this chapter interdicts while it also prescribes expiation. Sin may come in through the ear: "*hear the voice of swearing*"; albeit it is no sin in itself to hear, unless we shut it in wilfully and become accessory thereto. It should be let out through the lips: "*utter it*": give it no harbour, but prompt escape; for it defiles the soul which retains it as a secret. Let no evil thing find a quiet

chamber in our thoughts; expose it, and thereby exorcise and condemn it. Impurity must ensue from entertaining secretly what God bids us renounce and denounce.

V. 2.—**Touch any unclean thing.** God would have His people untainted by uncleanness. With minute care He had defined what were unclean things. From every contagion they must keep free, if they were to remain ceremonially holy. Shall not we also shun contact with forbidden things? "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." There are institutions in society, companionships and friendships, indulgences and pastimes, recreations and books, which would defile a Christian life and lower the sanctities of existence. "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. vi. 17).

It be hidden from him. How often do we touch defilement unconsciously! And having by contact derived the contagion (in pure thoughts sullied, our sensitive recoil from evil blunted, elevated aims lowered, and Christward affections decayed) how do we forget that we have touched! How constantly we argue with our own consciences that the tainted pleasures and pastimes we foster are outside the interdicted list. Yet this self-excusing is vain; "he also shall be unclean and guilty."

V. 4.—**Whatsoever a man shall pronounce with an oath.** Vows which bind us to lines of conduct should never be made in ignorance. It is perilous to society as well as to individual honour for a man to make himself subject to a vow whose issues are "*hid from him.*" This reprehensible plan prevails in those "secret societies" and "brotherhoods" whose programme is the destruction of civil institutions and State stability. If a man blindly swears away his liberty, and binds himself by oath to any confederation, he is "*guilty*" of any and all the deeds done by the associates of such organisations. Oaths should only be taken when their issues are fully discerned; certainly no right-minded man will allow himself to become the dupe of bad associates, or the accomplice of evil designs, under the specious plea that the effects of his oath were "*hid from him*" when he bound himself thereby. Prudence and piety will warn us against being thus "*rash with our mouth.*" [Compare Eccles. v. 2 and 6; Acts xxiii. 12-14.]

V. 5.—**He shall bring his trespass offering.** Rash oaths incurred guiltiness, and must be atoned for; the folly of taking an oath to "*do evil*" was an offence to be expiated; whereas the neglect of an oath to "*do good*" was equally a trespass. God's requirement of an expiatory offering for both misdemeanours acted beneficially on the community, by restraining persons from taking hasty and inconsiderate oaths. "This served very effectually (says Michaelis) to maintain the honour of oaths, inasmuch as every oath, however inconsiderate, or unlawful, or impossible, was regarded so far obligatory that it was necessary to expiate its non-fulfilment by an offering; and it was, at the same time, the best possible means of weaning the people from rash oaths, because a man who had grown addicted to the unbecoming practice would find himself too frequently obliged either to keep his oaths, how great soever the inconvenience, or else to make an offering for their atonement."

V. 15.—**Ignorance in the holy things of the Lord.** There were dues or debts to the sanctuary of God, and he who failed to bring his tithes and first-fruits, even though unintentionally and "*through ignorance,*" was a transgressor. A costly "*amends*" (v. 16) was to be made for this oversight, if his trespass was to be forgiven him. Thus jealous is God that we withhold no duty from Him, that we "*enter into His presence with thanksgiving,*" *i.e.*, with gifts as thank offerings. Every soul, spared in the land of the living, succoured by Divine goodness and grace, overshadowed by the Fatherhood of God, shepherded by the patient care of Christ, upheld by the energy of the Spirit, owes offerings to Heaven, and

should enter the sanctuary with the acknowledgments of all the mercy received. Our grateful souls should seek to fulfil "something of the debt we owe." "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?" God asks sanctuary presents from every one of His people.

V. 17.—Forbidden to be done. For the Lord had prohibited the profane use, or the appropriation to personal ends, of "holy things" dedicated to the sanctuary and its services. If a soul had reason only to *suspect* his misuse thereof, he must seek forgiveness by trespass offering. All such stern requirements tended to enforce a recognition of the supreme claims of Jehovah and the sanctity of religion. No trifling, no forgetfulness, no error was excusable. Shall not we "stand in awe and sin not," guarding ourselves from "presumptuous sins" and inadvertent negligence by "watching unto prayer" and by swift fulfilment of our obligations to Heaven?

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: COMPLACENT IGNORANCE (Vv. 1-5).

Sins of ignorance differ greatly in kind and in degree. Transgression may ensue from *lack of knowledge* that such conduct is forbidden; or it may be that, knowing the prohibition, disobedience is *speciously excused* on some vague plea that circumstances warrant it or expediency condones it. In such cases ignorance, if it be really ignorance at all, is self-induced, and is therefore the more culpable. Amid such reprehensible forms of ignorance may be placed—

I. CARELESSNESS; the mind too placid to rouse itself to inquiry.

II. INDISCRIMINATION; the habit of ignoring vital principles and conniving at inconsistencies.

III. SELF-EXCUSING; finding exceptional circumstances which extenuate faults and condone misconduct.

IV. NEGLECT OF SCRIPTURE; not "coming to the light lest their deeds should be reproved" (John iii. 20).

V. SATISFACTION WITH A STATE OF CONSCIOUS DARKNESS; indifference to precise regulations of religion, indisposition of heart towards "perfect holiness"; a loose and easy content over failings and negligence. Ignorance is by some persons consciously *cherished*: it allows them a covert from the exactions of a lofty and honest piety.

VI. PLAUSIBLE SOPHISTRY; entertaining the delusion that because there is not determined wilfulness in sinning, or not fullest knowledge of God's prohibitions of sin, they are less responsible, less to be condemned.

Note: Many persons, trained from youth in a school of error, grow up with *false principles dominating their judgments and consciences*, or with ignorance of the application of right principles to particular incidents and actions. The perception of righteousness is vague and dim, the moral sense is feeble and faltering, "darkness in part" has happened to them. Thus *Luther*, trained amid the blinding theories of Romanism, groped on till manhood in delusions and dimness. Thus *Paul*, brought up amid the traditions of Judaism, found his soul clouded with wholly wrong thoughts concerning what was "doing God service."

It is *our duty to undeceive ourselves*, to inquire after knowledge, to seek full light, that our dimness may yield to discernment.

A complacent ignorance is as the softly gliding stream which flows onwards to the rapids. To be able to rest in such self-satisfied ignorance indicates that self-delusion has begun, portending doom. "Whom the gods would destroy they first dement." And such contentment, while in error of the very way of godly

obedience and acceptance, betokens a demented state ominous of worst issues. Therefore :—

1. *Search the Scriptures.* 2. *Seek the Spirit's illumination.* 3. *Culture a pure and enlightened conscience.* 4. *Exercise the judgment and will* in efforts to “cease from evil and learn to do well.”

Topic : THE SIN OF CONNIVING AT WRONG-DOINGS (V. 1).

The trespass offering atoned for voluntary offences, thus fitly supplementing the offerings for sins of ignorance. All crime—*i.e.*, wrong done to men—is *sin* in the sight of God, and needs to be followed by repentance as well as reparation. Here we are taught that a person committed sin in withholding knowledge when able and judicially commanded to divulge it.

The camp of Israel in the wilderness was not only a Church, but a Commonwealth; the interests of the people were mutual, and their duties reciprocal. It was the duty of the rulers to defend and promote the right, and to expose and denounce the wrong. When an evil doer was arrested, a proclamation was made calling upon any who could furnish evidence (that the ends of justice might not be defeated) to present themselves as witnesses in the court. If any such person, through fear or neglect, failed to furnish the information in his possession he was a partaker in the sin. The safety and sanctity of society demanded that evidence should not wilfully be withheld. Jehovah here required His people to co-operate with Him in protesting against and exposing sin. Observe—

I. THAT THE SINS OF MEN CANNOT EVADE WITNESSES.

An old writer has forcibly said “that to every sin there must be at least two witnesses,” *viz.*, “a man’s own conscience and the great God.” Wrong-doing so confuses and condemns a man, except he be very degraded and hardened, that even though he was not really observed in the act, he will so betray himself to others that evidence of a presumptive or positive kind, circumstantial or self-evident can be presented.

Living together as the Israelites did in the wilderness, they would be constantly under each other’s eye, wrong-doing would be easily detected, its guilt easily proved.

We are all daily revealing ourselves more or less to each other, and persons who observe our conduct are tacitly gathering evidence to accuse or excuse, to commend or condemn our conduct and character. This world is a place of trial, a place of judgment. We are not only arraigned before the tribunal of our own consciences, but also before the bar of public observation and opinion.

II. THAT IT IS THE DUTY OF WITNESSES TO GIVE EVIDENCE WHEN JUSTICE DEMANDS IT.

When a witness heard the words of adjuration he was required at the proper place to give the needed information. It was his duty because (1) the law of the Lord commanded it, and (2) the purity of society demanded it. It would also be an injustice to a wrong-doer, for the sake of shielding him from present punishment, by conniving at his sin to encourage him in evil ways. Moreover, a witness owes the duty to himself to testify against sin, for if he does not expose it and bring it to condemnation, he may foster even in himself a careless unconcern about wrong. By bearing witness against evil doing we utter our protest against the wrong, and if we do it in the right spirit and “speak the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” we are serving righteously and faithfully our day and generation, and we therein discharge a duty we owe to God against whom all sin is a transgression, and who has appointed rulers to administer justice for the praise of those who do well, and to be a terror to evil doers.

III. THAT IN CONCEALING EVIDENCE AGAINST SIN WE INVOLVE OURSELVES IN SERIOUS GUILT.

By withholding evidence we may think to cover over sins, and so we may; but we do not *remove* them. We may prevent them coming to light and meeting their merited punishment, but the *sins* remain, and will take deeper root and throw out wider branches. It is a trespass, a breach of the Divine law, when we allow sin to go unaccused and unexposed; we thereby offer an inducement to sin, and tacitly encourage indulgence in transgression. The guilt of concealing evidence is seen, in that by so doing we—

1. *Dishonour God's voice, which speaks within us.*
2. *Disobey God's published laws.*
3. *Decrease our own antipathy to sin.*
4. *Encourage the trespasser in his wrong-doing.*

All sin ought to be acknowledged and expiated for the sake of the sinner and the wronged. A person refusing to give evidence makes himself an accessory to a wicked deed after its accomplishment, and becomes an accomplice in its guilt. Divine revelation teaches us that we have duties we owe to ourselves, to society, and to God.—F. W. B.

Topic: THE CONTAGIOUSNESS OF SIN (V. 2, 3).

The sin of touching an unclean person or thing is here described. The whole of the directions given respecting ceremonial defilement were to teach most emphatically the holiness of God, and His deep concern for the holiness of His creatures. The children of Israel were not only to obey Him, but also to worship Him, and as their service was to be a sacrament and their work worship, it was necessary that they should be taught the utmost scrupulousness in ceremonial, as well as inward, purity. These regulations and requirements would not only teach the people who were immediately affected by them the most salutary lessons, but would also teach (through them) the world valuable truths. We learn—

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF CIRCUMSPECTION IN OUR OUTWARD BEHAVIOUR.

The Israelites would feel that the greatest possible vigilance would be needed as they went in and out the camp and mixed with the congregation, lest they should become defiled by contact with some unclean thing. As we mingle with our fellow-men, and discharge our duties in the world, although we are not under the restrictions and regulations of the Levitical law, yet we are in a world where the moral atmosphere is tainted, and where we are in constant danger of being morally defiled. We are not only ourselves surrounded by a sympathetic moral influence, which affects all with whom we have contact, but we also in turn receive influence, good or ill, from others with whom we associate. We learn that the greatest possible circumspection is essential as we move amid the busy throngs.

II. THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTAMINATION, EVEN THOUGH WE PRACTISE CIRCUMSPECTION IN OUR OUTWARD CONDUCT.

The text shows that it was possible for people to become defiled and be unconscious of it. A man might find even that his extreme caution had ensnared him. He might not always be able to discriminate between the clean and the unclean, especially at first sight. So, as we pass through the world, we are so closely surrounded by morally contaminating influences that sometimes we may acquire infection before we are aware of it. Even the most innocent pleasures and pursuits may be perverted by us, becoming suggestive and ministrant of sin; in our ignorance or simplicity we may get a wrong bias, wicked thoughts may be awakened. For such defilement we shall need to make expiation; also seek forgiveness and cleansing, that the impurity of our heart and conscience may be removed, and the progress of moral depravity and deterioration be arrested.—F. W. B.

Topic: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WORDS (V. 4, 5).

Here is taught the sin of a person making a rash oath. In their conversation with each other the people were to beware of uttering idle words, especially when calling upon God to witness what they said; also, they were to be careful how they committed themselves by solemn engagements to do evil or to do good. The people were at present rude and unpolished, and one of the objects of the ritual was to elevate and refine them. Words are often spoken as if they were of no importance, vows made and oaths uttered as if they were unnoticed by God; but this law shows us that He does take strict notice of them, and that though forgotten by us, they are not forgotten by Him. Though spoken heedlessly and easily forgotten, yet God would hold them responsible. The gospel has not repealed the law's condemnation of rash speaking, for Christ taught that "for every idle word that men speak they shall give an account at the day of judgment." And we are taught, moreover, to "swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by earth, for it is His footstool, neither by our heads, for we cannot make one hair black or white." The influence of this Levitical injunction would be to lead the people to make an oath—

I. RARELY. There would be no need for oaths if they cultivated veracity, if their simple word was known to be their bond. To employ oaths frequently would be taking God's name in vain, and incurring danger of frequently transgressing one of the great commandments. God was in their midst as their Law-giver and King; they must not use too frequently and familiarly His holy name in connection with their common, ordinary conversation and conduct.

II. DELIBERATELY. Even when circumstances seemed to require that they should call God to witness and confirm what they affirmed, the act was so solemn that they would need to do so with great caution and deliberateness, pondering what they were about to affirm or deny, and estimating the probability that they could promptly perform their purpose. An oath deliberately made would be *impressed upon the memory*; if not fulfilled, no excuse could be offered. The nature of an oath, of the pledge with which it is accompanied, should be thoroughly weighed before God is called upon to help and witness.

III. CONDITIONALLY. There may be some cases and instances where an unconditional oath may be safely pronounced; but it is more prudent to associate with it qualifying conditions. Such a course would not make the oath less binding for all reasonable intents, and ought to meet the requirements of any ordinary case. Our proneness to err, the impossibility of our meeting exorbitant demands, the probability of after-thought showing us that what we had engaged to do was impracticable or undesirable, ought to be taken into account. Conditions and circumstances may so change as to relieve us from promises which, at the time, we made in good faith. When wise men make oaths, they will make them cautiously.

1. *Cultivate transparency and veracity of speech*, so that our communications may require to be simply yea, and nay; for when more is required it indicates that we have become unreliable, so that our word cannot be trusted.

2. If *pledges made between man and man* are thus solemn and binding, and the breach of them so blameworthy, pledges to God in solemn sacrament must be more solemn and binding, and their non-fulfilment more culpable.—F. W. B.

Topic: THE WAY OF PARDON (Vv. 6-13).

In the fifth verse it is enjoined that when any person shall be guilty of any of the trespasses specified, he shall confess that he had thus sinned; from which we at

once see that *confession* was to immediately follow *conviction*, and the next step—as we learn from the succeeding verse—would be *contrition*. The offender was to bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin, and the priest would present it to the Lord as an atonement for the sin. The offering was to be one of the flock; or a fowl, or of flour. From this arrangement we learn that—

I. THE WAY OF PARDON WAS MADE EASY. The circumstances of the transgressor were mercifully considered. The gradation of the offerings from a bullock down to the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour showed that God would allow no difficulty to stand in the way of transgressors seeking expiation. For the various gradations of wrong-doing there was pardon on confession and contrition. The offerings could be easily obtained, and the priest and altar were close at hand, so that at any moment the needed confession and atonement could be made. In the Mosaic, as well as the Christian dispensation, the way of forgiveness is made easy.

II. THE WAY OF PARDON WAS MADE EXPLICIT. Full and clear directions are given, even to minute details, in the way the victim was to be slain, and its various parts disposed of, and each direction (meaningless and useless as some at first sight appeared) had some symbolical or typical import. In every instance assurance was given of forgiveness, if only the required conditions were complied with. The unsavouriness of the offering—from the absence of sweet oil and frankincense—suggests the *loathsomeness* of sin: that it is displeasing to God, ought to be offensive to man, and is to those truly humble and contrite.

(a) *The mercy of God displayed in (1) providing remedy to arrest the course of sin; (2) providing remedy to arrest the consequences of sin.* Man's ignorance of sin proves his utter inability to put it away of himself.

(b) *The misery of sin discovered in that it (1) produces separation from God and all real good; (2) necessitates suffering and atonement before it can be forgiven.* In the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical economy we get God's provision for man's need—a sacrifice appointed for man's sin; a priest to present the sacrifice for man's sin; and a place of worship where the sacrifice may be offered and accepted.—F. W. B.

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER V. 1—13.

V. 2.—*Theme*: CONTRACTION OF DEFILEMENT. “If a soul touch an unclean thing... he also shall be unclean, and guilty.”

Human depravity, inherent—universal—“Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,” etc. Depravity may be *deepened* and *developed* by outward influences and circumstances. The body and mind may generate or acquire disease; so, with the soul. We are surrounded by a magnetic circle of influence which affects us, and through it we affect others for good or evil. Hence importance of guarding our sympathies, susceptibilities, senses, and every avenue and vehicle of our being. “Touch not the unclean thing.”

We learn the importance—

I. OF ABSENCE FROM EVIL ASSOCIATIONS. “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and walk not in the way of evil men.” [See Ps. i.]

II. OF ABSTINENCE FROM APPEARANCE OF EVIL. Beware of every infectious interdicted thing. “Taste not, touch not, handle not.”

Christ could mix with sinners, could touch lepers and the dead without defilement, because there was nothing in Him to respond

to, or to be laid hold on, by temptation or corruption. As the needle leaps to the loadstone, so our hearts leap to meet temptation by the law of attractive affinities. For every stain of defilement we contract, even though as deep as crimson or scarlet, there is a remedy: “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin,” and can make our souls as white as snow.—F. W. B.

V. 7.—*Theme*: WHAT GOD EXPECTS OF US. “If he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, unto the Lord.”

There is nothing exacting or exorbitant in the claims of God upon His creatures. He expects of us only what we can render according to talents, circumstances, opportunity, claims. He regards our purposes, and accepts them as acts performed when performance is impossible, e.g., He said of David's purpose to erect the Temple, “It was well that it was in thine heart.” Christ commended the act of the woman in the gospels because “she had done what she could.”

If God expects of us only what we can render—

I. THEN NONE ARE EXEMPT FROM HIS SERVICE. Doves and pigeons were accepted where lambs could not be furnished. The widow's two mites were as acceptable as the box of precious ointment and Solomon's Temple.

II. THEN HIS SERVICE IS PERFECT FREEDOM. The offerer had to judge and choose what he would offer. God expects voluntary cheerful gifts, not simply from a sense of duty but from impulses of a generous love. If we give *ourselves* to the Lord, all we have will be laid upon the altar that sanctifies both the giver and the gift.—*F. W. B.*

V. 8.—*Theme: MEDIATION.* "He shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer," etc.

The sin offering taught that guilt separated between the sinner and his Sovereign Lord:—Priest came between to connect, and be medium of communication. Such an arrangement would (a) *inspire courage*, and (b) *impart comfort* to the offerer.

The offerer brought his offering to the priest, yet—

I. THE VALUE OF THE OBLATION WAS NOT ENHANCED BY ANY MERIT OF THE PRIEST. But the infinite dignity of our High Priest gave infinite dignity to His sacrifice.

II. THE PRIEST OFFERED SACRIFICE PROVIDED BY ANOTHER: our High Priest offered Himself, once for all.

In the hands of the priest the sinner's sacrifice was acceptable: through Christ our offerings are well-pleasing to God. The only

thing that God hates, and that can separate between Jehovah and His creatures is *sin*. Its removal restores harmony, holiness, happiness in man, and the universe.—*F. W. B.*

V. 10.—*Theme: DIVINE FORGIVENESS.* "The priest shall make atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him."

Nature is unable to show how sin may be forgiven. By an inevitable and almost universal law reaping follows sowing, both in quality and quantity. Retribution follows wrong-doing. Nature is stern, unrelenting; only in revealed religion can we learn how God can be just and yet forgive the sinner. The Bible alone teaches that there is forgiveness with God that He may be feared. The offerer was assured that if he presented the prescribed oblation, his sin would "be forgiven him." This arrangement teaches—

I. THAT SATISFACTION MUST BE OFFERED BY THE SINNER HIMSELF, OR BY HIS ACCREDITED SUBSTITUTE. Pardon costs something both to God and man.

II. THAT THE SINNER MUST BE SINCERELY SORRY FOR HIS SINS. The offerings were to be presented in a manner which would denote *reverence* and *repentance*. Only forsaken sin is forgiven.

III. THAT IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IS VINDICATED. The demands of His justice were met—His broken law honoured—atonement sufficient and satisfactory made.

In the Gospels all these points are *exemplified* and *enforced*.—*F. W. B.*

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: TRESPASSES, DONE IGNORANTLY, AGAINST THE LORD (Vv. 14-19).

Scarcely is it possible to accredit absolute ignorance to trespassers in these "holy things of the Lord": for God's declarations respecting His rights were neither unintelligible nor obscure. They ought to have been known thoroughly, they must have been known to some degree. The ignorance was, therefore, in some sense wilful; certainly it was conscious, and was even preferred to knowledge.

Still, it is noteworthy that ignorance is predicated of these trespassers *against the Lord*, whereas there is no allowance of ignorance in the trespasses done against *men*. [Compare chap. vi.] This marks a melancholy fact in the conduct of wrong-doers. We *defraud God* of His due *carelessly and without giving it a thought*; whereas we are *too cautious* to trespass against a neighbour without knowing it. For the fear of man is more operative over us than the fear of God.

I. FRAUDULENT CONDUCT AGAINST THE LORD.

1. *Israel's history for ages* illustrates the ready ease with which men could "rob God" (Mal. iii. 8-10). Commanded to appear repeatedly every year before the Lord and celebrate His feasts, yet era upon era passed without their keeping those sacred feasts at all—until, in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah,

they read the Scriptures (long closed and neglected) and discovered their omissions to have been so numerous, so grievous, so long continued, that the people all lifted up their voices and wept.

Fifty years later, again Israel is described as habitually defrauding God of His due, and even justifying themselves in their "robbery," asking with effrontery, "Wherein have we robbed Thee?" (Mal. iii. 8).

Such warning incidents should have aroused the Church of Christ to greater watchfulness in later days. Yet—

2. *The present conduct of Christians* repeats the trespass of the ancient Church. Is there not a defrauding "of the holy things of the Lord" still rampant? Consider—

(a) *Doctrines suppressed and truths silenced* which ought to be "sounded out" clearly.

(b) *Worship rendered perfunctorily*, and void of "spirit and truth"; "the form of godliness without the power thereof."

(c) *Open allegiance to Christ withheld*; a careless and compromising profession supplanting whole consecration.

(d) *The selfish retention of our gains and possessions*, spending so freely upon ourselves that we have little or nothing to give God.

II. RESTITUTION DEMANDED AS THE CONDITION OF PARDON.

Unlike the sin offering, the "trespass offering" must not be presented until reparation had been made.

1. *Satisfaction was to precede sacrifice.* Man is a debtor, having withheld dues from the Lord. Those dues were not to be set aside by substituting contrition or expiatory offerings. It were easy to trespass if all could be righted by penitential confessions. But God says, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." "He shall make amends": such is Jehovah's fiat (v. 16).

2. *In Christ's obedient life satisfaction did precede sacrifice.* Man "had nothing to pay"; but Jesus paid the debt. In His own career He "fulfilled all righteousness" on man's behalf. Then, having perfectly satisfied the Divine requirements in His life, He bore man's merited punishment for long disobedience.

3. *Divine forgiveness differs essentially from connivance at man's sin.* God can pardon all manner of trespasses, but can gloss over not one jot or tittle of iniquity. "His grace is perfect, and therefore He can forgive all: His holiness is perfect, and therefore he cannot pass over anything. He cannot sanction iniquity, but He can blot it out."—C. H. M.

4. *Restitution by obedience* is a law which still incites believers to a diligent piety. Not by the merit of their acts to justify themselves with God, but to make such "amends" as a soul reclaimed from disloyalty naturally desires to make to its gracious Lord and King. "The love of Christ constrains us"; and by every act of sacrifice and service we aim to set right all wrong we have done, to counteract the follies of past years, to benefit those whom we may have harmed, to redeem the time by diligent use of opportunities remaining, and "henceforth to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him who loved us and gave Himself for us." By such earnest efforts to "do good as he has opportunity" does the Christian seal his salvation, and enjoy the "Well done" of his Lord. [See Addenda, p. 71, *Reparation.*]

Topic: "AMENDS" MADE BY CHRIST FOR MAN'S FAULTS (Vv. 15, 16).

Think of all the wrong and all the trespass which have been done against the Lord.

I. GOD HAS BEEN WRONGED OF HIS RIGHTS IN THIS WICKED WORLD.

1. What are the *just rights of Jehovah* in His creature, man?

2. What are man's returns to Jehovah in *actual obedience and righteousness* ?
3. What amazing *outrage and transgression* have defrauded God of His due !
4. What shortcomings and blemishes have marred even *the best lives of His redeemed people* !

II. GOD HAS GAINED MORE BY CHRIST'S REDEMPTION THAN HE LOST BY MAN'S FALL.

The trespass offerer *adds a surplus* ! But who can weigh the surplus Christ brings ?

1. Jehovah reaps a *richer harvest of glory, honour and praise* in the fields of redemption than ever He could have reaped in those of creation.

2. The "sons of God" would raise a loftier song of praise *around the empty tomb of Jesus* than ever they raised in view of the Creator's accomplished work.

3. The wrong has not only been perfectly atoned for, but an *eternal advantage* has been gained by the work of the Cross. God is gainer by the work of Calvary.

III. ALL HONOUR TO JESUS, IN WHOSE CROSS SUCH VAST "AMENDS" WERE MADE.

1. No wonder that around the Crucified One the *affections of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints* have ever entwined themselves.

2. No marvel that the Holy Ghost should have given forth that solemn but just decree, "If any man *love not our Lord Jesus Christ*, let him be anathema, maranatha" (1 Cor. xvi. 22). Heaven and earth shall echo forth a loud and eternal amen to this anathema.

3. No marvel that it should be the fixed and immutable purpose of the Divine mind that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 10, 11). [Compare *Notes on Leviticus*, by C. H. M.]

Topic: TRESPASSERS AND THE TRESPASS PENALTY (Vv. 15, 16).

(a) Sin has many forms : breaks out into *trespasses*.

(b) The trespass offerings are manifold : meet with penalty and satisfaction all wrongs done.

I. THE DUES OF HEAVEN ARE WITHHELD : God's will is transgressed, His law infringed.

1. Creation's law makes *man God's sole possession*. No faculty of mind or frame, no power of intellect or thought, no talent of influence or time, no opportunity, no gift, no grace, is property of our own. All, then, should serve the cause of one Sovereign Lord. Reason should plan, and eyes should see, and hands should work, and feet should run, to do Him honour and augment His praise. Our every energy should fly abroad with morning light to gather fruits of glory for His name. Each night should prove that faith and love have laboured to advance His Kingdom upon earth.

2. Instead of this, *self mounts the great Creator's throne*. We rise, enter on the day, journey on, as if self-seeking were legitimate employ. Whether we rest or toil it is "unto ourselves." Is not this trespass ? It robs our God ; wastes His dues. It brands us as purloining from a Father's and a Benefactor's store.

3. *Judgment must follow upon such trespasses*. The fire must consume. Life must be laid on the altar. Blood must flow. Trespass brings death. No soul can sin and escape wrath.

II. MAN CAN MAKE NO TRUE AMENDS.

1. *Devotedness cannot repay the debt.* That is a vast conceit. If not one thought of any moment ever swerved from a pure effort for the Lord, it would but be *that moment's due*.

2. *Surplus of merit* there is none. That is a papist's dream. Our best acts are only increase of our debt. Hence all our works make bankruptcy more deep. When Justice calls to the white throne, the fairest reckoning is one huge debt. Who, then, can stay arrest?

III. THE TRESPASS OFFERING PRESENTS RELIEF.

1. *Jesus is satisfaction to the full.* Hence *death for sin* is not the whole of His grand work. That decks us with no merit; it fills no hand with fruits of righteousness. He pays then a *whole life's homage* to the law. He gives compliance to its largest rule. It asked for one undeviating course of love. Jesus was love without one straying step.

2. This pure fulfilment is for *those who are Christ's*. For such Christ wrought it; to their account he puts it. Unsullied righteousness by Him avails for believers.

Such is the Gospel which pervades this rite. It declares in emphatic terms that—

(1) *Trespass stains your life, your heart, soul, and mind, every day, every hour.*

(2) It warns that *trespass strengthens Satan's claims*, places a vast barrier between you and God.

(3) *Shows a full recovery.* Christ's cross and life are both pictured. You see Him dying to pay the trespass penalty; you see His righteousness supplying trespass wrongs.—Homiletically arranged from the Dean of Gloucester's *Christ is all*.

Topic: SACRILEGE (Vv. 14-19).

The former offerings may be regarded as both sin and trespass offerings; these, in the closing verses of this fifth chapter, and in the opening seven verses of the sixth, are particularly and exclusively trespass offerings. Wrong has been done to God and man; and for that trespass contrition must be shown, an offering made, and restitution given. The trespass here indicated is sacrilege—mistake and misappropriation in the use of sacred things: a *culpable* trespass, whether done wittingly or unwittingly. From this rite we are taught—

I. THE JEALOUSY OF JEHOVAH FOR THE HONOUR OF HIS WORSHIP IN THE TABERNACLE.

By the Levitical ritual the people were taught that worship was only rendered acceptable when associated with Divinely prescribed sacrifices. There would be danger of the people becoming formal in their worship; that they would fall short of the full requirements of the ritual. The holy things here spoken of were the tithes, first-fruits, gifts, etc., demanded of the Lord. Such things were His before they were devoted as sacrifices, but they were doubly His when He claimed them as offerings unto Himself in connection with the worship of the tabernacle. To withhold would be to rob and wrong God; the honour of His worship would be insulted, His law outraged. Whether the sacrilege was committed knowingly or unknowingly it mattered not: the worship was marred, and for the trespass an offering must be presented. The trespasser was to bring a ram without blemish out of his flocks, and the priest was to make an atonement for him. Restitution was to accompany his contrition. He must make amends for the wrong he had done in the holy thing; and then his trespass was to be forgiven him.

Worship is a privilege we are permitted to enjoy, a duty we are bound to

discharge. When we draw near to God to pay our vows and commune with Him in prayer and praise, we draw near to give to Him the glory that is *due* to His name. Under the gospel dispensation we have not to erect a material altar and present offerings such as the Israelites did under the law. No definitely prescribed portion of our substance is required of us, as was required under the old economy, but we are expected to give unto the Lord of our means in the proportion as He hath prospered us. Yet, however liberal we may be, and conscientious in discharging our trust as stewards of the Kingdom, we constantly fall short of our duty as indicated in the gospel; we trespass, wittingly and unwittingly, and need constantly to seek, in confession and contrition, the pardon of our religious defalcations, and to make, in so far as we are able, some restitution to God, some humble amends, by bringing "forth fruits meet for repentance."

II. THE INFLUENCE THIS JEALOUSY WAS CALCULATED TO EXERT UPON THE WORSHIPPERS IN THE TABERNACLE.

Such scrupulous concern on the part of Jehovah about the sanctity of His service would teach the people to cultivate—

(1) *Sensitiveness of feeling.* It would be evident that indifference or carelessness would render the worshipper liable to a breach of trust, to make mistake or misapply the things devoted to the Lord.

(2) *Tenderness of conscience.* It would be easy for conscience to become perverted and hardened in the midst of so many privileges and in the abundance of blessings.

(3) *Scrupulousness of conduct.* The worshipper would find that merely good intentions would not suffice; contrition and confession would not be enough: there was to be implicit and complete obedience—nothing wanting of all that the Lord commanded. None of the sacrifice kept back, none of the holy things be employed or used for their own gain. If they did, even though they wist it not, they were guilty, and should bear their iniquity.

Watch that we trespass not against God as Achan did, and as Ananias and Sapphira did in the early Christian Church. Beware of trespassing through contempt, carelessness, or presumption. Aim to be suspiciously, as well as scrupulously, sensitive of doing wrong. Pray for pardon of inadvertent and unknown sins. God does not pass over, but forgives trespasses for the sake of our great Trespass Offering. This is the gospel order of blessing to the penitent: *repentance, reformation, restitution, then reconciliation* to God's favour, and *restoration* to His family, here and hereafter.—F. W. B.

OUTLINES ON VERSES, CHAPTER V. 14-19.

V. 16.—*Theme: REPARATION.* "And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing," etc.

In forgiving sins God does not teach that transgression of His law is a trivial matter; for, atonement not only *expiates* but *makes amends*. Amends must be made, for—

I. SIN IS A WRONG DONE TO GOD.

II. SIN IS A WRONG DONE TO MAN.

Amends must be made by—

(1) *Appropriate contrition.*

(2) *Personal sacrifice.*

(3) *Unreserved consecration*:—evincing itself in a holy, useful, *Christly* life.—F. W. B. [See Addenda, p. 71, *Reparation*.]

V. 17.—*Theme: ERROR, THOUGH INADVERT-*

ENT, IS GUILTY. "If a soul sin, and commit things forbidden, though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity."

God required a trespass offering for the smallest error in relation to any of His ordinances, however unwittingly that error was committed.

Yet so multitudinous were the rights of the ceremonial law, that its requirements wore heavily and anxiously upon the lives and consciences of God's people. Righteousness by the law, therefore, became a weary, a fruitless hope.

By this very weariness and failure, Israel was led to crave and look for release from this "yoke," which was promised when Messiah brought in the "better covenant."

The gospel age promised release from the oppression of a ritual righteousness, and freedom for a more spiritual service.

I. A SOPHISTRY NEEDING CORRECTION.

This: that *intention constitutes the quality of an action*; whether conduct is criminal or not. But this declaration of "guilt," though in the action he "wist it not," testifies against a sweeping and all-inclusive application of that principle, viz., that intention qualifies action.

1. Ignorance may and does *extenuate* the guilt of an action. Knowledge deepens guilt (John ix. 41; xv. 22). Ignorance alleviates it (Luke xxiii. 34; Acts iii. 17; 1 Tim. i. 13).

2. Yet ignorance cannot *excuse* guilt.

A man is not excused for breaking the laws of the land because he was ignorant of them. Nor is a servant's ignorance of his master's will, when he might and ought to have known it, a sufficient plea.

Nor is he innocent who trespasses, through error, against any ordinance of the Lord. And, if so in respect of *ceremonial* observances, much more so in relation to *moral* duties. Hence the curse stands against "*every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*" (Gal. iii. 10).

3. God Himself *refuses to condone* such ignorance. His Word declares that men "*perish for lack of knowledge*" (Hos. iv. 6); and that though "a people be of *no understanding*, He will not have mercy on them, and will show them no favour" (Isa. xxvii. 11). [Comp. *Simeon's Sermons*].

II. MAN'S UNCOMPUTED GUILT.

1. Reckon up our *remembered* sins. "They are more in number than the hairs of our head."

2. Add the sins *realised* at the time but *now forgotten*. Memory lets slip multitudinous trespasses.

3. Yet what can represent the number of our *unrecognised* sins, done in ignorance, done in error?

4. *Deviations and defects* also, which God's eye alone detected, and which we too self-indulgently condoned.

Eliphaz charges the inquiry on Job, and on us, "Is not thy wickedness *great*, and thine iniquities *infinite*?" (Job xxii. 5).

God's Word declares, "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not" (Eccles. vii. 20), that "in many things we all offend" (Jas. iii. 2; Prov. xxiv. 16).

In estimating our guiltiness we fail: "Who can understand his errors?" (Psa. xix. 12).

To *extenuate guilt* by saying "*It is an error*" (Eccles. v. 6), is to add to sin: rather let us humble ourselves in shame before God.

III. VAST VIRTUE NEEDED IN ATONEMENT.

1. Under the ceremonial arrangements for expiation, how *manifold and minute and numerous* were the regulations and provisions necessary to make atonement for sin! "Without shedding of blood there was no remission." And to that were added costly offerings and exacting observances.

2. When all sin had to be expiated by Christ's *one offering*, *what value it must needs possess!* Yet "by *one offering*" the Saviour "purged our sins."

(a) It summons us to *faith*. "Look unto Me and be ye saved." "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

(b) It incites us to *grateful adoration*. "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sin in His own blood," etc. (Rev. i. 5, 6).

(c) It assures us of *perfect redemption*. "There remaineth no more offering for sin," for "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). [See Addenda, p. 71, *Redemption*].

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER V.

TAKING OATHS.

The judicial oaths taken in courts of justice are administered variously: "The usual practice in England and Ireland is, for the witness, after hearing the oath repeated by the officer of the court, to kiss the four gospels by way of assent; and in Scotland, the witness repeats similar words after the judge, standing and holding up his right hand, 'swearing by Almighty God, as he shall answer to God at the great day of judgment,' but without kissing the book. Jews are sworn on the Pentateuch, keeping on their hats, and the oath ends with the words, 'So help you, Jehovah.' A Mohammedan is sworn on the Koran. A Chinese witness has been sworn by kneeling and breaking a china saucer against the witness-box. Thus, the mere form of taking the oath is immaterial; the witness is allowed to take it in whatever form he considers most binding upon his own conscience—the essential thing being, however, that the

witness acknowledge some binding effect derived from his belief in a God and a future state. . . . The objections of Quakers, Moravians, and Separatists to taking an oath have long been respected as not being fundamentally at variance with a due sense of religious feeling, and hence they have been allowed to make an affirmation instead of taking the oath. In 1854 another concession was made to those who, not being Quakers, yet refuse to take the oath for sincere conscientious motives; and these are now also allowed to affirm instead of to swear. But the law remains as before, that atheists and persons who admit that they have no religious belief whatever, are excluded from giving evidence in courts of justice."—*Chamber's Ency.*

"UNLAWFUL OATHS generally mean oaths taken by members of secret and illegal societies of a treasonable description: and

statutes long ago were passed to inflict penalties on all who took or administered such oaths."—*Ibid.*

PROFANE OATHS.—Louis the French king was taken prisoner by Meletisaka the Sultan, and conditions of peace being concluded between them, for more assurance thereof the Sultan offered to swear, "if he failed in performance of anything, to *renounce his Mohammed*;" requiring likewise of the king to swear, if he failed in anything he had promised, to *deny his Christ to be God*: which profane oath the king detesting, and wishing rather to die than to give the same, the Sultan, wondering at his constancy, took his word without an oath at all, and so published the league.

As, on the other side, King John of England, being overlaid in his barons' wars, when he sent ambassadors to the monarch of Morocco for aid, offered to swear fealty to him and to *receive the law of Mohammed*; and thereby the monarch grew into such dislike of the king that ever after he abhorred the mention of him.—*Traff.*

"It is a great sin to swear unto a sin;
But greater sin to keep a sinful oath."

Henry VI., II. v. 1.

SINCERE OATHS.

"His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles;
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate;
His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth."—*Two Gentlemen of Verona, II. 7.*

"An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice."

Merchant of Venice, IV. 1.

"Tis not the many oaths that make the truth:
But the plain single vow, that is vow'd true."

All's well that ends well, IV. 2.

"Unheedful vows may heedfully be broken."
Shakespeare.

INDIFFERENCE.—Idle swimmers who go floating carelessly down the stream, reckless of the nearing peril, until they get beyond reach of the bank.

"I asked a young man, 'Are you in anxiety about yourself and your salvation?' He replied, 'I have little concern or feeling on the subject.'

"Are you not trying to do what God commands you as well as you are able, and with such light as you have?"

"Oh no; it would seem absurd for one who feels so little as I do to attempt any religious duty!"

"Yet, you admit that God does require of you repentance, and faith, and worship, and a holy life; do you not?"

"Yes, I admit all this, but do not feel interested, or troubled, or concerned, respecting it."

"What would you advise a customer to do who had contracted a debt with you, who admits his debt, and that he ought to pay it, but says he knows it all, yet is so void of interest or feeling about it?"

"In an instant he replied, 'I would advise him to *pay it, not waiting for feeling.*'"

REDEMPTION.

"Heavenly powers where shall we find such love?"

Which of ye will be mortal to redeem

Man's mortal crime; and just th' unjust to save?"

Paradise Lost, III. 213.

"The Cross,

There, and there only (tho' the deist rave,
And atheist, if earth bears so base a slave),
There, and there only, is the power to save."

COWPER, Progress of Error, 613.

"Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;

And he that might the vantage best have took

Found out the remedy."

Measure for Measure, II. 2.

REPARATION.

"Restore to God His due, in titho and time;
A tithe purloined cankers the whole estate."

G. HERBERT, The Temple.

"God is much displeas'd
That you take with unthankfulness His doing:
In common worldly things 'tis call'd ungrate-
ful,

With dull unwillingness to repay a debt
Which with a bounteous hand was kindly
lent;

Much more to be thus opposite with heaven:
For it requires the royal debt it lent you."

Richard III., II. 2.

CHAPTER VI.

TRESPASS OFFERINGS: AND PRIESTLY CONSECRATION OFFERINGS.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—Trespass against the Lord and lie unto his neighbour. Wrong done to man is done to God. To deceive and defraud our neighbour is an insult to Jehovah. To harm man is to inflict injury on God; as to touch His people is to “touch the apple of His eye”; and as Saul’s persecution of the saints was persecution of Christ Himself (Acts ix. 5). Take heed, lest acts of injustice to others so affect heaven as to evoke remonstrance and rebuke.

Vv. 2, 3.—Violence, or hath deceived, or sweareth falsely. Evil is fruitful in forms of development. Two distinct classes of wrong are here indicated: embezzlement of things placed confidingly by a neighbour in his hand, “*that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship*” [Lit. “something placed in his hand,” a deposit]; and now, plunder and fraud, a neighbour’s property being possessed with violence and seizure. When Adam revolted from obedience to God it introduced a fraudulent principle into human life which soon wrought wrong between man and man. He who can sin against the Lord will be found equally capable of sinning against man. Dishonesty heavenward is likely to be confirmed by dishonesty in transaction with neighbours. There is no guarantee of integrity where there is impiety. *Righteousness* before God means *rightness* towards man.

V. 5.—Restore it in the principal. Reparation should follow repentance, and precede propitiation. First, set right the evil done to your neighbour, then come to the Lord for acceptance. It is an easy and delusive repentance of sin—sin done to men on every hand, sin continued for years, sin working sorrow in homes and in social circles—if the penitent may leave unremedied all this woful wrong among men, and free himself from further concern by simply on his knees lamenting all before God. No! if convinced of guilt, go and do right where your selfishness, and greed, and fraudulence have wrought havoc and misery; wipe out the blots of crime on human pathways, then come for appeasement and acceptance to the Lord. “Bring forth fruit meet for repentance” (Matt. iii. 7-10).

Add a fifth part more. Let there be an overflow of generosity to compensate for former selfishness. And let Christian life be distinguished by a liberal diffusion of your possessions, in order both to lessen the cares of neighbours and attest the reality of your conversion. “Freely ye have received, freely give.”

V. 6.—Bring his trespass offering. Zacchæus might pledge himself “if he had taken anything from any man by false accusation to *restore him fourfold*”; but to lavish reparation on man could not obliterate the guilt of his actions as concerns the law and holiness of God. There must be atonement. Good deeds and generous benefactions cannot expunge guiltiness of soul. And besides the actual trespasses, which reparation may in part requite, there remains the criminality of conscience, the impurity of soul, the impiety towards God. And “it is *blood* that maketh atonement for the *soul*.”

Vv. 8-13.—The burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar, etc. Every evening a lamb was sacrificed (Exod. xxix. 38), and these directions refer

to the ritual; the burning was to be "all night until the morning." And the altar fire was ceaselessly to be maintained; symbolic of (1) *the perpetual atonement needed by men*; (2) *the continuous acceptance of worship by God*; (3) *the uninterrupted relationship of Jehovah with Israel*. In this Christian epoch we maintain no ceaseless fire, but we enjoy a ceaseless atonement, which assures us of undoubted acceptance and unbroken fellowship with God. Instead of the daily feeding of the altar fire with wood, we may devote afresh daily our love and obedience, for these should "never go out" in Christian lives.

Vv. 14-18.—**The meat offering.** This section adds directions for the priests, supplementing the regulation given in chap. ii. 1-3.

V. 18.—**Every one that toucheth them shall be holy.** Either this contact with holy things *claimed* that the person so "touched" should be set apart for God, or the contact *communicated* a sanctity which henceforth secured his consecration. Derived sanctity: it is a law in continuous operation: many souls having been drawn to Christ through the influence of such contact with "holy things" as *e.g.* the Bible, the Sanctuary, etc.; or with holy *persons*, as godly parents, Christian friends, ministers of the Lord Jesus. Grace goes forth from them, as virtue went out from Jesus to heal. Seek such contact, if yet in your sins. Send out such sanctifying energy, if the sacred grace is in you.

Vv. 19-23.—**Consecration offerings for the priest** "in the day when he is anointed." With glad thank offerings the priest was to seal his dedication to the sacerdotal office. No tone or aspect of despondency would be proper to such an incident. It was to high privilege and honour the young priest was set apart: entire separation for the Divine service. And to what joyous life can we aspire comparable to this? "Yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead." The entrance upon a sacred life is a blissful incident, and should be marked with festive dedications.

Vv. 24-30.—**The sin offering killed before the Lord.** Supplementary directions are supplied to chap. iv. 1-5. So specially sacred was the blood of the sin offering that, if perchance a spray of the blood of the victim spurted out upon the priest's garments, the stain must be dealt with as of solemn consequence, and even the vessel in which the stained garment was washed (vv. 27, 28). Thus specific were Jehovah's regulations that the atoning blood might not be profaned. How much more should "the precious blood of Christ" be cherished as "a holy thing," and guarded from profanation! (Heb. x. 29). From within that ancient temple a voice of appeal comes to us to this day that we solemnly regard the blood of atonement, and so value it that we prize its sanctifying virtue and honour its efficacy by a blameless life.

SECTIONAL HOMILIES, CHAPTER VI. 1-12.

Topic: DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN TRESPASSES AGAINST GOD AND AGAINST MEN.
(Connect Chap. v. 15-19 with vi. 1-7.)

The trespasses in ch. v. relate to misconduct "in the holy things of the Lord"; the trespasses in ch. vi. refer to misdeeds in the common transactions and relations of life.

Distinction A: Note that the expression, "if a soul sin through ignorance," which occurs in the former, is omitted in the latter. The reason for this is obvious—

I. The claims which stand connected with "the holy things of the Lord" must *pass infinitely* BEYOND THE REACH OF THE MOST ELEVATED HUMAN SENSIBILITY. Those claims may be continually interfered with, continually trespassed upon, and the trespassers be *not aware* of the fact.

1. *Man's conscience can never be the regulator in the sanctuary of God.* How often may we have wronged God "in His holy things" without ever taking a note of it in the tablet of conscience, yea, without having the competency to detect it! [See Mal. iii. 8.]

2. *God's holiness alone must fix the standard when God's rights are in question.* That higher light must shine on man's conscience, therefore, to correct his "ignorance" of the laws which governed the sanctuary.

II. On the other hand, the HUMAN CONSCIENCE CAN READILY GRASP THE FULL AMOUNT OF THE HUMAN CLAIM, and can readily take cognizance of any interference with such claim.

1. When *man's rights* are in question, *conscience acts as a prompt and efficient standard.* The wrong which the human eye can see and the human heart feel, the human conscience can judge. A man could not, "through ignorance," tell a lie, swear falsely, act violently, deceive his neighbour, or find a lost thing and deny it. These were all plain and palpable acts, lying within the range of the most sluggish sensibility.

2. "Ignorance" is, therefore, *not allowed as qualifying and condoning men's conduct* in the common affairs of life.

How blessed it is to know that the precious blood of Christ has settled all questions with respect to God or man, our sins of ignorance or our known sins! Here lies the deep and settled foundation of the believer's peace. The Cross has divinely met all.

Distinction B: Note that when it was a question of trespass "in the holy things of the Lord," the unblemished sacrifice was *first* introduced, and *afterward* "the principal" and "the fifth." This order was *reversed* when it was a question of the common affairs of life. [Compare ch. v. 15, 16, with ch. vi. 4-7.] The reason of this is equally obvious—

I. When the *Divine rights were infringed* the BLOOD OF ATONEMENT was the prominent requirement.

If an Israelite had, by an act of trespass, deranged his relation *with Jehovah*, the order was *sacrifice* and restitution.

II. When *human rights were infringed*, RESTITUTION would naturally assume the leading place in the mind.

If an Israelite, by an act of trespass, had deranged his relation *with his neighbour*, the order was *restitution* and then sacrifice.

1. To *wrong a fellow-man interferes with communion with God.* And that communion can only be restored on the ground of atonement. Mere restitution would not avail. It might satisfy the injured man, but could form no basis of restored communion with God. To restore "the principal" and add "the fifth" would still leave the *sin* remaining; and "without shedding of blood is no remission."

2. To *set right the wrong to the injured man, restitution is efficacious.* "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. v. 23, 24).

The claims which arise out of our human relations must not be disregarded. They must ever get their proper place in the heart. [Compare C. H. M.]

Topic: HARM DONE BY TRESPASS (Vv. 2-4).

In the trespass *against "the Lord,"* considered in ch. v., there was specific declaration as to "the *harm done*" by that trespass; and for that "harm" the trespasser had to "make amends" (ch. v. 15, 16). In this chapter trespasses *against a "neighbour"* are under consideration, and these trespasses are ex-

plained as being deeds of actual wrong. Not imaginary or sentimental trespasses, but *acts*. Which statement shows how truly the greatest enemy of mankind is man. Or, as *Robert Burns* declares it :

“Man’s inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn.”

In the same vein writes *Young*, in his “Night Thoughts” :

“Inhumanity is caught from man,
From smiling man.”

[See Addenda, p. 86, *Injury*.]

I. THE INJURY WROUGHT BY TRESPASS.

Ample terms are employed here to describe the forms of wrong-doing. We read of “*violently taking*,” “*deceitfully getting*,” and “*swearing falsely about that which is found*.”

1. *Trespass defined*. In every act of trespass *practical* and *positive wrong* was done; there was an *act of evil* by which another was injured. “Trespass” differed from “sin” in this: *sin* marked what man *was in himself*, *trespass* described what man *had done*. Deeds of wrong, therefore, are here under consideration; actual wrong and robbery.

2. *Trespass conditioned*. It might be wrought “*in ignorance*” (ch. v. 15, 17, 19) when done against “the Lord”; and it is implied even in these acts of wrong against man that the trespasser did not deliberately, and “of malice aforethought” do these acts, but under impulse or through connivance, or simply from inattention. For it comes to be recognised as trespass *afterwards*, not at the time of the act. God has harsher names and heavier judgments for wrong-doing wrought in full consciousness and full light. Still, recognised or unrecognised, it is “trespass.”

3. *Trespass weighed*. Neither our conscience, nor our knowledge, nor our ability are allowed to be the standard by which our actions are measured, weighed, judged; but *God’s truth*. “Though he *wist it not*, yet is he *guilty*; he hath certainly *trespassed against the Lord*” (ch. v. 17-19). Man’s judgment of his own acts is not to be trusted. If a man’s conscience or his light were the standard, every man would weigh his conduct by a different rule; there would be no absolute standard of right and wrong. Evil then would consist, not in the act itself, but in man’s estimate or perception thereof. Sin has blinded our perceptions to the “*sinfulness of sin*”; but that does not alter the fact. God measures and weighs our trespasses by His Word.

4. *Trespass recognised*. Light comes in at last, and the wrong-doer discovers that he has committed a trespass. “*When he knoweth of it*” (chap. v. 4); and in due course transgression makes itself known to the transgressor. Light shines in the darkness, and its beams fall about every life, and will ultimately “bring to light the hidden things of darkness.” Conscience in man will awake, and memory will convict the sinner of his long-forgotten sin.

“Conscience . . . mutinies in a man’s bosom;
It fills one full of obstacles.”—*Shakespeare*.

“There is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemned
He deals on his own soul.”—*Byron*.

“Conscience is harder than our enemies,
Knows more, accuses with more nicety.”—*George Eliot*.

“Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard thro’ gain’s silence, and o’er glory’s din;
Whatever creed be taught or land be trod,
Man’s conscience is the oracle of God.”—*Byron*.

II. THE REPARATION MADE FOR TRESPASS.

When the trespass was realised, it had to be *expiated by sacrifice*, and *amends had to be made to the injured neighbour*.

1. *Trespass atoned.* Blessed be God (whose *voice within us*, whose *inspired Word*, whose *convincing Spirit* brings home to us our trespass), that His grace has "found a Ransom." "He shall bring his *trespass offering* unto the Lord," etc. (v. 6). He that sees Jesus in the trespass offering, sees trespass expiated, annihilated; for Christ has assumed its guiltiness, borne its judgment, paid its penalty. Not alone was "His soul made an offering for *sin*," but "He was wounded for our *transgressions*" (Isa. liii. 5-10).

2. *Trespass compensated.* For the wrongs the trespasser has done to his neighbour *restitution* must be made: "He shall even restore it in the principal" (v. 5). Our Lord has made full reparation for the wrong we had done—to God and man; *satisfying God* by His own merits given for our demerits, and *blessing man* by ensuring to him richer advantages than those which sin forfeited.

Wherefore this *reparation* after *expiation*? Thus: for a victim merely to die would leave the injured neighbour a loser still. Though the trespasser were punished, the injury would remain. The death of the wrong-doer would not restore defrauded rights. Yet until this was done satisfaction could not be regarded as perfect; nor could justice be said to have righted the wrong. Therefore, punishment fell upon the victim, and the wrong was also repaired. So that in the atonement for trespass we find—

1. *Judgment inflicted.* The victim's life is forfeited, as was the sinner's for his sin. And Christ gave His life as man's substituted victim.

2. *Injury compensated.* The evil had to be remedied. Having wrought evil in time past of our lives (comp. Ephes. ii. 2, 3), we, saved by Christ Jesus, now give ourselves to earnest effort to repair the wrong done; to *glorify God*, whom we had wronged by disobedience and dishonour; to *benefit men*, whom we had harmed by sinful influence and example. To these are to be added:

3. *Dues exceeded.* More than the original loss had to be repaid; the wrong more than remedied. A "*fifth part more*" had to be "added thereto." For there was in *Christ's obedience and virtue* a surplus, an excess of merit *presented to God*, passing beyond man's demerit. And in *Christian devotedness and ministry* there are blessings brought to men by man far more sacred, and tender, and consolatory, and helpful, which more than outweigh all the injury done to men by man. "Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall *hide a multitude of sins*" (Jas. v. 20). [See Addenda p. 87, *Faithlessness*.]

Topic: RESTITUTION MADE FOR WRONG (Vv. 4, 5).

Besides the original due was added a "fifth." Consider—

i. *How this was fulfilled for us in Christ.* At His hands God received more than all whereof man had robbed Him.

ii. *The consequence of this to those "in Christ."* They are "complete in Him" through whom we have received the atonement.

But the practical bearing of that transaction commands attention. Enquire in what way, and how far, this view of *Christ's act of reparation* should prove an *incentive* and an *example* to us.

I. RESTITUTION MADE *by those who are in fellowship with Christ.*

By standing in behalf of man Christ makes full restitution for man's wrong and trespass; "not with corruptible things, as silver and gold" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19), but by the value of His own offering and obedience He repays our trespasses.

1. In this sense, of satisfying God for our trespasses, we *can make no restitution*.

If Christ has not made it we are lost. The rest of our lives, if wholly spent for God, could never atone for our acts of trespass. Each day would bring its own proper claim. Works of supererogation, therefore, we could have none.

2. Yet there is a sense in which the soul in fellowship with Christ *will make restitution*. Not, indeed, to win acceptance, but as showing how, according to his measure, through the Spirit, he sympathises with Christ. As he has, in days past, "as the servant of sin," robbed God and man of their rights, so now, as "having been made free from sin," he will "become the servant of righteousness" (Rom. vi. 22).

II. AMENDS SUPERADDED *to the restitution offered*.

In consequence of trespass, against God or man, more than their *original claim* was due to them.

1. Under the law, the claim on man *was righteousness*. If man dealt justly toward God and man nothing further could be claimed of him. But it became different when he had trespassed. Then, by God's appointment—

2. *Right was no longer the measure of man's debt*. The trespasser now is in no condition to attempt to deal out righteousness, either to God or man. The fact of our having become trespassers—

(1) Gives God a claim upon us which is *not the bare claim of right*. Above and beyond this, the trespasser is a debtor. He requires more than the righteousness which sinless souls could have rendered; additional "amends" have to be made; something more than an equivalent for man's sin; this—Christ's bounteous virtues; yea, and also—that we *love* Him for His grace to us.

The law did not ask *love*; it asked of man rectitude! But God now asks more than rectitude; He desires and expects *gratitude, affection, consecration*.

"For souls redeemed, for sins forgiven,
For means of grace, for hopes of heaven,
Father, what can to Thee be given,
Who givest all?"

(2) *Calls us to unselfish devotion to others*. As the recipients of *grace* we are called to exhibit grace in all our transactions with others. Not dealing out justice to men, but generosity, and kindness, and unselfishness. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye; but I say unto you, *resist not evil*: do good to them that hate you; pray for them that despitefully use you" (Matt. v. 38-44).

"And when ye stand praying, *forgive* if ye have ought *against* any; that your Father also in heaven may forgive *you* your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses" (Mark xi. 25, 26). [Comp. also Luke vi. 32-35.]

Yet how far is this principle of *grace exceeding justice* the rule of Christian lives? If we are *just*, how little concern have we as to being *gracious* in our dealings with fellow-men! We go to law (1 Cor. vi. 1-7); we claim our rights, little thinking of the added "fifth" of the trespass offering.

Grace, not right, must be the law, as it is the *hope*, of the trespasser. [Comp. *Jukes on the Offerings*.]

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER VI. 1-7.

V. 2. *Theme*: THE DUTY OF HONESTY.

History and civilisation began with promulgation of law from Sinai, which would regulate man's conduct towards God and his neighbour. Israel in wilderness, not only a *church*, but *commonwealth*; hence, laws to govern civil and social relationships, as well

as religious life. Society could not exist without respect to rights of property, and restraint of liberty. Israel in wilderness without laws would have been a horde of savages, where only the strongest would have survived. The Lord's freemen were not to be out-laws and freebooters, but

obedient servants of the most High. *He* would dwell with them, they were to dwell in peace with each other, and hold each other in mutual esteem. Every breach of trust, every species of dishonesty, strictly prohibited; when committed, amends to be made, and forgiveness sought. From the trespass offering we learn—

I. THAT PROPERTY—THOUGH NOT INTELLECTUALLY A HUMAN RIGHT—MAY BE LAWFULLY POSSESSED BY MAN.

Though the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, yet He hath given it to the children of men. Though a man absolutely possesses nothing but *what he is*, he may acquire the right to call worldly possessions lawfully his own. No community of goods among Israelites. Communism is Utopian; infringement upon the due interests of others, and therefore robbery. As trustees and stewards, in holding and using possessions, we must have respect (a) to the good of others, and (b) the claims of God.

II. THAT PROPERTY UNLAWFULLY POSSESSED, IS NOT ONLY A CRIME AGAINST MAN, BUT ALSO A SIN AGAINST GOD.

Every breach of trust, dishonest act, or fraudulent transaction, displeased Jehovah, and required atonement at the hands of the offender. Guilt was contracted when the law was dishonoured, and no circumstances were to be pleaded in extenuation of the guilt or in mitigation of the sacrifice demanded. The principle of this law has never been repealed; it is *morally*, as well as legally, criminal, to obtain property of any sort by any wrong means, either from individuals or societies. Revealed religion lies at the basis of all *political, commercial and social* morality.—F.W.B.

V. 2. *Theme*: BREACH OF CONFIDENCE. "Lie unto his neighbour, or hath deceived his neighbour."

I. Note some EXAMPLES OF THIS SIN.

1. Injury to, or loss of, borrowed goods. [See Kings vi. 5.]

2. Retaining a found article, knowing, not seeking, the owner.

3. Obtaining property under false pretences.

II. EFFECTS OF THIS SIN.

1. Diminishes the trust men should have in each other.

2. Lessens the stock of general kindness. [See Matt. v. 42.]

3. Fosters a spirit of dishonesty.

III. THE DIVINE VIEW OF THIS SIN.

1. Reparation to be made to man.
2. Confession and atonement to be made to God.—Rev. J. Comper Gray, *Biblical Museum*.

Theme: DEPOSITING PROPERTY.

I. A NEIGHBOURLY CONVENIENCE. To deposit valuable property with a neighbour was, and still is, a common practice in the East, where no establishments exist for the storing of private treasure.

1. How *helpful* a neighbour may become.
2. How *grand* is this confidence in another.

3. How *mutually dependent* we are one upon another.

4. How *honourable* we should be in all transactions.

5. How *jealously* we should strive to merit *implicit trust*. [See Addenda, p. 86, *Injury*.]

II. A HAZARDOUS TRANSACTION.

1. *Man's* reliability is sorely discredited by continuous breaches of faith.

2. *Treasure* becomes often a serious anxiety to its possessor.

3. *No security* can be guaranteed in any earthly confidence. [See Addenda, p. 87, *Faithlessness*.]

III. A DOUBTFUL ALTERNATIVE.

There was another method adopted, when a man was about to journey, if he could not trust his neighbour: he would conceal his treasures under ground.

1. *What light* this throws on *Scripture phraseology*.

The Hebrew word for treasure denotes *hidden*: and explains such phrases as "hidden riches of secret places" (Isa. xlv. 3) and "search for her hid treasure" (Prov. ii. 4; Job iii. 24).

2. *What light* this throws on *Christ's* parables.

There was danger of a man forgetting the spot where he had long ago buried his treasure. Hence our Lord's language concerning "treasure hid in the field" and "searching" "digging" to find it.

IV. A SPIRITUAL ANALOGY.

This committing treasure to a neighbour suggests Paul's imagery of

The soul committed to Christ: "I know whom I have trusted and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12). [See also v. 14 and Tim. vi. 20].

1. Christ is faithful to our trust.

2. We cannot safely risk our souls in other keeping.

V. 5. *Theme*: THE BENEFICENCE OF A REDEEMED LIFE.

The same law in reference to "the fifth part" obtained in the case of a trespass against a man, as in a trespass against the Lord. The application of this regulation to the work of Christ indicates that man, as well as God, is a positive gainer by the Cross. The believer can say, as he gazes upon that Cross, "However I have been wronged, trespassed against, deceived, whatever ills have been done to me, *I am a gainer by the Cross*. I have not merely received back all that was lost, but much more beside."

Thus, whether we think of the injured or the injurer, we are equally struck with the glorious triumphs of redemption, and the mighty practical results which flow from that gospel, which fills the soul with the happy assurance that "all trespasses" are "forgiven," and that the root from whence those trespasses have sprung has been judged.

I. A TRESPASSER IS TRANSFORMED INTO A BENEFACTOR by the law of Divine grace.

He carries blessings—

1. Into the scenes which have been the

witness of a man's sins, his trespasses, and his injurious ways.

2. *Among persons who have suffered in consequence of his evil doings, his deceits, and his transgressions.*

3. *The renewing grace of God having worked in him, he is sent back to those scenes and among those sufferers furnished with grace, in order that he should—*

4. Not only *repair the wrongs*, but to allow the full tide of *practical benevolence* to flow forth in all his ways, yea, to "love his enemies, and do good to them that hate him, and to pray for them that despitefully use and persecute him." Such are the rich, rare, and refreshing fruits of the grace of God that act in connection with our great Trespass Offering.

II. A GRACIOUS LIFE WILL ATTEST ITSELF IN GENEROUS CONDUCT.

Sinfulness and selfishness can have no licence in a redeemed life. Instead of the caviller against godliness being able to show that God's people allow sin "that grace may abound," sin is cut up by the roots; the sinner is turned from a curse into a blessing, from a moral plague into a channel of Divine mercy, from an emissary of Satan into a messenger of God, from a child of darkness into a son of the light, from a self-indulgent pleasure-seeker into a self-denying lover of God, from a slave of vile lusts into a willing-hearted servant of Christ, from a narrow-hearted miser into a benevolent minister to the needs of his fellow-men. The thief, the defrauder, is transformed into a generous donor; giving the "fifth" of his possessions.

2. *Practical righteousness is the crowning witness of that life whose sin is expiated and forgiven.* Away, then, with the oft repeated taunts, "Are we to do nothing?" "According to this gospel we may live as we list!" They who utter such language know not what grace means: have never felt its sanctifying and elevating influences. They forget that, while the blood of the trespass offering cleanses the conscience, the law of the offering sends the trespasser back to him whom he has wronged with "the principal" and "the fifth" in his hand. Noble testimony, this, both to the grace and righteousness of the God of Israel!

If the conscience has been set to rights, by the blood of the Cross, in reference to the claims of God, the conduct also must be set to rights by the holiness of the Cross in reference to the claims of practical righteousness. This hallowed union will never be dissolved by any mind which is governed by pure gospel morality. "He that doth not righteousness is not of God" (1 John iii 10).

III. DIVINE GRACE IS DISHONOURED IN THOSE WHOSE CONDUCT AND CHARACTER EXHIBIT NOT THE FAIR TRACES OF PRACTICAL HOLINESS.

1. God has given us in His Word those evidences by which we can discern those that belong to Him. "The Lord knoweth them that are His: and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. iii. 19).

(a) *We have no right to suppose that an evil-doer belongs to God.* The holy instincts of the Divine nature are shocked by such a thought. Difficulty is felt in accounting for evil practices in those who are regarded as Christians. But the Word of God settles the matter clearly and authoritatively:—"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whoever doeth not righteousness is not of God," etc. (1 John iii. 9, 10).

(b) *Laxity and self-indulgence*, specially the perils of our times, must be severely and sternly shunned.

2. *An accommodating, easy profession of Christianity is rebuked* by this law of the trespass offering. Every genuine Christian is called upon to give a clear testimony, a testimony resulting from the steady exhibition of "the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God." Most deplorable is it to see such faulty manifestation abroad of the *love and holiness* which should distinguish Christian conduct.

Let us rebuke, by a *life of self-denial and genuine benevolence*, the culpable inactivity of professors. Christian life should abound in large and generous ministries. [Comp. C. H. M. on *Leviticus*.]

V. 6, 7. Theme: THE SIN OF DISHONESTY.

In the natural government of the world God has made the laws of nature on the side of goodness and virtue; and in the moral government of the universe the Divine favour is on the side of honesty, integrity and righteousness. The enactments of Sinai, and those from the door of the tabernacle, were a transcript of the holiness of the Divine character, fixing approval upon the right, and stigma upon the wrong. Men were to do to others as they would others should do to them, remembering that the eye of the Lord was upon them. Thus Israel was taught—

I. THAT THE SIN OF DISHONESTY INCURS THE JUST INDIGNATION OF HEAVEN.

Moses and others, who administered the laws among the people, would feel the sacredness and responsibility of their office, in that they were Jehovah's deputies, and punished offenders in His name. Earthly rulers and governments should—

(a) *Base their statutes upon Divine enactments; and*

(b) *Seek the reformation, as well as punishment, of the offender.*

The appointed offering, and the appearance of the trespassers before the Lord, denoted that sin had been committed, that guilt had been incurred. All sin is hateful in the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

II. THAT THE SIN OF DISHONESTY MAY NEVERTHELESS BE FORGIVEN.

Specific directions were given respecting the offering required, that the offerer might have no doubt as to the way of forgiveness. Obedience would show that the trespasser—

(a) *Acknowledged his offence;*

(b) *Was sorry for it;*

(c) *Was ready to make amends ;*

(d) *Desired absolution.*

The root and essence of sin is that *it is committed against God* ; hence, only God can forgive it. In the gospel the law is not

destroyed, but fulfilled ; For Christ, our Sin, or Trespass Offering, procures complete and free pardon for all sin. Fools make a mock at the sin offering, but with the righteous it is in esteem.—F. W. B.

SECTIONAL HOMILIES CHAP. VI. 8-13.

THE LAW OF THE BURNT OFFERING (resumed).

Topic.—DIGNITY LINKED TO DUTY (Vv. 8-12).

With the eighth verse of this chapter we traverse ground already gone over. Directions having been given for the institution of the burnt offering, Aaron and his sons now receive particulars as to their parts in the service. The burnt offering was the first and most important of all the ordinary oblations, pointing as it did to *unreserved* personal consecration, and *universal Divine redemption*. In the directions given to Aaron and his sons, we learn—

I. HOW APPARENTLY UNDIGNIFIED DUTIES MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE MOST EXALTED SERVICE.

The Divine work to which the priests were appointed would distinguish them from the common people ; ensure them reverent recognition ; be their passports to social, as well as sacred eminence. Their spotless vestments were a symbol of their official purity. How undignified it would *seem* for the priest to be busy removing the ashes of the consumed sacrifice with his own hands to a clean place without the camp. But no work, however lowly, if done for God and at His command, can bring real degradation. Men always go up when they go to duty. David felt he would “rather be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord than,” etc. The priests were as great and dignified when removing the ashes of the offering as when they ascended to their loftiest sacerdotal duties. Let us think nothing mean or low that we can do in the service of our risen and loving Lord.

II. HOW THE ASSOCIATION OF LOWLY DUTIES WITH EXALTED SERVICE MAY BE A SALUTARY DISCIPLINE TO THE WORSHIPPER.

That the reasons for the sacrifices, and the laws relating to them, were only partially given ; and that in matters of precision and detail so much seemed mysterious and even unnecessary, would—

(a) *Test the faith, (b) quicken vigilance, (c) stimulate energy, and (d) prepare for higher and more spiritual service.* He that is faithful in the least will be in that which is greatest. Fidelity in what the world may deem small and meaningless will receive the recognition of heaven, and promotion to higher and holier service.—F. W. Brown.

OUTLINES ON VERSES, CHAPTER VI. 8-13.

V. 9. *Theme: SACRED ATTIRE.*

These directions concerning offering the burnt sacrifice relate to the priests ; and denote the divinely acceptable method of their ministrations. In all these specific ceremonial regulations there lay couched important spiritual suggestions.

I. IN HOLY ATTIRE *they serve at the altar.*

1. Suggestive of *the essential holiness of Christ.* By His grace all offerings were rendered a sweet savour to God.

2. Symbolic of *their derived purity and righteousness.* [Comp. Exod. xxviii. 40-43 with Psa. cxxxii. 9 ; Rev. iii. 4 ; vii. 13, 14 ; xix. 8.]

3. *Indicative of the spirit of service.* Bring to God services and sacrifices with clean hands, and pure hearts, and holy lives. The *state of the offerer* affects the character of the offering. [See Heb. x. 22.]

II. IN ALTERED GARMENTS *they bear the ashes from the sanctuary.*

1. *The changed tone of feeling in the minis-*

trant. He no longer serves in delight at God's altar, but takes part in the act of out-casting the sin sacrifice. A saddened mood is upon him as he becomes for the moment associated with the *repulsiveness of sin* in carrying the ashes "without the camp." There are two aspects of Christian ministry—*joyous privilege*, when clothed in the garments of salvation, and *saddened reflection* when realising the offensiveness of sin.

2. *The altered scenes which a Christian frequents.* He is not always within "the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High," he has to go forth to outside scenes: the rougher, less hallowed scenes of life and human society. Yet, though laying aside the holiest priestly garb when he left the most sacred scenes, as a Christian soul necessarily leaves behind him the sublimer thoughts and feelings he wore when in the very secret of God's presence: still his changed garments were consecrated garments. The Christian must never lay aside his sanctity, nor his priestly profession. Everywhere, whether apart with God or busy amongst men, he must wear the consecrated attire.

V. 12. Theme: DIVINE FIRE HUMANLY MAINTAINED.

"The fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out; and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning," etc.

It might have been supposed that this "fire," having been Divine in its origin, would have been Divinely maintained. That fire, so given, suggests—

I. DIVINE ENDOWMENTS COMMITTED TO THE CONTROL OF MEN.

As in the instances of that "fire," supernaturally originated on that altar, and then left in man's hands, so with—

1. Pure sympathies implanted within man.
2. Revelation in the Scriptures.
3. Quickened life in the regenerated soul.
4. Spiritual endowments to the believer.
5. Sacred affections in the Christian heart.
6. Holy enthusiasm firing an earnest nature.

From God they come: but man has them in his hands.

II. DIVINE ENDOWMENTS ENTRUSTED TO THE PRESERVATION OF MEN.

The priests had to keep that "fire" alive, or it would expire.

1. *Having received the gifts of God we are responsible for their maintenance.* God holds us as in trust with them.

2. *How solemn the priestly office*, which all are called to perform: feeding the Divine "fire" in our souls continually!

III. DIVINE ENDOWMENTS REQUIRING THE CO-OPERATIVE WATCHFULNESS OF MEN.

The priest's eye would need to be often turned to the altar fire: "every morning" it needed care.

1. *A watchful life is imperative* if we would maintain godliness within.

2. *Neglect will allow the extinction of the divinest gift.* It needs scarcely that positive effort be made to "put out" the fire: it will go out of itself if not attended to.

Only neglect

- (a) Daily prayer;
- (b) Daily reading of the Scriptures;
- (c) Daily fellowship with Christ;
- (d) Daily watching against temptation.

Fail in these duties, and the "fire" will expire. "Every morning" bring wood to the fire!

IV. DIVINE ENDOWMENTS ENDURING ONLY WHERE ACTIVELY MAINTAINED.

That fire did expire! At the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar.

1. May the Divine life in a soul go out?

2. May the Christian's "first love" become extinct?

3. May the holy aspirations of a child of God droop?

4. May all sacred ardour, in prayer, in consecration, die away?

"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling."

"See that ye make your calling and election sure."

V. 13. Theme: FIRE NOT TO GO OUT.

I. Its typical import, as relating to the GOSPEL.

1. That we all constantly need the atonement. This fire was given for the use of all Israel without exception: all needed to offer atonement; Aaron as well as the people. We must all bring our offering to the altar. The fire, too, was for daily use. And daily we need to come to God through the atonement.

2. That the Levitical sacrifices are insufficient for us. Thousands of victims were consumed on God's altar, yet the fire continued to burn; indicating that full atonement had not been offered (Heb. x. 1-4, 11, and ix. 9).

3. That God intended to supply a satisfactory sacrifice. The continuous fire, and the daily supply of wood, seemed to repeat Isaac's inquiry, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Gen. xxii. 7, 8). God kept up the expectation of the Great Sacrifice.

4. That all who repudiated that Great Sacrifice must expect severest judgments. The victims consumed by that fire betokened the sinner's deserts (Mark ix. 43, 44, 45, etc.). "Who can dwell with the devouring fire? who can dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isa. xxxiii. 14).

II. Its mystical import, as relating to the CHURCH.

That altar represents the heart of man, from whence offerings of every kind go up to God (Heb. xiii. 15, 16).

1. That no offering can be accepted of God unless it be inflamed with heavenly fire.

Compare Nadab and Abihu's doom (Lev. x. 1, 2); and the remonstrance of Isaiah (l. 11).

2. That if God have kindled in our hearts a fire, we must keep it alive by our own vigilance: "Stir up the gift of God that is in thee" (2 Tim. i. 6); "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die" (Rev. iii. 2).

3. That every sacrifice, offered in God's appointed way, will be accepted. Though unable to bring a kid or lamb or young pigeons, yet

bring a small measure of flour (Lev. v. 5-13). The sigh, tear, groan, will be accepted equally with the most fluent prayer; the widow's mite equally with the offerings of the wealthy.

III. *Its personal suggestion, indicating OUR DUTY.*

1. *Look to the Great Atonement* as your only hope.

2. *Surrender up yourselves* as living sacrifices unto God.—*C. Simcon.* [See Addenda, p. 86, *Enduring Fire.*]

V. 13. *Theme: THE ALTAR FIRE.*

"The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out."

A. This fire is *typical of HOLY DESIRES, and of DIVINE LOVE*; to which it bears an exact parallel in a variety of instances, in its various operations:—

i. Fire is an *illuminating* quality.

ii. It is a *warming and heating* quality.

iii. It will *burn any combustible matter*; separating metal from dross and rust.

iv. It is an *ascending* quality; greedily mounting to its proper seat, and will not rest till it incorporates with its own element.

v. It is a *melting and softening* quality. Iron and other metals are made pliable by it.

vi. It is a *comforting and consoling* quality.

vii. It is of an *assimilating* quality. It changes materials into its own nature, and sets them on fire.

viii. Without fire business would be arrested; nor could we exist. Parallel: "Man lives not by bread alone," etc. "His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire."

B. *How may we QUENCH THE FIRE of holy desires and Divine love?*

i. By *inconsideration* or unwatchfulness.

ii. By a *trifling spirit*, or permitting levity to prevail.

iii. Not keeping our eye single, our heart *sincere*.

iv. *Fond conceits of ourselves*; being wise above what is written.

v. Not harmonising our lives by the rule of God's Word.—*Methodist Plans*, by Rev. Wm. Stephens, A.D. 1786.

V. 13. *Theme: THE ALTAR FIRE A SYMBOL OF REGENERATING GRACE.*

The ANALOGY between this fire and regenerating grace appears—

I. In its *source and origin*.

II. In its *tendency*.

III. In its *nature and properties*.

IV. In its *permanency*.

V. In its *perpetuity*.

The PRACTICAL LESSON gathered from the subject, is diligence in the use of means:—

1. *Prayer*: secret, family, social.

2. *Study of God's Word*.

3. *Meditation* (Ps. cxix.; Mal. iii. 16; Hob. x. 25).

4. *Attendance on the means of grace*.

5. *Faithful labour* for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.—From *Homiletic Monthly*, by Rev. G. F. Love. [See Addenda, page 86, *Enduring Fire.*]

V. 18. *Theme: THE UNEXTINGUISHABLE FIRE.*

The Divine injunction to keep the fire upon the altar ever burning has been thought by some Biblical scholars to imply, *that the wrath of God against sin will never expire; that the Divine punishment for sin is interminable*. But we must remember that the fire on the altar consumed *not the sinner but the sacrifice* offered in the sinner's stead. *And the fire did ultimately go out.*

It seems more consistent with the moral teaching of the rite (and certainly beset with fewer difficulties) to take the fire (a) *as symbolic of the fact* that the constantly offered sacrifices met with abiding approval of the Lord; and (b) *as an emblem of the deep devotion and constant love of the heart* necessary to secure unbroken communion with heaven.

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost; and, as priests unto God, "we are to offer up ourselves living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto Him." Fire is a Divine emblem by which God is represented *to us*; and by which God is manifested *in us*. Enthusiasm means God in us. The fire of consecration must be—

I. **DIVINELY KINDLED.** It must come from the presence of Jehovah, or we shall offer strange fire on the altar. The baptism of fire, like that of the Holy Ghost, is from above.

II. **CONSTANTLY REPLENISHED.** The altar fire was every day fed by the repeated sacrifices. Enthusiastic consecration can be sustained only by repeated supplies of appropriate fuel. We must *pile up grateful memories, holy resolutions, self-denying services*, etc. The flash of religious excitement will not suffice, God will not accept the white ashes of a former fire.

III. **FREQUENTLY REVIVED.** The fire must not be choked, or damped, it would need fresh air, and stirring: the fire in our hearts *needs the fresh air from heaven—to be stirred by renewed efforts*—we need to *beware of extinguishing influences*, such as unholy lusts, undue anxieties, unbelief in God, inattention to public and private devotions, etc.

IV. **JUDICIOUSLY CONTROLLED.** The fire upon the altar was kept within reasonable bounds, or it might have spread disaster through the whole camp. Zeal and consecration must be governed by intelligence, or they will degenerate into fanaticism and lead to bigotry and persecution. Let us seek to be clad with zeal as with a garment, and to possess holy fire in our souls.

The fire of consecration may be known by—

(a) *Intense heat of love.*

(b) *Twofold flame of devotion*—prayer and praise.

(c) *Clear light of knowledge.*

Such a fire within will be *comforting, purifying, aggressive, ascending*. Take fire, hold fire, spread fire; then when death comes we shall be translated to the land where we shall be as seraphs before the sapphire throne.—F. W. B.

SECTIONAL HOMILIES, CHAPTER VI. 14-30.

THE PRIESTS' MEAT OFFERING.

Topic: PRIESTLY SERVICES AND PRIVILEGES (Vv. 14-16).

"The sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord . . . the remainder shall Aaron and his sons eat."

I. FULFILMENT OF SACRED FUNCTIONS.

Christ was typified in "Aaron," *Christians* in "his sons."

1. Consider the *priestly ministrations of Jesus Christ within the sanctuary*. (a) Within *His Church on earth*, in maintaining the love, and devotion, and piety which there are offered to God. (b) Within the *heavenly sanctuary*, in gathering up the prayers of His saints, adding His own virtues to human offerings, and interceding in the presence of God for us.

2. *The subsidiary ministries of the Christian priesthood*. (a) *In consecrated lives*. (b) *In loving gifts*. (c) *In prayerful fellowship*. (d) *In useful agencies*.

II. ENJOYMENT OF SPECIAL PRIVILEGES.

1. *Christ feasts with His followers*. "Aaron and his sons shall eat." For our Lord appeals to us, "Eat, My friends; yea, eat and drink, O My beloved." We have "fellowship with Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 4). Thus our Lord ate "the passover with His disciples." Thus He "sups with us" (Rev. iii. 20). Thus He will eat with His Church at the heavenly feast.

2. *A repast reserved for the priesthood*. None but "Aaron and his sons" might eat. There is a joy the world knows not of, a hidden life in Christ to which all but Christians are strangers, there are lofty fellowships with God which none but priestly souls can approach. Note, this feast was to be "in the holy place"—not the innermost court, type of "heaven itself," but in "the court of the tabernacle of the congregation"—symbolic of the Church on earth. It thus points to the sacred favours enjoyed now in the spiritual life and in Christian communion.

Topic: DIVINE FRIENDSHIP (Vv. 14-18).

The leading idea of this offering is *communion with Jehovah*. In the sacrifice presented the Divine and the human meet in hallowed fellowship and banquet together with great rejoicing. We learn:

I. THAT THE ALMIGHTY DEIGNS TO COMMUNE FAMILIARLY WITH MAN. At Sinai the people were commanded to keep distant; in the burnt offering, the whole of the sacrifice was consumed, indicating that the offerer deserved to be consumed for his iniquity; here a small portion only was consumed, the greater part was taken by the priests, and the meal was peculiarly sacred. "I have given it them for their portion of My offerings made by fire." Thus Jehovah partook with the priests, and entered into intimate fellowship. Under the new dispensation we are all made priests unto God, through faith in His dear Son—we become partakers of the Divine nature; we enter His banqueting house, and His banner over us is love. He calls us not servants, but friends; sups with us in our hearts, at His table in the Church, and will, with us, hereafter at the marriage feast in heaven.

II. THAT MAN MUST NOT TAKE UNDUE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH DIVINE FAMILIARITY.

The meat offering was to be solemnly and carefully presented : strict attention to be paid to dress and deportment : no ceremonial or personal impurity to be allowed : no leaven of any kind used. A sacred circle was drawn around the altar, the service invested with great importance, even the priests placed under restrictions. We may come with holy boldness and childlike confidence to God ; but we must do so with becoming reverence. " God is a spirit," etc. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, but not levity and irreverence. *Sincerity, thankfulness, and a sense of deep responsibility* will give the right tone to our religious exercises.

III. THAT SUCH HALLOWED FELLOWSHIP IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD AND PROFITABLE TO MAN. The people offered their flour, oil, and frankincense ; the priests took their portion and ate it in the court of the tabernacle ; the fragrant incense perfumed the air ; Jehovah accepted all as a sweet savour, having respect to the obedience and reverence represented in the offering. The worshipper was taught his relation to the Lord, acceptance of Him, friendship with Him. Christ has not only become our Sin Offering, but our Meat Offering, in that He invites us to partake of His love : " My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." Only by *personal, spiritual participation of Christ*, can we have fellowship with Him here, and companionship with Him in eternity. " If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His."—F. W. B.

Topic : MINISTERIAL DEDICATION : THE PRIEST'S CONSECRATION OFFERING
(Vv. 19-23).

Here can be found suggestions concerning dedication and devotion to the ministerial office.

I. *Consecration to the ministry : an event to be MARKED BY IMPRESSIVE SOLEMNITIES.*
" The day when he is anointed." What a day that is to a young minister ! His entrance upon so solemn and responsible a work as that of becoming " a minister of the sanctuary " should be specially signalised.

" *This is the offering unto the Lord* in the day when he is anointed." God asks that the consecration solemnities should be " unto " Him. For it signifies the setting apart of a life " unto the Lord," and the placing upon His altar of every *energy, faculty, affection, and aspiration.*

" O Lord, Thy heavenly grace impart,
And fill my frail, inconstant heart :
Henceforth my chief desire shall be
To dedicate myself to Thee—
To Thee, my God, to Thee."

II. *Consecration to the ministry : an act to be CHARACTERISED BY COMPLETE SELF-DEVOTION.*

1. *Perpetuity* is to mark the offering. " For a meat offering *perpetual.*" It is to be no temporary dedication, but a whole life-long devotion.

2. *Continuity* is to mark the offering. " Half of it in the morning, and half thereof at night " ; *i.e.*, it was to be a day-by-day dedication ; the offering was to go on *every morning and night.* God asks not one demonstrative act of consecration at the outset of our official life, or our Christian life, but a ceaseless repetition, a daily reproduction of that act of devotion ; " the love of our *espousals* " is to be daily enacted.

3. *Entirety* is to mark the offering. " It is a *statute for ever ; it shall be wholly burnt* " (v. 22). " Every meat offering for the priest shall be *wholly burnt* " (v. 23). In the offering for the people God required only a " handful of flour " as a " memorial of it unto the Lord " (v. 15) ; but He required the complete offering

from a priest. No part of the price might be withheld : time, talents, all the man is and has—"wholly."

"How can I, Lord, withhold
Life's brightest hour
From Thee ; or gathered gold,
Or any power ?

Why should I keep one precious thing from Thee
When Thou hast given Thine own dear Self for me ?"

III. *Consecration to the ministry: a service to be ASSOCIATED WITH GRATITUDE AND JOY.*

1. *Emblems of thankfulness* were to be laid on the altar. "Fine flour, and oil." For it should be that the young minister, laying himself out for his high calling, should realise *how much he owes his Lord*, and ask : "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me ?" To His grace we must ascribe all we have received of endowments, gifts, holy affections, enjoyment of His redemption, enlightenment by His Spirit, the call to ministerial work.

"To Thee, Thou bleeding Lamb,
I all things owe ;
All that I have and am,
And all I know ;
All that I have is now no longer mine,
And I am not my own ; Lord, I am Thine."

2. *Such joyous self-devotion is peculiarly fragrant to the Lord.* "For a sweet savour unto the Lord" (v. 21). There is so much that charms even the glorious Jehovah in a young life fully consecrated: the ardour and bloom of opening manhood laid wholly on His altar ; the aspirations and affections of the heart withdrawn entirely from secular attractions and pursuits, and fixed on Christ and His service ; the fervour of being dedicated to the sublime mission of winning souls for the Saviour and ministering in His courts.

"Accept these hands to labour,
These hearts to trust and love,
And deign with them to hasten
Thy kingdom from above."

Topic: THE SIN OFFERING A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME
(Vv. 24-30).

The sin offering was presented on the north side of the altar : in the fulness of time the world's Great Sacrifice was offered on the north side of Jerusalem. *How*, as well as *what* to be presented clearly indicated in this, as in previous offerings. In directions given we learn :

I. *HOW COMPLETE THE SIN OFFERING WAS.* Though parts of the sacrifice were to be eaten by the priests when the oblation was made for the people, the whole was to be consumed by fire when presented for the priests. The sin offering atoned for every kind of sin, thus showing great completeness, and adaptation for priests and people, who in the sight of God need forgiveness and restoration to His favour. When a part of the offering was eaten by the priests it was shown how God and man were reconciled ; when the offering was wholly burned it was shown how complete the atonement was, how fully pardon was secured.

II. *HOW TRANSITORY THE SIN OFFERING WAS.* Frequently repeated, it was only of temporary virtue. It borrowed all its efficacy from the great Sin Offering which it typified. "It was not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin" ; without the sacrifice of Christ they would have been of no avail.

Altars and offerings have passed away, but Jesus hath procured "eternal redemption for us."

III. HOW SACRED THE SIN OFFERING WAS. It was called "most holy," great precaution was taken that it should not be desecrated, even the implements and vessels used in its observance were scrupulously guarded from ceremonial impurity. Priests were not allowed to partake if ceremonially defiled: showing that sin and holiness are alike contagious—may be communicated, intentionally or unintentionally, to *persons, places, offices, things*. How complete and sacred the sin offering of the Redeemer! If contempt for, and neglect of, Levitical rites was heinous in the sight of God, how much more so similar conduct when shown to what they foreshadowed!

Conclusion. The sin offering showed (a) *the exceeding sinfulness of sin*; (b) *the absolute necessity of atonement being made for it*; (c) *the transcendent importance of deliverance from every taint of it*. These truths fully taught and actually embodied in the glorious gospel of the blessed God.—F. W. B.

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER VI.

INJURY.

"Of all the things that have had record in the world, of the many sources of violence, injustice and cruelty, I do not know of anything else that is so cruel as man. It is only man that studies cruelty, and makes it exquisite, and prolongs it, and carries it out with appliances and art. From the despot on the throne to the despot of the household, all men alike carry vengeance, bitterness, wrath, hurtfulness, as characteristics of the race."—*H. W. Beecher.*

"How should you feel if you were to enter the room where your child is sleeping, and find upon it a stealthy cat, stationed at the portal of life, and stopping its very breath? How should you feel were you to find upon your child a vampire that had fastened into its flesh its blood-sucking bill, and was fast consuming its vitality? How do you feel when one of your children tramples upon another? or when your neighbour's children crush yours? or when ruffian violence strikes against those whose hearts for ever carry the core of your heart? Judge from your own feelings *how God, with His infinite sensibility, must feel when He sees men rising up against their fellow-men: performing gross deeds of cruelty on every hand . . . devastating society by every infernal mischief that their ingenuity can invent.*"—*H. W. Beecher.*

"Justice consists in doing no injury to men; decency, in giving them no offence."—*Cicero.*

"Recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness."—*Confucius.*

"He threatens many that hath injured one."
—*Ben. Jonson.*

"Brutus hath riv'd my heart:
A friend should bear his friend's infirmities,
But Brutus makes mine greater than they
are."—*Shakespeare.*

"Virtue is not left to stand alone. He

who practises it will have neighbours.—*Confucius.*

"Be as just and gracious unto me

As I am confident and kind to thee.

—*Titus Andronicus.*

ENDURING FIRE.

The perpetual fire of the Persian Magi and modern Parsees; the eternal fire, as it was called at Rome, kept perpetually burning by the Vestal virgins; and the *Pur Asbeston* "unextinguishable fire," of the Greeks at Delphi, were evident imitations of this sacred fire.

"It was one of the distinguishing marks of the chieftainship of one of the Samoan nobility that his fire never went out. His attendants had a peculiar name for their special business of keeping his fire blazing all night long while he was asleep."—*Turner's Polynesia.*

"During the second temple this perpetual fire consisted of three parts or separate piles of wood on the same altar; on the largest one the daily sacrifice was burnt; the second, called the pile of incense, supplied the fire for the censers to burn the morning and evening incense; and the third was the perpetual fire from which the other two portions were fed. It never was quenched till the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar. Indeed we are positively assured that the pious priests who were carried captives into Persia, concealed it in a pit, where it remained till the time of Nehemiah, when it was restored to the altar (2 Macc. i. 19-22). The authorities in the time of Christ, however, assure us that the perpetual fire was one of the five things wanting in the sacred temple."—*Elliott's Commentary.*

"Wake in our breasts the living fires,
The holy faith that warmed our sires."

—*Holmes. Army Hymn.*

FAITHLESSNESS.

"Treason is there in its most horrid shape
Where trust is greatest! and the soul re-
sign'd

Is stabbed by her own guards!"—*Dryden*.

"He who does not respect confidence will
never find happiness in his path. The belief
in virtue vanishes from his heart, the source
of nobler actions becomes extinct in him."—*Auffenberg*.

"Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers;
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all."
—*Tennyson*.

"O what a goodly outside falsehood hath!"
—*Merchant of Venice*.

"Trust that man in nothing who hath not
a conscience in everything."—*Sterne*.

"A slender acquaintance with the world
must convince every man that actions, not
words, are the true criterion of the attach-
ment of friends; and that the most liberal
professions of goodwill are very far from be-
ing the surest marks of it."—*Geo. Washington*.

"A foe to God was ne'er true friend to man,
Some sinister intent taints all he does."

—*Young's Night Thoughts*.

"The highest compact we can make with
our fellow is: Let there be truth between us
two for evermore. It is sublime to feel and
say of another: I never need meet, or speak,
or write to him; we need not reinforce our-
selves, or send tokens of remembrance; I rely
on him as on myself; if he did this or thus I
know it was right."—*Emerson*.

CHAPTER VII.

Ritual of the Sacrifices: the Peace Offering.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 1.—Likewise this is the law of the trespass offering. More precise instructions are now added to those given in chap. v. 1-13, expressly for the guidance of the priest. Every minute detail is of Divine regulation; God rules within the sanctuary, directs every particular of worship and service therein; for altar sacrifice is "*most holy*," and man must scrupulously refrain from adding, omitting, or altering aught when he approaches Jehovah with expiation. Neither, in the Christian dispensation, is license, or caprice, or self-assertion allowed to sinful man who would propitiate God; he must implicitly follow instructions. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good."

V. 7.—As the sin offering, so is the trespass offering. If any item of regulation was given for one offering which was not given in the other, then it was to be applied as equally binding in both cases. The priest was entrusted with the duty of searching out each particular and fulfilling it sedulously. It should be our study to "*know* the Holy Scriptures," and therefore we should "*compare* spiritual things with spiritual," "*searching* the Scriptures daily," as did the Bereans, in order that nothing be left undiscovered, nothing unfulfilled. How careful should be our endeavour to make the written will of God our law in every particular of worship and of habit, of life and conduct.

V. 10.—One as much as another [literally, *a man as his brother*]. In the "*meat* offering" "all the sons of Aaron" were to share, and the dividing was to be equal. And this law assures us, who in Christ are of the "*priesthood*," that there is an equal participation in the *merits* of the sacrifice and the *privileges* of the Christian life for all who are sacredly related. The gracious rule of *brotherhood* is to be illustrated in our enjoyment of the sacramental feast at the Lord's table, "All ye are brethren." No assumption of superiority is permissible, no exclusive appropriation of the sacred provisions; in the Gospel feast, and at the

Lord's Supper, "*a man is as his brother.*" How, then, dare the Romish celebrant assume the sole right of participating? or where is the warrant for "priestly" superiority in the "household of faith"?

V. 12.—Offer it for a thanksgiving. These "*peace offerings*" are of three kinds—*thank offerings* (vv. 12-15), *votive offerings* (v. 16), and *voluntary offerings* (vv. 16-18). [Comp. on chap. iii.]

V. 18.—Neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it. The offerer was expected to see that the entire votive or voluntary offering was "*eaten the same day*" as it was offered; a regulation this which compelled him to hospitality, to invite together a sufficient number of neighbours or poor persons to the festal board. And if through inattention to this duty of considerate and generous hospitality any part remained uneaten that "same day," it must be completely consumed "on the morrow," or the offerer was liable to a serious risk—the part not consumed might fall into some person's hands after the limited time; and then the efficacy of the sacrifice would be entirely disannulled and the offerer must bring another votive offering and go through the regulations of lavish hospitality again, but with more promptitude and precision. A Christian must "*not live to himself*"; his care for others must be generous; he must be hospitable to the needy; and in his enjoyment of sacred privileges he must bring in others to share with himself the "*feast of fat things*," or his own *selfish religious life* becomes "*an abomination.*"

V. 20.—Having his uncleanness upon him. The penalty of legal defilement was excision from the Lord's people. "*Ye are a holy nation.*" Such was Jehovah's reiterated declaration; and every infringement of ceremonial sanctity was immediately stamped with disapprobation and disfranchisement. Shall not the *Church of Christ* be equally guarded from the presence of the unclean? Wherefore "*let a man examine himself*," and let those charged with the care of the Church preserve her fellowship from contamination by "*trying the spirits.*" As for ourselves, this is the injunction for us to heed: "*Wherefore come out from among them, be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.*"

Vv. 22-27.—Ye shall eat no manner of fat. . . no manner of blood. [Comp. on chap. iii. 17]. That which was the *Lord's* man must not appropriate. "*What shall I render unto the Lord?*" Our aim should be rather to exceed His specified requirements by offering something beyond, "*some very precious*" alabastron, some free-will sacrifice of love "*for the great love wherewith He has loved us.*"

V. 30.—His own hand shall bring the offerings of the Lord. Divine service could not be done by proxy. Just as at the judgment "*every one shall give account of himself to God*," so in now seeking appeasement and acceptance every soul must come to the Lord on his own behalf. "*The Master calleth for thee.*"

V. 34.—The wave breast and the heave shoulder. The spectacular movements of parts of the sacrificial victim before the altar intimated their consecration to Jehovah, and their performance was justified by the necessity of impressing on the people the supreme claims of God upon them when they brought their offerings. It was an uplifting of the sacrifice to Him who dwelt between the cherubim; a recognition of His unseen presence, a response to His solemn demands. A vivid realization of *God within the sanctuary* would constrain to more reverence in our offerings and actions. "*Who hath required this at your hands to tread My courts?*" (Isa. i. 12).

V. 37.—This is the law of the burnt offering, etc. An enumeration of the various kinds of sacrifices, which carries the suggestion that Jehovah could omit no one from the list, that all were essential to His continued favour towards and fellowship with man, that the religious life could not be thorough if one were withheld—self-consecration, fellowship, atonement, reconciliation, peace.

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: INVARIABLE LAWS REGULATING SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP (Vv. 1-10).

With minute precision God reiterates His requirements in sacrificial worship. Thus emphasizing the conditions of man's propitiation, and his acceptance with Him. "There is *one law* for them" (v. 7). Though some diversity existed in the details, *e.g.*, as to the disposal of the blood of the victim by the priest [comp. ch. iv. 6, 7, with v. 2], and the sharing of the different parts of the animal; yet amid all diversity in details, *an invariable law* ruled in the arrangements, and this God again emphasizes. What was that invariable law? In chap. vi. 27, etc., the stress of Divine injunctions is laid on the *quality of the sanctity* distinguishing the sin offering: and here it is reaffirmed (vii. 1) "it is *most holy*," and (v. 6) "it shall be eaten *in the holy place*, it is *most holy*." Ponder that inflexible requirement and consider that there are still inevitable laws and fixed conditions of acceptable approach to God.

I. METHODS OF WORSHIP MAY VARY, BUT HOLINESS IS INEVITABLE IN ALL.

1. *Moral qualities* are essentially more valuable than outward rituals.
2. Modes of approaching God, though important, *fail to win Divine favour*, if the inmost state is alien to His will.
3. *Sanctity is the most precious quality in man*. Not grandeur, not punctiliousness, but holiness.

4. This holiness indicates not so much moral faultlessness and absolute perfectness in the offerer, as *sincerity, humility*, "a right spirit," a reverence of God, and a trustfulness in His grace. [See Addenda, p. 100, *True Worship*.]

II. *All propitiatory acts are secondary to* THE SUPREME FACT—DEATH FOR SIN.

1. First in *order of time*: the offering was to *be slain* (v. 2). After that was done, then began the ritual. Any attempt to draw near God until the atonement death is a realised fact is an intrusion, an anachronism.

2. First in *order of consequence*: the worshipper must *substitute a victim's life*. Or he himself must die! Shielded from death by substitution, he may then seek God by propitiatory ritual or reconciliatory worship.

3. *Calvary* was thus the consummation of all types: *Death for sin* making possible man's approach to God.

III. *Offerings to God must always be* THE CHOICEST IN OUR POWER TO PRESENT.

1. *Vast variety* was allowed and ordained in the sacrificial offerings. God permits and approves our various gifts; every one bringing his distinctive offering; every life presenting its special and peculiar quality. Considerable freedom in choice is granted.

2. Yet the invariable law rules—*God must have the finest, the very best*. The vital parts, the choicest of the inwards of the victim were claimed for Him (vv. 3-5).

3. *Each worshipper has to bring something of peculiar preciousness* to God, something *additional to atonement*. Yes; beyond Christ's death, God asks the *very choicest qualities of the life* of all who seek Him. [See Addenda, p. 100, *Offerings for God*.]

IV. ABSOLUTE CONSECRATION MARKED WHATEVER WAS PRESENTED TO THE LORD. "It is most holy."

1. There might be *no taking back* that which had been offered. Think on Ananias and Sapphira.

2. *No one might share* that which "pertained unto the Lord." [Comp. v. 20.]

Hence: once dedicated to the Lord we are *His absolutely and always*. And whatever is dedicated to the Lord none may partake with Him—it is *His only*.

Topic: THE SACRIFICE OF PEACE OFFERING (Vv. 11-18).

“And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he shall offer unto the Lord,” etc.

In the ritual of the Hebrews there were three great classes of offerings: the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the peace offering. The meat and drink offerings were secondary, and usually were offered in connection with other sacrifices.

The burnt offering and the peace offering were *known before the giving of the law*. The sin offering was instituted in connection with the law, as made necessary by it.

The law of the peace offering is *given last* in publication of the sacrificial arrangements, as if to declare that it naturally follows the others as a sacrifice of *completeness* (as expressive of restored fellowship between God and man); and also that *every view of Christ is gathered into it*.

I. *The peace offering is a SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING.*

Three forms of it are specified:

(1) The offering of thanksgiving, *i.e.*, for some special blessing.

(2) The vow, the fulfilment of a promise to God.

(3) The voluntary offering made from a *principle* of gratitude, when, with no special occasion, the worshipper *called* upon his soul and all within him to bless and praise God's holy name.

It was a peace offering, a *national thanksgiving*, which Solomon made at the dedication of the temple. It is this sacrifice so frequently referred to in the Psalms.

In connection with the *Passover celebration* there were two peace offerings: the former of these is *continued in the Pascal supper*, which is a sacrifice of peace offering, a feast of thanksgiving for God's greatest gift to men, a service by the Church to be joyously observed. At the *sacramental table* we should (1) *thank God for all special exhibition of Divine goodness*; (2) *should joyfully fulfil our promises to Him*, those sacred covenants into which, in trial or difficulty, we have entered with Him; (3) *should make our voluntary offerings*, in view of the *constant mercies of God*, the daily and hourly grace; not the freshet water in the stream of Divine providence, but the constant flow from the inexhaustible “upper springs.” How well do these befit all our approaches to God, how well, of all places, do they befit the sacrifice of the Communion!

II. *The peace offering is a SACRIFICE OF FELLOWSHIP.*

This idea lies at its centre. The peculiar feature of it was the sacrificial meal; the *priests shared* in what was offered; the *offerer* also partook; the offering was presented to God, and part thereof consumed, *as if by Him*, upon His altar.

1. It was an act of *communion with God*. He gives us back a portion from the altar. Christ is our sacrifice. At the Communion we partake of the Paschal Lamb. God gives us His flesh to eat, His blood to drink. When we came home as returning prodigals the Father set the table *for* us, and sat down *with* us: “Let us eat and be merry,” He said. At the Communion Christ says, “Let us eat; let us drink.” He sits at the table with us.

2. So also the sacred meal was an act of *mutual communion*. It was a social meal: the priest, the worshipper, his family, and other friends shared with him. So was it in the peace offering of the Passover; so in Solomon's great feast of dedication; so it is at the Communion table. We partake of Christ *together*. Holy fellowship, of loftiest, tenderest experience.

What a beautiful *relation of Christian to fellow Christian* is here exhibited. How the fact of our having sat at Christ's table together, partaken of the Lamb

of God, commits us to purest brotherly love, most free from all self-seeking, alienation, suspicion, bitterness; charges us, "Ye are members one of another."

How much is meant when we are exhorted to "*be at peace among yourselves.*" It is to be in fellowship in the sacrament, in offering together our offering of peace, partaking together our joyous supper at which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost unite with us. Is true communion anything less than this?

III. *The basis of communion in the peace offering is SACRIFICE: and, in the sacrifice, THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD.*

The shedding of blood in this particular sacrifice does not represent, as in the sin offering, the act of atoning for sin. 1. *The bleeding Christ, as our Peace Offering, is not our Sin Bearer.* But His blood in this offering also declares that an atonement has been made, and that the *sole ground of fellowship* with God is *in the reconciling blood* of the Lamb. "But now in Christ Jesus," etc. (Eph. ii. 13, 14).

2. *We follow our sin offering with the peace offering of the sacrament, and we constantly renew our sacrament to express our joy in redemption, and our recognition of the sole ground of it, the blood of the Redeemer.* The sacrament is only an act of communion with him whose sins have been washed away in the "fountain filled with blood." We must make our peace offering on the basis of a previous sin offering of atonement for our soul.

3. *Communion with God is impossible, on any natural basis, without the blood of Christ.* You speak of enjoying communion with God and with good people; is it in the blood of the Son of God? Certain tribes in Africa have a custom which they call *blood-brotherhood*, the most sacred of all relationships. By the mutual transference from the veins of each to the other of their blood, two become in the most binding and inevitable manner brothers. Ours is a *blood-brotherhood*, fellow Christians; only with us the seal of the covenant is the blood of Christ.

IV. *The peace offering REQUIRES HOLINESS IN THE WORSHIPPER.*

This fact is expressed in the provision that "*unleavened bread*" should be offered as a part of the sacrifice. Yeast or leaven was a symbol of corruption. The absence of leaven suggested the absence, therefore the *removal*, of sin.

If *in your heart* there is a *preference for sin* let it concern you. Ask yourself, how can this be, if you are a new man. [See Addenda, p. 100, *True Worship.*]

V. *In the peace offering THE SINFULNESS OF A NATURE PARTIALLY SANCTIFIED is confessed.*

With the offering of unleavened bread *one of leavened bread* was also to be made. This was not a part of the sacrifice, but a meat offering accompanying the sacrifice. It is particularly stated that the bread was leavened; *i.e.*, the principle of corruption was within, and working in it.

Since our conversion we are not sinners as before; but *sin is in us*. We cannot make God an absolutely holy offering.

Some claim that they have no sin. They are deceived. "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We need cry to God with pangs of conscience ever keener:

"Break off the yoke of inbred sin
And fully set my spirit free."

VI. *In the peace offering THE WORSHIPPER WAS TO KEEP NEAR THE SACRIFICE.*

1. This is suggested in the regulation that the offering was to be "eaten the same day." If the offerer had been allowed to keep the offering over day after day he would be tempted to make his communion meal off unwholesome meat, less than the freshest and best. Do not let the sacrifice be abandoned, allowed to suffer neglect. Keep near God. Renew your sacrifice daily. Think not you can live on past devotions—of yesterday, of last Sabbath.

2. We tend to make religion consist of other elements *to the exclusion of sacrifices*. We conceal from ourselves, in attention to externals, that the life of religion is devotion, and that the life of devotion is the element of sacrifice. The early Church kept near the Sacrifice. They *communed daily*. The freshest offering is best. The near place is the place of fellowship; keep near Christ.

3. The suggestions of the peace offering are most practical for any one who seeks to live close to God.

(a) It is the *complete* offering: expressing the idea of the burnt offering, *entire consecration*; of the sin and trespass offerings, *atonement for sin*; and it expresses its own characteristic idea, *the joyous communion* of the soul with God and all saints.

(b) It suggests all *the possible relations of Christ to the soul* which sacrifice can embody. Keep we Christ ever before us in all His offices.

(c) Daily we should remember that *the condition of daily communion is a daily offering*.

Whoever so approaches God, Christ is his peace. However far away sometime, daily he is now brought nigh by the blood of Christ, daily he finds the middle wall of partition broken down, and the way into the holiest place opened. —*Rev. Geo. R. Leavitt*. [Compare Homilies on the Peace Offering, pp. 30-37 *infra*]

Topic: THE BELIEVER'S PEACE AND PORTION (Vv. 29-31).

(1) There is nothing that men more require in their natural and restless condition than *peace*, a composed and assured state of mind. The need is, however, to be met; the amplest provision has been made for its being met; and we have only to appropriate to enjoy it. (2) Yet there are but *few who avail themselves of the provision*. Instead of being restful, men are disquieted; dissatisfied instead of contented; apprehensive instead of assured. A broad gulf separates them from the Centre of their being, and from all that is serene and satisfying.

I. TO HAVE GOD IS TO HAVE PEACE: for He is the God of peace; especially as revealed and given us in Christ. But what is given may be enjoyed, as what is offered may be received. Then let the gift be accepted, and the peace you desire will "keep your heart and mind," and this in all circumstances. The winds of adversity may smite you, and the waters of affliction overwhelm you; but as God is greater than these, He keeps in the perfectness of peace the minds that are stayed upon Him.

II. Such peace is FOUND IN CHRIST ALONE; not in anything *done* by Him, or *given* by Him, but in His personal indwelling. The apostle's declaration is, that "He is our peace" (Ephes. ii. 14). [See Addenda, p. 100, *Sacred Peace*.]

The *knowledge* of Him will illuminate, and the *faith* of Him will impart security; but you must *have Himself* to have the portion that will satisfy, and the peace you need.

III. But not only is Christ our peace, but from being the ATONER, OUR PEACE OFFERING, He gives Himself *to God* an offering and a sweet smelling savour, and then *to us* who trust in Him for deliverance and satisfaction.

The ancient Jewish sacrifice of the peace offering illustrates this. (1) The *material* of which it consisted was either a bullock, heifer, lamb, or goat; but in all cases it was to be "without blemish." God is entitled to the best, and will receive nothing less. Yet how often is less than what He asks offered Him! That they who so act by Him should have few answers to their prayers, and little satisfaction in their religion, can be wondered at by no one.

(2) Peace offerings were offered by persons who, *having obtained forgiveness of sins, and given themselves to God*, were at peace with Him. Friendship with God was the principal idea represented therein.

(3) Only a *part* of the peace offering was given to God ; but that was the *best*, the part to which He was entitled, and which He claimed. And it was accepted, as was shown by its consumption by fire. Offer Him your best, and though in itself small and poor, He will receive it, and make liberal acknowledgement of His approval of it.

(4) The Israelite was not at liberty to lay the fat of his offering *at random*, any way, or any where, on the altar. He had to lay it "*upon the sacrifice* that was upon the wood on the altar fire." But that sacrifice was the lamb of the daily offering, which typified atonement in its fulness. There, God's portion of the peace offering was laid, and accepted according to the value of that on which it was offered.

(5) *Apart from Christ nothing is acceptable to Him.* What you bring to Him may be *your best*, that which He asks for, and what is in *itself valuable* ; but unless offered on the ground of atonement it is not received by Him.

(6) But that is the ground *within everyone's reach*, and on which everything that is offered to God may be presented. There is no one by whom the name of Jesus may not be used as a plea, and His sacrifice urged as a reason for acceptance.

IV. The peace offering expressed the thought of COMMUNION AND SATISFACTION. It supplied God with a portion, and man also. It furnished a table at which both met, and where they had fellowship with one another. God fed on the fat, and man on the shoulder and breast (v. 31) ; and both were satisfied.

(1) But we have *Christ* here ; and we know what *the Father ever found in Him* ; with what pleasure He ever regarded Him, in His righteousness of walk, perfection of obedience, and beauty of character. God was supremely pleased with all that Jesus was and did, as the *representative of Himself to men*, and the *ideal Man to the world*, the indicator of holiness and the honourer of the law. Christ was, and is still, His well-beloved and His joy.

(2) But not God alone fed on the peace offering, *man did that also* ; he ate of the breast and the shoulder. In the anti-type these typified *love and strength*. These, believer, are *your portion in Christ*. You have His heart of love and His shoulder of might—His unchanging affection and His all-sustaining power. Enfolded in His embrace and enthroned on His shoulder of strength, you occupy a position where evil cannot harm you, nor want remain unmet.

V. *No Israelite who was ceremonially UNCLEAN was permitted to partake of the peace offering*, or share with God in the provision it supplied. And without holiness no man is now allowed to see God. But provision is made both for man's expiation and for his sanctifying from all impurity. The cross that separates from the guilt of sin also separates from its defilement. Christ is thus Sanctifier as well as Justifier. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people" (Tit. ii. 14).

Thus beautified with His salvation, you will find a place in His banqueting house of love, a guest at the Lord's table, and satisfied with the food of which you partake (John vi. 57, 55, 35).

Are you *satisfied with Christ* ? Does He appease all your yearnings, fulfil your every desire, give you rest, and prove your peace ? "My beloved is mine, and I am His" (Song of Sol. ii. 16). His resources are inexhaustible, His communications are continuous, and His glory is divine.—Arranged from "*The Gospel in Leviticus*," by James Fleming, D.D.

Topic : THE LAW OF THE PEACE OFFERING (Vv. 11-35).

A halo of gladness surrounds this sacrifice. Persons grateful for deliverances wrought and mercies received, desirous of paying vows previously made, or pledging themselves voluntarily to some new obligation, were to offer before the Lord their sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise. In this law we see :

I. THAT PEACE FOLLOWS FORGIVENESS.

The expiatory sacrifices removed guilt, which is the only barrier that can exist between God and man. The peace offering admitted man into the reconciled presence of God. The offerer came not as a culprit seeking pardon, but as a forgiven child drawing near to a loving Father. Pardon is the door into the chamber of Peace. So, in the Gospel, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Peace is the Divine legacy Christ has left to all who come to Him for rest from the burden of the ceremonial law, and guilt of sin.

II. THAT RESTORATION FOLLOWS PEACE.

In presenting the peace offerings, and feasting on the same, the worshippers would feel they were admitted into the family of God. They sat in His banqueting house, and His banner over them was love. The priests and people joined with the Lord in the divinely appointed eucharistic feast. This privilege is taught in the parable of the Prodigal Son. It would not have been enough for him to be pardoned for his rebellion and sin, he needed restoration to his father's house and favour. Christ is our peace, He has broken down the middle wall of partition, and made us one with God.

III. THAT GRATITUDE FOLLOWS RESTORATION.

The pardoned and restored worshipper would be constrained to render to the Lord the glory due to His name. Brought into a right relationship with God, there would be the expression of right feelings towards Him. The offering waved to and fro, and heaved toward heaven, would denote the offerer's gratitude to Jehovah; recognising Him as the Proprietor of all things, and as worthy of the warmest and strongest love. The gratitude was—

(a) *Prompt*. The offering was to be made at once, none of the things provided were to be kept until the third day, all to be partaken of while memory of the blessings acknowledged was fresh.

(b) *Large-hearted*. The priests and people were to invite their families to join them in the feast, and to eat unsparingly.

(c) *Perpetual*. The statute was never to be repealed while the economy continued. The people were under obligation to be thankful, and they knew how their thankfulness might be acceptably expressed. The injunction of the Gospel is "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

IV. THAT DEVOTION FOLLOWS GRATITUDE.

The waving of the breast, the heaving of the shoulder, symbolised *consecration of strength, and affection to the Lord*. Everything offered was to be *clean*, and even the inward parts, obviously teaching the necessity of moral purity in character of those who presented the offerings. Those who dared to transgress by omitting the directions, or were in any way hypocritical, exposed themselves to the penalty of *excommunication*, as well as to severe reproof.

(a) The peace offering was partaken of in *tents* of the people. Religion is for the tent as well as the altar, for the *home* as well as the *sanctuary*. Christ expects our service to spring from love, not from fear; from gratitude to Him for what He has done for us. "We love Him, because He first loved us."—*F. W. Brown*.

Topic: RECAPITULATION OF SACRIFICIAL RITUAL (Vv. 35-38).

Here the directions respecting sacrifices are solemnly emphasised: "This is the portion," etc. Offerings and the priesthood were inseparably connected; when, and in the fulness of time, the offerings ceased, the priesthood ended. All priestly assumption under the Christian dispensation is out of place *chronologically*, and presumptuous *religiously*. Israel, by the Mosaic economy, was to

become the repository of the Word of God, and the reflector of His glory. The offerings taught that man is a guilty sinner in the sight of God, that his sinfulness separates him from God, that removal of sin restores man to God. The Jewish economy was perfectly unique; the Hebrew nation stood out in distinct relief among surrounding idolatrous nations. In this recapitulation of the Levitical ritual we are taught—

I. THAT GOD DOES NOT ENJOIN OBEDIENCE UPON MAN WITHOUT AT THE SAME TIME FURNISHING DIRECTIONS FOR RENDERING IT.

Had directions been given that certain offerings were to be presented, and no specifications added as to how they were to be offered, the people would have been in constant uncertainty whether or not they were doing the thing that was required. As it was, the priests and people entered upon their religious observances with a full knowledge of their duties and how to discharge them. In the Gospel we are told what God requires of us under the Christian dispensation. Christ has taught us in His royal law what all the law and the prophets taught. In our worship we may observe and present all that the offerings of the Levitical economy signified. We may receive, in answer to believing prayer, the influences of the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to guide us into all truth, and to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us.

II. THAT GOD DOES NOT PRESENT ALTERNATIVES TO MAN WHEN HE FURNISHES DIRECTIONS FOR OBEDIENCE.

The laws of the offerings were as emphatic as they were clear; there was no margin left for human invention, no zone of uncertainty about the things to be presented. In some offerings there were gradations, but it was in specified things; the offerer was to bring no substitute for what was divinely ordained. This exclusiveness would give assurance to the offerer that what he presented God would accept, and would prevent oscillation between rival claims. The straight line of the law was laid down, and clearly indicating finger-posts set up; the commands were unmistakable, "This is the way, walk ye in it." So under the Gospel we have no alternatives in the way of salvation. "No other name given," etc. The Christian religion excludes all others.

III. THAT GOD DOES NOT WITHHOLD FROM MAN INDUCEMENTS TO RENDER OBEDIENCE TO DIVINE COMMANDS.

The promulgation of the law from Sinai, and the enunciation of the ritual from the tabernacle, were associated with the most solemn sanctions. The Hebrews could have no reasonable doubt about the *Divine origin* and *binding obligation* of those enactments. With equal solemnity our duties toward the Gospel have been inculcated. Not from Sinai, but from the Mount of Beatitudes; not from Moses, but from Christ. Evidences of the Messiahship of Christ, of the supremacy of His claims, of the truth of His religion, are many and conclusive. His life was public, His miracles were not done in a corner. "He that despised Moses' law died," etc. (Heb. x. 28, 29). In the Gospel, as on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elias meet to bear witness to His character and mission; all the rays of spread light that gave guidance to the Hebrews centre in the cross, focus on Calvary. "Before Messiah's coming the ceremonies of the Jewish economy were as the swaddling bands in which He was wrapped, but after it they resembled the linen clothes which He left in the grave. Christ was in the one, but not in the other."—*F. W. B.*

Topic: SURVEY OF THE ENTIRE ALTAR SACRIFICES; WITH THEIR PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCES (Vv. 37, 8).

"This is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings," etc.

The offerings set forth Christ. We see in them how man in Christ has made atonement. We look at the sin and trespass offerings and see that the sin of man has been fully borne : at the burnt and meat offerings, and see all God's requirements satisfied. And this is our confidence, that as Christ "for us" has been "without the camp," as "for us" He has been laid on the altar, so truly do we stand in Him, even as He is ; "for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

We are one with Christ. In this view His offering, as our Example, sets before us the model and standard of our self-sacrifice. And, just as Christ's sacrifice for us had varied aspects, as satisfying God, and as satisfying man, and as bearing sin ; so will our sacrifice, in a lower sense, have these same aspects. In this way the typical offerings have an application to Christians. Thus we also are offerers ; "present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. xii. 1). Between Christ's sacrifice and ours there will, of course, be dissimilarities neither few nor small, arising from the fact that He was sinless and we are sinners. Yet the saint will "be made conformable unto His death" (Phil. iii. 10), and his rule in sacrifice will be "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ."

Trace, therefore, how far the various aspects of the offering of the body of Christ may be applicable to those, who, being members of His mystical body, are called to "walk even as He walked."

I. THE BURNT OFFERING. This was man *satisfying* God ; man in Christ *giving himself to God as His portion*. We have seen how far *for us* [comp. pp. 8, 9 *infra*.] this was fulfilled in Christ : we now inquire how far *in us* it may be fulfilled by the Spirit.

The burnt offering stands as a witness how we should "*yield ourselves*" (Rom. vi. 13).

1. As to *its measure*. It was "wholly burnt." No part was withheld from God. Entire self-surrender. It must "cost us something" (2 Sam. xxiv. 24). The burnt offering was *God's claim* : the fulfilment of this required the life of Christ. It will demand our lives—"Thou shalt love the Lord with *all* thine heart, *all* thy soul, *all* thy mind and *all* thy strength."

Our path after Christ must be still a sacrifice. Can we "present our bodies a living sacrifice" without cost, without feeling that sacrifice is still sacrifice ? Christ *felt His sacrifice*.

2. As to *its character*. In the varieties of the burnt sacrifice, of bullock, lamb, and turtle dove, each brought out some distinct particular in the character of our blessed Lord. Would to God that in *active, yet patient service* (as the bullock), in *silent, uncomplaining submission* (as the lamb), in *gentleness and innocence of life* (as the dove), we might be conformed to Him who went before us.

Service, submission, meekness, will *gain no crown for us here* ; nor did they for Christ. We cannot seize greatness, or secure honour in this world, by offering ourselves to God in the character these emblems signify. Christ was despised and rejected of man, as a lamb slain and none to pity. May He give us grace gladly to acquiesce in the likeness.

II. THE MEAT OFFERING. This was Christ *satisfying* MAN ; offering *Himself as man's meat*. In doing this He met man's claim on Him as man. Man had a claim on man ; God had ratified that claim, saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." In the meat offering, Christ met and satisfied this claim, by giving Himself to God as man's portion.

1. For the *measure* of it it is enough to say, the type shows us the whole consumed. Such is our standard.

2. For its *character*, the "bruised corn," the "oil," the "salt," and the "frankincense," are sufficiently explicit.

How far may we be conformed to it ? To answer this question let us look to

other days, and see how men have conformed to it. Time was when the Church, though but "a leavened cake" (Lev. xxiii. 17), was so far filled with the anointing of the Holy Ghost that "the multitude of them which believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither *said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own*. But they had all things common; *neither was there any that lacked*; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, etc., and *distribution was made to every man as he had need*" (Act viii. 31-35). Here was a *meat offering*; and costly; yet not a rare one.

In that day there were living men, who for the Gospel had "lost all things" (Phil. iii. 8), yet were willing to suffer more: "Yea, if I *be poured out* (alluding to the *drink offering* which was an adjunct to the meat offering), on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you" (Phil. iii. 17). See also concerning Onesiphorus, Epaphroditus, Philemon, Phebe.

There is yet a Church. There must yet be offerings; and we hear of sacrifices, but what is their measure, their character? Let each judge himself. But this stands, that just in measure as we are like our Master, just as we accept His words as the rule of our devotion, just so far shall we find our path a sacrifice.

III. THE PEACE OFFERING. This view of the offering shows us the *offerer fed*; for he, with the priest and God, partook of, *i.e.*, found *satisfaction* in, the offering. The peace offering has a fulfilment, not only in Christ, but in His members.

1. Does God find satisfaction in our offerings? The answer is clear: "To do good and to communicate forget not, *for with such sacrifices God is well pleased*" (Heb. xiii. 16). So the offering sent by the Philippians to Paul was "an odour of a sweet smell, *a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God*" (Phil. iv. 18). God puts value on, finds satisfaction in, the offerings of His Church. He "loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix. 7); and as our greatest gift is "to give ourselves" (2 Cor. viii. 5), so the presentation of our bodies as living sacrifices is "acceptable unto the Lord" (Rom. xii. 1).

2. The *priest* also fed in the peace offering. Our Priest finds joy in our offerings, poor though they be; so that even in a cup of cold water and in bread to the hungry He is refreshed and fed. "I was an hungered, and *ye gave Me meat*; I was thirsty and *ye gave Me drink*" (Matt. xxv. 35). Did we but know His joy in seeing us yield ourselves an offering to Him; did we realise His gladness of soul in each work of faith and labour of love in ministering to His saints, we could not give with narrow, grudging, selfish hearts. "Ye did it *unto Me!*"

3. The peace offering fed *the offerer*. And surely we have been strangers to self-sacrifice if we need to be told the joy it imparts to him who sacrifices. Paul says, "Yea if I be sacrificed *I joy and rejoice with you*" (Phil. ii. 17); "*I rejoice in my sufferings for you,*" etc. (Col. i. 24); "I count not my life dear unto me, so that I might finish my course *with joy*" (Acts xx. 24).

The very costliness of our sacrifice increases our joy when we know that He, to whom we offer, rejoices with us.

IV. THE SIN AND TRESPASS OFFERINGS. And first as to the *sin offering*.

1. There is a sense in which *the Christian may bear sin and suffer its judgment in his mortal flesh*. For lack of knowing this, many are sparing that flesh which the cross of Christ was given to crucify. Is there, then, anything to be wrought in us by the Spirit answering to the dying for sin of the sin offering? Yes; Christ's death *in the flesh for sin* is made our example: "Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Pet. iv. 1). The Christian, as having been judged in the person of Christ, and knowing that for him Christ has borne the cross, follows on by that cross to judge and mortify all that he finds in himself still contrary to his Lord. The flesh in him is contrary; the flesh, therefore, must die (Gal. vi. 14; v. 24; Rom. vi. 6).

2. In the trespass offering *restitution was made for wrong*. And the saint in

fellowship with Christ will make restitution; in acts of generosity and kindness to men; and will "add the fifth," going beyond bare justice, in dealing graciously and mercifully with others.

Such is "THE LAW OF THE OFFERINGS." It gives but one view of Christ; yet how much is involved in it both as to our standing and walk in Him. His offering witnesses of *sacrifice even to the cross.* [Comp. *Jukes on the Offerings*]

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER VII.

Vv. 1-10.—*Theme*: THE TRESPASS OFFERING.

This law similar to that of sin offering, with additional directions respecting the blood of the sacrifice, which was to be sprinkled round about the altar. The shedding and sprinkling of so much blood in the worship of God was doubtless intended to impress the worshipper with the *repulsiveness of sin; the enormity of guilt, the absolute necessity of pardon*, in order to acceptance and peace. In this law we see—

I. *God's jealous regard for the strictest order in His service.* The directions given in the ritual were emphatically Divine; He, to whom belong the silver and the gold, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, condescended to give minute directions about slaying a "bullock," "ram," and "pigeon," to teach that no part of His service is beneath His notice, or may be performed carelessly. Everything we do for God is worthy of being done well, or it should not be done at all. Mankind should aim at perfectly doing God's will, as it is done in heaven.

II. *God's generous concern for the temporal wants of His servants.* All the parts of the sacrifice not burnt upon the altar were the perquisite of the priests. The offering not only provided for the spiritual needs of the people, but for the physical requirements of those who had surrendered themselves to the service of the tabernacle. The provision was suitable, liberal, and constant. As the priests with their sons partook of their ample provisions, gratitude to Jehovah and mutual good feeling would be cultivated. No one can serve God for nought. He cares for all His creatures, especially for those who trust Him; "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

We are not under the law but under grace—yet, we are not to conduct our religious services lawlessly. We do not obey because commanded, and from fear, but from *constraint and love.* One of the first questions a true believer will ask, is: "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?" Duties to ourselves, our fellow-men, and God, run parallel with every privilege we enjoy and every blessing we receive. We are saved by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law; but "faith without works is dead."—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 1, 11, 37.—*Theme*: RIGIDITY OF THE LAW. "This is the law," etc.

Reiteration employed to indelibly impress

the statutes upon the minds of priests and people; to show their pressing and transcendent importance. The worshipper would thus be impressed with—

I. THE MAJESTY OF JEHOVAH. He, God over all, exercised in all royal supremacy. From His word there was no appeal.

II. THE PRIVILEGE, AS WELL AS DUTY, OF WORSHIPPING HIM.

They were not to draw near as slaves, but as servants and friends, and obtain the favour of the King of kings.

III. THE NECESSITY OF PREPARATION FOR WORSHIPPING HIM

It would need *personal*, as well as *ceremonial* purity to approach acceptably one so *august* and *holy*.

IV. THE BLESSEDNESS OF OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMANDS.

(a) *By obedience they would bless the Lord.*

(b) *By obedience they would be blessed themselves.*

Carelessness in preparation for service might not only lead to *useless*, but *offensive* worship. The heart needed to be in full accord with the purposes for which the offerings were instituted. Surely obedience to the commands of Christ are as binding as was obedience to the laws of Moses. The ordinances of the Christian religion are the *invariable accompaniments*, as well as the *external badges*, of membership in the Christian Church.—*F. W. B.*

V. 12.—*Theme*: THANKSGIVING. "If he offer it for a thanksgiving."

Even brutes are capable of gratitude. Israel was often rebuked by the prophets for thanklessness, and reminded that the dumb creation put them to shame. Gratitude rises naturally in our hearts towards human benefactors; shall we not be thankful to Him, in whom we live and move and have our being? Concerning thanksgiving, we observe—

I. IT IS UNIVERSALLY OBLIGATORY, for—

(a) *We are dependent creatures,*

(b) *Recipient,*

(c) *Unworthy,*

(d) *Responsible.*

III. IT MAY BE OCCASIONALLY VOLUNTARY. When no particular command calls for it; when no special mercy suggests or prompts it. It may rise out of a full and gladsome heart. It may be adoration for what God is in Himself, and has promised to bestow; as well as for gifts received. The *Giver* is above and

better than His gifts. Let us bless Him, and forget not all His benefits, especially "*His unspeakable gift.*"

III. IT SHOULD BE PRESENTED BECOMINGLY.

(a) *Without delay*, for life is short; duty demands; God deserves; opportunity favours; delay is a slight; we are liable to forget altogether what we postpone.

(b) *With freshness*: nothing deteriorated, or exhausted. Beauty, vigour, sweetness, fragrance, virtue, soundness, all should be laid at His feet, offered at His throne.

(c) *With generosity*: Let us not *withhold*; and having given, let us not *withdraw*; The Lord loves a cheerful, an ungrudging giver.

"Whoso offereth such praise glorifieth God."
—F. W. B.

Vv. 20, 21.—*Theme*: EXCOMMUNICATION.
"That soul shall be cut off from his people."

Precaution against laxity in service, carelessness in offering. Failure to comply *minutely* with directions, would incur Jehovah's righteous displeasure.

I. THE OFFERING WOULD BE REJECTED.

II. THE OFFERER WOULD BE EXCOMMUNICATED.

The strength of the strongest chain is the weakest link, if that breaks, all fails. So, if the offerer omitted one requirement, broke one link in the chain of law, he was guilty of violating the whole. We have *analogies of similar exactness in nature*. There perversions, excesses, shortcomings, violations, miscarriages, etc., entail forfeiture of blessing; indeed, they convert the blessing into a bane. Men are constantly cutting themselves off from good by placing themselves voluntarily under the ban of heaven. Rigid discipline is especially needed in the infancy of the affairs connected with *State, Church, Society, Family*. Law is intended to be a terror to evil doers, and an encouragement to those who do well. Under the Gospel Christ is able to save to the uttermost.—F. W. B.

Vv. 23, 26.—*Theme*: RESERVED THINGS.

"Ye shall eat no manner of fat."

"Ye shall eat no manner of blood."

I. *To beget reverence for God's altar.*

II. *To preserve a sense of the sacredness of life.*

III. *To show that the best and richest things can be claimed righteously by God.*

IV. *To cultivate delicacy of feeling; check gross and savage passions.*

Thus the hearts and minds of men were cultured in the elementary education of the wilderness; preparatory to the higher culture; which after ages would demand and develop.
—F. W. B.

V. 36.—*Theme*: THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.

"Which the Lord commanded to be given unto the children of Israel."

In heathen sacrifices, man is seeking after God; in the Hebrew sacrifices, God was seeking after man. The *fixing of times, places, offerings* for sacrifice, showed that the Lord

was anxious and ready to bless. The things which the law enjoined showed—

I. THE TRANSCENDENT IMPORTANCE OF TRUE RELIGION.

Nature, conscience, convenience, choice were not sufficient. True religion must be revealed. Offerings did not explain the *origin of evil*, but what was more important, *how it might be removed*. That which God has specially revealed, in addition to His revelation in nature, must be specially important for us to know and obey.

II. THE PARAMOUNT CLAIMS OF TRUE RELIGION. The Jewish religion, promulgated from Sinai, put in the forefront of all other claim. Christ commands us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Religion is "the one thing needful."—F. W. B.

Vv. 37, 38.—*Theme*: SUMMARY OF THE OFFERINGS.

The laws given from the tabernacle are an expansion and enforcement of those given from Sinai. They *symbolised* essential spiritual truths for the Hebrew, and *typified* the same for the Christian Church, viz., the necessity of mental, moral, and spiritual purity in drawing near to God. Thus the foundation of true religion was laid for all ages. These laws were a *protest against idolatry; a witness to the sovereignty of Jehovah; a badge of distinction for Israel; a training for further and higher service, and fuller revelation*. Looking at the offerings as a whole they taught—

I. THAT MAN IS A SINNER, AND NEEDS TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIMSELF AS SUCH IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

A sinner by nature; by transgression of Divine law; deserving punishment—death; a sinner absolutely at the mercy of Him against whom the sin had been committed.

II. THAT MAN REQUIRED TO MAKE AN ATONEMENT FOR HIS SIN IN ORDER TO APPROACH GOD ACCEPTABLY.

He must not come to God empty-handed, there must be the divinely appointed gift, the *substitute*, for whose sake, *in some way*, sin should be forgiven. Vicarious sacrifice in harmony with the law of nature.

III. THAT MAN REQUIRED PERSONAL FAITH IN THE ATONEMENT MADE ON HIS BEHALF, TO RENDER IT EFFICACIOUS FOR HIM.

Neither *offering* or *act* of any avail except representing faith and obedience of offerer. The fire that consumed the sacrifice represented the *ascending consecration of the worshipper's spirit*.

IV. THAT MAN REQUIRED COMPLETE CONFORMITY TO GOD'S WILL, AND RESTORATION TO HIS FAVOUR.

The perpetual offering of sacrifices would necessitate constant remembrance of the Divine precepts; the frequent coming to God would keep alive a sense of His presence and sovereignty. Thus the chief end of man would be secured—"To glorify God, and enjoy Him for ever."—F. W. B.

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER VII.

TRUE WORSHIP.

"*Deos placatos pietas efficiet et sanctitas.*"—

CICERO.

[Piety and sanctity will propitiate the gods.]

"*Res sacros non modo manibus attingi, se ne cogitatione quidem violari fas fuit.*"—CICERO.

[Things sacred should not only not be touched with hands, they should not be violated even in thought].

"When once thy foot enters the Church, be bare:

God is more there than thou; for thou art there

Only by His permission. Then beware,
And make thyself all reverence and fear."

—*Geo. Herbert.*

"In the temple every little ornament, even of the mighty structure that crowned the cliffs of Zion, was "holy" to the Lord. Not the great courts and inner shrines and pillared halls merely, but all. Not a carven pomegranate, not a bell, silver or gold, but was "holy." The table and its lamps, with flowers of silver light, tent and staves, fluttering curtains and ascending incense, altar and sacrifice, breast-plate and ephod, mitre and gem-clasped girdle, wreathen chain and jewelled hangings—over all was inscribed *Holy*, while within, in the innermost shrine, where God manifested Himself above the mercy seat, was THE HOLIEST. Thus the utter holiness of that God with whom they had to do was by every detail impressed upon the heart and conscience of ancient Israel."

—*Grosart.*

OFFERINGS TO GOD.

"Just as a thing looks green which is looked at through green glass, or red through a red glass, so is everything most pleasing and acceptable to God the Father which is

offered through His Only Begotten Son."—*F. W. Faber.*

SACRED PEACE.

"Peace is greater than all other treasures, but no philosophy can bestow it: for how can it cleanse from sin? Nor can any works: for how are they able to justify? Descend into whatever mine, shake whatever tree, knock at whatever door in the world thou wilt, the poor world cannot offer it thee. Peace is but one; One only has peace; One only can give it: know ye Him who says: "These things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace"? His name is "the Prince of Peace."

—*Krummacher.*

"As on the Sea of Galilee,

The Christ is whispering 'Peace.'"—*Whittier.*

"Happy the heart that keeps its twilight hour,
And, in the depths of heavenly peace reclined,
Loves to commune with thoughts of tender
power,
Thoughts that ascend, like angels beautiful,
A shining Jacob's ladder of the mind!"

—*Paul H. Hayne.*

"Years ago a Christian friend had experienced a heavy and most unexpected loss, a loss which to most men in his circumstances would have been crushing. The moment the announcement of what had happened was made to him his mind turned to the believer's all-sufficient and never failing portion in God, and the certainty of the unsearchable riches of Christ; and the calm of his spirit continued. The next day was the Sabbath: and he was seen in his place in the sanctuary, joining in worship with the people of God as if nothing of misfortune had overtaken him. It was a regret to him that his means of doing good were diminished, but his own peace of heart remained unbroken."—*Dr. Jas. Fleming.*

CHAPTER VIII.

The Priesthood Initiated and Consecrated.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—Take Aaron and his sons and the garments, etc. All that was to be now done by Moses had previously been specifically enjoined (Exod. xxviii., xxix., xxx.). The office of the priesthood was now to be formally instituted, that office being necessary to the maintenance and performance of the sacrificial system ordained in the preceding chapters. Hitherto, Moses had fulfilled the

priestly functions; from this time he ceases such ministries. It is for him a valediction, for Aaron an inauguration. Thus do sacred ministries become transferred, familiar human forms pass away from the services by which God's people have been aided and blessed; but the work ceases not, for God never fails His Church nor overlooks her needs; while for us in Christ, who has "an unchangeable priesthood," and is Himself "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," an abiding provision is assured. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

Vv. 6-9.—Washed them with water, etc. Washing is the first stage in the process of priestly consecration. As cleansing from all unrighteousness is inevitable ere we can enter spiritual privilege. "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart" (Psa. xxiv. 3, 4). The priestly washing was by bathing, the whole body being thus cleansed; for entire purifying was required and was symbolised. And "he that is bathed . . . is clean every whit" (John xiii. 10). Only they who have experienced this "cleansing from all sin" can stand within God's sanctuary; but we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. x. 19-22).

Vv. 7, 8.—Put upon him the coat, and girded him, etc. The "coat" was a close-fitting garment of white linen, covering the entire body; this was bound about the body with a linen "girdle," or sash, embroidered with figures, and fringed at its ends; over this was placed the "robe," called "the robe of the ephod" (Exod. xxviii. 31-35), which was all blue, and was woven without seam; above the robe was the "ephod," which fell one part over the front, and another part over the back of the shoulders; this compound and ornate upper garment was wrought of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, interwoven with threads of gold. The "curious girdle of the ephod" was of the same costly material as the ephod itself, and fastened the ephod below. The "breastplate" was a square pocket, suspended by gold chains from the onyx and gold epaulettes on the shoulders; around its four sides were set twelve precious stones, each stone bearing the name of a tribe of Israel. Within this breast-pocket—open on the upper side to receive them—were placed "the Urim and the Thummim," the oracular stones by which the priest learned the mind of God on questions of judgment. Then the head-dress or turban of linen, the "mitre," was placed on his head, across which was tied "the golden plate, the holy crown," bearing the awful inscription, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD."

This solemn robing suggested—

1. The installation of the high priest in his pontifical office, as the supreme minister in the sanctuary, and as God's representative amid Israel.

2. His personal adornment with righteousness and sanctity, the qualities which alone fitted man to dwell in near communion with the Lord.

3. The mediatorial glory and beauty of the coming Messiah, whose graces all these symbolic adornments typified and figured.

Surely if Jehovah attached to such minute symbols so great significance and importance, He must value the realities of which they were but signs: *the mediatorial graces of Jesus*, with which God was "well pleased"; *the sanctities of a priestly character* in us who, in the Gospel, have become "priests unto God"; and the *beauties of the perfect righteousness* with which all believers in Christ are adorned.

Vv. 10-13.—Anointed the tabernacle, etc., including the ark of the covenant, the altar of incense, the candlestick, the table of shewbread, the veil, and sacred utensils. Then the anointing oil was "seven times" sprinkled upon "the altar and its vessels," and "the laver and its foot." By their anointing they were "sanctified" for sanctuary uses, and as symbols of gracious truths to worshippers.

He poured the anointing oil upon Aaron's head: not sprinkled it, but in such quantity as that it "ran down unto the beard, and went down to the skirts of his garments" (Psa. cxxxiii. 2), suggesting the plenteous grace of the Holy Spirit which covered over the entire manhood of God's consecrated priest, "baptised with the Holy Ghost," "endued with power from on high," "receiving an unction from the Holy One." The Spirit was "given without measure" to Christ, and we may also be richly anointed with His energy and grace. But they who are so "anointed" are consecrated to a holy ministry, sealed for a sacred life on earth.

Vv. 14-17.—The bullock for the sin offering. For the *first time* in all history, as a new incident on earth, full of interest to all the hosts of heaven, instinct with significance for all humanity, suggesting new conceptions of man's guilt and Christ's atonement—the sin offering was now offered. Jehovah Himself must have viewed with peculiar regard the *first sin offering ever presented*. Calvary witnessed the *last* ever to be offered! "There remaineth no more offering for sin." The order of the sacrifices is noticeable:

1. The *sin offering* first: for substitution is the basis of the sinner's justification with God.

2. Next the *burnt offering* (v. 18): as declaring complete self-surrender of life, in its highest qualities and complete devotion, unto God.

3. Then the *ram of consecration* (v. 22), which was the thank offering and the peace offering: representing the grateful joy of those whom God honoured with the privileges of priesthood, and as initiating a career of festal fellowship with the Lord.

V. 23.—The tip of Aaron's right ear, etc. The "right" member conveys the meaning of entirety, thoroughness, fulness, and strength. Every sense and every member, all avenues of feeling, and all life's active powers, were to be used for God. See here the standard of life's dedication for all Christians, who owe to their Lord so great a debt of love as should constrain them to most fervent and absolute devotion.

V. 30.—Anointing oil, and of the blood. The Spirit's grace mingles with the Redeemer's virtue: both are imperative. Salvation must be sealed with sanctification, and the good work of renewing is in no case complete where there is not the blended application of both the "blood" and the "anointing oil."

Vv. 33-36.—Seven days shall he consecrate you. Within the sacred enclosure they were to tarry during that period. Consecration must not be hurried. Zeal to be engaged in Christian work may lead to rash and reckless haste; let the young convert pause amid the Divine sanctities, and get his soul filled with reverence, nourished into strength, enriched with grace, such as can only be secured by "*waiting on the Lord*." Ardour is good, alacrity is often needed, for opportunities summon us to activity; but the young life needs first the sacred fostering, and a "quiet resting place," or ever it is equipped for the duties of the Christian priesthood. Moreover, God asks for Himself this consecration interlude. Each day of the seven these priests were to "*fill the hand*," i.e., were to repeat the same sacrifices. God must be served first, then man. Dwell much and restfully "in the secret places of the Most High," give Him leisurely your homage, wait on Him in meditation and prayer; you will be more endowed for gracious ministries to men by such solemn seclusion with the Lord. "Wait on the Lord and He shall strengthen your heart; *wait, I say, on the Lord*."

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: PRIESTS versus PRIESTISM (Vv. 1-5).

So great have been the abuses of the priestly office, so enormous its pretensions, so offensive its intrusions, that it requires an effort of thought in order to entertain, in these times, pleasant and grateful ideas respecting "priests" and the functions of priesthood. The modern assumptions of priestism are so painful an outrage on Christianity as to start the intelligent mind into revulsion and move the devout heart to grief. Yet—

I. PRIESTS MINISTERED IN ISRAEL WITH THE HIGH SANCTION OF GOD. He—

1. *Created the office*, and defined its solemn functions, which were of the loftiest character.

2. *Invested the person* of the priest with splendour, majesty, and beauty, to command admiration and awe.

3. *Determined the mediatorial intervention* of the priest between man and God; set one man in this august and solemn supremacy among his fellows.

4. *Refused any other than the priest* to come direct to His altar and stand in His most holy presence.

II. THE PRIESTHOOD WAS A PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENT ANTICIPATORY OF CHRIST'S GLORIOUS OFFICES.

1. In the personal excellence and piety of individual priests, the faultless being always chosen, Christ's *perfect humanity* was foreshadowed.

2. In the splendid attire with which the priests were adorned, *Christ's majestic attributes* and *Divine qualities* were represented.

3. In the imposing ministries before and within the veil, Christ's offices as *atoning and mediating Priest* were portrayed.

4. In the sacred and exclusive privileges the priests enjoyed, *Christ's entire acceptableness* and *God's great delight in Him* were impressively and constantly intimated.

III. CHRISTIAN MINISTERS INHERIT MANY OF THE MOST AUGUST AND RESPONSIBLE SPIRITUAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

1. They have no priestly calling, yet are as distinctly commissioned and *divinely consecrated to their work*.

2. Their solemn trust places them in highest ministries and responsibilities as *mediators between God and human souls*.

3. The Christian Church is *commanded to maintain* them in their ministry and *esteem them very highly* in the discharge of their sacred commission.

4. As bishops and shepherds of Christ's flock, they are put in *trust with the souls of their people*; "they watch for souls."

IV. MODERN PRIESTLINESS PERVERTS AND PROSTITUTES THE SACRED OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. Its *offensive assumption of spiritual supremacy* is in defiance of Christ's law of equality and brotherhood among believers.

2. Its *officious intrusion between God and men* is an affront to the unfettered liberty and right of every one to seek God for himself, and is an infringement upon the mediatorship of Jesus which always avails for all.

3. Its *daring pretensions of altar ministries* is a perversion of New Covenant doctrines; neither altar nor sacrificial rites remaining now within the Church.

4. Its *appalling misleading of seduced souls*, who rest on such beguiling priestliness for spiritual safety, instead of wholly trusting Christ, is sufficient to fill Christian hearts with indignation and to cover the very name of "priest" with anathemas. [See Addenda, p. 114, *Priestism*.]

(a) *There is now no priest but Jesus Christ.*

(b) His ministers falsify their trust if they thrust the shadow of a human presence between the soul and Jesus.

(c) The Christian Church will rightly value the ministry as it elevates Christ's offices before men.

(d) Every believer, though not called to the ministry of the Word, is entrusted with priestly functions, as a pleader with men for God, a pleader with God for men.

Topic : THE CALLING OF THE PRIESTS (Vv. 1-13).

Notable in this record is the *exclusive agency of God* in placing on His people the blessings of redemption. It recounts the consecration of His priests, those whom He was pleased to call into His sanctuary to *know* and *serve* Him : a calling now granted to all the family of faith. Former chapters of Leviticus have revealed the arrangements of God's mercy in providing the satisfaction due to His own holy government, and in securing the pardon and acceptance of His people. But pardon and acceptance are not the only blessings God has provided through redemption.

I. THE PRIESTLY CALLING.

To what does God summon and set them apart ?

1. *Intimate access* with Him ; coming into special nearness to His presence, His altar, and His holy place.

2. *Fullest knowledge* of Him ; learning His secret will, enjoying freest communion with Him.

3. *Holy service* for Him. "His servants shall serve Him."

II. A CALLING OF HIGHEST HAPPINESS AND PRIVILEGE.

1. The fact of His being what He is as God, perfect in all goodness and in all blessing, must necessarily make *admission into His service, joy* ; and exclusion from it, woe. [See Addenda, p. 114, *Sanctity*.]

2. What higher *honour* than to be employed in carrying out the designs of One who is perfect in wisdom and love, and all powerful likewise, so as surely to accomplish the contemplated end.

III. A CALLING HARMONIOUS WITH A CHRISTIAN'S SACRED INSTINCTS AND ENERGIES.

1. God's saints have energies, imperishable energies which, *if unoccupied, must cause them unceasing sorrow* ; and how could they be *fitly occupied* except in His service ?

2. But they are not to be unoccupied. He who gave those energies *intends that they should be fully occupied*, and that not in distance from Himself, but *in His own near presence*.

IV. A CALLING INTO A WONDROUS LIFE.

Israel was now in the midst of a waste and howling wilderness ; and God might have assigned to their priests that they should serve and commune with Him amid those wild and ungenial scenes.

1. But they were called to *enter beneath the shelter of the tabernacle of God*. Its golden boards enclosed them, its mystic curtains covered them. They were shut in with God, encompassed within the sacred and hallowing seclusion.

2. Amid what *solemn experiences they daily dwelt* ! There they found *incense* ascending for them, and shrouding them with its fragrance ; *light* shining for them and encompassing them with its brightness ; and *bread* prepared for them as food, even on the table of God. There, in the presence of God's own goodness, they learned His lessons, and when they went back into the wilderness, they never again entered *it as their home*, but as those whose *dwelling place was with God* in the peace of redemption. They might go in or they might go out ; but still they were His priests always. [Comp. B. W. Newton's *Thoughts on Leviticus*.]

Topic: THE MINISTRY OF THE PRIESTHOOD (Vv. 1, 2).

I. DEFINITION OF THE PRIESTHOOD. *A priest is one who mediates between God and man.* He presents the gifts and sacrifices which the worshipper may not, or does not, or dare not offer in person; and brings back from God the assurance of acceptance and favour.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE. Among the Hebrews, as among kindred nations, priestly functions were discharged by the head of each family till the institution of the covenant at Sinai. This, by consecrating one family as priests for the nation, and requiring all sacrifices to be presented in front of the tabernacle of meeting, put an end to the ancient practice.

The transition from the *family* priesthood to the Levitical—the *national* priesthood was indicated when Moses was entrusted to conduct the sacrifices of Israel, as the mediator of the covenant; and the closing of the old régime was marked by his choosing young men as his assistants in the offering of national sacrifices. As the mediator of the covenant, divinely authorised to communicate God's messages to the people, and the people's messages to God, Moses would be the first person thought of for the priesthood. But his hands being already sufficiently occupied, the office was conferred on his brother, as the person nearest to him in consanguinity and harmony of feeling.

III. THE UNIFYING VALUE OF A NATIONAL PRIESTHOOD. It would help to consolidate the families which had before worshipped at different altars. The union of all Hebrews, of whatever parentage, in the worship of the tabernacle, was an important element of national life. The families were henceforth, at least so far as concerns the rites of religion, united together as a nation; and the family of Aaron were, by the appointment of Jehovah, mediators between the nation and Himself.

IV. SELECTION OF THE AARONIC FAMILY. The nation being constituted especially Jehovah's, by virtue of their election as His covenant people, the family of Aaron were elected to a corresponding eminence above their kindred; not only belonging to Jehovah as all Hebrews did, but being in a peculiar sense His for the service of mediation. As the entire nation was holy, or separate from other nations, so this family was called to be holy, for the office and ministrations of the priesthood. As this separation of the Hebrews from the rest of mankind did not begin with any act of their own, but they were chosen by the Lord to be His; so Aaron and his sons did not take the prerogatives of the priesthood spontaneously, but were called to the office by the election of Jehovah Himself.

V. BENEFICENCE OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE. The people were not qualified to draw near to God in person; and though, by virtue of their election, they were entitled to dwell in His habitation, their consciousness of sin made them afraid of Him; therefore, in condescension to their inability to understand the greatness of His love, He provided a class of persons who, as representatives of His elect, might in their stead enter the tabernacle. To draw near to God, to be a priest, are equivalent expressions. Aaron drew near in behalf of those who were elected to have spiritual communion with God, but were not yet delivered from the bondage of fear; and his admission within the habitation signified that they were entitled to a corresponding access in spirit, that they were called "a kingdom of priests" for the reason that they might thus draw near God in spiritual fellowship. By his office he was qualified to do outwardly and symbolically what all might do in spirit and in truth.

VI. EXPIATORY MINISTRY OF THE PRIESTHOOD. Before Aaron could enter the holy habitation in behalf of the people, he must officiate at the altar of sacrifice, and expiate sin; for his constituents were sinful, and the representation of their

approach to God as members of His household must be preceded by signs that their sin was taken away; otherwise it might be inferred that Jehovah was indifferent whether His people were holy or unholy. The Hebrew priesthood therefore symbolised in general the expiation of sin, and the admission to filial intercourse with God effected thereby. [Comp. Atwater, *Sacred Tabernacle*].

Topic: QUALIFICATIONS AND MINISTRIES OF GOD'S PRIESTS (Vv. 6-30).

All now done to the tabernacle priests symbolises the experiences of the sanctified soul.

I. CONSECRATION WHOLLY THE WORK OF ANOTHER.

Moses, acting for and representing God, *did everything* needful to complete their consecration; whilst they, the *subjects of consecration*, stood as passive recipients of blessings which were placed upon them by another's hand. Moses washed them, clothed them, anointed them, slew the appointed sacrifices, sprinkled the blood, etc. He ceased not from his ministrations until he left them at the door of the tabernacle *fully consecrated* as the priests of God.

A lesson this to those who *desire to be established in grace*. We have not properly learned the typical lesson if we trust to either our power of appreciation, or the applicatory power of faith. The garments brought to us and placed upon us by God become the spring of joy, steadfast and abiding, only as we realise that our possession of them rests not in powers connected with the creature, but in God alone.

II. PERFECT CLEANNESSE THE INITIAL REQUIREMENT.

Their cleansing was received *as a gift from God*. They washed not themselves, the hand of another did it. Even as Jesus says to His disciples, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me" (Jno. xiii. 8).

III. INVESTITURE IN HOLY ATTIRE.

To Moses it had before been said, "Thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and beauty." Those garments had been made.

1. All the adornments of grace have been *prepared for us*; wait in readiness for us.

2. *A moment of intensest joy to Moses* when he brought forth those prepared garments for adornment. Nor less to Christ when He clothes the soul "with the garments of salvation."

3. *Attire symbolic of sacred qualities*. They were of blue, purple, scarlet, fine-twined linen, with connecting chains and ouches or settings of gold, indicating:

(a) Heavenliness of character (typified by the *blue*).

(b) Purity (typified by the *white* linen).

(c) Official dignity (typified by the *scarlet and purple*).

(d) Divine power of sustaining others (typified by the chains and ouches of *gold*); gold being used in the tabernacle as a symbol of Deity.

IV. ADORNED WITH THE CROWN OF HOLINESS.

On his head was placed "the holy crown, the golden plate."

(a) A "crown" is the symbol of *kingship*; it declares the *royalty of consecrated souls*, "kings unto God."

(b) *Holiness* inscribed on the crown: it declares that the *highest dignity of man* is *moral rectitude, spiritual sanctity*.

That plate bore the inscription "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." It implied that—

1. *The vindication of that "holiness"* was the avowed object of his priestly service.

2. Bearing that inscription on his brow among the people, during his priestly ministries, asserted that *God's holiness had been and was being adequately maintained*.

3. Entering into God's presence with that inscription was evidence that *God acknowledged the fact of His holiness being maintained*. It was so with the temple priests; so with our glorious High Priest; is so with every soul who fulfils on earth the ministry of Christian devotion.

V. THE BADGE OF MEDIATORSHIP.

1. From the high priest's shoulders (the place of *endurance and strength*), suspended by chains of gold (symbol of *Divine sustaining power*), hung the "breast-plate." And that badge of his office, to intercede for others, *lay upon his heart*.

2. It bore upon it the *names of those for whom he was appointed to minister*, and whose high priest he was. Every one who had a place within that cluster of names had a claim on his ministry and mediatorship.

3. Besides being suspended from the shoulders, the place of strength, it was firmly bound to the pontifical ephod, the distinguishing garment of the *mediatorial office* of high priest.

The most glorious function of the high priest was the bearing *others' names*, not his own; and mediating *for others*, not for himself, before the Lord. It is certainly the crowning glory of the Lord Jesus. And the Christian soul has a priestly mission, supreme above all others, to "look not every man on his own things but the things of others"; to *bring others before the Lord in prayer*, and to *win souls into blessed reconciliation with God* by his gracious interventions and Christly ministries.

VI. SPIRITUAL ANOINTING.

That "holy oil" is the "unction from the Holy One." (1) The *plenitude* of the Spirit; and (2) the *graces* of the Spirit; and (3) the *efficient power* of the Spirit, are essential to a priestly life of sanctity and service.

VII. QUALIFICATION BASED ON SACRIFICE.

1. The scene suddenly changes; and the gloriously attired and anointed priest stands *as a sinner* by the sin offering. For sin must be expiated even for the most privileged souls.

(1) Its blood sprinkled upon the altar indicated that *appeasement was demanded* or ever they could approach that altar in ministry.

(2) Its body being consumed without the camp declared *what their doom would be* did justice exact its due.

(3) But the blood on the altar *and accepted*, announced complete propitiation and acceptance.

(4) While the *choice inward parts* consumed on the altar fire, testified that God's claim of *inward perfectness* was satisfied.

2. The burnt sacrifice summoned them to *absolute self-devotion*; for God will receive no less in any who avowedly become His. "His zeal must *consume us*"

3. But in the *consecration offering* they yielded themselves up to God with *gratitude and gladness*: as those who reach towards the self-devotion of Jesus—"I delight to do Thy will; yea, Thy law is within my heart."

In every sacrifice the merits of Christ and His atonement are primarily set forth: but there is a subsidiary relevancy to the self-denials of a Christian career.

VIII. APPLIED SACRIFICIAL GRACE.

"Moses took the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's ear," etc.

1. The *value* of sacrifice, which had before been accepted *for them*, was now *applied to them*.

2. The *meaning* of sacrifice, also, was now *urged upon them*: all life laid out for God, and in His service.

IX. SYMBOLIC OFFERINGS PRESENTED TO GOD.

This was their first act of personal presentation within God's sanctuary of consecrated sacrifices. Moses took offerings and "put all upon Aaron's hands, and upon his sons' hands, and waved them for a wave offering before the Lord," etc.

The sacrifices which thus filled their hands were those which signified :

1. *Inward perfectness* : perfectness in the reins, and in the heart ; indicating the bringing, on their part, into God's employ of their purest affections, and highest virtues, and noblest intelligence.

2. *Outward developed perfectness of character* ; represented in the unleavened anointed bread that constituted the meat offering.

It is only in Christ's perfectness, a perfectness to be appropriated by us, that we can present such offerings before God.

X. SIGN OF DIVINE ACCEPTANCE.

1. *Being sprinkled by the blood* which first had been sprinkled and *accepted upon the altar*, conveyed the fact that God received their consecration : that themselves, their office, and all its various functions were placed under the sanction and the acceptableness of the blood.

2. The sprinkling of the *holy anointing oil* symbolically connected the Holy Spirit's grace with those offices into which God was, and is pleased to call His people. Without this, by whatever dignity or beauty they might be clothed, they would remain inefficient and powerless to minister aright before the Lord. But He who calls into holy office bestows the needed grace and power.

3. Their *feeding upon* the sacrifice signified the *communication of strength*, for we are nourished by food ; and suggested the *fellowship now established between them and God*. They fed on part of that on which the holy fire of the altar had fed. There was communion, therefore, with God in the sacrifice.

Thus consecrated, they were to abide within the tabernacle, and "keep the charge" of Jehovah. And "blessed is the man whom Thou chooscest, and causeth to approach unto Thee." [See Addenda, p. 114, *Sanctity*.]

Topic: CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS.—A. : THE PUBLICITY OF THE CEREMONY (Vv. 1-5).

Among the Hebrews, previous to the promulgation of the law from Sinai, the priesthood was not confined to particular individuals ; though, as a rule, the head of the family discharged duties at the altar of the household associated with divine worship. The Levitical priesthood corresponds, in many of its features, with most of the religions of antiquity, in their sacerdotal institutions. In them, we read of *priests, altars, and sacrifices* ; supposed to be mediums of communication between the worshippers and worshipped, and the means of propitiation.

The institution of the priesthood followed the request of the people that Jehovah would not speak to them except through some mediator. The priests became servants of the Lord, and of the people for His sake. The consecration services, by which Aaron and his sons were inducted to their offices, were calculated to humble as well as exalt them. They were to be free from personal blemish, sanctified from all ceremonial defilement, and were to exercise self-denial by abstaining from wine during the performance of their duties. In this chapter we have the performance of ceremonies directed in Exodus xxix., and they were not repeated subsequently, except in the succession of the high priest. The ceremony was *public*—

I. TO CONFIRM ITS GREAT IMPORTANCE. Among a people so prone to be rebellious and jealous, it was necessary that conclusive evidence should be furnished to leave no room for the shadow of a reasonable doubt respecting the persons selected for so distinguished a position. The purposes for which the priesthood was instituted were the most solemn and important ; upon the rightful discharge of the duties the most momentous issues hung. Aaron and his sons were to stand in the breach which sin had made between man and God, and be dispensers of life and death.

II. TO CONFIRM ITS DIVINE APPOINTMENT. Had they been consecrated in a private way, suspicions that the offices had been assumed from personal ambition, or for selfish ends, might have been suggested; but the ceremony being performed in the presence of the whole congregation, "at the door of the tabernacle," *the open approval of Jehovah was proclaimed*. The congregation would thus be deeply impressed with the sacredness of the priesthood, as selected and anointed of the Lord.

III. TO CONFIRM ITS GENERAL ACCEPTANCE. The people had asked for the intervention of a priest, their request had been granted, and they were now required to show at a public ceremony that they *approved and accepted* what was done. At the door of the tabernacle they would recognise the divine appointment, and unitedly engage to accord with the arrangements made. They were the subjects of, and witnesses to, the covenant made with Moses and Aaron; and pledged themselves ready to render implicit obedience.

Read in the light of the New Testament, these considerations may be applied to the public consecration of our blessed Lord, when baptised in the Jordan by John. Heaven opened, the divine voice, the descent of the Spirit in the presence of many witnesses, indicated the great importance of the mission He was beginning; showed that He was beloved of God, and possessed His unqualified approval. Such facts place upon all to whom the tidings come binding obligations to accept the Messiah as the Atoning Priest of the world, for all men, for all time.—*F. W. Brown.*

B. : THE SOLEMNITY OF THE CEREMONY (Vv. 6-17).

Commanded to draw near to Jehovah at the door of the tabernacle, and to observe the ceremony under direct Divine superintendence, the Israelites would be at once impressed with a sense of deep solemnity in the service; they would feel they were standing on holy ground. The solemnity seen—

I. BY THE PREPARATORY ABLUTIONS ENJOINED. Appointed to come nigh to a God spotlessly pure and holy, Aaron and his sons must adopt means fitting to suggest the need of inward holiness and official blamelessness.

II. BY THE SACERDOTAL VESTMENTS REQUIRED. Garments so beautiful and elaborate, rendering the priests (especially the High Priest) imposing in their appearance, would not only adorn the person, but convey the idea that Jehovah's worship required the presentation of things *pure and excellent*. The priests' attire was chosen by the Lord, and each part suggested some solemn lesson. The mind is impressed through the eye, the spirit may be made devout through the senses.

III. BY THE APPROPRIATE SACRIFICES OFFERED. Their "sin" "burnt" and "peace" offerings symbolised *death to sin, fulness of consecration, acceptance with God*. Every act in connection with sacrifices was calculated to prepare the priests for their holy work, to beget reverence in the people towards them.

IV. BY THE GENERAL ANOINTING OBSERVED. The tabernacle, as well as the priests, was anointed with oil. Israel was to entertain reverence for the place where the priests would officiate, where oblations would be presented; everything associated with divine worship was to be regarded as peculiarly sacred.

When, "in the fulness of time," Christ came, He was pointed out as "the Lamb of God," denoting the solemn *sacrificial character* of His work, as well as the *exemplary character* of His life. Through Him we have access into the holiest of all by a new and living way.—*F. W. B.*

C. : THE COMPLETENESS OF THE CEREMONY (Vv. 17-36).

In the consecration observances every place where the priests would officiate, and every faculty of the priest, was impressively dedicated. The *head*, the seat of intelligence; the *shoulders*, the repository of strength; the *breast*, the home of love; all were clothed appropriately to indicate *purity, energy, excellence*. Beauty in appearance, efficiency in service, comfort for the worshippers, benedictions for the whole congregation, all were arranged for, and guaranteed. As the hands of the priests were lifted towards heaven, and waved to and fro, they were reminded that their ministry would reach to heaven; and at the same time bless the children of men. The completeness of the ceremony is seen in that—

I. THERE WAS NO MARGIN LEFT FOR HUMAN INVENTION.

Every thing was done *fully* and *exactly* as Jehovah commanded; the pattern of the tabernacle was given to Moses on the mount, and every minute arrangement in the series of sacrifices, and consecration of the priests, *finally fixed*. Had the people been left to add, or subtract, there would have been room for manifold innovations and absurdities.

II. THERE WOULD BE NO AFTER NEED FOR DIVINE REVISION.

Jehovah never makes mistakes; what He does stands fast, His plans are perfect, His purposes immutable. The priesthood met the moral needs of the Hebrews; was perfectly adapted to requirements of the age. When the prophetic age dawned, and clearer light shone upon divine revelation, the things instituted in connection with the tabernacle service developed into more spiritual significance; what they *taught* remained unimpaired. These things continued till they were lost in the substance of which they were only shadows. Christ *embraced all* the divine teaching, and *embodied all* the excellencies to be found in Moses and the law. Christianity is not so much a new, as a perfected religion, as the first verse of the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches. The whole of revelation, from first to last, is a development; every stage complete in itself, each growing out of its predecessor, and merging into something better. *The completion of redemption* will be when we are made kings and priests unto God, and reign with Christ for ever and ever.—F. W. B.

D. : THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CEREMONY (Vv. 17-36).

The institution of sacrificial worship, through an ordained priesthood, would deepen in the hearts of the Hebrews impressions of Divine truth already there as the outcome of the patriarchal teaching. They were now very clearly taught—

I. *That there can be no acceptable service rendered to God without purity in the worshipper.*

II. *That the imperfection of purity in the worshipper demands an atonement in the sight of God to make up for that defect.*

III. *That the distance between God and man, produced by sin, can be removed only by a divinely-appointed mediator.*

The priests were the *channels*, not the sources, of blessing to the people; they had no power of their own to dispense pardon, nor could they exempt from blame, or furnish indulgences. They existed *for the people*, not the people for them. They wielded deputed and responsible power. Medieval priestly assumption, papal arrogance, find no sanction in these Levitical rites.

The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches that in the Gospel dispensation we, as priests to God, are, (a) *cleansed by the washing of regeneration*; (b) *clothed with*

the garments of Christ's righteousness; (c) offer sacrifices of praise and prayer; (d) surrender ourselves wholly to the Lord; (e) receive the unction of the Holy One.

To seek position and succession in such a spiritual priesthood is the duty and privilege of all.—*F. W. B.*

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER VIII.

V. 2.—*Theme*: GOD'S ELECTED PRIESTS.

i. "It is not only historically true that Aaron and his descendants were PRIESTS BY THE ELECTION OF JEHOVAH declared through Moses, the mediator of the covenant, and confirmed by the sign of the almond rod, but *such a calling of God is essential to the idea of the office*; for a priest is one who comes near to God, dwells with Him in His home as a companion in behalf of others, because more acceptable than they. The priest is preferred before those he represents; therefore no man may take this honour to himself, or be exalted to it by his fellows. 'Blessed is the man whom *Thou chooseth*, and causet to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, even of Thy holy temple' (Psa. lxx. 4). Only those thus chosen by God were priests.

ii. "This divine election of the family of Aaron out of Israel signifies that those who had been admitted to filial fellowship with the Holy One of Israel were called thereto by the SOVEREIGN CHOICE OF GOD. As Jehovah chose the family of Aaron out of the tribe of Levi, the Levites out of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the Hebrews out of all the nations, so has He chosen His spiritual seed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Without such election they would have remained, like the rest of mankind, strangers to the covenant, instead of becoming 'a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.' The New Testament writers make this Divine election very prominent, declaring that those who, by receiving Christ became sons of God, were 'born not of the will of man, but of God' (Jno. i. 13), were 'called to be saints' (Rom. i. 17), were 'chosen before the foundation of the world that they should be holy' (Eph. i. 4), were 'predestinated to the adoption of children' (Eph. i. 5), were 'elect unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. i. 2).

iii. "*The priesthood were ELECTED TO HOLINESS.* The whole people, as a kingdom of priests, were to be a holy nation; but the family of Aaron were chosen to a still higher ceremonial purity than was required of their brethren. When Korah and his companions claimed the right to officiate as priests, they did so on the ground that all the congregation were holy; and the reply of the mutineers was, 'To-morrow Jehovah will show who are His, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto Him; even him whom He hath chosen will He cause to come near unto him'

(Numb. xvi. 5). The budding of Aaron's rod decided the question between him and those who claimed the office on the ground that all were holy. It was a sign that Aaron was elected to a superiority of holiness among the Hebrews, as the nation was to a similar eminence among the nations of the earth.

"The election of the Hebrews to be a holy nation set forth before the eyes of men the truth that Jehovah is holy, and that the true Israel who in spirit and in truth have access to Him must be holy; the calling of *the priests to a greater strictness of life* than was required of the common people, and the requirements of a *still higher degree of holiness in the head of the sacerdotal order*, were concurrent and cumulative testimonies to the same truth.—*Atwater, Sacred Tabernacle.*

V. 3.—*Theme*: AN ELECT PEOPLE. "And gather them," etc.

The circumstances amid which Divine directions were given to the people, as well as the directions themselves, were calculated to impress the fact upon all Israel that they were an *elect nation*, brought out from Egypt to inaugurate a new era for the world. Every other nation was sunken in idolatry, and Israel had proneness to it, as evinced in the worship of the calf at the foot of the Mount. All idolatry debases and degrades; has never been known to develop into civilisation, much less into pure and undefiled religion. Man could not develop from his innate wisdom or inner consciousness such ideas of *God, holiness, duty and worship*, as those which were promulgated and established around Sinai. The institution and consecration of the priesthood taught that God is holy, and that "holiness becometh His house for ever." Man, without supernatural aid, has always transferred and affixed his own sinful passions to priests and gods; and, has sought to become like them, to avoid their anger, and secure their benediction. In Israel, Jehovah showed who He was; and *how* His favour might be secured. Consider:

I. THE CONGREGATION ASSEMBLED. All the people were to meet, they had been prepared for united service. In Egypt they had become bound together by strong and tender ties—they had no prejudices or predilections in respect to government, were ready to take directions from their Divine king. Had Jehovah revealed Himself equally, and at once, to all men, revelation would have seemed the spontaneous and simultaneous growth of human inquiry; and the plan by which God governs our race would have been thwarted.

Israel was chosen to high honour, but onerous duties were associated with their privileges; they were called to self-denying service, and to the attainment of holiness, requiring constant self-mortification. The priesthood would convey knowledge of God *through the medium of the senses*; thus the revelation in the wilderness was adapted to the infancy of the Jewish Church.

II. **THE PLACE OF ASSEMBLY.** "The door of the tabernacle." Everything done in order to beget devoutness and solemnity. There was no image of Jehovah before which the people would bow; but they were to remember that God had taken up His abode among them, and revealed His will from the tabernacle. What a contrast the place would be to the heathen temples in Egypt, with which Israel had been familiar. *They* were places where revolting abominations were practised; *here*, all would impress the mind with purity. The priests who were to officiate in the holy place must be sanctified, to denote how spotlessly pure the God of Israel was. The gathering of the congregation at the door of the tabernacle, and the consecration of the priesthood would meet the great wants of man's moral nature. He has something in him that compels him to recognise and worship a superior Being; he becomes like the Being he worships; he seeks to commune with and receive communications from, the Being he worships; he desires a mediator between him and his God.

All the light and purity that gathered around the Levitical priesthood was *symbolic* of the purity of character required in those who draw near to God; and *typical* of the perfect purity of Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."—*F. W. B.*

V. 8.—*Theme*: ISRAEL'S GLORY.

"And he put the breastplate," etc.

To outward seeming at this time the people, in themselves and their circumstances, did not present a very dignified appearance. With no visible means of subsistence, a horde of emancipated slaves, and before them as their new arena for enterprise a waste, howling wilderness. Yet they were the Lord's freemen; He was their Deliverer and King. *Through* and *with* their priests, consecrated in their presence, they would draw very near to God. They had not been permitted to engrave their names upon tablets of fame in the land of bondage, but now their names are engraved upon the breastplate of the high priest, and presented before the Lord. This denoted—

I. THAT THEY WOULD BE EVER REMEMBERED IN THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

Their names *uncovered*; *plainly immediately* seen.

II. THAT THEY HAD A PLACE NEAR THE HEART OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVE.

Not behind his back, or beneath his feet, but on his breast.

III. THAT THEY WERE REGARDED AS VERY PRECIOUS BY THE LORD.

Their names not written in the sands of the desert, which would be soon obliterated, nor on raw and rough material, but on precious stones. The Lord esteems those as His "*jewels*" who become His people.

IV. THAT THEY MIGHT RECEIVE LIGHT AND DIRECTION IN ALL THEIR JOURNEYINGS.

The Urim and Thummim in the breastplate would, in some way unknown to us, indicate the Divine will to priests and people. The precious stones of the breastplate may suggest *the paradise lost by the fall*, where there were gold and precious stones; and *paradise regained by the redemption of Christ*, where precious stones abound. Our great High Priest carries us, not only on His breast, but *in His heart*. He remembers, represents us, pleads for us. Through His righteousness we may hereafter be admitted into the holiest of all.—*F. W. B.*

V. 9.—*Theme*: THE HOLY CROWN.

"Upon his forefront did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the Lord commanded Moses."

Man is the only creature whose forehead fronts the temple of the sky. Fitting that the head of High Priest, "the human face divine," should be crowned with gold when approaching the King of kings, and representing Him among the people. The gold band upon the mitre shone like a diadem, caught and reflected the glory of heaven. On it in letters patent to all: "Holiness to the Lord." Gold denotes *preciousness* and *incorruptibility*. Such ever are the *nature* and *character* of Jehovah. The holy crown upon the head of the High Priest implied—

I. THAT HE HAD REGAL DUTIES TO DISCHARGE. He was in the service of the King, immortal, invisible, the only wise God. Nothing he commanded to be performed could therefore be mean or unimportant.

II. THAT HE HAD REGAL POWER TO EXERCISE. Weak, like other men, in himself, he was a plenipotentiary, full of power, because of the authority by which He was commissioned and sustained. Ambassadors in councils and courts are powerful on account of the *Sovereign* and *Realm* they represent: so here.

III. THAT HE HAD REGAL DIGNITY TO SUSTAIN. He, a kingly priest, would need to magnify his office. He was under necessity to keep the glory of the crown unsullied. The people would look up to Aaron as their exemplar, as well as mediator. Every thought, word, deed to be "Holiness to the Lord."

Here we have a significant *Type of Christ* our High Priest. He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. He is *King* and *Priest*. Our great Intercessor was seen by John (Rev. xiv. 14.) "having on His head a golden crown." Holiness is the crown and glory of the universe; constitutes the *nature* and *blessedness* of God; is the ultimatum of human redemption. Holiness and blessedness are wedded together by indissoluble bonds.—*F. W. B.*

V. 12.—*Theme*: SANCTIFICATION. “To sanctify him.”

Aaron was set apart to his grand work, not only by lavations and lustrations, but by anointings. This would show—

I. THAT HE WAS ENTIRELY DEDICATED TO GOD'S SERVICE. As the oil was poured profusely upon his head, it symbolised the fact that so readily and cheerfully would he pour out his life's best and brightest energies in Jehovah's service.

II. THAT HE WAS COMPLETELY SANCTIFIED IN GOD'S PRESENCE.

As the oil made the face of Aaron shine, and he submitted to every preliminary in connection with his entry upon his office, he would have the inward witness, and give ocular proof, that the needed preparation was complete.

Christ, as our great High Priest, “*sanctified Himself*,” not for His office simply, but for the sake of His disciples; and His will is that we should be “*sanctified through the truth*.” We all need the “*unction of the Holy One*,” sanctification by the grace of Christ, and the influences of the Holy Ghost to fit us for sacred service and communion with the Lord.—*F. W. B.*

V. 21.—*Theme*: PERFECT SERVICE. “And he washed the inwards,” etc.

The minute and strict directions given respecting the offerings presented at the consecration of the priests showed—

I. THE NEED OF INWARD PURITY. Man looks only on the outward appearance; the Lord looks upon the inward parts, and in the hidden parts He would have us to know wisdom. The inwards, as well as the legs of offering were to be cleansed before being presented.

II. THE NEED OF UNRESERVED SURRENDER. *The whole ram* was to be offered. This same truth fully taught in the holocaust. The new dispensation demands that we present our bodies living sacrifices holy and acceptable unto God. Let us seek, then, to please the Lord and to be accepted of Him.—*F. W. B.*

V. 23.—*Theme*: LIVING SACRIFICES.

“And he slew it; and Moses took,” etc.

Aaron and his sons laying their hands upon the ram of consecration, identified them with it; denoted their unqualified surrender to Jehovah. The blood of the victim being put upon the priests' ears, hands, and feet, must have been intended to teach important lessons. The blood sprinkled upon the right ear, suggests—

I. THAT THE PRIESTS WERE TO ATTENTIVELY LISTEN TO THE COMMANDS OF THE LORD. They were not to exercise their own ingenuity in forming precepts, they were not to listen to anything that would border on collusion, or conspiracy. Ear-gate was ever to be open and ready to receive the communications from heaven; was to be kept sacred to the Lord. The sprinkling of blood upon the thumb of the right hand suggests—

II. THAT THE PRIESTS WERE TO READILY

RECEIVE THE COMMANDS OF THE LORD. The hand is an emblem of *receptivity*, as well as *energy*; represents *capacity* and *will*. By it, we *distribute* and *receive*. The hands of priests would be busy in offering sacrifices, in waving incense, in presenting prayer. They must be therefore clean and consecrated, ever ready to present gifts to God from the people, and to convey blessings to them from God. The sprinkling of blood upon the great toe of the right foot suggests—

III. THAT THE PRIESTS WERE TO IMMEDIATELY OBEY THE COMMANDS OF THE LORD. By our feet we move in the direction our hearts prompt and lean. The feet of the priests would stand in the holy place, it was fitting they should be sanctified.

Our great High Priest gave the words to His disciples that He received from His Father; His holy hands were ever busy doing good; His “*holy feet*, trod the sacred fields of Palestine for our advantage.” Let us seek that all our powers may be sanctified by and consecrated to the Lord.—*F. W. B.*

V. 27.—*Theme*: HEARTY SERVICE.

“And he put all upon Aaron's hands,” etc. Moses had the honour of inducting Aaron to his office, as well as robing him for it. *Placing the offering upon the hands of Aaron and his sons*—

I. CLEARLY INDICATED THEIR WORK. Gave them practical knowledge of the duties to be prepared.

II. FULLY DEDICATED THEM TO THEIR WORK. Not only were they sanctified and attired in sacerdotal vestments, but really began their work.

Waving the offering in their hands, showed—

I. THE SUBORDINACY OF THE PRIESTHOOD. They were only servants, with hands full of obligations; they held gifts which already belonged to Jehovah: of His own they would offer at the altar.

II. THE SUPREMACY OF THE LORD. Themselves, as well as the offering, belonged to God; they stood before the Lord acknowledging His sovereign claims.

Let us do the work of the Lord with both hands earnestly. Our work is (a) *important*—requires both hands; (b) *great*—fills both hands; (c) *urgent*—prompts both hands. Thus our Redeemer toiled for us, so let us labour for Him.—*F. W. B.*

V. 33.—*Theme*: SEVEN DAYS' CONSECRATION.

“Seven days shall he consecrate you.”

The protracted period of consecration within the tabernacle would suggest—

I. *The deep dyed character of sin.*

II. *The immaculate purity of God.*

III. *The need of patient preparation for sacred work.*

IV. *The conditions of success in sacred work.*—*F. W. B.*

V. 36.—*Theme*: EXEMPLARY OBEDIENCE.

“So Aaron and his sons did all,” etc.

Though many things commanded to be

done seemed strange and unimportant, yet "all things" were done by Aaron and his sons that the Lord directed. Indicating—

I. WILLINGNESS FOR THE SERVICES to which they were called. Thus they enjoyed—

II. GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS IN THE WORK to which they were called.

Fulfilling their part of the covenant, the Lord would fulfil His part. Those who honour the Lord He will honour. Through the priesthood priceless blessings would be vouchsafed to Israel; through our Great Prophet, Priest, and King, innumerable and inestimable blessings came to the world.—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER VIII.

PRIESTISM.

"Go forth and preach impostures to the world,
But give them truth to build upon."

—*Dante.*

"The power to bind and loose to Truth is given,
The mouth that speaks it is the mouth of Heaven;
The power which in a senso belongs to none,
Thus understood, belongs to every one.

It owes its high prerogatives to none,
It shines for all, as shines the blessed sun;
It shines in all who do not shut it out
By dungeon doors of unbelief and doubt.
To shine, it does not ask—O, far from it—
For hierarchal privilege and permit!
Rabbi and priest may be chained down to lies,
And babes and sucklings winged to mount the skies."

—*Abraham Coles: The Evangel.*

"Led so grossly by this meddling priest,
Dreading the curse that money may buy out."

—*King John, III., i.*

"Hateful to me, as are the gates of hell,
Is he who, hiding one thing in his heart,
Utters another."—*Bryant's Homer's Iliad.*

"O what a godly outside falsehood hath!"
Merchant of Venice, I., 3.

"Priest, beware your beard;
I mean to tug it, and to cuff you soundly;
Under my feet I stamp thy cardinal's hat;
In spite of pomp, or dignities of Church,
Here by thy cheek I drag thee up and down."—*Henry VI., i., 3.*

SANCTITY.

"Holiness—as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it—appeared to me to be of a sweet, calm, pleasant, charming, serene nature, which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness, ravishment to the soul; in other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all

manner of pleasant fruits and flowers, all delightful and undisturbed, enjoying a sweet calm and the gentle vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true Christian—as I then wrote my meditations—appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year, low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture, diffusing around a sweet fragrance, standing peacefully and lovingly in the midst of other flowers round about, all in like manner opening their bosoms to drink in the light of the sun."—*Jonathan Edwards.*

"A Christian should let us see his graces walking abroad in his daily conversation; and, if such guests are in the house, they will often look out of the window, and be publicly seen abroad in all duties and holy actions."—*Gurner.*

"When courtiers come down into the country, the common home-bred people possibly think their habits strange; but they care not for that. 'It is the fashion at Court.' What need, then, have the godly to be so tender-foreheaded, to be out of countenance because the world looks on holiness as a singularity? It is the only fashion in the highest Court, yea, of the King of kings Himself."—*Salter.*

"Inward holiness and eternal glory are the crown with which God dignifies His elect. But they are not the cause of the election. A king is not made a king by the royal robe he wears and the crown that encircles his brow; but he therefore wears his robes and puts on his crown because he is a king."—*Salter.*

"True ornaments to know a holy man."
—*Richard III., iii., 7.*

"Our holy lives must win a new world's crown."—*Richard II., v., 1.*

"Holiness and happiness are always an indissoluble connection; yea, holiness is felicity itself."—*Alex. Macworter.*

"He's honourable;
And, doubling that, most holy."
—*Cymbeline, III., 4.*

CHAPTER IX.

Inaugural Ministries of Aaron.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 1.—On the eighth day. It was the dawn of their Sabbath, and followed a week of seclusion within the tabernacle, where they had daily presented their consecration offerings. With what solemn eagerness they must have anticipated this day: the day of their inauguration into their public ministry as God's priests for Israel. Moreover, the day was to be distinguished by a sublime manifestation of "the glory of Jehovah" unto them and before the people. Such privileged days enter into all saintly careers, fervently desired, surpassingly blessed: when the soul is led into hallowed spiritual experiences, and when "the Lord suddenly comes to His temple." It intimates the truths that—

1. Preparation for sacred service ought to be made in seclusion with thoroughness and utmost solemnity.

2. Devout waiting for the Lord will in due season be sealed with glad realisations of Him.

3. Entrance upon any sacred project or pursuit should be stayed until God has been sought in patient communion.

4. A ministry for God will only be acceptable and effective as the minister is himself fully and spiritually in readiness for his "high calling."

That "life hid with God" is symbolic of the sacred separateness to which the Christian is called, and summons us to like retirement from the world, that we may become meet to render true service as "priests unto God."

V. 2.—Take thee a young calf. Was there in this a calling Aaron's sin to remembrance? Jesus, as He commissioned Peter to his apostolic ministry, called his sin (of denying Him thrice) back to memory by His thrice repeated inquiry, "Lovest thou Me?" And here Jehovah recalls the *calf-idolatry* at the base of Sinai; for on no other occasion was "a calf" appointed for a sin offering. But surely, in now entering upon his high-priesthood, that great occasion of sin should be in his mind to humble his soul in the hour of his exaltation, and teach him how wholly unmerited was the sacred honour into which Jehovah now admitted him. It is well that we, in hours of exalted privilege, "look to the hole from which we were digged," and have our sins in mind, "lest we be exalted above measure." Paul needed a like restraint. Human nature is apt to become self-satisfied and arrogant; the remedy is to see our frailty in the light of past follies.

V. 4.—To-day the Lord will appear unto you. When an appointment is made to an exalted office in the State, it is accompanied by presentation in person to the Sovereign of the realm. This was Aaron's introduction, in his high official status, to the very presence of Jehovah, whose priest he was henceforth to be, and in whose Regal presence he was henceforth to minister. The Shekinah, which had dwelt in the secrecy of the holy place, would that day "shine forth" in brightness. God's elect servants should behold His glory. It would teach them to serve with awe, and impress on them the grandeur of their office; thus fostering reverence and circumspection in their ministry. When the like incident occurred to Isaiah, his spirit was utterly overwhelmed (Isa. vi. 5); and even John the beloved fell as one dead at the feet of the glorified Jesus (Rev. i. 17). Blessed are they who have had Paul's glad yet gentler experience: "It pleased God to reveal His Son *in me*" (Gal. i. 16). It was then he was designated to his apostolic work; and such a vision calls us also to a sacred life and service.

V. 7.—Go unto the altar . . . make atonement for thyself. Installed though Aaron was as high priest, he yet waited the command to act; and Moses stood to him as God. Hence the words, “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (Heb. v. 4, 5). Yet it is well that we heed God’s will in the call addressed to us from the demands and opportunities around us. “Go unto the altar”: for there is frequent occasion that we approach the altar in service for man and sacrifice to God.

Atonement for thyself, and for the people. The “people” were concerned in Aaron’s sin of idolatry: “They made the calf which Aaron made” (Exod. xxxii. 25); hence there was to be an inclusive sacrificial offering for both Aaron and the people. But “such an High Priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners . . . who needeth not to offer up sacrifice first for His own sins” (Heb. vii. 26, 27).

V. 15.—The people’s offering. This consisted of the sin offering, burnt offering, meat offering, and peace offering. It was Aaron’s first mediatorial service, standing between God and the people, and propitiating on their behalf. From that hour there never has ceased to be an intercessory priest; nor shall the priesthood fail henceforth; for “the word of the oath has consecrated Christ *for evermore*” (Heb. vii. 28). How consolatory and assuring the truth, that within “the holy place made without hands” our Lord unceasingly presents the merits of His mighty sacrifice, and intercedes for all who come to God by Him. None need fear neglect, since Jesus assumes the gracious ministry of mediation; it is the office to which He devotes Himself now in heaven: “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” And as His sacrificial death on the cross was not for Himself, but for mankind, He still presents “the people’s offering.” But He “needeth not daily” to renew the sacrifice. Aaron’s duty was to maintain with undeviating regularity and recurrence the burnt sacrifice of the morning (verse 17); type of the enduring virtue of Jesus’ atonement day unto day, till time shall be no more.

V. 22.—Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people. Sacrifices completed, Aaron now, with hands upraised, pronounced his first priestly blessing upon Israel. The very words of the blessing were ordered by Jehovah: “Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them: The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace” (Numb. vi. 23-26).

So Jesus, His sacrifice finished, “lifted up His hands and blessed” His Church; and “it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven” (Luke xxiv. 50, 51); whence still and unceasingly that unfinished act of blessing goes on, and its sacred gladness and peace come down perpetually upon an adoring Church.

V. 23.—Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle. The *last* entrance for Moses, the *first* for Aaron; and it marked the moment for transmitting the priestly duties from the younger to the elder brother. Surely they bowed the knee together when within that “secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High,” and sought on each other’s behalf the succour and grace of God for the onerous responsibilities of their Divine service. Beautiful the thought of such hidden prayer by two brothers, ere they “came out” to their high and holy ministries.

V. 24.—There came a fire out from before the Lord. Forth from the effulgent “glory” cloud (verse 23) sprang living flames on to the altar, and the smouldering sacrifice was quickly consumed by miraculous fire. This fire was jealously maintained; it went not out by day or night: it burned always as the symbol of Jehovah’s sanction upon the altar presentations, and His acceptance of those who offered them.

When the people saw, they fell on their faces. “Blessed are they who have

not seen, and yet have believed"; for still "the Lord is in His holy temple," though the shekinah is not visible. "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker: for He is our God" (Psa. xcvi. 6, 7).

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: ENTERING UPON PRIESTLY WORK (Vv. 1, 2).

"On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons, and said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, and offer them before the Lord."

A train of solemn rites preceded the priests' admission to their functions. The entrance-path was long and holy. None might draw near *uncalled, uncleaned*—without atonement made through blood, without the sprinklings of anointing oil (chap. viii. 6, 24, 30).

Through a whole week the victims died, and consecrating services went on. During those days the sacred tent enclosed the devoted band. They might not pass its separating gate. The world was left. A barrier parted them from common life. They dwelt, shut out from man, shut in with God.

I. THERE IS A RIGHTFUL PATH BY WHICH GOD'S MINISTERS REACH THEIR SACRED OFFICE.

Called; cleansed; consecrated.

II. PREPARATION COMPLETED: THE HOLY OFFICE IS ASSUMED.

"On the eighth day" service commenced in fulness. Life is now one cloud of incense to the Lord. From morn till night the willing priests discharge foreshadowing forms.

III. IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY THE PRIESTLY SYMBOLS ARE REALISED.

Altars no more are raised: victims no longer die: all vanished in the Cross. No lights now are lighted, no incense burns: twilight ordinances fled when the Sun of Righteousness arose. Yet still wide fields of labour open: and grand facts are to be set forth by your ministry. Your life is to proclaim the Lamb of God, the blood once and for ever shed. Your voice must never cease the cry—Behold this truth; bathe in this stream; trust in this death; plead this atoning Cross.

Shame would it be if legal priests relaxed not typifying work, and your hands wearied in uplifting the grand substance—CHRIST. [Compare "*Christ is all.*" By Dean of Gloucester.]

[See Addenda, p. 127, *Ministerial Dedication.*]

Topic: SACRIFICIAL PREPARATION FOR JEHOVAH'S APPEARING (Vv. 2-4).

"Take thee a sin offering, a burnt offering, peace offerings, to sacrifice before the Lord; and a meat offering; for to-day the Lord will appear unto you."

Who would see God? Let the soul make ready. To whom will God show Himself? They who make ready by sacrifices.

I. TO SEE THE LORD DEMANDS SPIRITUAL PREPAREDNESS IN MAN.

1. For man to *meet God without readiness* would entail on him terror and death.

2. But man *may meet God with readiness*, prepared even to behold His glory.

3. When man *meets God thus prepared*, the meeting is propitious and privileged.

II. SACRIFICIAL MERITS PREPARE MAN FOR SEARCHING MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD.

1. By effecting the *complete removal of his sin* (by Sin offering) and therefore cancelling his condemnation.

2. By presenting *an offering of self-devotion* (Burnt offering), and thereby appeasing the Divine favour.

3. By conciliatory acts of propitiation (Peace offering), thus removing all strangement.

4. By *covenanted communion with God* (Meat offering); fellowship with God in the sacrificial feast.

When Jehovah meets a soul thus "made nigh" by sacrificial merit, not only is there "no condemnation," but "access unto grace" is assured, and even "joy in God." [Compare Rom. v. 1, 2, 11.]

III. AMID MOST GLORIOUS DIVINE MANIFESTATION THE SOUL PREPARED BY SACRIFICE STANDS FEARLESS AND BLEST.

1. Revelations of God come now to privileged souls: and are "*times of refreshing.*"

2. The unveilings of death, which will bring the soul to God's clear presence, will not terrify the believer: it will be "*far better.*"

3. The Lord's appearance "in great glory" at the judgment will be welcomed *with joyous acclaim* by those who "look for His appearing."

4. And in the splendour of heaven, the ransomed hosts will stand without rebuke; realising in God's presence "*fulness of joy.*" [See Addenda, p. 128, *Nearness to God.*]

Topic: CONSECRATION A QUALIFICATION FOR ACTION (Vv. 7-22).

Between the records of this and the preceding chapter there is a striking contrast.

(a) The cleansing and adornment of the priests—in which the priests themselves took no active part—represent the truth that the soul, in being made ready for sacred office and sanctuary privilege, is a *passive recipient* of grace which flows from God through Christ our mediator.

As with Aaron and his sons, so with Joshua (Zach. iii. 3-5); all investiture with purity and dignity was wrought *for* them not *by* them. We do not make ourselves clean, do not consecrate ourselves priests. All is of grace, derived from Christ.

(b) Our complete consecration and equipment for privileged relationship and a life of near access with God, are *preparatory for a career of service.* [See Addenda p. 128, *Spiritual Benefactors.*]

I. *Consecrated souls are called TO SERVE IN THE POWER OF THE GRACE THEY HAVE RECEIVED.*

1. *New energies* are imparted to the soul on which the grace of Christ rests. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*" (Eph. ii. 10).

2. *New qualifications* are bestowed upon the soul for a life of sacred service. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32). "Go stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" (Act v. 20). "Let him that heareth say come" (Rev. xxii. 17). "Maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place" (2 Cor. ii. 14).

3. *New inspirations* animate the life thus divinely enriched. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. v. 14). "They which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 15).

II. *They who have received grace are REQUIRED TO EXPEND THEIR REDEEMED LIVES IN SACRED MINISTRIES FOR OTHERS.*

1. The *virtue of sacrifice is not exhausted* in consecrating us who are made priests in Christ.

2. Sacrificial merits *avail for the people among whom we are to serve* as priests in offices helpful to their salvation.

3. The peculiar sphere of Christian thought and action is defined—carrying to others the blessings of altar sacrifice. For priestly service now, as with Aaron, is all associated with *the* SACRIFICE.

III. CONSECRATION AND SERVICE ARE THE TWO SACRED SEALS AND GUARANTEES OF A PRIVILEGED CHRISTIAN LIFE.

1. Merely to *dwell apart from men as being ourselves consecrated souls*, of a higher sanctity and more heavenly calling than the people, is to *miss the end* for which we were “called of God as was Aaron.”

2. Equally so, to *toil in service thereby to gain assurance of our acceptance with God*, is to fulfil the duties and carry the burdens of the priesthood *forgetful of the derived and sufficient grace of Christ for ourselves*.

3. *Sanctity and service* : sanctity *derived* and service *rendered* ; these form the blended *credentials* of our hallowed priestly life, our blessed relationship to God, and they afford us the full *guarantee* of sufficiency for and success in our ministries for man.

Topic : A SOLEMN BENEDICTION (V. 22).

“And Aaron lifted up his hand towards the people and blessed them.”

It would be an act of presumption in a man to assume the part of blessing others if he were not himself occupying a superior spiritual altitude to those he blessed.

I. *In the relations of men to Jehovah there are those who ATTAIN A HIGHER LIFE OF PRIVILEGE AND OF POWER.*

The *high* priest alone was empowered to bless. His was a spiritual elevation above the priests.

1. *Conscious nearness to God* is not equally attained by all.

2. *Sacred power from God* is not equally derived by all.

II. HIDDEN FELLOWSHIP WITH JEHOVAH IS THE SOURCE OF EXALTED QUALIFICATION, the *spring* of BENEFICENT SPIRITUAL POWER.

Aaron had spent solemn seasons during the seven days *enclosed within the tabernacle*. It nerved his heart for his high task, it gave him assurance as he assumed the high function of blessing the people in Jehovah's name. But *after* that official act, he went into more intimate fellowship and prayer with God (v. 23) ; and when he came forth, he again “blessed the people.” It was the act of one whose soul was full of conscious power, to whom it was no longer an *official trust and duty to bless*, but a *delight and privilege* ; it was the outflowing of a soul all ardent and adoring.

1. Blessings can only flow from a soul *itself rich in the affluence of blessedness*.

2. Affluence of blessedness can only be won by *the most intimate communion with the Lord*.

III. THEY WHO LIVE AN ELEVATED SPIRITUAL LIFE ARE RICH BENEFACTORS TO A SINFUL WORLD.

1. They draw power from God which does not rest unused, but *goes forth in blessing others*.

2. They exert salutary and saving energy among men, by which earthly life is sweetened, and spiritual health is imparted, and Christian peace is bestowed.

3. Their very prayers, unheeded as factors of good, win daily benediction from heaven on many hearts and homes.

4. As a *daily influence in society* such elevated souls shed a benign grace, making social circles purer, kinder, less selfish and sinful, more gentle, peaceful, and Christian.

5. In all their *active ministries for Christ* they are potent for good. They cannot “lift up their hands towards the people” but gracious results ensue.

Thus should every Christian seek to be a “*light of the world,*” “*salt in the*

earth." Therefore let each (a) live a life of *nearest intercourse* with the Lord; a "life hid with Christ in God"; (b) fulfil the solemn office of *gracious intercessors* for men; winning blessings by secret prayers.

"But that from us aught should ascend to heaven
So prevalent as to concern the mind
Of God high blest, or to incline His will,
Hard to belief may seem: Yet *this will prayer.*"—Milton.

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day."—Tennyson.

"Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream
Of glory on the consecrated hour
Of man, in audience with the Deity."—Young.

[See Addenda, p. 128, *Spiritual Benefactors.*]

Topic: WITHIN THE SECRET OF GOD'S TABERNACLE (Vv. 23, 24.).

"And Moses and Aaron *went into the tabernacle* of the congregation," etc.

In this first day of priestly work a fact of significance occurs. When all the offerings had been duly made, Moses and Aaron seek the holy tent. For a short season they retire. They leave the busy scene. It is their wish in stillness to seek God's clearer face. He was before them in the public rite; but calm retreat would give them more calm approach.

I. THE CHRISTIAN SERVANT LABOURS IN OPEN SCENES.

In busy haunts of busy men he strains the toiling nerve. The world is the wide field. There are the precious souls which need the wholesome warning and the faithful word. There sin abounds, and misery dwells, and ignorance spreads its blinding veil. There Satan rules with dreadful sway. In this wild waste the good seed must be sown. Amid graceless crowds grace must be manfully displayed. But—

II. PRIVATE HOURS GAIN STRENGTH FOR PUBLIC ZEAL.

When all is still the opening heavens pour down their dew. In quietude the soul draws nearer to Christ's arms. Then tender whispers testify of love; then truth unfolds the wondrous page; then promises assume substantial form; then distant prospects brighten to the view. It is when apart from men that grace takes deeper root, temptations wither, the world's false glitter fades, the inner man is strengthened to resist, and loins are girded for the battle field. The soldier of the cross goes forth from solitude to fight his fight. He who seeks God alone has God in public by his side.

III. COMMUNION WITH GOD ENRICHES THE SOUL WITH PRECIOUS GRACE.

Grace for *others*. Moses and Aaron soon return; but they come not with empty hands; they are enriched with the best gifts. Here is beautiful evidence of gainful commerce with the Lord. Laden with good, they haste to scatter good around. Their souls are redolent of heaven; "they *blessed the people.*"

The *blessed of the Lord bless earth*. And they are the most blessed who seek the mercy-seat. The wise, the rich, the learned, and the strong, are tools employed by God to move the world's machine, but it is *piety* which strews real weal on men. They who descend from Zion's heights are as the clouds which drop refreshing rain.—"*Christ is all.*" [See Addenda, p. 128, *Nearer to God.*]

Topic: THE PRIESTS' ENTRANCE UPON THEIR OFFICE (Vv. 1-7).

At the close of the seven days' consecration service in the court of the tabernacle, the priests entered publicly upon their office, began their holy and solemn

work. On the eighth day, Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel, and gave directions how the sacrificial services of the tabernacle were to be inaugurated. The rites of consecration were to culminate in a public declaration and recognition, in the presence of Israel and the Lord. On this occasion Aaron and his four sons were to slay the victims to be offered; and the ceremony was of the most imposing character. As Aaron and his sons came forth from their seclusion at the call of Moses, they appeared in vestments which were a visible expression of the offices they held, and an outward sign of the power and authority with which they had been invested. Moses here transfers the office he had held to Aaron, and declares that he does so at the command of the Lord. Aaron was now to speak to the people as the oracle of God to man, and the mouthpiece of man to God. As the people saw the high priest ascend the altar steps for the first time, they would recognise the person through whom henceforth they would draw near to heaven. We notice:

I. *That the installation of Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood, was SOLEMNIZED BY THE PRESENTATION OF SYMBOLIC SACRIFICES TO THE LORD.*

Although the consecration service had extended over seven days, and had been most searching and complete, though the high priest had been washed, anointed and clothed with gorgeous and spotless apparel, crowned with the mitre which displayed in pure gold the words, "Holiness unto the Lord"; although appointed sacrifices had been presented during those seven secluded days; yet, when the consecrated priest and his sons came forth to begin their duties, it is necessary that additional sacrifices be offered before they can perform any acceptable service for the people.

This showed that the priests, after all consecrating ceremonies, were (1) *not perfect men*, that they were compassed about with infirmity, and that for them as with the rest of the people forgiveness and cleansing from sin must be sought of God. False religions lift the priesthood above human faultiness and infirmity, and invest those who officiate at the altar with superhuman privilege and power. In the Levitical economy this error was not committed, and it is one of the distinguishing works of the divinity of the old dispensation that the imperfections of the best of men are acknowledged as demanding repentance and forgiveness.

(2) The priests of the Levitical economy were *not perfect types of Christ*; for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

The *order* of the sacrifices offered on the first day of the official service of the priests, shows the progressive steps by which we approach unto, and find acceptance with God. (a) *The sin offering* suggests that first there must be *forgiveness of sin*, the barrier must be removed which separates between the soul and its Maker. (b) *The burnt offering* suggests that pardon having been procured, *there must be complete consecration* to Him who has mercifully forgiven. (c) *The peace offering* suggests *devotion of the life to the Lord*, the enjoyment of union and communion with Him, and constant communications from Him. These sacrifices were to be presented in the presence of the people, at the command of, and unto the Lord. Though set apart to the holiest service, no man is perfectly pure. No acceptable service can be rendered to God except by persons who have been pardoned and prepared. The clear statements in the New Testament of the perfect purity of Christ, and the evidence we have that those statements are correct, furnish conclusive proofs that He was *infinitely superior to the Aaronic priesthood*; that—unlike them—He was not even "the best of men," but was *God-man*, "God manifest in the flesh."

II. *That the installation of Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood was SIGNALISED BY THE MANIFESTATION OF THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.*

What Moses had done and commanded with respect to the tabernacle and its services, had been by the authority of the Lord. He had received authority not only respecting the sacrifices to be offered, but also to announce that follow-

ing the presentation, the Lord Himself would make Himself known, and reveal His glory. The offerings were to be presented "before the Lord," and He would give open demonstration that He both saw and approved. He would show His regard for their obedient worship, by manifesting His glorious presence. In all our acts of worship, in every service we present to the Lord, we shall derive inspiration and stimulus by remembering (a) *His commandments*; (b) *His presence*; (c) *His promises*. He crowns the well-doing of earth with His own eternal "well done!" But those who are faithless and despise His Word shall be covered with shame and everlasting contempt.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: AARON'S FIRST OFFERING FOR HIMSELF (Vv. 7-14).

What unquestioning obedience Aaron yielded to the will of the Lord, as made known through Moses! for we read, "Aaron went *therefore* unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself." The ritual is the same as that in chap. iv., except that the blood is not brought into the sanctuary. Holiness without which no man can see the Lord, could only be *typically* attained by the Levitical priesthood.

I. *The offerings presented by Aaron for himself show that HIS PRIESTHOOD WOULD BE ACCEPTED.* He could not have drawn near to God acceptably for others, had there been any unforgiven guilt resting upon him. The three offerings he presented fully satisfied the Divine claims, and placed him in a position of acceptance and communion; so that he could represent the interests of the people in the presence of Jehovah. God would be well pleased with arrangements He had Himself made.

II. *The offerings presented by Aaron for himself showed that HE WAS COMPASSED BY INFIRMITIES.* This lesson respecting the servants of the Lord, chosen and appointed to wait upon Him for His own glory and the best interests of men, is continually presenting itself through the sacred scriptures. Aaron had sin that needed to be forgiven, there was natural enmity in his mind that needed to be slain. It was a humbling thing for Aaron to proceed, arrayed in his splendid sacerdotal garments, upon which the people looked with awe and wonder, to slay the calf that was appointed for sacrifice, and to offer it for his own sins. The calf would probably remind him of his great sin in making a golden calf for the people to worship while Moses was up in the mount. Any pride of heart, or presumption of mind, would now be checked by a public acknowledgment of his sins and need of pardon, though chosen and lifted to so high and holy an office.

III. *The offerings presented by Aaron for himself show that A GREATER OFFERING MUST HAVE BEEN TYPIFIED, BY VIRTUE OF WHICH THESE WERE ACCEPTED.* All the washings, anointings, offerings, and attirings of the seven consecration days had not sufficed to make the priests pure and holy; and one offering now is not enough to make the ceremony complete; nor are the three that are now offered final. None of these could make the comers thereunto perfect, they had only *temporary* and *typical* value. *Our High Priest's offering of Himself* was accepted, He is therefore able to save all who come unto God by Him. He made no offering *for* Himself, for He had no sins to own, no guilt to atone for. His sacrifice is final, for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Tasting death for every man, no other offering is needed by man, and no other can be accepted by God.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: AARON'S OFFERINGS FOR THE PEOPLE (Vv. 15-21).

In these offerings for the people, the people were led to express their desire for forgiveness and their complete consecration to the service of Jehovah. They

had asked for some one to go propitiiously between them and God ; their request had been granted, their offerings are taken by Aaron and presented to the Lord for them. By such an arrangement, both priests and people were taught—

I. THAT THEY STOOD ON A COMMON MORAL EQUALITY BEFORE GOD. The election of persons to eminent positions and distinguished service did not imply that they were the favourites of heaven, exempted from responsibility, or from moral blame. The priests were under the same moral obligations with those for whom they officiated at the altar ; and had to seek acceptance *in the same way*, of the God who alone can forgive sins.

II. THAT THEY BOTH NEEDED PARDON FROM, BEFORE THEY COULD HAVE PEACE WITH, GOD. A condition of sinfulness unrepented and unforgiven is a condition of rebellion and hostility. And, as two cannot walk together except they agree, so God and man cannot commune together except strife and variance cease. Both people and priests, after acknowledgment of, and atonement for sin, could draw near to God, and enjoy friendship and fellowship with Him.

III. THAT THEY WERE BOTH EXPECTED TO RENDER IMPLICIT AND COMPLETE OBEDIENCE TO GOD. Priests and people had to do what Moses commanded, and he only commanded what God enjoined. Jehovah alone was the source of authority and power in the commonwealth and theocracy of Israel. The way by which God comes to man is by the blood of sprinkling, and the blood must be applied according to His own will and pleasure. The most minute details had to be carried out, which would test the *faith*, as well as the *obedience* of the worshippers. The Word of the Lord was, "*Do and live.*"

Under the Gospel dispensation, and around the cross of Christ, all men meet on a level *morally* ; and none are saved except through faith in His Name. Being pardoned and justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But, "no cross no crown." Faith and works must go together, we are saved by faith, but faith without works is dead. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Christ enjoins obedience to His commandments, as well as faith in His Name.—*F. W. B.*

Topic : BLESSING THE PEOPLE (Vv. 22, 23).

How earnestly Aaron entered upon his solemn and responsible work ! Having presented the required sacrifices, prompted by the Spirit of the Lord he pronounced his benediction upon the people. Descending the sloping side of the altar Moses conducted him into the tabernacle of the congregation to finally instruct him in his duties. On returning, Aaron blessed the people, for this was to be the outcome of all the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical economy : blessing from the Lord.

The people were not only prepared for a holy and lofty mission by the strict and searching discipline of the Levitical ritual, but they were initiated unto elementary knowledge of spiritual truths, and introduced into the possession of priceless spiritual blessings. The sacrifices themselves had no virtue or power to bless, but they were the tests of the people's faith and obedience ; appointed and approved means by which the demands of God's law were, for that age of the world, satisfactorily met. God favourably regarded the relation into which Israel had been brought, and His blessing descended upon the people when Aaron outspread his hands. Aaron's act foreshadowed the work of Him who was to come, and in whom all nations would be blessed. When the sacrifices had been offered the blessing fell on the people, denoting that God was satisfied with obedience to His commandments ; and typifying the greater benediction of our High Priest, as from the most holy place He dispenses His blessings upon the hearts of men.

In the act of Aaron blessing the people we observe—

I. *The recognition of MAN'S GREATEST NEED, viz., GOD'S BLESSING.* By sin man had incurred the Divine displeasure; had fled from the Divine presence; his mind had become carnal and alienated from God. The mercy of God could not let man perish; His justice demanded an atonement, in order that reconciliation and restoration might be effected. Divinely appointed substitutionary sacrifices satisfied the claims of Divine justice for the time being; and, through them, friendship and communion with God were enjoyed. Man, as the offspring of God, could not be happy without God, without his reconciled presence, and paternal benediction. The needed blessing was promised, if only the needed conditions for its bestowment were observed. In these incidents, the preliminaries were completed; and Aaron, with the sanction and smile of Heaven, came forth and blessed the people. Probably, the formulary employed was that recorded in Num. vi., 23-27, or Ps. xc., 17; words which the Lord commanded Aaron and his sons to use, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it." What a complete and comprehensive blessing! Some have thought that the mention of the name of Jehovah three times in the words to be used by Aaron have reference to the triune nature of God, according with the threefold apostolic blessing of the new Testament, and the formulary pronounced at the ordinance of baptism. Man needed the blessing, good will, and aid of the Lord, His friendship and smile. Needed to be kept from all evil within, and from the Evil One. Man needed the face of God to shine upon him, God's reconciled, cheering, transforming face, the face of his Father and King. The peace of God alone could remove remorse for the past and dread apprehensions for the future. Here, then, was the bestowment of all needed grace, the earnest as well as preparation for final glory. These blessings centre in, and flow from Christ with (a) *infinite fulness*; (b) *inestimable graciousness*; for all men and all time. Observe—

II. *THE DECLARATION OF GOD'S GREATEST JOY, viz., BLESSING MEN.*

How quickly the mercy of God whispered blessing in the ears of the first offending pair ere they were expelled from the blissful bowers of Eden! How He sanctioned the erection of altars and accepted their offerings wherever the patriarchs pitched their tents! How faithfully He now fulfilled the promises made to Moses, to meet with and bless His people if they erected an altar to His name and offered sacrifices thereon. His greatest joy is in blessing man. He is slow to anger, and delights in mercy. Aaron, standing with outspread hands, was the representative of God as well as of the people; and in the words of the Lord, as well as in His name, he pronounced the blessing. God blessed man; (a) *in equity*: He had not connived at iniquity, had not accepted man into His confidence and communion without obedience and satisfaction. He was just, and yet the justifier of those who came to Him in sacrifices, which typified the one sacrifice of Jesus. (b) *Out of the sanctuary*. The high priest came out of the tabernacle and blessed the people; and God still pronounces His best and brightest blessing out of Zion, where His name is recorded, His worship observed. (c) *In connection with human means*. It was the blessing of God, but it passed through the lips of Aaron. God employed and honoured human agency. Man could not bless himself; Aaron, of himself, could not bless the people. He could be, and was, the *channel* to convey the Divine benediction. Moses inducted Aaron to his office, and then Aaron conveyed blessings to men. We cannot be sources, but we can be *means* of blessing to others; we may glorify God by co-working with Him in His plans and purposes for blessing men. The Gospel, which blesses men, is the Gospel of God's glory.

Aaron blessing men from the holy place where the sacrifices were completed may be regarded as a type of Him who, when on earth, opened His lips and pronounced His benedictions upon men, not only in the beatitudes but all through His life as He went about doing good, when He descended from Olivet with hands outspread, blessing His disciples. He has His hands full of blessing now, since He has led captivity captive and received gifts for men.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: THE MIRACULOUS FIRE (Vv. 23, 24).

According to the word of Moses, when all was completed that the Lord had commanded, the Divine glory was displayed in the presence of the congregation. There was no delay on the part of Israel to comply with the Divine requirements, and there was no delay on the part of the Lord to signify He had accepted their sacrifices. There was a sudden flash of mysterious flame from the resplendent light that filled the holy place. It lighted upon the brazen altar, and *consumed* the sacrifice which was already on fire; thus, the altar fire was consecrated. Look

I. AT SOME OF THE FACTS WHICH THE FLASHING FIRE CONFIRMED.

(a) *That the sacrifices were divinely accepted.* The priests had kindled a fire, had done all needed to render their offering complete and acceptable; Aaron had been into the tabernacle, returned, and blessed the people; it needed only now the baptism of fire, the smile of the Lord to be seen beaming forth from the holy place. That radiant and effulgent smile came, took possession of the sacrifice upon the altar, compassed and consumed it. The *ascending* flame symbolizes that heaven received it.

(b) *That the priests were divinely accredited.* What Aaron and his sons had done pleased the Lord; He inspected their work, saw that it was good; and, to show to priests and people that the order of the priesthood was confirmed, the fire came leaping forth to crown the fire the priests had lighted. Thus the Lord owned the priests as co-workers with Himself, as mediators between the human and Divine. Henceforth, they would be His accredited servants.

(c) *That the tabernacle was divinely appropriated.* God had already taken possession of it and had filled it with His glory; but the eyes of the common people were not permitted to see the glory that dwelt within. It was well, therefore, for them to witness the glory manifested from within; to see the fire of the Lord leap forth, giving them ocular demonstration that Jehovah had really appropriated the tabernacle as His earthly, local, temporary dwelling-place. Jehovah has never ceased to answer by fire. The Scriptures record many instances where, by cloud and flame, the Divine Presence has been manifested to men, *e.g.*, the dedication of the temple; the nativity of Christ; the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. At the end of the world, by clouds and fire the great assizes will be inaugurated. Let us seek to present acceptable sacrifices to Him in the sanctuaries of our hearts, let us seek for the descent of the fire of His love to consume all selfishness and sin, and make our bodies temples of the Holy Ghost. Consider also:

II. SOME OF THE EFFECTS WHICH THE FLASHING FIRE PRODUCED.

The people, having been told beforehand by Moses that at the completion of their offerings the glory of the Lord would appear, were anticipating the manifestation which took place. There had been *atonement*, and *mediation*, sin had been forgiven and removed; all had been declared "holiness unto the Lord," there was nothing now to dread. The people were filled with *holy rapture*. A loud simultaneous shout of joy arose. They could not restrain their gladness; adoration blended with praise; they were *grateful* as well as *glad*. They felt that God was propitiated by what had been done. They were filled with *sacred awe*. They fell upon their faces; the glory was so resplendent, or they may have felt how

great the disparity existing between them and God, how unworthy they were of His favour. They were not prostrate with dread and terror, but from feelings of reverence and worship. The people had no doubt about the reality of the fire—about its miraculous character—they were satisfied as to its origin and meaning. *All the manifestations of God's glory to men, in nature, and in revelation, are calculated and designed to awaken rapture and beget reverence.* The Gospel brings glad tidings of great joy, even a joy unspeakable and full of glory; it begets reverence for it shows us how great our sins and how holy our God. We see God as a consuming fire to consume sin, and to purify from all defilement. Let us so live that hereafter we may enter into the glory unchanging and eternal. Rapture and reverence will characterise the delight and worship of heaven.—*F. W. B.*

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER IX.

V. 6.—*Theme*: CONDITIONS OF BLESSING.

Inanimate nature governed by fixed laws; brute creation by instinct; man by reason. These facts asserted in scripture, obvious to experience and analogy. Man can exercise intelligent and deliberate choice. God compels where law and instinct rule, but commands where reason reigns. Animals submitted unconsciously to their fate, but the worshippers voluntarily slayed and intelligently presented them in sacrifice. The people were told to obey the Lord, and then His glory would appear unto them. Thus, a promise was given to inspire, reward held out to stimulate and sustain. Thus the people were taught—

I. THE DUTY OF OBEDIENCE TO DIVINE COMMANDMENTS.

Implying—

(a) *That God has the right to command.*

(b) *That man has ability to obey.*

(c) *That man is under obligation to obey.*

II. THE BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE TO DIVINE COMMANDMENTS.

(a) *It pleases God.* He is satisfied—glorified.

(b) *It blesses man.* Exercises and honours his noblest faculties, awakens keenest delight, secures manifestation of Divine glory. Those who obey increase in knowledge of the Divine will, and become transformed into the Divine likeness. God's highest delight to exercise mercy, to purify, and save.—*F. W. B.*

V. 12.—*Theme*: THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING.

In tabernacle service and furniture almost everything sprinkled with blood. There must have been something peculiarly significant in the fact. Among other things it—

I. INDICATED THAT LIFE HAD BEEN REALLY SACRIFICED.

II. AWAKED FEELINGS OF AWE IN THE WORSHIPPERS.

III. INVESTED THINGS WITH PECULIAR SACREDNESS.

IV. PROCLAIMED THAT PROPITIATION HAD BEEN EFFECTED.

The precious blood of Christ teaches these things, and more; for the blood sprinkled

round about the altar had no virtue in itself to wash away sin, whereas Christ's blood cleanses from all sin. (See Heb. xii. 24; 1 Peter i. 2.) The robes of the glorified are made white in the blood of the Lamb. The new song of heaven extols the efficacy of the blood that was shed on Calvary.—*F. W. B.*

V. 24.—*Theme*: THE ANSWER BY FIRE.

The flame that leaped out of the tabernacle and consumed the burnt offering, and the fat upon the altar—

I. DEMONSTRATED THE FACT OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

II. EXHIBITED THE AWFULNESS OF THE DIVINE POWER.

III. PROVED THE FIDELITY OF THE DIVINE WORD.

IV. TAUGHT THE TENDERNESS OF THE DIVINE MERCY.

The fire might have consumed the sinners instead of the sacrifice, but God is a consuming fire against sin, He loves the sinner, is not willing that any should perish.—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 23, 24.—*Theme*: GOD'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE SACRIFICES.

When we see the variety of ordinances and multitude of sacrifices, we are ready to ask, What compensation could be made to the people for all the expense and trouble to which they were put? Here we have a sufficient answer: God would not withhold from them communication such as would abundantly recompense all they did for His sake. He gave them such testimonies of His acceptance as made their hearts overflow. Consider—

I. THE TESTIMONIES OF GOD'S ACCEPTANCE.

These were of different kinds:

1. *Ministerial.* Moses and Aaron having finished all they had to do within the tabernacle, came forth and "blessed the people." In this they were—

(1) *Types of Christ*: Showing what He would do as soon as He had finished His sacrifice: He blessed His disciples (Luke xxiv. 50, 51) as He was taken up to heaven; and He sent the promised blessing of the Holy Spirit quickly thence (Acts ii. 33; iii. 26).

(2) *Examples to ministers*: Showing what all ministers are authorised and empowered to declare to those who rely on the Great Sacrifice. They are to stand forth in the very name of God, and proclaim pardon and peace to all (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

2. *Personal*. In two ways did *God Himself* by direct testimonies, apart from all indirect human agency, manifest His acceptance.

(1) *He displayed His glory* before all the people. Now we have no such visible manifestation, but we have instead, as direct testimonies from God, "the Spirit of God witnessing with our spirit"; and "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts."

(2) *He sent fire upon the sacrifice*: Showing what fiery indignation they deserved, but that he had turned it aside from them, and caused it to fall on the altar.

II. EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THESE TESTIMONIES OF GOD'S ACCEPTANCE.

Visible objects affect us strongly; the people now were deeply impressed with what they saw. They were filled—

1. *With exalted joy*. Had they not been taught to expect this manifestation they would have been terrified thereby, as Gideon and Manoah (Judges vi. 21, 22; xiii. 19-22); but being prepared, they rent the air with their shouts.

The inward triumph of Paul seems more suited to our dispensation (Romans viii. 31-39), and that is both the privilege and duty of every one of us to enjoy.

2. *With profound reverence*. Humility united with joy. Even the seraphim cover their faces and feet before the throne; glorified saints cast their crowns at the feet of Him who sitteth thereon. Exalted joys should be tempered with adoration. Illustrations will be found in Gen. xvii. 3; Exod. iii. 6.

Learn:—

(a) *To lay no stress on transient affections*. Such a state of feeling in the people ought to have issued well, but soon passed away when temptation arose.

(b) *To be thankful for the advantages we enjoy*. We are apt to envy the Jews their privileges: they walked by sight, we walk by faith. But our High Priest "blesses us with all spiritual blessings."—*Chas. Simeon, M.A.*

V. 24.—*Theme*: GRACIOUS FIRE.

A sudden marvel fills all minds with awe.

While blessings fall from blessing saints (Moses and Aaron) heaven brightens with resplendent signs. Glory shines around. Fire is sent forth.

I. FIRE SEALS WITH HEAVEN'S OWN SEAL THE ATONING RITES.

Wherefore comes the fire forth? Is it to seize the guilty sons of men? Is it to hurl on them deserved wrath? Far otherwise. It comes with olive branch of peace. It settles on the altar. It feeds on the victim as its feast. Then it brings evidence of God's delight. Then it fills hearts with tranquil peace. The flame with blazing tongue proclaims: Here is the sacrifice which God selects, approves, calls men to bring, and never will refuse.

II. THE ATTESTING FIRE SPEAKS GOD'S ACCEPTANCE OF SUBSTITUTION.

The altar victims were the foreshadowing of Christ. Faith therefore loves this scene. It is one of the wells from which it gladly draws new joy. It is one of the meadows of its richest food.

But *what is the antitype of the descending flame?* The clear Gospel page. There, distinct testimonies answer to this approving sign:—

(1) The angelic host, a shining train, which swept down from heaven at Jesus' birth.

(2) The baptismal seal (Luke iii. 21, 22).

(3) Transfiguration glories rest on Him: and a voice from the cloud proclaims, "This is My beloved Son."

(4) The opened grave, guarded by the angels, for in the resurrection of Christ we have the fiery seal of an accepted sacrifice.

When Israel's host beheld the fire of God, what were their feelings? "They shouted and fell on their faces." Sweet joy was theirs. Deep adoration warmed each heart. Exulting praise burst forth. Profoundest worship was their instant act.

Shall we not do the like? God sent His Son to seek, to save. He lays on Him our every sin; gives us every pledge that He approves, attests, receives, delights in the accepted offering. Witness after witness from His courts assures that pardon, acquittal, release from every woe, admission to the home of heaven, may be ours. Oh, then, let every breath praise God! Let every hour of every day be inward worship.—*Dear Law.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER IX.

MINISTERIAL DEDICATION.

"If so poor a worm as I may to Thy great glory live,

All my actions sanctify, all my words and thoughts receive;

Claim me for Thy service, claim all I have and all I am.

"Take my soul and body's powers; take my memory, mind, and will;

All my goods and all my hours; all I know and all I feel;

All I think, or speak, or do—take my heart, but make it new.

"Now, O God, Thine own I am; now I give Thee back Thine own;

Freedom, friends, and health and fame, consecrate to Thee alone;

Thine I live, thrice happy I! Happier still if Thine to die."—*Charles Wesley.*

"I thank Thee, Lord, for using me for Thee to work and speak ;
However trembling is the hand, the voice however weak.

"For those to whom, through me, Thou hast some heavenly guidance given ;
For some, it may be, saved from death, and some brought nearer heaven.

"Oh, honour higher, truer far, than earthly fame could bring,
Thus to be used in work like this, so long, by such a King !

"A blunted sword, a rusted spear, which only He could wield ;
A broken sickle in His hand to reap His harvest field."—*Bonar.*

NEARNESS TO GOD.

Favoured *places* :—Eden, Peniel, Sinai, Temple, Transfiguration Mount, Olivet, etc.

Favoured *persons* :—Enoch, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David, Elijah, Daniel, Stephen, Paul, John.

SPIRITUAL BENEFACTORS. Our power to

benefit others will just be in proportion to our personal holiness. "Speak for eternity," says Mr. Cheyne, "but above all, cultivate your own spirit. A word spoken by you when your conscience is clear, when your heart is full of God's Spirit, is worth two thousand words spoken in unbelief and sin. This was my great fault in the ministry. Remember it is not man but God that must have the glory. It is not so much speaking as faith that is heard."

"The vertical power of religion in the heart is the truest measure of its horizontal power in the world."—*Bowes.*

"When one that holds communion with the skies,
Has filled his urn where those pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things—
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings ;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied."—*Cowper.*

CHAPTER X.

Reckless Ministry Sternly Rebuked.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 1.—*Nahab and Abihu offered strange fire.* Whether they were prompted by impetuous religious feeling, or were confused with wine, the act was reckless ; they offered before the Lord incense on fire which was unsanctified. Probably, instead of holy fire taken from the altar, they lit their censers from the fire burning "at the door of the tabernacle," used for "boiling the flesh." [See chap. viii. 31.] To act in God's service from heated *impulse* is as blameworthy as to act under *intoxication*. Strong feeling makes a man as confused in thought and rash in conduct as does strong drink. When God commands what should be done, that and that only should be done : and done in the manner He prescribes. Self-will, heedlessness, impetuosity, must be absolutely arrested on the very threshold of sacred service. God asks obedience : literal and absolute : and "behold to obey is better than sacrifice ; and to hearken than the fat of rams."

V. 2.—*Went out fire from the Lord.* That fire had only just before fallen upon the altar victim instead of falling on the sinner : God thus expressed His pleasure in sparing man and accepting the substituted atonement offering. And "He is not willing that any should perish." But if man will act disobediently, notwithstanding God's desire to spare him, man must bear his penalty. And now the fire falls direct on the sinner and devours him. "For our God is a consuming fire." The cross of Jesus shelters all who will hide beneath its grace, but on the presumptuous the wrath of God must surely fall. "*They died before the Lord.*"

V. 3.—This is it that the Lord spake. Moses appeals to a well-known divine utterance, which, however, is not to be found in the written Scriptures. Just so, the apostle Paul quotes a saying of the Lord Jesus, which nowhere appears in the Gospels (Acts xx. 35). There were sayings of Jehovah living in the people's memory which the pen had not transcribed to the sacred page. There is an unwritten Bible: for God's messages, in which He "spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets," were so numerous that all could not be gathered into the written Bible.

In this sense must be understood John's statement that much of our Lord's life—His words and deeds—is left unrecorded in the pages of the evangelists (John xx. 30; xxi. 35). Yet, lest any should use this fact as a warrant for *adding* aught "to the words of the book of this prophecy" (Rev. xxii. 18) John declares that the written Gospels are sufficient for our faith, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John xx. 31).

I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me. Aaron and His sons had been most solemnly consecrated for their ministries: and, because of their perfected sanctification (ceremonially), were to be allowed near access to Jehovah's awful presence. Should they presume upon their privilege and act heedlessly, violating their sanctity by thoughtless and irreverent conduct? God would not have it so. The presumptuous soul is offensive to Jehovah. [See Num. xx. 30.] If we do not honour Him by our reverence, He will get honour to Himself in our punishment.

Aaron held his peace—bowing to the appalling judgment of God with acquiescence: recognising that his sons had summoned upon themselves the doom which befel them. It was the silence of a soul overwhelmed with grief, but grief regulated by the sense that "the Judge of all the earth doeth right."

V. 5.—Carried them in their coats out of the camp. Their priestly tunics were not burned by the fire which had struck the wearers with death. The garments were symbols of the sanctity God approved: they remained unharmed. What a hush of awe must have gone through "the camp," as the crowds of Israel watched the carrying of the blanched corpses through their midst. It told the warning truth that God was so jealous for His holiness that He would not spare even the young priests so newly consecrated if they failed to sanctify Him. "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire."

V. 6.—Uncover not your heads. To let the hair fall dishevelled was the custom of mourners, the sign of bereavement. For them to express open and violent grief would appear like casting blame upon God, like strife against His providence. They must submit. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it." Hard indeed it is not to complain and rebel when the hand of God lays bitter strokes upon us: but piety will manifest itself best in meek submission and quiet endurance.

Much grace will be needed, however, in mourners if they are to yield up their treasures of affection thus uncomplainingly to the Lord. Yet let it be remembered that Jesus had no rebuke for the tears shed over Lazarus' death; yea, more, that as He stood by the grave and beheld the scene of weepers, "*Jesus wept*" (John xi. 35). The case was exceptional with these young priests, and God's prohibition of mourning for them must not be regarded as a divine interdict of the tears of love.

V. 7.—For the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you. They who are dedicated to God's service must let that be supreme; its claims subordinate all private duties; even the burial of their dead was insufficient as a warrant for them however briefly to desert their sacred offices. "Let the dead bury their dead," said Jesus; "and come, follow me" (Matt. viii. 21, 22). For religious claims are superlative,

and our human affections (in themselves becoming) may prove a snare if permitted to assert themselves against divine claims.

Vv. 8-11.—Do not drink wine, etc. Certainly such a possible cause for excited action, confused thought, or ungoverned feeling must be scrupulously shunned by all when occupied in sanctuary ministrations and sacred employ. Jesus “would not drink” (Matt. xxvii. 34) when the narcotic drug was offered Him at Calvary; for He was at that moment engaged in divinest employ—offering Himself unto God as man’s atonement. Paul’s admonitions to bishops and deacons (1 Tim. iii. 2, 3) not to be “given to wine,” is in the same direction; any cause of false excitement or possible rashness must be sedulously avoided by those occupied in God’s service. The prohibition is, however, not all-inclusive; it only applies to specified persons, and to specified occasions—“when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation.”

Vv. 12-15.—Take the meat offering, etc. Moses pressed upon the priests to turn to their spiritual functions and ministries without delay. For the best solace in grief is activity. Sit not in repining because of God’s stroke, turn to Him in holy service. Possibly the dread of God, “lest He be angry,” urged all to quick attention to duty. Sad it is that we need often the startling visitation of God to awaken us to vigilance in religion. “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. xxvi. 9).

Vv. 16-20.—Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering. The flesh of this sacrificial offering should have been eaten by the priests; and Moses grew “angry” with the surviving sons of Aaron that they had neglected this part of the prescribed ritual. But Aaron produced an explanation of the omission: that all the sacred regulations for the sin offering had been observed by them, except the festive part which was an obligation upon the priest and his family; and that the calamity which had befallen them unfitted them for this social repast or rendered the festivity inappropriate. This was an error; express commands should not be evaded even by plea of untimeliness or impropriety; duty must be first: but Moses was touched by his brother’s great grief, and “was content.” For is it not written, “I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hosea vi. 6)? Where the “spirit” is right the “letter” is less important.

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: REPULSIVE INCENSE (Vv. 1, 2).

“Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord.”

Nadab and Abihu were priests, ministers of the tabernacle; therefore lessons from their example possess a special fitness to *ministers of Christ*. To preach to others, forgetting admonitions to ourselves, were deplorable, fulfilling the lament, “They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept” (Cant. i. 6). Yet, though the lesson of this incident is special to ministers of the sanctuary, it is not exclusive; for “ye are a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. ii. 5). Every redeemed soul is consecrated by grace to be God’s priest in His great universe. Christ “hath made us kings and priests unto God.”

From every priest God looks for incense; of affection, influence, service, possessions, praises, prayers. God called us into the temple of His grace that we might “offer living sacrifices; holy and acceptable, our reasonable service.” This is our mission on earth, the design of our conversion; for this the Spirit works in us: we must be priests.

And each of us, as a priest, *does take his censer*, and the fire ascends to the Lord. Each is doing something in work, or worship, or ministry, to fill the temple of earth with offerings to the Lord. But it is for us solemnly to ask in presence of this incident—

WHAT INCENSE ARE WE OFFERING? Even priests may err here: burn “strange fire,” offer what God will abhor, and imperil their souls in the action. Consider therefore—

I. THEIR OFFENSIVE OFFERING. “Offered *strange fire*.”

1. *What rendered their incense odious to God?* “The fire was *strange*.” It lacked two essential and acceptable qualities—

(a) It had *not been kindled by God*. The fire on the altar was kindled from heaven. The divine origin of that fire changed human offerings laid on that altar into atoning sacrifices. They became thereby sanctified. Without this divine element the human offerings were not acceptable (chap. ix. 24). But these priests “took their censers and put fire therein”; and thus the fire had nothing of divinity in it; the offering was altogether earthly and human; “strange fire.”

(b) It had *not been mingled with blood*. Sacrificial victims were being continuously offered on that altar; that fire never went out; the fire was never free, therefore, from the blood. This rendered the fire sacred. Consecrated by blood. Nothing came to God pleasing Him except mingled with blood. But their fire had nothing of the savour of blood in it: it was, therefore, “strange,” offensive to God.

2. *What corresponding offensiveness may mar our offerings?*

In the Christian church to-day, not a little “strange fire” is burned before the Lord. The *motive* that prompts what we do is *not divine*; the fire is earthly, human. The incense is not sanctified by blood; for much we do is done *without associating it with the atonement of Christ*, and resting on the merits of His blood for acceptableness and worth. Thus, the fire is “strange” when our religion or work is the outcome of—

(a) *Mere emotional fervour*. The “wild fire” of hot sensationalism, the religion of boisterous emotion and animal tumult, the raging vulgarity of noise, these are no acceptable substitute to offer before the Lord, in place of calm devoutness and holy earnestness. There may be the noisiness of the “crackling of thorns,” without fervid glow or quiet heat. Emotional people are not the most devotional. Sensation is no test or measure of sincerity.

(b) *Mere intellectual excitement*. Public prayers which are voluble and boisterous, lacking thoughtful reverence, how are they rebuked by the homage of the veiled cherubim, repudiated by the emphatic command: “Be not rash with thy mouth, for God is in heaven and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few” (Eccles. v. 2). Preaching which abandons itself to the mere “fire of oratory,” though rousing an audience, may be more human than divine; souls are never converted by “excellency of speech” (1 Cor. ii. 1, 4, 5).

(c) *Mere feverish activity*. There is an evil under the sun into which very young converts are betrayed. Before becoming themselves enriched in the Christian life, before they have nourished and fortified their minds in divine truth, without giving any one opportunity of “instructing them in the way of the Lord more perfectly,” as Paul did Aquila and Priscilla (Acts xviii. 26), they seize their censer, and with restless eagerness rush out to wave their incense forth. “Not a novice,” says Paul, “lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil” (1 Tim. iii. 6).

(d) *Mere self-glorifying religious effort*. He who rejects Christ’s righteousness, but labours, by diligent efforts, “to establish his own righteousness,” offers strange fire. The Christian who is active for love of eminence or observation, zealous or liberal for the sake of praise or distinction, offers “strange fire.”

(e) *Mere spiritual rhapsody.* Spiritual moods and "frames of feeling" which are elevated, ardent, rapturous, are not the divinest in which a child of God may be found. God does not intend that we live in the cloud-land of ecstasy, for elation of feeling may be but self-elevation. God brought even Paul down from "the third heaven" by a "thorn in his flesh," that he might "rather glory in his infirmities"; for much of that lofty sentiment of piety is "strange fire." [See Addenda, p. 151, *Sensationalism.*]

II. THEIR RASH IMPIETY. "Offered strange fire before the Lord."

To ordinary observers that fire looked like altar fire, as prayers which are sensational, and services which are self-seeking, look like ardent piety; but "God seeth not as man seeth, he looketh at the heart." Their act was one of—

1. *Fearless presumption.* Even amid the solemnities of the sanctuary they were reckless, frivolous. They "took fire" and swung their censers, as if it mattered not how they ministered; as if God deserved no special reverence. To enter God's awful presence without awe, to engage in His worship without adoration, seems a repetition of this careless swinging of censers. It is as though God still addressed the trifler: "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands that ye should tread my courts" (Isa. i. 12).

"Lo, God is here; let us adore,
And own how dreadful is this place."

Their conduct seems to have resulted from *festive indulgence*. The command of v. 9 indicates that in a state of intoxicated excitement they rushed into the holy place. But indulgence of any sort, if it unfits us for God's presence or service, should be shunned. Human nature is likely to be overbalanced when the senses are gratified; therefore Paul "kept his body in subjection," and "crucified the flesh." We may come "before the Lord" "drunk, but not with wine" (Isa. xxix. 9); intoxicated with worldly thoughts, with foolish vanity; the mind excited with delirious readings; and whatever takes solemnity from us must be shunned as we come before the Holy One of Israel. [See Addenda, p. 151, *Intemperance*].

2. *Wilful disobedience.* By lighting their own fire, and by assuming an office strictly assigned to the high priest, they violated God's commands.

Analogy of their conduct:—Refusing divine provisions made for us in the sacrifice of Christ, and making a religion of our own. When God has "given a name under heaven whereby we must be saved," and said: "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts iv. 12), what is it but wilful disobedience to set up other trusts? Pitiful the wrongly directed efforts of mistaken souls, whether of those who, not animated with the love of Christ, are yet doing Christian work in their own strength; or those who, seeking salvation, are relying on other merits than those of the blood poured out on the altar.

III. THEIR ALARMING DESTRUCTION.

They offered offensive fire; God sent out devouring fire. "Before the Lord" they burned their fire; "before the Lord" they were burned with fire. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." Let this admonish us to remember—

1. *The God with whom we have to do.* Hitherto, in the tabernacle service, God had not asserted indignation against the sinful, so much as provided for pardon and redemption. But He who is *gracious* can also show Himself *just*, as he who presumes upon His mercy will prove. [See Addenda, p. 150, *Presumption.*]

2. *The rebuke which presumption will receive.*

(a) *The complete overthrow of their rash efforts.* For what is not of God shall not stand. He will put every human thing to confusion. "The fire shall try every man's work." Much "work" which is thought the outcome of zeal for

God, will prove but "wood, hay, stubble," merely human; and, therefore, "if the work be burned he shall suffer loss."

(b) *More terrible rebuke* may be given than the frustration of our work: the *fire may fall upon ourselves*. "For the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in *flaming fire*, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 7). And "if judgment begin at the house of God, *what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*" (1 Pet. iv. 17). [See Addenda, p. 151, *Punishment*.]

Topic: YOUTHFUL PROFANATION OF A SACRED OFFICE (Vv. 1, 2).

Special grace is indeed needed by those occupying highest offices in the Church of God.

Nadab and Abihu were *the first young men* called into the ancient priesthood; and in their career a *warning is offered to the young* who think it easy to bear, and covet precipitately to secure, the dignity and gravity of a sacred office.

Paul gives warning against calling out *the young to prominent positions in the Church*; and commanded "not a novice, lest," etc. (1 Tim. iii. 6).

If placed in the forefront of God's people then he will bring all his artifices for his overthrow; and in the fall of a leader there will be great cause for "the enemy to blaspheme."

God grant that many young men may be led out into usefulness in the Church, and, if He will, into high stations in the Church of Christ; into the ministry of the gospel, into influential scenes of witness for truth; but God also grant to such the measure of special grace they will need, lest they *stumble on the high places*, and enable them to bear the standard of the Lord with steady hand to victory!

I. SOLEMN PREPARATION FOR A SACRED CAREER.

Nadab and Abihu "*saw the God of Israel*" (Exod. xxiv. 1, 9, 10). This was Jehovah's method of *preparing a man for a sacred career*, e.g., Moses at the burning bush (Exod. iii. 3, 6); Isaiah and Ezekiel for prophetic work (Isa. vi. 1, 6, 8; Ezek. i. 1); Saul of Tarsus for apostleship (Acts ix. 27).

That sight gave them qualification. It taught them who God was; how glorious and holy (Exod. xxiv. 10). As also saith Isaiah, "I have seen the King the Lord of Hosts." They would surely be reverent and solemn hereafter in all their service within the tabernacle in presence of resplendent Deity.

Have you seen God for yourselves? It is your qualification for serving Him. You cannot minister before the Lord unless. Hold back from all sacred work until you have "seen the King." But if God has revealed Himself to you it is both a qualification and call to His service. For He wants those who have seen Him to "tell the vision," to go from that secrecy of blessed experience, saying, "That which our eyes have seen, which we have looked upon, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us" (1 John i. 1-3).

II. ENTIRE SEPARATION TO SANCTUARY MINISTRY (Exod. xxviii. 1).

1. Their designation to this office was to be accompanied by *most solemn rites of consecration* (Exod. xxix.). Washing (v. 4); clothing with priestly robes (vv. 5, 8, 9); reconciliation offerings (vv. 10-18); sanctifying unction (vv. 20, 21).

Note: that a *year intervened* between the directions given for their dedication and the event. An interval of serious thought, meditation on their high calling, forming of resolves and prayerful preparation for their future.

2. Obeying these minute directions, Moses did then *consecrate them* (Levit. viii. 4, 30) *in the sight of all Israel*. They were thus *publicly set apart to the holy office*.

From all this it appears *how careful God is* that they who are to engage in His service should be *spiritually prepared*. It was God's idea, God's work, wrought through Moses. And ye are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that ye should walk in them."

God wants you, who are called to sacred service and high trust in His Church, not less hallowed and consecrated than Nadab and Abihu. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." God must have holiness in those who serve Him.

III. STARTLING MISDEMEANOUR AND PROFANITY.

O how great a fall is here! (Lev. x. 1, 2).

1. *For awhile they maintained a reverent demeanour*. They gave good promise (chap. viii. 36); were observant and obedient to God's word; and attended to the duties of their office (ix. 8, 9, 12, 13). Not instantaneously did they fall from their eminence. The castle must first be undermined before it crumbles into ruins.

"Ye *did* run well." Young Christians began their spiritual life with every promise of "adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things," *conversion seemed thorough*; and Christian service was entered on with seriousness and earnestness, consecration seemed real. But a vast difference exists between a hopeful beginning and "continuing therein with all perseverance": "holding fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

Many a ship made a good start—wrecked! Many a well formed bud—blighted! Many a promising youth—destroyed!

2. *What explains and accounts for their fall?*

Was it a *mere mistake*, an act of ignorance? No; "the Lord commanded them not." Emphatic prohibition: "Ye shall burn no strange incense thereon," etc. (Exod. xxx. 9). It arose from *recklessness*. They may have thought their own fire as good as that on the altar; but they had no right to think on such a matter; God had commanded.

When God has made the way of obedience, the way of salvation, the way of holiness plain, to substitute anything is an act of daring presumption and a horrible offence to God.

What could have led them to this act of presumption? With God's express command, how dared they disobey? In a festive moment they seemed to have lost sobriety; and their act was done under the confusion of drink. How fearful the act! What bitter woes and wrongs has not the baneful indulgence wrought! O what homes desolated, what characters destroyed, what souls ruined! True, indeed of intemperance—

When once the demon enters,
Stands within the door,
Peace and hope and gladness
Dwell there nevermore.

Alas for the *young* who have fallen thereby!

Put away from you all indulgence which imperils your character and piety. Have a just fear of yourselves. Do not think you stand, lest you fall. [See Addenda p. 151, *Intemperance*.]

IV. PUNISHMENT OF YOUTHFUL PROFANITY. "They died before the Lord."

1. *Though exalted in religious privileges*: how terrible their doom. "Thou Capernaum, exalted unto heaven, shalt be cast down to hell."

Yes: the divine *grace* with which men trifle will invoke most fearful retribution. "Of how much sorer *punishment*, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trampled under foot the Son of God." "Therefore, kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little."

That high All-Seer which I *dallied* with
 Hath turned my *feigned* prayer upon my head,
 And given in earnest what I begged in jest.
 Thus doth He force the swords of wicked men
 To turn their own points on their master's bosom.

2. In the beauty and fulness of youth, how *instant their destruction!* Dread the possibility of being thus arrested: life arrested in an act of sin! Leave the way of godliness but for a moment; you may never return! Adventure upon one rash step of impiety: it may be your last. There is but one step between you and death!

"God is angry with the wicked *every day*": but He holds back judgment; yet it may leap forth *any day*. "Wherefore, let us have grace, whereby we may *serve God acceptably with reverence* and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." [See Addenda p. 151, *Rashness.*]

Topic: THE SIN OF AARON'S SONS (Vv. 1, 2).

Not many hours had elapsed since Nadab and Abihu were consecrated to the sacred office of the priesthood. They knew that only the high priest was to officiate with the holy incense, and that the fire to be employed must be taken from the brazen, and put upon the golden altar. Yet they usurped the functions of the high priest, kindled common fire, and offered it on the golden altar, "which the Lord had not commanded." Such an act was a flagrant exhibition of insubordination, and a direct insult to Jehovah. In their heinous sin we see—

I. HOW ELEVATION TO HIGH AND HOLY POSITIONS DOES NOT PLACE MEN BEYOND THE TEMPTATION AND LIABILITY TO COMMIT SIN.

Consecrated to the priestly office, they were henceforth expected to be examples to the people of purity, and piety. They would be amid scenes, and engage in services, calculated to restrain them from wrong-doing, and to stimulate them to good works. It was reasonable to expect that, while the solemn ceremony of consecration and inauguration was fresh in their memories, they would be conscientious, circumspect, and magnify their office; but a day did not elapse without a strong temptation to desecrate their office; a day did not elapse before they yielded to the temptation. They were proud and presumptuous; intoxicated with the elevation they had received to the priestly office (if not with drink), and snatching up common fire, went unbidden into the holy place before the Lord, and insulted Him to His face. The temptation was peculiar to their position; flattered their vanity; promised them equality with Moses and Aaron in authority and power; they yielded to it and fell. By unholy ambition fell the angels and our first parents—no position, however exalted, seems to be exempt from temptation to pride and presumption. We learn that (i.) *having pious parents*; (ii.) *being in holy places*; (iii.) *holding sacred offices*; (iv.) *seeing divine manifestations*, will not place us beyond the reach of temptation to commit sin, or screen us from punishment if we commit it. Even Jesus Christ was assailed by the shafts and insinuations of the wicked one. Being a servant, and even a son of God, does not exempt from temptation, but temptation is not in itself sin, yielding is sin.

II. HOW THE COMMITMENT OF SIN MERITS, AND MAY MEET WITH SUDDEN CORRESPONDING RETRIBUTION.

Their punishment may seem severe, but it must be remembered that the sin was committed (a) *by persons in high position*, (b) *enjoying great privilege*, (c) *possessing great light and knowledge*, (d) *deliberately*, and (e) *daringly*, on the floor of the holy place, and before the face of the holy God. It was a sin, which, if not signally and immediately punished, would have been a precedent for presumption of the highest kind. Had they sinned ignorantly, they would have been allowed

the privilege of the sin offering. We may not always be able to trace resemblance between sin and its punishment, in kind or degree, but the Judge of all the earth is equitable, and allots His punishments according to the deeds done, and in the end will render unto every man according to his works. *Position, circumstances, knowledge, intention, ability*—all will be taken into account in adjusting penalty and awarding bliss.

III. HOW SUCH RETRIBUTION, WHILE IT CONDEMNS THE SINNER, VINDICATES THE BROKEN LAW AND GLORIFIES THE LAWGIVER.

We may note that the punishment they received (1) *condemned them here in the eyes of all Israel*; (2) *showed the exceeding sinfulness of sin*; and (3) *the exacting demands and exalted dignity of the law*. The Lord had said to Moses that He would be sanctified in them who drew near Him, and glorified by all the people; and He would make even the wrath, or wickedness of man, to praise Him. Nadab and Abihu treated the law and the Lawgiver with contempt, and the Lord showed, by visiting them with immediate retribution, that such sins deserve death, and that He is able to vindicate His own glory. God thus manifesting Himself as a consuming fire, showed (1) *His jealousy*, that He could not be openly and grossly insulted; (2) *His power*, that the fire which glowed in the cloud, which had kindly led them out of Egypt, protected them from their foes, and which consumed the burnt offering on the day of consecration, had power to destroy, and, unless held in check, would consume all sinners; (3) *His mercy*, that while sin deserved punishment, and God had the right and power to destroy, He made judgment His strange work, and such retribution—as that which visited Aaron's sons—an exceptional thing. Let us learn that, though worship must be voluntary, yet it must be according to God's own appointed way. Liberty is not to be perverted into lawlessness. Knowledge of God will be good or ill to us according as we use or abuse it. The law set before men life and death, and left them to choose. The gospel is a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death, according as men accept or reject it. Sacred fire renders divine worship acceptable, strange fire renders divine worship abominable; the former God longs for, the latter God loathes. Strange fire is offered upon God's altar when worship is presented with (1) *unsolicited materials*, or from (2) *unsanctified motives*. Enthusiasm is holy ardour—literally, *God in us*—His own fire ascending to Himself.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: MAN'S DEGRADATION OF WHAT IS HOLY (Vv. 1-3).

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

I. MAN SPOILS EVERYTHING. Place him in position of highest dignity, and he will degrade himself. Endow him with most ample privileges, and he will abuse them. Scatter blessings around him in richest profusion, and he will corrupt

them. Such is man! Such is nature in its fairest forms, and under the most favourable circumstances. Here, with Nadab and Abihu—

1. Hardly had the *divine position been assumed* ere it was *deliberately abandoned*, through neglect of the divine commandment. Hardly had the echo of the shout of victory died away ere the elements of a spurious worship are prepared.

2. Man has always proved himself ill-disposed to walk in the narrow path of strict adherence to the plain word of God. The by-path has ever seemed to present resistless charms to the poor human heart. "Stolen waters are sweet" (Prov. ix. 17); such is the enemy's language.

3. Nadab and Abihu *took their own way*: they should have acted according to the word of the Lord.

II. DIVINE HOLINESS REJECTS THAT WHICH IS THE FRUIT OF MAN'S CORRUPT WILL.

"There went out fire from the Lord and devoured them." How deeply solemn.

1. By the outgoing of fire Jehovah had signified *His acceptance of a true sacrifice* (chap. ix.).

2. By the outgoing of fire He sends *His judgment upon erring priests* (chap. x.). The "strange fire" was rejected as an abomination. The Lord was glorified in the former; but it would have been a dishonour to accept the latter.

Men's corrupt will is never more hideous and abominable than when active in the things of God. But—

III. MAN CANNOT BE PERMITTED TO DESECRATE THE SANCTUARY OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE. "I will be sanctified in them that come *nigh me*," etc.

1. The *dignity and glory of the entire economy* depended on Jehovah's maintenance of His righteous claims. If these were to be trifled with all was forfeited. If men were allowed to defile the sanctuary by "strange fire" there was an end to everything.

2. Nothing could be permitted to ascend from *the priestly censer* but the pure fire, kindled from off the altar of God, and fed by the "pure incense beaten small."

3. Man *must not be allowed to introduce his devices into the worship of God*. All his efforts can only issue in the presentation of "strange fire," unhallowed incense, false worship. His very best attempts are an absolute abomination in the sight of God.—C. H. M.

Topic: THE LAW OF WORSHIP (Vv. 1-11).

Religious history is a continuous series of revelations of God: every incident freighted with significance and suggestiveness. The gleam of the seraph's sword at the gates of Eden declares *the sinner's banishment from God*: the roar of the deluge is the voice of many waters attesting the *terrible might of Divine judgments*: the lightnings of Sinai write out in letters of fire the *sovereignty of the decalogue*. And so in the doom of Nadab and Abihu we have announced in tongues of flame *the law of worship*. What answer does the incident give us to the vital question, How can men worship God acceptably?

I. THE CHARACTER OF THE WORSHIPPER *is a factor of importance*.

While the people were yet trembling at the judgments sent upon the offending priests, God ordained certain restrictions to be observed by those who ministered at His altars, as a "statute for ever throughout your generations, that ye may put differences between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean."

1. The numerous directions in the Jewish ritual relating to *personal purity*, were all significant of the *value of character* in the office of worship.

2. Yet the *soundness of the inward life as pre-requisite to a real approach to God*

is seldom considered. This material age exalts the form above the spirit. If a man observe the formalities of public worship his spiritual condition is assumed to be correct.

3. But *character*, the style and stamp of the man, is the one thing needful. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for *they* shall see God."

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE WORSHIPPER is the element of which God makes account.

Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire" in obedience to some selfish end. Their proper offices in the ministry were subordinate; the adoption of a new method would secure them reputation. Egotism, vanity, prompted them.

1. When a minister at God's altar now *cultivates eccentricities and extravagances of manner* to attract a crowd and become famous, he is offering "strange fire." A singleness of purpose to honour God should be the sovereign motive in every minister's heart.

2. *Attendance in God's house* is not proof of true worship. *Why* are they there? Coming to be charmed with eloquence is not worship. Attendance from force of habit is not worship. Ceremony is easier than consecration; so men satisfy themselves with the outward observance, while the essential need of the inward aspiration is overlooked.

It is averred that the offices of public worship are waning in interest and influence. The reason is not far. It is not from lack of facilities and appliances. There are wheels enough, but not enough of "the living spirit within the wheels." Abolish the intellectual and æsthetic theory of worship, and restore the spiritual, and the evil is corrected. Let every man feel that only the outgo of His heart to God is worship, and our places of prayer will become true temples where the glory of the Shekinah burns, and where hushed assemblies gather to sun themselves in the light of the Divine Presence.

III. THE PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP is a matter to which God attaches great importance.

1. *Men should be at their best* when they approach the place and hour of worship. In the house of God things suffered elsewhere were forbidden (vv. 8, 9). Every faculty should be in highest exercise; every barrier to God's freest access to the soul should be broken down.

2. Now, as then, *true worship requires preparation*. It cannot be extemporised. We cannot turn to it at a moment's notice, and realise it while our ears are full of the babble of the market and our hands are clenched in the grip of gain. As Moses in sight of the flaming bush must put off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground, so those who would meet God in their worship must prepare themselves. A hushed season of reverence is a pre-requisite; a ready soul, and no other, finds a waiting God.

IV. THE MODE OF WORSHIP has its limits of importance.

Nadab and Abihu were punished for departing from the divinely established order of service. Under the Christian dispensation larger liberty is allowed. Men are free to adopt such methods of worship as are most affluent in ministries to their spiritual life. But the old underlying principle is still in force.

1. *Forms of worship are only to help men to get to God*. All claims to antiquity, or beauty of diction, or appeal to the sensuous in men, are barred out; the one question is, Do they help us to push open the doors of the invisible world, and make our way to the presence of our Lord?

2. In the nature of the case *there is no one set method for reaching this end*. The ritual which gives wings to the soul in Christian lands may prove a drag weight to the Zulu.

3. *The soul owes no loyalty to ceremonials of human contriving*. Along which way it can quickest find God it is bound to travel. There is no best way for the whole world.

Right character, earnest purpose, due preparation, helpful method, these are the essentials to acceptable worship. These will open a door through which the divine Spirit shall come in, until the soul of the worshipper is "filled with all the fulness of God."—Rev. Edward S. Atwood, in *Sermons on the International S. S. Lessons*.

Topic: SPURIOUS WORSHIPPERS: THEIR DARING AND DOOM (Vv. 2-5).

I. GOD DISCRIMINATES BETWEEN TRUE AND SPURIOUS WORSHIP.

1. Earnest spirits, honest in their struggles in searching after peace with God, *may make mistakes in coming nigh Him*. They may bring what He cannot receive; *self-reliant efforts*. "If I wash myself in snow-water, and make my hands never so clean" (Job. ix. 30); *repentant tears*, hoping to appease by contrition; *generous acts*, endeavouring to win by deeds of mercy. Such efforts, though erroneous, may be sincere endeavours of upright, but unenlightened consciences to attain a knowledge of sins forgiven. Hence eager souls are seeking God by works of the law, or the ordinances of systematic religion.

2. All such will doubtless issue through the exceeding goodness of God, *in the clear light of a known and enjoyed salvation*. There never yet was one who followed the faintest glimmerings of light which fell upon his understanding, who did not, in due time, receive more. "To him that hath shall be given." "The path of the just is as the shining light, which *shineth more and more* unto the perfect day." All this is as plain as it is encouraging.

3. Yet they who *bring their own impious wills* into the worship and service of God can expect no graciousness from God; on them, sooner or later, the solemn judgments of a righteous God, who cannot allow His claims to be trifled with, must fall. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me."

II. GOD DEALS WITH WORSHIPPERS ON THE TERMS OF THEIR OWN PROFESSION.

1. If men come near Him, *honestly seeking Him*, He will meet them *as seekers*, and they shall surely find Him.

2. But when men approach *as priests*, He will demand from them *such worship and incense* as priests should offer.

3. They who come before God as *worshippers* are regarded by Him as no longer seekers, enquirers, asking the right way to Him, but as *those who believe they know and profess to have found*. From such He requires the true worship, the acceptable offering. If their censer smokes with unhallowed fire, if they offer unto God the elements of a spurious worship, if they essay to tread His courts unwashed, unsanctified, unsubdued, if they place on His altar the workings of their own corrupt will, *judgment must be the result*. There will be (a) the *immediate rejection* of all worship which has not the Father for its goal, Christ for its substance and hope, the Holy Spirit for its sanctity and acceptableness; and there will be (b) the *fearful judgment at the last*, when all folly and wrong will be accursed.

4. God's *holiness* is as quick to reject all "strange fire," as His *grace* is quick to accept the faintest, feeblest breathings of a true heart. He must pour out His righteous judgment upon all false worship, though He will never "quench the smoking flax, or break the bruised reed."

III. YET WHAT AN ENORMITY OF SPURIOUS WORSHIP GOES UP BEFORE GOD.

1. Very much of that which *passes among men for worship of God* is but "strange fire" after all. There is neither the pure fire nor the pure incense, and therefore heaven accepts it not.

2. *Attainment to the true qualities of hallowed worship* is a result of divine grace in the soul. He who knows through grace the pardon which the blood of Christ

brings, he who has received the illumination of the Holy Ghost, can worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

3. It is consolatory to turn our thoughts from the vain worship which within so many shrines is burned before the Lord, to consider the *true worship which from so many honest and Christian hearts is ascending to God's sanctuary.*

IV. THE JUST JUDGMENT, WHICH FALSITY OF WORSHIP EVOKES, CANNOT FAIL TO COME.

1. It carries now, because of the interposing grace of Christ, staying the plague, arresting the doom. *During this age of grace, "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."* Therefore the judgment falls not direct, as on Nadab and Abihu it did, on spurious worshippers.

2. Yet the throne of God cannot ever *continue to be insulted by clouds of impure incense* ascending from unpurged worshippers. "Strange fire" will ultimately be quenched for ever, and all that is spurious be abolished, and the whole universe become as one hallowed temple wherein the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall be adored in acceptable and reverent worship throughout the everlasting ages.

Topic: A WARNING TO WORSHIPPERS (V. 1, 2).

There are three circumstances in which the Old Testament dispensation deserves our notice. (1) *As it prefigured the times of the gospel and the sacrifice of Christ—"the law a shadow."* (2) *As it showed the true requisites of acceptable worship.* (3) *As it plainly marks the solemnity which God attaches to all the institutions of His own appointment.* Everything was marked by severity. The Sabbath breaker was punished with death, disobedience to parents with death, the slightest infraction of a solemn ordinance was punished with death. Instance before us, Nadab and Abihu. Say not we have no concern. The dispensation differs, but the Lawgiver is still the same (Heb. xii. 28, 29). Tabernacle typified Christ (Heb. ix. 8).

Consider the *circumstances, warnings, inferences.* Necessary to mark these.

I. THE CHIEF CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH THE HISTORY RECORDS.

1. *The setting up of the tabernacle.* This had been erected at a great expense, and was truly a national work, and the completion of it was a subject of universal congratulation. No labour was withheld, no cost spared, no difficulty considered; all ages, all classes, all ranks, almost all hands were employed in forwarding it (Ex. xxxv. 20). It had been framed after the pattern in the mount, by God's express appointment, "as the Lord commanded." The most consummate skill had been employed in its erection; and as they saw its hallowed curtains finished, they rejoiced with an elevated and a reasonable joy. They felt that they were no longer aliens; they had the visible symbol of God's presence; they were raised to the dignity of moral life; they had a sanctuary to which they might repair, and, amidst the toils of the wilderness, there was one object on which the eye might rest, one sacred enclosure which formed the link between earth and heaven. It was their refuge in danger, their guide in perplexity, their solace in weariness, and their hope when every other hope failed them.

2. *The acceptance of their sacrifices.* At length the expected day arrived when the tabernacle should be publicly consecrated and the first services performed. Ten thousand hearts beat with warm devotion when the solemnities began. Moses and Aaron, the elders of Israel, the Levitical priesthood, the great congregation—all were assembled. And now the sin offering for Aaron was to be presented. The beasts were slain, the ceremonies performed, the blood was sprinkled, the wave offering was offered; Aaron, in the ardour of devotion and with a heart overflowing with love, blessed the people (23, 24). The sacrifice was accepted.

3. *The death of Nadab and Abihu.* "And Nadab and Abihu took each a censer and put fire." This had been distinctly prohibited—*went beyond God's ordinance.* It was a virtual contempt of the authority of God, a dishonour to the spiritual nature of that institution. They were, probably, over-elated with the honour of their new function, and perhaps, with the headstrong vanity of irreligious youth, anxious to overstep the ordinary forms and show their independence of the example and authority of Aaron. The Jewish doctors suppose that these young men were intoxicated with wine, and had also neglected to make the proper distinctions in the sacrifices (from 8 and 9).

Their sin was compounded of impiety, presumption, and sacrilege. "*And there went out fire from the Lord.*" Fire was their sin, fire their punishment. God saw that fire was the fittest vengeance for a sin of fire—his own fire for their strange fire; the same fire which consumed the sacrifice now consumed the sacrificers. "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*" They had to do with one who was wise to prescribe His own worship, just to require what He hath prescribed, and powerful to avenge what was in opposition to His command.

There is something inexpressibly awful in the thought that the service of the sanctuary began with death and judgment "*before the mercy-seat*" (4-6).

II. THE WARNINGS WHICH THE TEXT PERPETUATES.

Lay it to heart, and remember that it is as effectual to all the purposes of solemn caution as though it had occurred but yesterday and had taken place within the precincts of a Christian temple. Is it recorded for your instruction. God is the same, religion is the same, worship is the same, and the sanctions of Gospel ordinances are the same; the only difference is that the *punishment* is deferred till death, and that instead of earthly and material fire, those who mock God in His ordinances will be exposed to a fire never quenched, "*suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*"

1. *The awful solemnity which God attaches to the ordinances of religion.* "*I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.*" This law has never been repealed, but it has been renewed and perpetuated by Christ Himself. "*God is a spirit.*" Ex. x. 22. Sanctified God will be, either in the spirituality of men's worship, or the severity of their condemnation. Let us beware of falling into their sin. When we come with prayerless and unsanctified hearts, with worldly affections, with profane imaginations, when we worship without spirituality of mind, without imploring the grace of the Holy Spirit, and without a lively faith in the sacrifice and intercession of Christ, we bring common fire, "*strange fire,*" to the altar. *These flames were never of His kindling.* He hates both altar and fire, priest and sacrifice. Who can calculate our guilt?

Remember this, ye who only come to trifle, who never pray before you come, who make no conscience of spiritual worship—remember, you never leave His house as you enter it. You leave it with a heavier weight of guilt. "*Keep thy foot,*" etc. (Eccles. v. 1).

2. *No outward profession, no forms of religion, however specious, will avail without internal piety.* Nadab and Abihu had been anointed with holy oil, set apart by God Himself, clad with beautiful garments, had taken part in a sacrifice which had been accepted (ix. 9). But all this was as nothing. What a lesson to ministers! Well may we tremble, answerable for the spirit we diffuse in prayer, etc.

3. *The piety of parents will form no shield for the iniquity of children.* Aaron's sacrifice had been accepted, his sons were smitten instantly. We might have pleaded their youth and inexperience, a first offence, their relation to Aaron. Even Aaron had not a word.

III. THE INFERENCES WHICH THIS EVENT SUPPLIES.

1. *Bless God for the more gracious age in which you live, that "mercy now rejoices against judgment."*

2. *Mourn the iniquity of your holy things.* Even our very approaches to God,

our prayers, hymns, services, are all marred by our sad defects, in spirit, manner, and aim.

3. *Implore the divine Spirit* to "help your infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as *we ought*; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. viii. 26, 27).—*Rev. Samuel Thodey, A.D. 1822.*

Topic: THE SILENCE OF AARON'S SORROW (V. 3).

The sudden and awful destruction of Nadab and Abihu filled the heart of their father with unutterable grief. It must have been a most appalling sight to see two young men clad in priestly vestments smitten dead before the Lord in the midst of an iniquitous act of innovation. But "Aaron held his peace." Let us notice—

I. THE POIGNANT CHARACTER OF AARON'S SORROW. The blow came and smote (i.) his *patriotism*—he would feel that Israel as a nation was disgraced; (ii.) his *piety*—religion was dishonoured and God insulted; (iii.) his *paternity*. As a man, he would have felt deeply had any two men of Israel met with such a doom; but for the victims to be HIS SONS, the flower and promise of his family, this would make his grief exceedingly great. He may have looked upon them with pardonable pride the day before, when they stood by his side and received the commendation of the Lord; now he stands beside them with unutterable shame, as well as sorrow, as he sees them lying lifeless under the condemnation of the Lord. (1) It is a great grief for parents to watch their children die when they have *seen the end approaching*, and have prepared their hearts to meet the bereavement by its slow approach; but in Aaron's case the bereavement was sudden, there were no premonitions to prepare the father's heart to meet it. (2) It is a great grief for parents to surrender their children even when they feel *sure they die in the Lord*, and that God gently takes their life away; but, in Aaron's case, his sons died under the frown of the Lord, and concerning their future he could have no sure and certain hope. To lose two sons under such circumstances was sorrow of the most poignant kind.

II. THE PATIENT CONDUCT OF AARON UNDER SUCH SORROW.

The catastrophe struck him dumb. He restrained himself, and refrained from uttering any comment on the event, any complaint against God. It was not the silence of *stoicism*, or *sullenness*, or *obstinacy*; but of *devout and reticent submission*. He heard what Moses had to say upon the event; he felt his sons had grossly insulted the Lord; that God's glory must be vindicated; that the punishment was merited; so, he "*held his peace.*" He offered no objection, asked for no explanation; knew he could not reverse the verdict, could not restore the victims; it was *an irreparable loss!* He "*held his peace*"; no language of his could have described his grief, or conveyed a fair idea of his sorrow. He "*held his peace*" with men, but by thought, which is inarticulate speech, he could tell his grief to God. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth sometimes cannot speak; at such a time as this, in the hidden depths of the spirit, the heart only knows its own bitterness. This incident of Aaron silently and meekly bearing his great grief teaches us that one of the most consistent and expressive ways to show our sincere sorrow in the hour of any great calamity, is by holding our peace. Silence at such a time is (a) *safe*, (b) *devout*, (c) *consistent*. The silence must be holy and resigned; for there may be rebellion and anger in the heart when the lips are dumb.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: PRIESTLY ELEVATION ABOVE PRIVATE SORROW (Vv. 6, 7).

Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar were to remain unmoved in their elevated place, their holy dignity, their position of priestly sanctity. Neither the failure, nor the judgment consequent thereon, was to be allowed to interfere with those who wore the priestly robes and were anointed with "the oil of the Lord." Those outside might "bemoan the burning," but as for Aaron and his sons, they were to go on in the discharge of their hallowed ministries.

I. WORSHIP, NOT LAMENTATION, IS THE SOLEMN FUNCTION OF PRIESTS.

Priests in the sanctuary were not to bemoan but to adore; not to weep as in the presence of death, but to bow their anointed heads as in the presence of the divine visitation. The fire of the Lord might act and do its solemn work of judgment, but to a true priest it mattered not what that "fire" came to do—to express divine approval by consuming the sacrifice, or divine displeasure by smiting sin; that "fire" was the known *manifestation of God*, and whether it acted in mercy or judgment the business of all true priests was to worship. "I will sing of mercy and of judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing."

II. *They who have the anointing of the Holy Ghost must MAINTAIN AN ELEVATION OF SOUL ABOVE NATURE'S WEAKNESSES.*

1. *Priestly nearness to God gives the soul an insight into all God's ways*, and such a sense of the *rightness* of all His dispensations that one is *enabled* to worship in His presence, even though the stroke of His hand has removed from us the object of tender affection.

2. Though godly souls *feel* as men, they *worship* as *priests*. They are not stoics; but an elevated spiritual life opens up a region to the soul brought "nigh to God" of thought, feeling, experience, in which nature can never move; a region in which, with all its boasted refinement and self-sufficiency, nature (unhallowed by God's grace and unsustained by the Lord's sufficiency) knows nothing. We must tread the sanctuary of God with *true priestly energy*, in order to enter into the depth, the meaning, and power of such holy mysteries.

The prophet Ezekiel was called, in his day, to sit down to this difficult lesson (Ezek. xxiv. 16-18); and it proves that in *prophetic* testimony, as well as in *priestly* worship, we must rise superior to all the claims and influences of nature and of earth.

III. OUR HIGH PRIESTLY PRIVILEGES MAY BE FORFEITED BY THE ASSERTION OF NATURE'S FRAILTIES.

Too often sanctified and hallowed souls fall below their divine elevation.

1. Nothing save *realised priestly nearness to God* can preserve the heart from the power of evil or maintain its spiritual tone.

2. All believers are priests unto God, and nothing can deprive them of their position as such. But though they cannot lose their position they may *grievously fail in the discharge of their functions*. While looking at the precious truth of the believer's security we may forget the possibility of our failing to discharge our sacred duties.

3. There is continual need of watchfulness and prayer, *that the hallowed elevation of priests unto God be preserved*. His heavenly grace alone will preserve us from every species of failure, whether it be personal defilement, or the presentation of any of the varied forms of "strange fire," which abound so in the professing Church, or in the yielding to personal weakness of grief and complaint of our frail human nature.—Developed from *Notes on Leviticus*, by C. H. M.

Topic: EXCITATIONS PERILOUS TO COMMUNION (Vv. 8-11).

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

I. *Each should discover for himself* WHAT ACTS UPON HIM AS A DELETERIOUS EXCITEMENT.

1. The *causes which excite are manifold* indeed; wealth, ambition, politics, the varied objects of emulation around us in the world, as well as "wine and strong drink."

2. Acting upon us with exciting power, they entirely unfit us from every department of priestly service. If the heart be swollen with (a) *feelings of pride, covetousness or emulation*, it is utterly impossible that the pure air of the sanctuary can be enjoyed, or the sacred functions of priestly ministry discharged. Men speak of the versatility of genius, or a capacity of turning quickly from one thing to another; but the most versatile genius ever possessed could not enable a man to pass from (b) *an unhallowed arena* of literary, commercial or political competition, into the holy retirement of the sanctuary of the divine presence; nor could it so adjust the eye that has become dimmed by the influence of such scenes as to enable it to discern, with priestly accuracy, the difference "between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean."

II. GOD'S PRIESTS MUST KEEP THEMSELVES APART FROM UNHALLOWED EXCITATIONS.

1. Theirs is a *path of holy separation and abstraction*. They are called aside from and raised far above the influence of merely earthly joy as well as earthly sorrow. In other words, the joy of God's priests is not the joy of earth, but the joy of heaven, the joy of the sanctuary. "The joy of the Lord is their strength."

2. Hence, everything that incapacitates us for our priestly function, *that tends to derange our priestly relation or dim our priestly vision*, must unfit us for the service we are called to render. The heart must be kept right, the conscience pure, the eye single, the spiritual vision undimmed.

3. *The soul's business in the holy place must be faithfully and diligently attended to*, else all will go wrong. Private communion with God must be kept up, else we shall be fruitless as servants, and defeated as men of war. It is vain for us to bustle about, and run hither and thither in what we call service, or indulge in rapid words about Christian valour and warfare. If we are not keeping our priestly garments unspotted, if we are not keeping ourselves free from all that would excite nature, we shall assuredly fail and be defeated. Our success in every department depends on our cultivating a spirit of worship.

(a) Let us then *exercise a spirit of self-judgment* over our habits, our ways, our associations. It is the business of each one to be fully aware of what is to him as "wine and strong drink," what blunts his spiritual perceptions. It may be the auction mart, a cattle show, a newspaper—the merest trifle. But if it tends to excite, it will disqualify us for future ministry.

(b) When by grace we discern aught that in the slightest degree unfits us for the elevated exercises of the sanctuary, let us *put it away*, cost what it may. Let us not suffer ourselves to become slaves of a habit.

(c) *Communion with God should be dearer to our hearts than all besides*; and just in proportion as we prize that communion shall we watch and pray against everything that would rob us of it, against everything that would excite, ruffle or unhinge.

(d) The more we live in the presence of God, the *less we can bear to be out of*

it; and no one who knows the deep joy of being there could lightly indulge in aught that would take or keep him thence. There is not that object within the compass of earth which would, in the judgment of a spiritual mind, be an equivalent for one hour's fellowship with God.

By abiding in the secret retirement of His holy presence, and keeping implicitly to His truth, we shall be kept from false worship of every kind, and fleshly excitement in all its forms; so shall we be enabled to carry ourselves aright in every department of priestly ministration, and to enjoy all the privileges of our priestly position. The communion of a Christian is easily hurt by the rude influences of an evil world; within the sacred precincts of the divine presence all is pure, safe, and happy.

Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.

[See Addenda, p 151, *Sensationalism.*—*Vide*, C. H. M.

Topic: THE UNRELAXING STRICTNESS OF THE RITUAL (Vv. 12-20).

The Lord having spoken unto Aaron (v. 8), showing that he was not dismissed from service on account of the sins of his sons—Moses now addresses him and his two surviving sons upon the law of eating the holy things; showing they were still as priests to draw near to the Lord, and mediate for the people.

Workers may sin and die, but God's work must go on. The reiteration of the law of the meat offering was useful and timely, as Aaron and his sons may have forgotten it in alarm and confusion at the calamity just occurred. They were to partake of their portion according to the law of the Lord, as their due, according to the commandment of the Lord.

Then having given these directions concerning the offerings, Moses betrays some misgivings respecting the full observance of the sin-offering ritual: and "Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold it was burnt"; this made him angry, he questioned the sons of Aaron upon their delinquency, and assured them that they might and ought to have eaten what was appointed them as their share of the sacrifice in the holy place. [See chap. vi. 26-29.] Aaron offered an apology for the omission, and Moses accepted it. Let us look—

I. AT THE FAILURE OF THE PRIESTS TO FULFIL THE REQUIRED RITUAL.

Moses reminded them that he had enjoined it upon them; that what he enjoined he received from the Lord; the portion allotted them was the gift of God, and given in connection with the privilege of acting as typical sin-bearers of the congregation. How jealous Moses was for the honour and strict observance of the ritual: he would not have any part of it neglected under any circumstances or pretext. They were to be performed in the right *time*, *place*, and *manner*, as well as in the right *spirit*. Neither priests nor people were at liberty to innovate upon the details of the offerings.

II. AT THE CAUSES OF THE FAILURE. (a) *An overwhelming feeling of sorrow.* Aaron said: "Such things have befallen me," and they were "*such things*" of sorrow as no language could describe; he had held his peace under the stroke of a double simultaneous bereavement, but "*such things*" had not been known by him before, nor had he heard of any "*such things*" occurring in connection with any other family. He had been overwhelmed, and that had contributed to the failure to comply with what was required of him and his sons. (b) *An overawing fear of sin.* He feared that if he had eaten of the sin-offering it might not have been accepted of the Lord, that too much sin clung to him and his sons, and he would rather leave the rite uncompleted than perform it in a wrong spirit. Aaron apprehended the great truth that "God is a Spirit, and that

those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Aaron felt that with such feelings as pervaded his breast, to have eaten his portion of the sin-offering would have been a mere empty and meaningless form. Such a full and frank acknowledgment of deviation and unworthiness satisfied Moses, and he said no more.

III. AT THE FORGIVENESS OF THE FAILURE. It is not directly stated that Aaron and his sons were forgiven, but doubtless they were. The Lord allowed the omission to pass unnoticed; and evidently, Moses—although he was angry at first—saw that, in the exceptional circumstances under which the failure occurred, no dishonour was intended, and no offence was offered to the Lord. The sin of Aaron's sons in offering strange fire was a positive outrage. The sin of Aaron and his two surviving sons was a simple failure. Forgiveness was granted on the ground (a) of *human infirmity*. Aaron and his sons must have been physically, as well as mentally and morally, exhausted by the sorrow into which they were so suddenly plunged; they felt constrained to fast as well as to weep. The flesh was weak, though the spirit may have been willing. (b) *Of spiritual sincerity*. Aaron declared he was afraid that if he ate he might do so unworthily and unacceptably; that he shrank from a forced and false compliance with the letter of the law. (c) *Of Divine clemency*. Moses knew that God was a jealous God, that the ritual was very rigid and exacting; and yet he knew that the Lord was merciful and ready to forgive. He pointed out the error and failing to his brother, then held his peace, content with what Aaron had to say in his defence. In all our service and worship we have to do with a God who pities those who fear Him, even as a father pities his children; who knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust. All errors and failings, yea, all sin, may now be forgiven through Christ's one great atonement, if only the penitent ask in faith and sincerity.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: NO JOY BEFORE GOD'S ALTAR (Vv. 18, 19).

Origen (A. D. 185-254) in his Commentary on Leviticus (*In Levit., Hom. viii.*) supplies suggestions based on Aaron's grief amid his priestly ministrations which may be headed—

CHRIST'S GRIEF AT GOD'S HEAVENLY ALTAR :

And reflects thus: "My Saviour even now is mourning for my sin. How can He, who is the Advocate for my sins, drink the wine of gladness when I am grieving Him with my transgressions? He is therefore in sorrow as long as we remain in error. . . For we cannot think that while Paul mourned for sinners and wept for the guilty, my Lord Jesus abstains from weeping when He approaches the Father, when He stands near the Altar and offers the propitiation for us. And this is the meaning of the prohibition against drinking the wine of gladness when coming near the altar, for Christ suffers still the bitterness for our sins."

In the *Benedictine Breviary* this passage from Origen formed one of the "lectures" or readings, and its teaching became thus diffused over the whole Catholic Church.

St. Bernard (A. D. 1091-1153) recognising the erroneousness of doctrinal teaching in this comment of Origen, wrote a special discourse [*S. Bernardi Serm. xxxiv. de verbis Origenis*, see Canon Jenkin's *Devotion to the Sacred Heart*] pointing out the error and danger of extending the sufferings of Christ, either in *body or mind*, into the reign of His glory. "On earth" he exclaims, "Jesus truly wept, was truly sorrowful, truly suffered, truly died, was truly buried. But now that He is risen again, old things are passed away. Seek not then thy Beloved on His bed; He is risen, He is not here. . . Now He is no

longer among the dead, but is taken from the midst of them, changed in body, changed in heart, He hath entered into the majesty of the Lord. . . Though our Lord wept over Jerusalem, now He weeps no more for ever (even as raised from the dead He dieth no more); and as rising from His bed He is no more found therein. Yet He hath now an unspeakably larger and more effectual feeling than they have who mourn for sinners, or lay down their lives for their brethren; although He who hath finished His work can no longer do either of these acts of mercy."

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER X.

V. 1.—*Theme*: SELF-EXALTING ZEAL.

Sounds of high joy had first been swelling through the holy court: sure tokens of approving love had rested on the altar.

But a vile foe is always near. Satan sees the sacred hour, and flies to mar. He sees the gospel of that heaven-sent fire, and will strive to quench.

I. NO STATION IS TOO HIGH FOR TEMPTATION TO ASSAIL.

The foe has keys for every gate. Though the place is sacred and the office holy, no consecrated functions scare him back. He seeks the side of Aaron's first-born sons. Their calling to be priests is no protecting shield. He can ascend the altar steps. He knows the fit temptation for the holiest place. So now he fosters *self-exalting* zeal. He leads to worship, but the worship must be "strange." Such was his bait: mark its success.

II. SELF-WILL OFFERINGS HAVE NO PLACE IN GOD'S WORSHIP.

1. Their *first step strays*. Each takes his censor. God did not require this act: it was not His will.

2. The next act *errs more*. They add fire. Whence was it brought? God has provided what alone He would receive. An outstretched hand might instantly obtain the divinely sanctioned fire.

3. Was there *defiant reasoning* on their part? What, will no other flame avail? Will His altar fire alone cause incense to ascend? Impious self-will thus reasons unto ruin.

4. A "strange" *service* is acted. Their hands feign holy work, but *rebel feet tread down God's ordinance*.

III. TO DESPISE GOD IS RAPID DOWNFALL.

1. *His frown is withering blight*: it arms each creature with destructive sting. Behold a proof. The pledge of *favour*, "fire," inflicts sudden *death*! The symbol of accepted service now hurls the disobedient into ruin's gulf.

2. The fire thus *scorned*, puts forth its mighty strength; *acts out God's indignation*. It vindicates its sacred import. They who rejected the fire of God cannot now cast it off. It wraps them in its burning arms, and lays their blackened corpses in the dust. Thus Nadab and Abihu perish from the earth.

IV. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD STILL LIVES FOR TRANSGRESSORS.

This story stands as a dark beacon on a rocky coast. It cries, beware! to all despisers of the gospel scheme. It shows that—

1. *They who stray from God's appointed path*, fall into quicksands of tremendous wrath. It declares that—

2. If men *despise, reject, neglect the atonement* God has provided, death without a remedy is near.—*The Very Rev. Henry Law, D.D.*

V. 2.—*Theme*: DESPIISING GOD'S ALTAR.

I. ON THAT ALTAR BURNED THE SYMBOL OF GOD'S GRACE FOR MEN.

"Fire" given by Him, as—

1. *A seal of His acceptance of human offerings*.

2. *A sanctifying element rendering sacrifice efficacious*.

II. FROM THAT ALTAR SCORNERS TURN IN WILFUL PRESUMPTION.

They despise the grace, they reject the provisions of God. There are Nadabs and Abihus still. Who are they?

1. They hear of Christ and *refuse His sufferings* and merits for their own salvation.

2. They see the cross and *reject it as the symbol of faith*. They rather choose a self-created fire: merits of their own. They develop an obedience of their own contriving.

III. ALL SUBSTITUTED MERITS ARE HATEFUL TO A GRACIOUS GOD.

The sin of Nadab and Abihu, therefore, re-appears to-day in the—

1. *Self-righteous*. A round of duties towards God, of charity towards men: and they ask, what lack we more? But what is man's *best*? Rags and pollution. Yet for these, God's well-beloved Son is scorned, His righteousness put aside.

2. *Self-reformation*. Flagrant faults are shunned. Foul transgressions have soiled their lives. These they own and flee. But they bring self-reformation fruits, Cain-like, and lay them on fire for offerings. Self-amendments are their incense. But outward changes are not inward grace; a painted surface will not purify a tomb.

3. *Contrition* is offered. Feelings are stirred, tears flow. The tempter whispers—there is merit in tears. The mourning spirit

fondly hopes that mourning can bring peace. Sorrow when brought as the price of pardon is "strange."

4. *Formalists* crowd God's courts in studied reverence. Their lips drop holiest words, their hands touch holiest symbols. If rites and outward decorum were devotion, they worship indeed. But such worshippers reject the substance and rest on signs. They stay no wrath, purge no sins.

(a) What does your censor contain?

(b) Christ's merits alone are delightful incense to God.

V. 3.—*Theme*: VIOLATION OF SANCTITY. "I will be sanctified," etc.

I. THE ESSENCE OF THEIR SIN in their conduct before the Lord.

1. The emphasis is to be placed on the word "I." "I will be sanctified." God must be served with sanctity: and He must be alone considered in our worship, and not ourselves or others.

2. This implies that when *deviations from divine and clearly defined instructions* occur, the Lord charges that such deviations do not enhance His glory: neither is He sanctified in those who are guilty of such deviations.

II. THE REQUISITES IN WORSHIP which are hereby enforced.

1. The only acceptable manner of administering the ordinances of God's house—strict observance of the prescribed order. Not with the "strange fire" of will worship.

2. The *unfitness of those who minister* in holy things who neglect the proper observance of the ordinances, and teach men so to do.

3. Avoid everything which would disqualify us for acceptable worship.—*D. C. Hughes, A.M.*

V. 3.—*Theme*: THE SILENCE OF AARON.

Of the silence of grief there is no example more renowned than that of Aaron. This was truly the *silence of grief*, and no reproach of *insensibility* can be attached to him.

I. THE CONDUCT OF AARON MUST BE EXPLAINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE WHOLE EVENTS.

1. The slaying of his sons was a *necessity*, in order to arrest further presumption and profanity spreading throughout all Israel.

2. God's holy ordinances had been *outraged*, whose penalty was death.

II. It is the *case of GODLY HUMILITY* to be thus silent in the bosom of an irreparable loss, of a profound affliction.

III. In this mute sorrow, there is also more than wise humility; as we must see there also *ACQUIESCENCE*.

Aaron cannot hide from himself that his sons *merited* their fate.

IV. It is just to recognise in this conduct *LOWLY AND FIRM RESIGNATION*.

1. *Rebellion* speaks.

2. *Resignation* holds its peace.—*A. Coquerel.*

V. 3.—*Theme*: MUTE SUFFERING.

I. HOW GREAT THE GRACE NEEDED FOR THIS.

II. *How exemplary* THE USE OF NEEDED GRACE in such a trial as this.

Let us learn to submit to God's judgments however severe.—*D. C. Hughes, A.M.* [See *Addenda* p. 151, *Submission*.]

V. 3.—*Theme*: SUBMISSION TO GOD IN AFFLICTION. "And Aaron held his peace."

The becoming behaviour of a servant of God under very great and sore affliction: who, through divine assistance, stilled the murmurings of nature and replied nothing against God. Observe—

I. That the CHILDREN OF GOD ARE SOMETIMES LIABLE TO SEVERE AFFLICTION, both personal and relative. David complains (*Psa. xxxviii. 2*). *Job* also (*Job ix. 27*). Paul's testimony (*2 Cor. v. 4*). And it is in heaven only where all tears shall be wiped from their eyes (*Rev. vii. 17*). The blessed God intends by their afflictions their advantage in time and eternity.

1. He never afflicts till there is a *real necessity* (*1 Peter iv. 16*).

2. He afflicts in *wisdom* (*Heb. xii. 9, 10*).

3. *In measure* (*1 Cor. x. 13*).

4. *In love and tenderness* (*Prov. iii. 12*; *Heb. xii. 5, 6*; *Rev. iii. 19*).

5. *To sanctify our hearts and affections* (*Heb. xii. 10*).

6. *To save us from condemnation* (*2 Cor. iv. 17*).

7. They are but *light and momentary* (*Psa. xxx. 5*; *Isa. liv. 7, 8*; *2 Cor. iv. 17*).

II. *What is implied in being SILENT IN TRIALS AND AFFLICTIONS?*

Not a careless indifference (*Heb. xii. 5*).

Not a sullen, daring obstinacy (*Jer. v. 3*).

Not a restraint of prayer before God, nor a restraint of communication before a real friend (*Job xix. 22*). But—

1. A deep sense of God's hand in what we suffer (*Psa. xxxix. 9*; *Isa. xxxviii. 15*; *1 Sam. ii. 6*).

2. An humble acquiescence in the justice of His proceedings.

3. A resigning ourselves to His pleasure (*Matt. xxvi. 39*).

4. Acknowledging His right in us, to do as He thinks best (*Job i. 21*).

III. *Considerations by which TO INDUCE SUCH A GRACIOUS TEMPER OF MIND.*

1. God has an unquestionable right to dispose of us and ours as He pleases (*Rom. ix. 21, 22*).

2. He grants many daily mercies which we do not deserve.

3. We have sinned against Him (*Mic. vii. 9*).

4. The sufferings of Christ for us were infinitely greater than are ours (*Isa. liii. 4, 5*; *Heb. ii. 10*).

5. We shall be adjudged unworthy to reign with Him if we do not suffer with Him (*Matt. x. 38, 39*).

6. In afflicting His people God has a view to His own glory (*Lev. x. 3*).

Improvement—

1. To be impatient under affliction is unbecoming in a child of God, considered as a new creature.

2. To oppose our wills to the will of God is high presumption (Isa. vi. 9).

3. It is inconsistent with our prayers.

4. It would subject us to the charge of ingratitude to our best Friend and Benefactor, who has drawn us to Christ, pardoned our sins, given us the spirit of adoption, and made us heirs of a glorious immortality, and who is, by these very afflictions, preparing us for our heavenly state (2 Cor. iv. 17).—*Hannum*.

V. 6.—*Theme*: PUBLIC LAMENTATION.

Aaron and his sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, were to refrain from exhibiting outward signs of grief; were not to uncover their heads so that their hair might not become dishevelled; nor rend their clothes, as was the custom at such times of sorrow. They were to suppress their grief, lest they seemed to rebel against the retributive providence of God and unfit themselves for their duties; lest they die, and wrath come upon all the people. They were to show in the presence of the people supreme love to the Lord, and unmoved, exalted devotion to His service. Although Aaron and his two sons were not to disengage themselves from their duties nor exhibit outward signs of grief, there was to be a general lamentation, evincing:

I. PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF A SIGNAL JUDGMENT. The sin was too great to be passed unnoticed by the people, and the judgment was too solemn to be hushed up and treated as of transient moment; the whole house of Israel was to bewail the burning which the Lord had kindled. They were to lament *the sin* that had caused the judgment, and the sudden transformation of a joyful ceremony into a scene of lamentation and woe. Such a public and sorrowful recognition of the divine judgment would impress the people with the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and be calculated to deter them from repeating a similar offence; would teach them the dignity of the Law, and jealousy of the Lawgiver for His own glory. The people were to show, by an act of national humiliation and sorrow, that they deplored the sin, and deprecated the divine anger. The general lamentation also evinced—

II. PUBLIC SYMPATHY WITH A SIGNAL SORROW. "Slight sorrows are loquacious, deep anguish has no voice." The sight of the whole congregation mourning, weeping, and wailing, would help Aaron and his sons to bear their griefs; especially when they knew that the Lord had commanded the public lamentation. The expressed grief of the sympathising people would be the counterpart of the suppressed grief of the sorrowing priests. Similar judgments following flagrant sins are recorded in 2 Sam. vi. 7; 1 Chron. xiii. 10; Num. xv. 32-36. We further learn—

(a) That when the leaders of a people sin, the whole community shares in the blame.

(b) That when the leaders of a people are signally punished, the whole community shares in the sorrow.

(c) That bereavement, even of the most

painful kind, must not prevent us discharging sacred duties.

(d) That sympathy with the bereaved is in keeping with the instincts of our nature, and in harmony with the will of God.

(e) That when God's righteous wrath is made manifest against sin, penitential grief should be prompt and general.—*F. W. B.*

V. 9.—*Theme*: HELP TO TEMPERANCE.

Combine with this verse, Jer. xxxv. 6; Ephes. v. 18; 1. Thess. v. 7.

Intemperance, one of the giant evils of the land, is self imposed. This is its saddest feature. All the evils connected with it might be swept away if men so willed.

I. THE NATURAL. Use no intoxicants: and thus never acquire a passion for them.

II. THE MEDICAL. Some treat drunkenness as a disease: and by medicine seek to destroy the appetite for alcohol.

III. THE SANITARY. Asylums for inebriates have been opened, which combine physical and moral means to effect a cure: and with success.

IV. THE LEGAL. Its object is to control or arrest the evil; and by prohibition of its manufacture and sale, to remove it from the land.

V. THE VOLUNTARY. This involves the pledge and membership in societies banded together for mutual help and safety. Earnest work for others is a good preventative, so long as it is actively continued.

VI. THE SPIRITUAL. Grace, wherever received, casts out the demon of drink.

VII. THE PHILANTHROPIC. Here is a reform in which to engage. Intemperance is the fruitful source of crime, misery and ruin. The resources it wastes are enormous. Its results on the individual, the family, friends, and country, are appalling.

Dark as is the picture of its ravages, yet the progress made towards sobriety within this century has been considerable. Sidney Smith said that at the beginning of his life, "even in the best society, one third of the gentlemen, at least, were always drunk." Today the use of liquors at public tables is the exception, not the rule.

This beneficent change in public sentiment demands devout thankfulness, and is prophetic of what shall be achieved.—*Rev. Lewis O. Thompson*. [See Addenda p. 151, *Intemperance*.]

V. 9.—*Theme*: A DIVINE PROHIBITION.

The prohibition, occurring here, seems to indicate the secret of the rashness and rebellion of Nadab and Abihu; that they offered the strange fire before the Lord when under the unhalloved excitement of intoxicating drink. Let us regard the prohibition—

I. AS A PRECAUTION AGAINST IMPIOUS PRESUMPTION. The position the priests occupied and the duties they performed would be calculated to excite them. They would require no artificial stimulants to inflame their passions. Participation of wine and strong drink

may lead to indulgence and excess, which are the sources of many evils; such as (a) *Offensive carelessness*; persons become careless about the promises they have made and the duties they have to discharge, heedless of the smiles or frowns of those they profess to please and obey. (b) *Offensive independence*; persons get puffed up with a vain notion of their dignity and importance, assume absurd airs, and forget their position in, and relation to society around them. (c) *Offensive arrogance*; persons become overbearing and disrespectful, employ words and perform actions most insulting, and of which they would feel ashamed in their sober hours. (d) *Offensive indolence*; persons become paralyzed for useful and holy employment; although, frequently they become infuriated and enthusiastic in useless and unholy engagements. None of these things could be tolerated in the service of Jehovah in the tabernacle, for the priests were to be *devout, careful, vigilant*, were to exercise self-restraint and control; with concentration of strength, and consecration of spirit give themselves up wholly to the Lord. Such a prohibition was therefore necessary and merciful. We may also regard it—

II. AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST SINFUL INDULGENCE. Tarrying in wine and strong drink is directly opposed to reasonable and acceptable religious service; it perverts the powers of body, mind, and soul. It leads to the perversion (a) of *personal endowments*. Bodily strength becomes abused, health deteriorated and undermined; mental faculties weakened and frequently deranged; natural

geniality and amiability soured. (b) *Of Providential bestowments*. Princes have been brought to pauperism, fortunes have been wasted at the shrine of Bacchus; homes and friends have been brought to a common ruin by its degraded devotees. (c) *Of reasonable enjoyment*. The priests were not commanded to abstain from wine and strong drink, except when they were in the tabernacle officiating at the services. They might partake at other seasons, but were to use and not abuse what they were allowed. (d) *Of religious ordinances*. The various directions of the ritual were so *minute and numerous*, that except the head was kept clear, the nerves calm, there was a great risk of mistakes being made, of some parts of the ceremonies being omitted. The memories of the priests were to be kept unclouded, their imaginations unexcited, their animal passions uninflamed. Ancient historians speak with great ardour and decision upon the fact, that in connection with heathen worship, the priests were prohibited taking wine during their attendance upon the gods and the performance of their worship. The reasons given are, that indulgence in wine and strong drink induces *hesitation, forgetfulness, sleep, folly, and insanity*. The prohibition under consideration subserved divine purposes during the Levitical economy, conducted to the safety and well-being of the priests and the glory of Jehovah. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty;" we may under the gospel abstain from meat as well as wine, if thereby we can be the means of saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins.—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER X.

PRIDE.

"In general pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes."—*RUSKIN, True and Beautiful.*

"But man, proud man!

Drest in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,
His glassy essence—like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As makes the angels weep."

—*Measure for Measure, II. 2.*

"Pride in their port, defiance in their eye."
—*GOLDSMITH, The Traveller.*

"It thrust proud Nebuchadnezzar out of men's society; proud Saul out of his kingdom; proud Adam out of paradise; proud Haman out of court; proud Lucifer out of heaven."—*Henry Smith.*

"What is pride? A whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star."

—*Wordsworth.*

PRESUMPTION.

"Presumption is a firework made up of pride and foolhardiness. It is indeed like a heavy house built upon slender crutches. Like dust, which men throw against the wind, it flies back in their faces and makes them blind. Wise men presume nothing but hope the best; presumption is hope out of her wits."—*T. Adams.*

"*Sequitur superbos ultor a tergo Deus.*"

—*SENECA.*

[An avenging God closely follows the haughty.]

"*Omne animi vitium tanto conspectius in se Crimen habet, quanto major, qui peccat habetur.*"—*JUVENAL.*

[Every vice makes its guilt the more conspicuous in proportion to the rank of the offender.]

"It is a dangerous thing in the service of God to decline from His own institutions. We have to do with a Being who is wise to prescribe His own worship, just to require what

He hath prescribed, and powerful to revenge that which He hath not required."—*Bishop Hall*.

RASHNESS.

"*Audax omnia perpeti
Gens humana ruit per velitum nefas*"
—HORACE.

[The human race, afraid of nothing, rushes on through every crime.]

"*Faucis temeritas est bono, multis malo.*"
—PHAEDRUS.

[Rashness brings advantage to few, misfortune to many.]

"*Juvenile vitium regere non posse impetum.*"
—SENECA.

[It is the fault of youth that it cannot control its own impetuosity.]

SUBMISSION.

"Calamity is man's true touch-stone."
—Fletcher.

"All are not taken! there are left behind
Living beloveds, tender looks to bring
And make the daylight still a happy thing,
And tender voices to make soft the wind.

But if it were not so—if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path but hollowly did ring:
Where 'Dust to dust' the love from life dis-
joined—

And if before these sepulchres unmoving
I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moors in weary
dearth)

Crying, 'Where are ye, O, my loved and
loving?'

I know a voice would sound, 'Daughter, I
AM:

Can I suffice for heaven and not for
earth?'—*Mrs. Browning*.

During the siege of Barcelona by the Spaniards and English, in 1705, an affecting incident occurred, which is thus related by Captain Carleton in his Memoirs: "I remember I saw an old officer, having his only son with him, a fine young man, about twenty years of age, going into the tent to dine. While they were at dinner a shot from the bastion of St. Antonio took off the head of his son. The father immediately rose up, first looking down upon his headless child, and then lifting up his eyes to heaven, while the tears ran down his cheeks, only said, 'Thy will be done!'"

SENSATIONALISM.

"Violent fires soon burn out themselves:
Small showers last long, but sudden storms
are short:

He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes:
With eager feeding, food doth choke the
feeder:

Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,
Consuming means, soon preys upon itself."
—*Shakespeare*.

INTEMPERANCE.

"*Bonarum rerum consuetudo pessima est.*"
[The too constant use even of good things
is hurtful.]

"Touch the goblet no more!
It will make thy heart sore
To its very core!"—LONGFELLOW, *Cristus*.

"Drunkenness is an immoderate affection and use of drink. That I call immoderate that is besides or beyond that order of good things for which God hath given us the use of drink.—JEREMY TAYLOR, *Holy Living* II. 2.

PUNISHMENT.

"Punishment is the recoil of crime, and the strength of the back-stroke is in proportion to the original blow."—*Trench*.

CHAPTER XI.

Food: Permitted and Prohibited.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—These are the beasts which ye shall eat. [For scientific and sanitary information respecting the animals, reptiles, birds, and fishes specified, valuable information will be found in *Whitlaw's Code of Health*; also in *Calmet*; and a useful summary in the *Critical and Explanatory Commentary* on this chapter].

How noteworthy the fact that the glorious Jehovah should extend his oversight of Israel to such minute dietic and sanitary regulations. But the minute is not less within God's thought than the majestic; the "hairs of your head" are guarded (Matt. x. 30) with a providence which equally controls dynasties and kings (Matt. x. 18). There is nothing unimportant with Him "whose we are"

He careth for you with a care which gathers all into consideration—each single step, “lest we dash our foot against a stone”; each moment of life, lest “sudden destruction” come upon us; each item which makes for health, for happiness, for holiness; for God thinks of us in every particular.

The special purposes effected by these dietic regulations for the Hebrew people were:—

1. *Sanitary*: to effect health and cleanliness in the individual and the family. And beyond question the classification of meats is founded upon the wholesomeness of the creatures as man’s food, while the stringent laws respecting the “dead” were of emphatic importance in an Oriental country and climate. It is Bacon’s testimony that “*cleanliness of body* was ever esteemed to proceed from a due reverence of God”; and Thomson affirms that “*health* is the vital principle of bliss.”

2. *Political*: to enforce a distinction between the Hebrew and surrounding nations, restricting them, by minute prohibitions in diet, from mingling with other people in the usages and indulgences of social life; enforcing on them a constant necessity of avoiding all close familiarity with “strangers.” This distinction, in habits at the table, and in all festivities, rendered them “a peculiar people,” and restrained them from a perilous intermingling with idolatrous neighbours; thus conserving the Theocracy, and marking out Israel as a nation selected and governed by Jehovah.

3. *Religious*: The distinction of meats rested on a moral, a religious, a theological basis. The creatures here classified were images of virtues and vices, suggestive to the Oriental mind of moral and sacred truths; were a pictorial delineation, therefore, of theological instructions. Certainly those creatures pronounced “clean” have been acknowledged most wholesome as man’s meat in all after times; and this enforced limitation on Israel that only “clean” food should pass their lips carried the important lesson to every man, woman, and child, that “God had called them not to uncleanness but unto holiness” (1 Thess. iv. 7).

Every enactment of the old dispensation aimed at cultivating virtue, purity, sanctity in God’s people; and equally, even more solemnly, every requirement of the gospel and all the provisions of our Lord’s atonement summon us to be “clean every whit.” “Be ye holy,” saith God, “for I am holy.”

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: DISTINGUISHING THE PRECIOUS FROM THE VILE (Vv. 4, 5, 6, 7).

“*He is unclean unto you.*”

God’s charge, through Ezekiel, against the faithless priests was that “they put no difference between the holy and profane, neither showed difference between the unclean and the clean” (Ezek. xxii. 26). It was also His requirement from Jeremiah in order to his being dignified as God’s acknowledged messenger: “If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth” (Jer. xv. 19).

The emphasis with which Jehovah insists upon this habitual and minute distinguishing the unclean from the clean proclaims therefore a *foremost law in godly conduct*. Consider—

1. *That God’s people*, the spiritual Israel, *move in a SCENE OF MINGLED GOOD AND EVIL*,

Man coveted in Eden to “know good and evil.” From that hour the “clean and unclean” have been around him in every path of life.

1. In the *sphere of daily life we have contact with both*. The world around us—earth, air, and sea—all elements, all scenes, are occupied with these physical and moral opposites, “clean and unclean.” A character, a quality, is upon all that lives. And this fact in the lower orders of creatures forcibly indicates the like realities of moral and spiritual contrasts in the human lives which throng our sphere.

2. Our contact with them *entails the danger of contamination*. Taste the unclean and we thereby become defiled. God has marked specifically and minutely the things which are to be accounted “an abomination” (vv. 12, 20, etc.). So in the human sphere, there are interdicted pleasures, companionships, alliances. The ban of heaven is upon much which the world sanctions. We cannot “have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” without being made “unclean” (v. 26). “Every one that toucheth them shall be unclean.”

3. In such a defiling sphere *our duty is to separate the precious from the vile*. God has separated them for us by His prohibitions and permissions; by His “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not.” We are to act out His commands, work along the line of His directions. Ignorance is inexcusable when God hath “shown us what is good, and what the Lord requires of us” (Micah vi. 8).

II. That *in life’s mingled scene the godly* MUST EXERCISE CONTINUOUS VIGILANCE.

People who knew not the Lord put no difference between things clean and unclean. But the “Israel of God” would need to hourly walk as amid treachery and hazard; they could not eat of the dish of an alien without possibility of tasting the condemned food. This enforced a divided life upon the Israelite, as Christianity still does, leading us to “abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good,” and maintain a “separation from sinners.”

1. We enter, by relationship with Christ, into *a separated life*. As Israel was by these dietic ordinances severed from intimacy and festivity with the heathen, so are Christians called aside, led out from near intercourse with unsanctified society, to “put a difference between the unclean and the clean” (vv. 43-47). We are separated unto God in Christ: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John xvii. 16).

2. Such a separated life must *assert itself in habitual avoidance of prohibited things*. The “unclean” is to be marked, repudiated, shunned, as “an abomination.” It entails an hourly watchfulness, a quick habit of penetrating into the moral differences which underlie society, men, and manners, pastimes and pursuits. Things must be looked at, not from their popularity, their advantages, their attractions, but faced with a challenge as to their moral quality and tendency. Will this defile? Is it “clean or unclean”? We must “take the precious from the vile.”

3. *Minute distinctions are forced upon us* by this principle of conduct. The “unclean” things are not glaringly so; the “clean” are not manifestly different from the “abominable.” These creatures—beasts, reptiles, fishes, etc.—are so similar that the lines seem almost to converge and intersect. We may easily avoid sinful men, shun their society, hide from their power; and yet men throw out their influence where they themselves are invisible and unsuspected. We might loathe the company of a vile man, and yet think it no risk to read his thoughts as they appear on the printed page. “Thereby many are defiled.” Thoughts read enter our minds, are within us to soil and fret us. The sentiments, maxims, and ideas of worldly-wise men gain currency as motives to common conduct, as rules of life. They may act as decoys. Let us challenge their “cleanness” in God’s sight, and estimate them by His truth. Our age is charmed with the specious plea of “expediency,” “tolerance,” “utilitarianism.” Let us separate the “precious from the vile.”

III. *That by strictest adherence to divine directions* SANCTITY OF LIFE SHOULD BE

MAINTAINED. "Ye shall not make yourselves abominable, etc.; ye shall sanctify yourselves" (vv. 43, 44).

1. Every godly soul is, to a degree, *put in trust with the imparted sanctity*. All Israel's peculiar and distinguishing holiness was the bestowment of Jehovah's grace; as all our Christian purity and piety are derived from Christ. Yet sanctity is not a passive condition of the soul, but a cultivated quality of temperament and behaviour. "Ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing" (v. 44). Godliness is to be wrought out into life, shunning the "corruptions which are in the world," and cultivating the holiness which assimilates us to God.

2. *Derived sanctity is no assurance against defilement* if we forsake God's commands. The Israelite only maintained his spiritual status as he held by his sacred separateness from the heathen; repudiating their festivities, broadening rather than obliterating the line of demarcation which distinguished him from the godless world. The admonitory word to us is this: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. i. 14, 15). It is our covenant privilege to be as God's sanctified household amid alienated peoples; with His sanctuary amongst us, admitted through a High Priesthood into the holiest of all; accepted by sacrifice, sanctified by the Spirit. It therefore behoves us to shun the vile, touch not and eat not "the unclean," but live in delightful observance of His commands, and thus "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord" (2 Cor. vii. 1). [See Addenda to chap. xi., *Separate from Sinners.*]

Topic: FORBIDDEN FOODS.

"Neither shall ye defile yourselves" (V. 44).

The details of these ceremonial restrictions are unimportant to us. They had their meaning and purpose for the Jew. But the suggestiveness of these prohibitions comes powerfully upon us who are not under Jewish ceremonialism.

"Govern well thy appetite, lest Sin
Surprise thee, and her black-attendant Death."
Paradise Lost, Bk. vii. line 546.

I. Man's *duty* is—THAT HIS PHYSICAL HEALTH AND PURITY BE SEDULOUSLY MAINTAINED.

The lust of the eye, the caprices of appetite, are not to rule him. He may give no license to cravings whose indulgence would violate the health and sanctity of his physical frame. Every fitful fancy, every low desire, can find gratification in the varieties of meats and drinks which are within man's reach. Yet that is no justification for his indiscriminate and unrestricted indulgence. His self-respect, his intelligence, his sense of propriety, his regard for purity, his recoil from vicious and vitiating habits, and his recognition of responsibility to God, should restrain him from any gratification which is low and degrading, which will inflame the blood, intoxicate the brain, disease the body, defile the conscience.

"Keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. v. 22). Such is man's duty. If he trifle with his health, and defile his flesh, he mars the work of God's hands. [Addenda to chapter xi., *Feasting.*]

"All philosophy," says Epictetus, "lies in two words—'Sustain' and Abstain.'"

II Man's *dignity* is—THAT HIS ENTIRE NATURE BE HALLOWED AND SANCTIFIED.

“For I am the Lord your God : ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy ; neither shall ye defile yourselves ” (v. 44).

All God’s solicitous care for Israel’s physical health and purity was but the index to His supreme desire for their moral rectitude and spiritual holiness. He does not interdict delights, but He requires that no defilement be admitted into the temple of the human life, sensuous, intellectual, or spiritual.

“Religion does not censure or exclude
Unnumbered pleasures, harmlessly pursued ” (COWPER’S *Retirement*),

but it lays prohibition on all that would demoralise us and offend God. “Unless the vessel be pure,” says *Horace*, “whatever is put in will turn sour.” [*Sincerum est nisi vas, quodcumque infundis acescit.*] The first requirement, therefore, to a hallowed life is a *purified body*; its passions subdued, its vile affections extinguished, its immoral tendencies arrested. Conversion proves itself by the renunciation of all sins of the flesh. From the *mental nature* must then be excluded all “evil thoughts”; the intellectual citadel of man must be purged of impure imaginations, decoying fallacies, fitful reasonings, and “every thought be brought into the obedience of Christ ” (2 Cor. x. 5). The *spiritual life* can only be perfected in holiness, dignified with sanctity, as the tabernacle in which it dwells is preserved inviolate. Hence the appeal, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty ” (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18).

Note : The word “*holy*” has its root in the ancient Saxon word *halig*, hale, sound, whole ; and *health* is therefore the primal idea of holiness—an unblemished, unimpaired, perfect physique. It glides into the higher application—perfect in a moral sense ; pure in heart, pious in thought and life.

Inferentially : All Jehovah’s regulations for Israel’s physical cleanness and health carried with them the higher demand—“a clean heart and a right spirit.” For only he that is “clean every whit” has attained to the divine ideal of man’s true dignity—“*Holiness unto the Lord.*”

Topic : A RESTRAINT UPON FESTIVITIES.

The design of God’s directions concerning food was not guidance to nutritious diet. The palate suffices man to discern between the luscious and the harmful. And the classification is not into salubrious and insalubrious, tasteful and tasteless, but *clean* and *unclean*. The results of these distinctions and directions are :

I. REMOVAL FROM ALL SOCIAL CONTACT AND FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HEATHEN.

God’s chosen tribes could hold no intimacy, share no festivity with idol worshippers. The tables of the nations were unclean. The Jew could have no seat at impure boards.

The principle is divine. The need of separateness remains, for the world is still the world. Its baits, its indulgences, its corruptions are unchanged. It extends its nets for unwary souls. Hence Scripture’s voice still cries, Beware. Beacons still show a coast bestrewed with wrecks, and wisdom calls the holy pilgrim from the treacherous path.

A clear precept interdicts the world. Believers must not cross the line. They must dwell apart, avoid intimacies, share no vile festivities.

1. Mark the *divine goodness* in this separating law. The climate of the world checks growth in grace. A coiling serpent sucks the life blood. Rough contact blunts the edge. Solomon’s lustre becomes clouded with shame because his heart declined to pleasure’s charms. All indulgent intimacies with the

world cause holiness to sicken and wane. Therefore Mercy warns, "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. xii. 2). [See Addenda to chap. xi. *Separate from Sinners.*]

2. Consider that the *world wars incessantly against Christ and His honour*. It declares itself Christ's open foe: it proclaims hostility against sacred truth. Is it not, then, a traitor's part to feast with the enemy? The true believer shows himself on the Lord's side, in company, act and step. We are the "salt of the earth": but, mixed with corruption, the salt loses its savour.

3. *Usefulness is neutralised where godliness is accommodating*. Suspicion fastens on the faltering steps, on the compromising profession. Society will heed no warning words from one who courts to share its vanities. Therefore Jesus says, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (Jno. xvii. 14). Tread down the barrier line, stray out beyond the limits of Israel's fellowship, and you wrong your own soul, shadow the glory of Christianity, and enfeeble the witness of gospel truth. The second result is—

II. UNCEASING VIGILANCE WAS ENFORCED UPON GOD'S PEOPLE.

God's dividing line was drawn everywhere, on all scenes, on every hour, between clean and unclean. Its lesson is to us—

1. That at every step we inquire *Is this a lawful path?* The quality of cleanness or uncleanness stamps every movement of every mind, every act throughout each day. Each minutest thing is the seed of some result. We may contract defilement from veriest trifles. This law enforces us to apply a constant test.

2. *No act is neutral*—void of quality, good or ill. We always stand in a path which is right or wrong. Ask continuously, Am I in a "clean" path? and it will be found often impossible to tarry. Examine *thoughts* by this test: dispel those found to be "unclean." Put *words* before this criterion, and "set a watch upon the door of thy lips." Place *books* at this bar of judgment; and how many trifling offsprings of a worldly pen will be consigned to oblivion! Bring *employ* to this light; and flee from what stands rebuked in the light of gospel truth.

Is your *soul* clean or unclean? By nature it is vile. But there is a Saviour's blood and a purifying Spirit. Jesus can cleanse, the Spirit can sanctify.—Compare Dean Law's "*Christ is All.*"

Topic: LEGAL PROHIBITIONS ABROGATED BY CHRISTIANITY (Vv. 44-47).

The *ceremonial* dispensation made righteousness and sanctity dependant on external observances and habits. Judaism "stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation."

The *spiritual* dispensation institutes an inward life of holiness, the Christian being "sanctified in Christ Jesus." Hence for us the Levitical restrictions and regulations are set aside. "Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. iv. 4).

Peter received a special revelation upon this matter (Acts x.), which at once and for ever swept away the distinctions between clean and unclean creatures; and with it abrogated that righteousness of moral life and religious feeling, which consisted in attendance to mere details of ceremonialism. The vision to Peter was especially intended to abolish the distinction between the Jewish and Gentile nations: since the gospel offered cleansing to all people, and Christ, by His atonement as the Lamb of God, took away the sin of the whole world (John i. 29; 1 John ii. 2).

Paul likewise received instruction direct from Christ on this same truth: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is nothing unclean of itself.*"

So that we are under an economy based upon grand principles rather than punctilious rites.

I. CHRISTIANITY REGARDS NOTHING AS IRREMIEDIABLY UNCLEAN.

Its message is that the unclean may be made clean: that what was before forbidden and "cast away" may now find acceptance, and be placed among the sanctified. Nothing is so impure but it may be purified: the *human heart*, the *godless will*, the *evil imaginations*, the *defiled habits*, the *guilty conscience*, the degraded soul. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Christianity declares that none, nothing, is unchangeably impure: defilement may be removed; God's prohibition is withdrawn: the "handwriting against us" is abolished; the sinner may be "washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 2).

II. CHRISTIANITY DENOUNCES NOTHING BECAUSE OF ITS BEING UNCLEAN.

The law had denounced much. Not foods only, but *people*. The Gentiles were excluded from spiritual fellowship with Israel. But the doom has been revoked: the "middle wall of partition" has been broken down (Ephes. ii. 14); all may enter the sacred enclosure and become accepted in Christ.

Every sin-defiled soul is in its sinfulness a separated and forbidden thing; in its uncleanness it is put aside, it has no place among the pure, no part in the heritage of them who are sanctified through faith in Jesus. But *not denounced!* Guilt renders it necessary that the sinner should be thus excluded so long as guilt remains; "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" for "the unclean can not stand in His sight." Yet Christianity offers, opens "salvation even to the uttermost;" declares that "where sin abounded grace doth much more abound."

Men who missed the large and loving truth denounced the "publican and the harlot"; Jesus Christ set the door open wide to them and became their Friend. "Behold a friend of publicans and sinners."

III. CHRISTIANITY ABANDONS NOTHING HOWEVER UNCLEAN.

No! it goes down to the depths. The *leper* was abandoned—socially and ceremonially—left to perish; his plaintive cry "Unclean! unclean!" winning no help till Christ "touched the leper" and healed his leprosy and restored him to society again. Until the possibility and potency of Christ's redemption and sanctity came to our souls, we were thus *outcasts*. The kingdom of God on earth was closed upon the unclean; and heaven too: "Nothing entereth that defileth."

No more now; a "new and living way" affords us entrance even "into the holiest of all." The grace of the Lord Jesus avails for each; and "him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Not a soul need remain unclean. Christ can cleanse. There is hope for the vilest.

"The Cross! it takes our guilt away
It holds the fainting spirit up."

Topic: SYMBOLS OF CLEANNESS IN THE LOWER FORMS OF LIFE.

"To make a difference between the unclean and the clean" (V. 41).

i. With regard to "BEASTS," two distinctive marks point out those which are clean and may be eaten; they should chew the cud and divide the hoof. Either of itself would be insufficient to constitute ceremonial cleanness. What spiritual truth may we learn from such marks being given? The chewing of the cud expresses the natural process of "inwardly digesting" that which one eats; while the divided hoof sets forth the character of one's outward walk. He who feeds upon the green pastures of the Word of God, and inwardly digests what he takes in, combines *calm meditation with prayerful study*, will manifest the *character of outward walk* which should distinguish him who obeys the Word.

The one without the other was insufficient (vv. 4-8). A man may profess to

love and feed upon the Word of God as the pasture of his soul; but, if his footprints along the pathway of life are not such as the Word requires, he is not clean. And also, though a man walk blamelessly, if his walk be not the result of the hidden life it is worthless. The impression of the foot is of no avail without the divine principle within which feeds upon and digests the rich pasture of God's Word.

ii. With respect to "*all that are in the waters*," the double mark of cleanness again is given. Two distinctions were necessary, "fins and scales" (vv. 9, 10). A fish needs the "fin" to enable it to *move through the water*, and "scales" to *resist their penetrating action*. And so does the believer require that spiritual capacity which enables him to move onward through the elements surrounding him, and at the same time to resist their penetrating influence. Both are essential. Encased against the action upon us of the evil world, yet endowed with the energy to pass onward through it.

iii. The law with respect to BIRDS was that the carnivorous, the omnivorous, the grovelling, were unclean (vv. 13-24). A striking exhibition is therein given of what must be strenuously shunned by every Christian. He must refuse everything of a "*carnal*" nature. Nor may he feed promiscuously upon everything which comes before him; he must "make a difference between unclean and clean"; must exercise a *discerning mind*, a spiritual judgment, a heavenly taste. Finally, he must use his wings: *rise on the pinions of faith*, and find his place in the celestial sphere to which he belongs. Nothing grovelling, nothing promiscuous, nothing unclean for the Christian.

iv. As to "CREEPING THINGS" there was entire prohibition (vv. 41-43). Jehovah would have his people free from the defilement consequent upon contact with, touching or tasting anything unclean. They were not their own; they belonged to Jehovah: His name was called upon them. Other nations might eat what they pleased: but Israel enjoyed the high distinction of being regulated by the Lord in every detail of life.

(a) Their entire separation from all manner of uncleanness flows out of *their relationship to Him*. It is not the principle of "stand by thyself, I am holier than thou"; but simply this, "God is holy," and therefore all who are brought into association with Him must be holy likewise. If a Christian be now asked why he walks apart from the ten thousand things in which men of the world participate, his answer is simply "My Father is holy." This is the true foundation of personal holiness.

(b) They are *bound to aim at the maintenance of the character* which He prescribes. If God, in His exceeding grace, stoops down to our low estate, and lifts us in association with Christ, has He not a right to prescribe what our character should be? And a true Israelite will maintain that "difference between the unclean and the clean."

(c) How strange to one who had scrupulously observed these ceremonial distinctions all his days, must have been that vision of the vessel containing "*all manner of four-footed beasts, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air*" (Acts x. 11-16) let down from heaven, and to have heard the voice say, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." No examination of hoofs and habits; no need now of this. The soul was now to rise above all ceremonial barriers into the magnificence of heaven's grace. True cleanness, the cleanness God required, was no longer outward and ceremonial, but should consist in being washed in the blood of the Lamb, which cleanseth from all sin, and renders the believer clean enough to tread the sapphire pavement of the heavenly courts.

The door of the kingdom is thrown open by the hand of Sovereign grace; but *not to admit aught that is unclean*. Nothing unclean could enter heaven. But a "cloven hoof" was no longer to be the criterion: but this—"what God hath cleansed."

The standard by which true cleanses must be regulated is no longer carnal, ceremonial, earthly; but spiritual, moral, and heavenly. We are no longer hemmed round about by "touch not, taste not, handle not"; but the divine Word assures us that "every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer" (1 Tim iv. 4, 5).—*C. H. M.*

Topic: JEHOVAH'S CONCERN FOR ISRAEL'S WELL-BEING (Vv. 1-43).

Doubtless the laws concerning clean and unclean animals were *symbolic*, conveying lessons specially adapted to Israel at the time; they were also *typical* of moral truths to be observed by worshippers of Jehovah through all time. So far as regards the animals themselves they were all on the same moral level in the sight of God; each followed the instincts implanted by the great Creator, acquired the habits, and exercised the passions peculiar to its nature. Some were more repulsive to man than others, of less service when alive, less utility when dead.

Animals had been classified by the patriarchs and among heathen nations; some animals had been considered more sacred than others. But these laws definitely fixed the line of demarcation to be drawn, the main distinction being twofold: All animals were unclean except those which divided the hoof and chewed the cud. The directions for determining the difference were numerous and minute, entailing careful and constant discrimination. Origen and other allegorical writers have found symbol and type in every permitted or prohibited thing; but the course is dangerous, and likely to lead to most erroneous conclusions. General truths are suggested, such as—

I. DIVINE CONCERN FOR THE TEMPORAL WELFARE OF ISRAEL.

Laws of purity enjoined would obviously conduce to their physical comfort. Cleanliness is a safeguard against many bodily ills. Nothing was interdicted in these restrictions that would tend to health and longevity. Caring for Israel as a father for his children, Jehovah would have them partake only of food that was nutritious. Nothing is beneath His notice that affects the welfare of the children of men.

II. DIVINE CONCERN FOR THE NATIONAL UNITY OF ISRAEL.

Elected to special privileges and responsibilities, the Hebrew nation was to be clearly distinguished from all other nations on the earth. The laws would keep the people from joining with the heathen in their ordinary meals and sacred feasts; would be a barrier against every intruder; for the Canaanites ate some of the animals these laws prohibited, and offered others in sacrifice to heathen gods. Nothing tends to obliterate national differences and to throw social distinctions into oblivion more than sitting together at the same table and partaking of common food. Israel's observance of the directions given in this chapter would set a hedge around the family life, and indicate a peculiar people.

III. DIVINE CONCERN FOR THE EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP OF ISRAEL.

Rites and ceremonies had already been instituted that would exclude other nations from mingling with the Hebrew in the worship of the tabernacle; now a guard is put around the *social* as well as sacred table. *Tent*, as well as tabernacle, to be consecrated to the Lord. Here we see Jehovah's *sovereignty* exercised, His *jealousy* for the exclusive worship of His people. Whether the people ate or drank, they were to do all to the glory of God. They were to come out from the ungodly and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and thus become the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. Nothing less than cheerful obedience to divine regulations for private and public life would satisfy the claims Jehovah made upon the loyalty and worship of His people.

IV. DIVINE CONCERN FOR THE COMPLETE PURITY OF ISRAEL.

While purity of heart and mind were of the first importance, the body also was to be kept pure. Nothing to be eaten that would make it gross, or vitiate the blood. Even the dwellings of the people, their garments, and every article for use or ornament, to be ceremonially clean. These minute and exact requirements would impress Israel with the holiness of the Lord with whom they had to do. In avoiding the proscribed animals—the habits and appearance of which in many cases would beget natural disgust—the people would be reminded (a) of the vileness and loathsomeness of sin; (b) of the need of constant circumspection to avoid contamination with evil; (c) of the necessity of complete purity in the sight of Jehovah. Attention thus called to the body and physical things would show that the human frame is not the vile product (as the Gnostics contended) of a malevolent deity, but created and cared for by Him who breathed into it at first the breath of life, and made man a living soul.

V. DIVINE CONCERN FOR THE EXALTED PIETY OF ISRAEL.

Selfishness is the root of all sin, pride of all impiety. These laws would tend to humble the people, teach them self-denial. Having to abstain from eating animals savage and voracious in their nature, unattractive in their form, repulsive in their habits, would remind Israel that the most scrupulous sanctity of heart was required by Him who demanded such purity in meaner things. These unclean animals may be regarded as types of persons it is always well to avoid. Thus the brute creation is a book full of useful lessons upon what we may with advantage adopt, and what we ought to shun. In all these things we see the wisdom and goodness of the Lord, conducing to well-being here, and furnishing stepping-stones to blessedness hereafter.—F. W. B.

Topic: JEHOVAH'S CONCERN FOR HIS OWN GLORY (Vv. 44-49).

The regulations taught Israel that Jehovah was their—

I. SUPREME RULER. "For I am the Lord your God." All authority resided in Him. He had sovereign right to command and restrain. The people were not to study their own preferences, or conveniences, but obey the mandates that issued from the King of kings.

II. SPOTLESS KING. "For I am holy." The constant reiteration of this truth must have engraved it deeply in the consciences of the congregation, and impressed them most solemnly with the purity of the divine nature. Israel could never have conceived of so holy a Being, surrounded as they had been, and were still, by hideous and degrading idolatry.

III. GREAT DELIVERER. "For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt." The people were under vast obligation to the Almighty. He had wrought signal deliverances for them. They were His by redemption. He had a right to expect obedience from them. He had brought them out of Egypt for the specific purpose of making them a people for Himself. These laws would test their *faith, gratitude, and obedience*; teach them self-denial, and restraint. Their spiritual nature was to be in ascendancy over everything carnal and temporal.

In the New Testament a new interpretation is given to these Levitical laws; we are shown that, not what we eat or drink defiles the soul, but what comes out of it. The root and seat of evil are within; yet, care needs to be exercised against temptation and contamination. Touching the unclean thing, such as *pernicious literature, places of ill-fame, sinful companionship*, may lead to moral defilement, to spiritual degeneracy. In the gospel—

- (1) *Special emphasis is laid upon spiritual purity;*
- (2) *With spiritual purity is associated our highest joy.*

Our *bodies* are temples of the Holy Ghost ; they ought, therefore, to be kept pure. The *Church* is the Body of Christ : from it, therefore, everything should be excluded that is unclean. Into the *celestial city* "there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination" ; all there shall be for ever, "Holiness unto the Lord."—*F.W.B.*

Topic : THE CLEAN AND THE UNCLEAN.

"*Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat*" (Lev. xi. 2, 3).

As the Mosaic was peculiarly a typical dispensation, we shall not exaggerate the uses of the text if we show that there was something instructive to us and something typical of the better covenant in the command given that the people were to eat no creatures but those which divided the hoof and those which chewed the cud.

I. These distinctions of meat were laid down TO KEEP THE JEWS AS A DISTINCT PEOPLE, and that herein they might be a type of the people of God, who are also, throughout all ages, to be a distinct and separate people—not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.

With this Levitical rule it was quite impossible for the Hebrews to mix with any other nation without violating the statutes they were commanded to keep. Their food was so restricted that they could not possibly enter into social intercourse with any of the neighbouring peoples. The Canaanites, for instance, ate everything, even the flesh that had been torn by dogs, and the dogs themselves. Now, a Jew could never sit at a Canaanite's table, because he could never be sure that there would not be the flesh of some unclean and accursed thing upon it. The Jews could not even eat with the Arabs, who were near akin to them, for they frequently partook of the flesh forbidden to the Jew. This command made them a distinct and isolated republic so long as they were obedient to the law. Just so the Mohammedan regulations, less strict than those of the Jew, prevent their becoming socially intermingled either with the idolators or with Christians. Now, what is the use of this to us ? *It is the earthly type of a heavenly mystery.* Thus all who name the name of Christ are solemnly bound to be forever separated from the world. Our Saviour "was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He was with them, but He was never of them ; among them, but always distinct and separate from them. He hath set us an example. Be among men as a light in the midst of darkness, as salt scattered over putridity, as heavenly angels in the midst of fallen men ; a distinct people, a chosen generation.

But *in what respects are we to be distinguished ?*

1. In a *pure consistency* always, in vain eccentricity never. Not in our garments ; not by any peculiar jargon in speech ; such artificial separations we leave to the people whose vanity feeds on its own conceit. Not trying to make ourselves look like Christians. Heavenly realities within do not always need to be labelled outside, so that everybody may say, "There goes a saint." There are other modes of being distinguished from the world than any of these.

2. We ought ever to be distinguished from the world *in the great object of our life.* Our main and principal motive as Christians should always be to live for Christ. You can make the commonest calling become really sacred. You may take the highest orders by dedicating your daily life wholly to the service of Jesus. There is such a thing—and let those that deny the possibility stand

self-convicted that they obey not the precept—"Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

3. By *our spirit* as well as our aim we should likewise be distinguished; a spirit which watcheth humbly before God, and seeketh to know His will and to do it through the grace of God given.

4. *Our maxims* and rules which regulate us should be very different from those of others. A Christian never considers what is usual, but what is right. The believer reads things, not in man's light, in the obscurity of which so many blind bats are willing to fly, but he reads things in the sunlight of heaven. If a thing be right, though he lose by it, it is done; if it be wrong, though he should become as rich as Cræsus by allowing it, he scorns the sin for his Master's sake.

3. *Our actions* should be distinctive. Let your conduct talk out your soul. Let the main sermon of your life be illustrated by all your conduct, and it shall not fail to be illustrious. This will furnish the best proof that you have been with Jesus.

4. A Christian is distinguished by *his conversation*. If he would have a jest, he picks the mirth but leaves the sin; his conversation is not used to levity; it is not mere froth, but it ministereth grace unto the hearers. Oh! commend me to the man who talks like Jesus; who will not for the world suffer corrupt communications to come out of his mouth. You know the value of the gold of heaven too well to pawn it away for the counterfeits of earth. "Come ye out from among them; be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." By a holiness which merely moral men cannot equal, stand as on a pedestal aloft above the world. Thus men may know you to be of the seed of Jesus, even as they knew the Jew to be the seed of Israel.

II. The distinction drawn between clean and unclean animals was intended by God to KEEP HIS PEOPLE ALWAYS CONSCIOUS THAT THEY WERE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF SIN.

An oriental Jew, sensible and intelligent, walks out in the fields. He walks along close by the side of the high-road, and what should he see but a string of camels going along? "Ah!" he says to himself "those are unclean animals" Sin, you see, is brought at once before his mind's eye. He turns away from the road and walks down one of his own fields, and as he goes along a hare starts across his path. "Ah!" says he, "an unclean animal again; there is sin in my path." He gets into a more retired place; he walks on the mountains; surely he shall be alone there. But he sees a coney burrowing among the rocks; "Ah!" says he, "unclean; there is sin there!" He lifts his eye up to heaven; he sees the osprey, the bald eagle, flying along through the air, and he says, "Ah! there is an emblem of sin there!" A dragon-fly has just flitted by him—there is sin there. There are insects among the flowers; now every creeping thing, and every insect, except the locust, was unclean to the Jew. Everywhere he would be reminded that this world, however beautiful, still has sin in it. Even the fish, in sea, or river, or inland lake, had their divisions; those that had no scales or fins were unclean to the Jew, so the little Hebrew boys could not even fish for minnows in the brook but they would know that the minnow was unclean, and so their young hearts were made to dread little wrongs and little sins, for there were little sins in the little pools, even as there were leviathan sins floating in the deep and nude sea. We want to have this more before our minds. Not a spot is there in the universe where the curse of sin has never inflicted a blight, or where the hope of redemption should not inspire a prayer. See that you put on the whole panoply of God, and watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. Every morning we ought to ask the Lord to keep us from unknown sins, to preserve us from temptation that we cannot foresee, to check us in every path of life if we are about to go wrong, and hold us up every

hour that we sin not. May the Lord set sin straight before your eyes, and then set the cross of Christ there too, and so you will be saved.

III. This injunction was also intended to be a RULE OF DISCRIMINATION BY WHICH WE MAY JUDGE WHO ARE CLEAN AND WHO ARE UNCLEAN, that is, WHO ARE SAINTS AND WHO ARE NOT.

There are two tests, but they must both be united. The beast that was clean was to chew the cud, here is *the inner life*; every true-hearted man must know how to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the sacred Word. The man who does not feed upon gospel truth, and so feed upon it, too, that he knows the sweetness and relish of it, and seeks out its marrow and fatness, that man is no heir of heaven. You must know a Christian by that which supports his life and sustains his frame. But then the clean creatures were also known by *their walk*. The Jew at once discovered the unclean animal by its having an undivided hoof; but if the hoof was thoroughly divided, then it was clean, provided that it also chewed the cud. So there must be in the true Christian a peculiar walk such as God requires. You cannot tell a man by either of these tests alone, you must have them both. But while you use them upon others apply them to yourselves. You may profess the faith within, but if you do not walk aright without, you belong to the unclean. On the other hand, you may walk aright without, but unless there is a real feeding upon precious truth in the heart, all the right walking in the world will not prove you to be a Christian. That holiness which is only outward is moral not spiritual; it does not save the soul. That religion which is only inward is but fancy; it cannot save the soul either. But the two together, the inwards parts made capable of knowing the lusciousness, the sweetness, the fatness of Christ's truth; and the outward parts conformed to Christ's image and character; these conjoined point out the true and clean Christian with whom it is blessed to associate here, and for whom a better portion is prepared hereafter.—*C. H. Spurgeon, in "Metro. Tab. Pulpit."*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XI.

SEPARATE FROM SINNERS :—

This was Christ's distinction: it should distinguish all who are Christ's.

"The friendships of the world are oft Confederacies in vice, or leagues of pleasure. Ours has severest virtue for its basis, And such a friendship ends not but with life."—ADDISON: *Cato* iii. 1.

"There are three friendships which are advantageous, and three which are injurious. Friendship with the upright, friendship with the sincere, and friendship with the man of observation; these are advantageous. Friendship with the men of specious airs, friendship with the insinuatingly soft, and friendship with the glib-tongued; these are injurious."—CONFUCIUS: *Analects* iii.

"Nature and religion are the bands of friendship; excellency and usefulness are its great endearments. But as all cannot actually be of our society, so neither can all be admitted to a special, actual friendship."

—JEREMY TAYLOR.

"Not with the light and vain,
The man of idle feet and wanton eyes;
Not with the world's gay, ever smiling
train;
My lot be with the grave and wise.

"Not with the trifler gay,
To whom life seems but sunshine on the
wave;
Not with the empty idler of the day;
My lot be with the wise and grave.

"Not with the jesting fool,
Who knows not what to sober truth is
due;
Whose words fly out without an aim
rule;
My lot be with the wise and true.

"With them I'd walk each day,
From them time's solemn lessons would
learn,
That false from true and true from false I
may
Each hour more patiently discern."

—BONAR.

FEASTING:—

“Simple diet is best; for many dishes bring many diseases.”—PLINY.

“They eat, they drink, and in communion
secret

Quaff immortality and joy.”—MILTON.

“Health and liberty

Attend on those bare meals: if all were
blest

With such a temperance

There would be no slaves, no syncophants
At great men's tables.—MAY.

“Fatal effects of luxury and ease!

We drink our poison, and we eat disease,

Indulge our senses at our reason's cost,

Till sense is pain, and reason hurt or lost.

—CHANDLER.

CHAPTER XII.

Maternity.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—If a woman hath conceived . . she shall be unclean. Thus at the very entrance into life uncleanness clings to us. Not a child is born without defilement surrounding its birth. “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psa. li. 5). “How can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job xxv. 4). How humbling is this Scripture presentation of our case. From the cradle to the grave man's life is pronounced unclean. Surely it should arrest all self-elation and boasting. Pitiably indeed sounds the vain panegyric upon the dignity of human nature; melancholy is the haughty assumption of excellence and worthiness, in the light of this vision of man's defilement from birth till death. He should rather “abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job xlii. 6). Instead of the too common flattery of human nature, be this mirror of his humiliating impurity held up to the face of the self-satisfied sinner, that he may see the “hole of the pit whence he was digged” (Isa. li. 1), and cry in penitential lowliness, “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa. lxiv. 6).

V. 6.—She shall bring a lamb. Always, in God's graciousness, the remedy rises for the malady. Defilement has its antidote in atonement. The two grand aspects of the sacrificial death of Christ stood out here in the “lamb for a burnt offering,” in which He offered Himself without spot to God; and in the “sin offering,” in which He substituted Himself as the victim for men. From the humbling spectacle of human helplessness and defilement here given what can be more assuring and consolatory than to gain a view, in type, of the perfect merits of Jesus—who in Himself concentrated the unsullied grace and dignity of humanity, and in His sacrifice effectually atoned for the guiltiness and degradation of our fallen race. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Vv. 2, 5.—If the woman have born a man child. . . . If she bear a maid child. The mother's defilement was ceremoniously less for the male child than for the female. Is not this a perpetuated memorial of the fact that sin entered the world through the woman, she being the first transgressor? Certainly this is the basis of Paul's argument for her inferior position in the Christian Church (1 Tim. ii. 11-14). Or, in this shorter banishment from sanctuary privileges when her child was a male, there may be found an intimation of the blessed privilege coveted by all Hebrew mothers, of giving birth to THE “MAN CHILD,” who was to be “born of a woman,” to redress the woes of the fall. Every suggestion of the

coming Emmanuel was cherished as the soft radiance of that promised "MORNING STAR." And so the heavier penalty fell on the birth of the female child, since woman was a remembrance of sin, whereas the ameliorated penalty was attached to the birth of a male, since the Man Child was the herald of the promised Saviour.

V. 8.—If she be not able to bring a lamb. However poor the woman might be, there could be no exemption from the presentation of an atonement offering. Poverty must come, though with meek aspect, trusting in reconciling blood. And the "poor in spirit," whose faith is tremulous, whose apprehension is feeble, must, nevertheless, lay hope on the merits of sacrifice. None can be allowed, through lowliness of station or poverty of soul, to evade the propitiatory atonement. All must place trust in Christ whatever our lot in life, whatever our spiritual mood. Yet how tender is God's consideration! He will allow the turtle dove to suffice for the poor, and regard it as equally efficacious as the richer offerer's lamb, so that the humblest Israelite should be harassed by no fear lest she forfeit privilege by her lowlier gift. God's perfect grace comes to the very condition in which the "poor and needy" are to be found. And so, in this Christian dispensation, the lowest and the feeblest have the atoning blood brought within their reach, and through its merits may recover all the privileges from which "uncleanness" excludes them. "To the poor the gospel is preached."

HOMILIES.

Topic: MOTHERHOOD.

Scripture shows that God *thinks much of mothers*. Allusions to a mother's sufferings, perils, relationship, affection, are very numerous. She passes through no experience which has not been noticed, described, and used by the Lord as a simile of spiritual truth. Motherhood, in all its aspects, is the reiterated theme of God's Word. This must afford a wealth of consolation and support to a believing mother in her trials and solicitudes; her watchful Father has shown that He minutely considers all her various cares, her mysterious pangs, her heart struggles between dread and delight, her yearnings and her love.

The *birth of a child* is also an event which constantly engages inspiration. The Word makes frequent reference to the incident. A new life ushered into the world, is a fact which touches the heart of God. Another being launched upon the floods of possibility; another factor in the intricate sum of human existence, whose results must affect the ultimate reckoning; another soul added to the millions whose destiny is bliss or woe. There is no room for doubting that the divine Father is concerned for each human offspring. He notes the child's entrance, gives directions concerning it, sends counsels for its career, desires its salvation and sanctification, calls it to the immortal Home made ready by Christ. "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14).

I. *How observant is Scripture of the HUMILIATIONS incident to MOTHERHOOD.*

This chapter is a witness.

1. Scripture has *sanctioned and sanctified wifely relationship* (Psa. cxiii. 9).

2. Scripture recognises *every stage of physical suffering* which motherhood entails (Jer. iv. 31).

3. Scripture forewarns of the *tender sorrows and distresses incident to maternity* (Jno. xvi. 21; Isa. xxvi. 17).

4. Scripture contains special *messages of compassion and hope* for mothers in their period of solicitude (Isa. xl. 11).

II. *How emphatically does Scripture pay tribute to the HONOURS of MOTHERHOOD.*
 In making a mother the symbol of the Church of God (Gal. iv. 6 ; Ephes. v. 32).
 In comparing Jehovah's consolatory ministries to those of a mother (Isa. lxvi. 13).
 In using motherhood as the channel of Christ's advent (Luke i. 35).
 In the tender consideration for His mother manifested by Jesus (Luke ii. 52 ; Jno. xix. 26, 27).

In the command given to children to pay their mothers reverence (Matt. xv. 4, etc.). [See Addenda to chap. xii., *Maternity.*]

III. *How watchfully does Scripture guard the HAPPINESS which should be the crown of MOTHERHOOD.*

1. *Conjugal loyalty is scrupulously demanded* (Mal. ii. 15, 16 ; Ephes. v. 25, 28).

2. *A mother's place in the family is carefully indicated* (Ephes. vi. 1, 2).

3. *The grace which flows through mothers to their children is recognised with emphatic approval* (2 Tim. i. 5).

4. *The blessedness of a mother's privilege is indicated in Christ's welcome of the mothers who brought their children to Him* (Luke xviii. 15-17).

"And say to mothers, What a holy charge
 Is theirs ; with what a kingly power their love
 Might rule the fountains of the new-born mind ;
 Warn them to wake at early dawn, and sow
 Good seed before the world has sown its tares."—Mrs. Sigourney.

Though her child is "born in sin," and she is humiliated by her own "uncleanness," yet can a mother retrieve her humiliation by uplifting her child in prayer to God, by training her offspring in the faith of Christ, and at last, with her children saved in the Lord, appearing in the glory of the Eternal Presence with the glad cry, "Behold me, and the children which thou hast given me!" [See Addenda, *Childhood.*]

Topic: BIRTH.

I. In its pangs there survives the MEMORIES OF THE WOEFUL FALL.

Our ancestress Eve sinned, therefore, "unto the woman God said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children" (Gen. iii. 16).

II. In its "uncleanness" there arise SUGGESTIONS OF OUR TRANSMITTED DEFILEMENT.

Physical impurity, amid which a babe is ushered into the world, is but a sign of that corruption, moral and spiritual, which parents pass on to their offspring : "Altogether born in sin" (Jno. ix. 34).

III. In its transports there reappears the JOYOUSNESS OF THE MESSIAH'S INCARNATION.

Sang the angels, "Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii. 11). A woman, "as soon as she is delivered of the child, remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man-child is born into the world" (Jno. xvi. 21).

Topic: POLLUTION AND PURIFYING.

The birth of a child should be an event of gratitude and delight. It is never wholly so ; for a shadow falls on every new-born life.

(a) It is "born in sin," and, therefore *may* perish in sin !

(b) It is born amid travail, and may—dread possibility that !—*occasion death* through the anguish of birth.

(c) It is an event marked by God as qualified with "uncleanness." For He sees in every birth, since Eve's fall, the *perpetuation of sin*, the *propagation of a sinning race*.

I. UNCLEAN: such is the VERDICT OF HEAVEN UPON HUMAN LIFE.

God has here written the word pollution upon the very entrance of a babe into existence.

1. It brands the mother as "unclean," and excludes her from social fellowship and sanctuary privileges. We are not now judged by this ceremonial standard; but a principle underlies this banishment of the mother. It declares that there is taint in the blood. There has never been a sinless mother on this earth. Certainly not Eve; nor even the Virgin Mary—for she had equally to observe "the days of her purification" (Luke ii. 22). Womanhood is defiled; therefore maternity is not pure.

2. It brands the child as defiled. The tender babe holds in its physical form the germs of foul disease, of corrupt affections and passions. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" From a poisoned fountain there can flow only vitiated streams. Leave that babe to follow its inbred desires and it will degenerate into evil. Goodness is never self-evolved, but only badness. "They go astray as soon as they be born" (Psalm lviii. 2).

II. CLEANSING: such is THE DEMAND OF GOD UPON EVERY ONE DEFILED.

Here upon the mother only, because the ceremonial directions deal with the mother. But the demand is equally enforced upon all; each sex, every life. The male child was unclean till "circumcised" (v. 3).

1. Until cleansing is effected there is *banishment*: the door is closed upon social life, for she must be separate: and closed upon sacred scenes, for she must "not come into the sanctuary." Defilement excludes us from all that is happiest, purest, best.

2. Until cleansing is effected there is *degradation*: the woman forfeited her place of dignity in her own home and in God's temple. Impurity is a degradation. We sink thereby from our honoured place in creation; we grovel instead of triumph; we are bowed into shame before God instead of joying in His favour; and we are refused the blessedness which is the right of sinless man, of treading God's courts with acceptance, and abiding in the delights of holy privilege.

III. PURIFIED: such is the POSSIBILITY OPENED BY GOD TO ALL WHO ARE UNCLEAN.

1. *Womanhood sanctified* (v. 7). In the Christian dispensation there is a richer purifying than the ceremonial; it "cleanses from all sin." Look in upon the Bethany home—"Mary sat at Jesus' feet." See the apostles' list of consecrated women in the Christian church at Rome (Romans xvi.). Lift your eyes to the pure souls, "an hundred and forty and four thousand" with the Lamb on Mount Zion: virgin saints, all undefiled (Rev. xiv. 1, 4).

2. *Childhood consecrated* (v. 3), thereby enrolled as a member of the Israel of God: and now placed in the hands of Jesus who, blessing the children, declares, "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

There is merit in Christ's "atonement" which purges all sin's stains. There is grace in His heart by which all may be rejoiced. There is beauty in His righteousness with which all may be clothed in sacred comeliness.

Topic: THE STATUTE RELATING TO MATERNITY.

This chapter records the rites to be observed by Hebrew women in connection with their new experiences of maternity. The period of ceremonial restrictions would differ according to the sex of the child; but, in both cases, the mother would be permitted to present her offering before the Lord, and,

eventually, be restored to her former status among the people. The statute suggests the following reflections :

I. THAT ANGUISH IS ASSOCIATED WITH MATERNITY.

Through the fall the sorrows of conception were greatly multiplied, and the pangs of childbirth became intensified. The whole period of conception, with many, is a burden ; and the time of travail one of most excruciating pain. Though the mother experiences one of nature's keenest joys when she knows that to her a child is born, yet there are accompanying sorrows which only the feelings of maternity can know, as no stranger can intermingle with the joy.

II. THAT PRIVACY IS ASSOCIATED WITH MATERNITY.

Although the procreation of children is normal and of divine ordination, yet, where there is virtuous womanly modesty, there is always a sense of shyness and reserve during period of preparation for advent of the little stranger, especially at the season of delivery. The instincts of nature suggest withdrawal from public observation and general familiar intercourse even with friends. Hence, even among heathen nations, special rites and customs have always been associated with the experiences under consideration. Such restraints and reserve do not degrade the gentler sex in the sight of God or the eyes of right-minded men ; woman rather rises thereby in honour and esteem.

III. THAT DEPRAVITY IS ASSOCIATED WITH MATERNITY.

Maternity, under honourable conditions, is no sin : yet, by it, depravity is communicated ; as the Psalmist expresses the fact, " Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." There is a hereditary tendency in human nature to sin ; so that giving birth to a child is the propagation of sinfulness, and an extension of the consequences of transgression, entailing *moral*, as well as ceremonial defilement. The rite of purification, under these circumstances, is both symbol and type of purification of the children of men by atonement of our great High Priest on Calvary. Responsibilities, commensurate with the honour of maternity, suggested by the statute. Imperative, that children born in sin, with inherent depraved propensities, should be taught the law of the Lord, and trained in holiness and righteousness all their days.

IV. THAT SALVATION IS ASSOCIATED WITH MATERNITY.

Though for a while the mother was kept secluded from society, the restrictions were only of a temporary character. She was soon seen presenting her appointed offerings before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. The burnt offering was the basis of all other offerings ; and signified, not only the sovereign claim of Jehovah upon all we have and are ; but, also the disposition of the worshipper to become a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. Behold the *goodness of God* in promising to accept "two turtles, or two young pigeons" if the offerer were not able to present a lamb ; *one for the burnt offering, the other for the sin offering*. The intention and frame of mind were of more importance than the offering itself, as the Scriptures elsewhere declare, "Behold ! to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." This rite—being for the Jews, and associated with the Levitical economy—is abrogated now ; *a more minute examination, therefore, would not minister to edification—is not necessary*. Some moral teachings have been indicated, and they may, when convenient, be reiterated in public as part of the didactic function of preaching ; for principles, gathered from divine laws, have undying roots, and inexhaustible meanings. This, as well as other rights, was observed down to the advent of our blessed Lord ; for Mary, the mother of Jesus, offered in the Temple the least offering allowed at thanksgiving and sacrifice after child-birth ; an irrefutable proof of the abject poverty of her worldly circumstances. On national, as well as on religious grounds, no objection can be offered under the gospel to women, having been delivered in the time of maternal solicitude and sorrow, publicly paying their vows in the courts of the

Lord, and with grateful hearts re-dedicating themselves to the service of the Most High. If womankind reflect with sorrow upon the fact that it was through Eve's seduction that Adam fell and sin entered our world, they may reflect with joy upon the fact that *it was through their own sex that the second Adam came*, who has reversed the curse of sin and redeemed the human race. If in connection with the first man shame seems to cover womanhood, the second man, the Lord from heaven, placed a wreath of undying glory on her brow, as we see lying in the arms of Mary at Bethlehem, "*the holy child Jesus.*" Paul asserts, in his first Epistle to Timothy (v. 15), that women shall be saved through the child-bearing; salvation has come through its ordinance, and if women abide in *faith, love, sanctification, and holy self-control*, they shall be cleansed from all moral impurity, shall be not only sanctified, but saved, through the Child born, the Son given.—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XII.

MOTHERHOOD:

"There is no mother like the mother that bore us."—*Spanish Proverb.*

"A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive."—*COLERIDGE.*

". A mother's love
Is an undying feeling. Earth may chill
And sever other sympathies, and prove
How weak all human bonds are; it may
kill
Friendship, and crush hearts with them;
but the thrill
Of the maternal breast must ever move
In blest communion with her child, and
fill
Even heaven itself with prayers and hymns
of love.—*PATTERSON.*

Monica, Augustine's mother. Never did mother struggle more earnestly than she. From her son's nineteenth to his twenty-eighth year, while he was revelling in all sin's foulness, she persisted in resolute hope and fervent prayer. In his twenty-ninth year she was

still "instant in prayer," when he left her and journeyed to Rome. From Rome he went to Milan, and thither the praying mother followed him. And there the answer to her prayer and reward of her Christian influence came. In Ambros's preaching contrition came to Augustine, and that event made *Monica's* happiness complete.

CHILDHOOD:

"Children are what their mothers are.
No fondest father's fondest care
Can fashion so the infant's heart
As those creative beams that dart,
With all their hopes and fears, upon
The cradle of a sleeping son."—*LANDER.*

"The mother's heart is the child's school-room."—*BEECHER.*

Cecil, who had adopted infidel sentiment in his youth, and prided himself upon his strong arguments against religion, said, long afterwards: "There was one argument I could never get over, the influence and life of a holy mother."

CHAPTER XIII.

Leprosy: its Discovery and Treatment.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

Gathering into view the circumstantial and concise description of the malady here given; the directions concerning leprosy may be thus analysed and arranged:

Symptoms of leprosy:

1. Their *minuteness*: small in their beginnings, trifling skin blemishes or hair defects, scarcely distinguishable at the outset, evasive therefore, and subtle.

2. Their *intricacy*: so resembling other ailments, in some cases rising out of other blemishes and wounds; complicate and interblending.

3. Their *repulsiveness*: all the descriptions are loathsome.

Discrimination of the symptoms. The investigation had to be—

1. *Cautious*: lest that should be pronounced leprosy which was not; or that which was, be exempted.

2. *Patient*: the sufferer must be repeatedly examined where the signs were uncertain: no haste, no summary decision.

3. *Thorough*: searching to the very root: watching a wound to note its developments, shaving the hair that no symptom escape notice.

Treatment of the leper. When the malady was beyond doubt, the doom was—

1. *Absolute*: he was banished, there might be no concessions; he was excluded the camp.

2. *Mournful*: garments to be torn, the hair dishevelled, the lips covered, as for the dead.

3. *Proclaimed*: from the outlawed leper must rise the cry of warning to others, which was also the death knell of his own fate—"Unclean!"

Six various aspects under which leprosy may develop itself in man are here specified:

1. *First appearance* of the plague: the victim manifesting symptoms which excite suspicion (vv. 1-9.)

2. *Return* of the distemper (vv. 9-11). But two features of the malady are here exempted from the ban of uncleanness.

(1). The plague has exhausted itself upon the *entire body* of the sufferer (vv. 12, 13).

(2). The *plague spots* have lost their virulence (vv. 16, 17).

3. *Leprosy developing* from other sores or accidental wounds: seizing these blemishes in which to root itself (vv. 18-28).

4. The plague *burying itself amid the hair*: called the "dry scall" (vv. 29-37).

5. *Harmless leprosy* (vv. 38, 39). It is still accounted harmless by the Arabs: causes no inconvenience, and lasts variously from two months to two years.

6. The *baldness* distemper: leading to the falling off of the hair from the back of the head (vv. 40-44).

Vv. 45, 46.—The leper in whom the plague is, etc. As the victim of a grievous calamity the poor leper must assume the melancholy aspects of mourning, he must tell out his woe in the doleful cry "Unclean," and his doom must be to wander as an outcast from the society of Israel and from the sanctuary of God. This foul distemper has always been a parable of the loathsomeness of sin, and its dismal punishment vividly portrays the grievous penalties of moral and spiritual defilement—"a castaway."

Vv. 47-59.—The garment also that the plague of leprosy is in, etc. Equal minuteness of inspection, discrimination of taint were to be exercised upon garments affected with the plague, and if judged to be really contagious they were to be burned. Clothes were scarce, and not easily to be replaced in the desert, hence care that nothing be needlessly destroyed. But no unclean thing, nor "anything that defileth" could be allowed to abide within the camp. Evil must be rooted from our own persons, or we become outcasts; and evil must be shunned, contact therewith be scrupulously avoided, or the malady may return. Therefore, like leprous garments, we must "lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us." Within the fellowship of the redeemed Church on earth, and amid the blessedness of the ransomed society of heaven, God will allow no place for any unclean thing, "neither

whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. xxi. 27).

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: MAN PHYSICALLY A VICTIM OF CRUEL MALADIES.

How appalling this picture of physical misery! To what sickening and wearying distempers has the human frame become a prey! How humiliating to contemplate

" the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to!"

I. *Fashioned after the divine image*, HOW GRACEFUL AND DIGNIFIED IS THE HUMAN FORM!

Moving among all products of God's creating skill, man is His "noblest work."

1. As a *tenement of the mind and spirit*, the body is endowed with a natural comeliness.

It is no unfit abode for the higher nature within. Physically we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." Mark its symmetry, its erectness, its agility. Well says *Hamlet*, "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"

2. As an *instrument of the mind and spirit*, the body possesses finest aptitudes.

Its motions, its senses, its abilities, afford admirable outlets for the impulses and aims of the inner being. The eyes for vision, the lips for speech, the hands for ministry and work, the limbs for movement—the physical form is a thing of marvellous suitableness to the necessities of intellectual life and spiritual sympathies. It is in itself no grim prison, no harsh machine, but a supple instrument, ready to all the requirements of the indwelling soul.

II. *Assailed by foul diseases*, HOW DESECRATED AND PITIABLE IS THE HUMAN FORM!

Look upon the mighty fallen! writhing in anguish, wasted by disease, distorted by maladies!

1. In bodily diseases we *mark the traces of calamitous experiences* having befallen man.

As in the geological strata the torn and disordered upheavals declare that violence has wrought harm, so in the sufferings and maladies of the human frame. Some dire disaster has come upon the serene world of human life. Diseases are evidences of ruinous activities having invaded man's history. God made his noble creature for something better than to be the victim of sufferings and maladies. A foul hand has been laid upon his beauteous form. "An enemy hath done this." Sin has done dire work. Every pang, disorder, disease, is therefore a warning cry against sin which brought death into the world and all our woes.

2. In our physical maladies we may note the *inducements to watchfulness and virtue*.

If diseases point to a historic disaster in man's career—his fall through sin, they also quicken man to carefulness against repeating the follies and vices which engender physical maladies. They are a call—Beware! It is not altogether a melancholy fact that illnesses and sufferings assail us, if they warn us from indulgences and defilements which develop physical misery. The evil heart of man would urge him to unlimited vices if this penalty did not confront and restrain him.

"Just disease to luxury succeeds,
And every death its own avenger breeds" (*Pope*).

3. Amid all distresses of the body *there are ameliorations and consolations offered in religion.*

(1). A patient and devout spirit may "draw honey out of the rock," and find solace in anguish; for those who love God have had to testify, "It was good for me to be afflicted."

"Affliction is not sent in vain
From that good God who chastens whom He loves" (*Southey*).

(2). In suffering also there comes the consolation of Christ to those who are His. He knew affliction in bitterest degree, and is a "brother born for adversity."

(3). And there opens in prospect to the child of God the blissful life of heaven, where "the inhabitants never say they are sick," etc. (Rev. xxi. 4).

Topic: DISEASE—DEVELOPMENT—DOOM.

Trace the career of the malady: it does not complete itself at a stride: it has its outset and its goal. A pestilence in the land does not expand into its fatal proportions without antecedent incitements and advancing developments. In its germinal stage the peril may have been unsuspected or ignored, but its fructification proves that active energies have long and effectively operated. Harvest fields swept by the scythe once lay bare in ploughed furrows; the seed was sown, it grew, ripened, till the reapers entered, and the garnerers were filled. Good and bad products alike have their history of outset, advance and fruition. In man's physical and moral life there are equally traceable the beginnings and progressions of evil, till the fatal end is reached. No fact for contemplation in the moral realm is more melancholy than this—the *progress of corruption*. Consider the—

I. SUBTLE HISTORY OF ITS ORIGIN.

Transmitted; mysteriously passed on from parent to child: or *acquired* by contact with the leper, or things infected with leprosy 1. For awhile the distemper lies *concealed* in the blood, assumes no visible symptoms; is latent, passive. Thus sin long secretes itself in the nature as a subtle tendency, slumbers in the heart as a hidden taint. Whence the beginnings of evil in a human life? Came it from parentage, a moral tendency in the affections, the will, the habits? Was it imparted by early whisperings, faulty examples, harmful influences?

2. Its first *appearance* was in a form of uncertainty, not manifestly leprous, a swelling, a spot. Wrong when beginning in a child is not glaringly wrong, there is a something suggestive of possible deviation from right, but it is not certainly so, not manifestly and determinately so. It startles *suspicion* in the observer; the word, though not false, was hardly true; the secret act was scarcely deceitful, yet lacking in thorough honesty; it is scarcely a "rift in the lute"; not yet a rot on the fruit, only a "little pitted speck."

3. Thus starting, as evil does, in a kind of incertitude, as a slight dereliction, a wavering which creates suspicion, but is not yet sufficiently pronounced to be condemned, it only needs time in order to unfold and *declare itself*. Leave it to work its way out, and it quickly assumes more positive forms, and it becomes too manifest that the leprosy has a firm hold on the blood, the life. [Addenda to chap. xiii. *Developments*.]

II. APPALLING RAPIDITY OF ITS PROGRESS.

Having gained hold on its victim, and diffused itself through the blood, the infection hastens to spread over the system. Thought of sin, suggested from without, or awaking from within, grows into desire; desire into intention: intention into act.

Vital energy decays, good resolves droop, moral force and rectitude of pur-

pose decline ; then succeed estranged affections, a defiant will, an "evil heart of unbelief," character corrupted, till "sin reigns in our mortal body that we obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. vi. 12).

III. LOATHSOME ASPECTS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT.

Whether looked at in its incipient stage (vv. 2, 3), or in further advance (v. 7), or full outburst (v. 10), or in an inflamed state (v. 24), etc., it is always repulsive.

Of all forms and degrees of sin God pleads, "O do not the *abominable* thing which I *hate!*"

IV. CONTAGIOUS PROPERTIES OF THE MALADY.

One leper could spread infection through a community ; all who came near him, all he touched, became contaminated.

"By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin : and so death passed upon all men." "One sinner destroyeth much good."

"*No man liveth to himself.*" One sin suggests sin to others. The contagion of evil example ! The destructive influence of impurity. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." [Addenda to chap. xiii., *Transmitted Effects.*]

V. FATAL TERMINATION OF THE PLAGUE.

Disease, unless arrested, soon completes its ravages ; and the victim sinks to death. And what are the issues of sin ? "Wages of sin is death."

"When lust is conceived it bringeth forth sin ; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

1. Outcast for his uncleanness, *all his days* (v. 46).

2. If he "*die in his sins,*" rejected for evermore from the Heavenly Sanctuary and the Family of God. [Addenda to chap., *Unclean.*]

Topic: THE LEPER BEFORE THE PRIEST (Vv. 12, 13).

"*And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh ; then the priest shall consider : and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague ; it is all turned white ; he is clean.*"

This is a singular paradox, but not to him who understands the gospel. Carry in your thoughts the one key, namely, that leprosy is the type of sin ; and, first of all, *see the leper, and in the leper the sinner.* Then bring him before the priest and watch while the priest examines him.

I. Turn your eyes to the LOATHSOME AND GHASTLY SPECTACLE OF A LEPER.

1. A leper was extremely *loathsome in his person.* The leprosy broke out, at first almost imperceptibly, in certain red spots which appeared in the skin. The withering of the skin followed, and was an index of what was going on within ; for in the very marrow of the bones there was a most frightful rottenness, which in due time would utterly consume the victim. When it came to its very worst phase the whole house of manhood would become a horrible mass of animated rubbish rather than the stately temple which God originally made it. It is a very poor portrait of the loathsomeness of sin. When once taught of God the Holy Ghost, we see that we are vile and full of sin, that there is no good thing whatsoever in us. Loathsome as was the leper, it was not more so in the type than is sin in the estimation of every enlightened mind.

2. The leper was *defiled in all his acts.* If he drank out of a vessel, the vessel was defiled. If he lay upon a bed, the bed became unclean, and whosoever sat upon the bed afterwards became unclean too. If he touched but the wall of a house the wall became unclean and must be purged. Wherever he went he tainted the atmosphere ; his breath was as dangerous as the pestilence. He

shot baneful glances from his eyes. All that he did was full of the same loathsomeness as was himself. The actions of the "natural man" are tainted with sin. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he continues to sin against his God. Nay, if he should come up to God's house and sing and pray, there is sin in his songs, for they are but hypocrisy; there is guilt in his prayers, for the prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord. Let him attempt to perform holy actions, he is like Uzziah who laid hold upon the censor of the priest while the leprosy was on his brow, till he was glad to retire from the sacred place lest he should be struck dead. If thou dost not confess that all thy actions before thou wast regenerate were full of sin and abominable in the sight of God, thou hast not yet learned what thou art, and it is not likely that thou wilt wish to know what a Saviour is.

3. Being thus the medium of contagion and defilement wherever he went, the Lord demanded that he should be *shut out from the society of Israel*. There was a spot outside the camp, barren, solitary, where lepers are confined. They were commanded to wear a covering over the mouth and upon the upper lip, and if any passed by they were compelled to cry "Unclean! unclean! unclean!" Some of the Rabbi translate the cry "Avoid! avoid! avoid!" One of the American poets has put it, "Room for the leper! room!" They were required never to drink of a running stream of water of which others might drink; nor might they sit down on any stone by the roadside upon which it was probable any other person might rest. They were dead to all the enjoyments of life, dead to all the endearments and society of their friends. Such is the case with the sinner with regard to the people of God. He can go and find such mirth as the company of his fellow-lepers can afford, but where God's people are he is out of place, shut out from the communion of saints, cannot pray their prayer nor sing their hymns, know not their joys, never taste their perfect peace, never enter into the rest which remaineth for them.

4. The leper was *wholly unable to come up to the house of God*. Other men might offer sacrifices but not the leper; others had a share in the great high priest's sacrifice, and when he went within the veil he appeared for all others, but the leper had neither part nor lot in this matter. He was shut out from God as well as shut out from man. He was no partaker of the sacred things of Israel, and all the ordinances of the tabernacle were as nothing to him. Think of that, sinner! As a sinner full of guilt, thou art shut out from all communion with God. Thou canst not stand in His presence, for He is a devouring fire and would consume thee. Thy prayers are shut out from Him, thy words are unheard; shut out utterly and entirely by sin from the presence and acceptance of God.

II. NOW BRING THE LEPER UP TO THE HIGH PRIEST.

Whenever a leper was cleansed under the Jewish law *the leper did nothing, the priest did all*. Previous to his being pronounced clean, the leper was passive—the priest did everything. The priest comes out from the sanctuary, comes to the place of the lepers, where no other man might go but he in his priestly office. He calls up one leper before him; he looks at him and there is a spot on that leper which is not leprous—quick, raw, healthy flesh. The priest puts him aside; he is an unclean leper. Here is another, and he has but one or two red spots appearing beneath the skin, all the rest of his body is perfectly sound; the priest puts him aside, he is an unclean leper. Here is another; he is from head to foot covered with a sealy whiteness of the filthy disease, the hair is all turned white, owing to the decay of the powers of nature which are unable now to nourish the roots of the hair. There is not a single speck of health in him from the crown of his head to the soul of his foot, but all is pollution and filth. But hark! the high priest says to him, "Thou art clean." And after certain necessary ceremonies he is admitted into the camp, and afterwards into the very

sanctuary of God. "If there was found any sound place in him, he was unclean." But when the leprosy had covered him, wheresoever the priest looked, then the man became by sacrificial rights a clean leper.

Bring up the sinner before the Great High Priest. How many there are ready to confess that they have done many things which are wrong, but they say, "Though we have done much which we cannot justify, yet there have been many good actions which might almost counterbalance the sin; been charitable to the poor, sought to instruct the ignorant, to help those that are out of the way. We have some sins we do confess; but there is much which is still right and good, and we therefore hope that we shall be delivered." I put you aside, in God's name, by His authority, as unclean lepers. For you there is no hope and no promise of salvation whatever. A second comes. He admits a very great measure of guilt; not open immorality, but his thoughts and the imaginations of his heart have been evil, and evil frequently. "But still," saith he, "though I have not one good work of which to boast, nor any righteousness in which to glory, yet I do hope that by repentance I may amend; I trust that by a resolute persistence in good works I may yet blot out my past life, and so may enter heaven." I set him aside again, as being an unclean leper, for whom cleansing rites are not provided. He is one who must still be kept without the camp; he has not arrived at that stage in which it is possible for him to be made clean. But another comes. Probably he is a really better man than either of the other two, but not in his own opinion. With many a sigh and tear he confesses that he is utterly ruined and undone. "A month or two ago I would have claimed a righteousness with the very best, could have boasted of what I have done; but now I see my righteousness to be as filthy rags, and all my goodness is as an unclean thing. I count all these things but dross and dung. I tread upon them and despise them. I have done no good thing. I have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Lord, at Thy feet I fall, full of leprosy from head to foot; nothing have I to boast of, nothing to trust to except Thy mercy." He is a clean leper; sins forgiven, iniquities put away. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, who died upon the tree, saved! As soon as ever the leprosy had come right out the man was clean, and as soon as ever your sin is fully manifest, so that in your conscience you feel yourself to be really a sinner, there is a way of salvation for you. As long as a man has anything to boast of, there is no Christ for him; but the moment he has nothing of his own, Christ is his.—*C. H. Spurgeon, A.D. 1860.*

Topic: "UNCLEAN, UNCLEAN" (V. 45).

God's *mercy* paints malady in hideous tints, that the sufferer may see his plague and hasten to the healer.

Leprosy showed, by a long train of emblem, the complex loathsomeness of sin, that evil might be the more abhorred.

I. THIS MALADY CREEPT IN WITH STEALTHY STEPS.

Not easily discerned. Human skill was blind. Wisdom from on high was needed. The anointed priest must search.

Sin lurks within the veins. The world has no detecting eye. The self-pleased fancy boasts of health. Death is begun when all seems life. The plague devours, but ignorance sees not.

Only the Spirit can "convince of sin": He only can reveal the inborn defilement. He sets the soul before the mirror of God's Word; opens sightless eyes; and the sinner beholds a hideous mass of polluted self. The light from heaven shows leprosy throughout. [See Job xlii. 6; and Isa. vi. 5. Compare also Paul's testimony, Rom. vii. 24.]

Sinners, bring heart, and thought, and ways, and life to the revealing Word. Consult not the world's counsel. Call in the Faithful Witness. Shrink not. Self-knowledge is a step towards Christ. The malady perceived leads to the malady relieved.

II. THE SUFFERER HEARS THE PRIEST'S CODEMNING VOICE.

He is pronounced "Unclean."

He goes forth; tastes no more the joys of social scenes; shunning and shunned he hides himself in solitude. His whole mien proclaims the misery of his dejected soul. Clothes rent, head bare, mouth covered; and when the hollow voice must speak it sounds the plaintive knell, "Unclean, unclean!"

1. *The wretchedness of sin*: The "clothes are rent"—symbol of bitterest grief (2 Sam. iii. 31; Job i. 20). There is no woe like that of sin.

2. *Lowly shame* also: "Head uncovered." [See Job xix. 9.] In the leper thus despoiled we see how sin inflicts an ignominious brand. [Compare Ezra ix. 6.]

3. *Utterance stifled*: "upper lip covered." The sorrowful and shameful sinner finds speech muffled and choked. When God withdrew, "Then were the seers ashamed," etc. (Micah iii. 7). Sin should be mute. While faithful lips abound in prayer, and send forth songs of praise, and tell of redeeming grace; a sinner's "throat is an open sepulchre."

4. *Pollution is bemoaned*. If a passing step draws near, a piteous warning must be raised—"Unclean, unclean!" (Zech. iii. 3; Isa. lxiv. 6).

5. *Outcast from social life*. No home may welcome him. In loneliness he pines. No station gains exemption. Miriam (Numb. xii. 14); King Uzziah (2 Kings xv. 5).

What has sin done? Driven angels from heaven's light. Excluded multitudes of men from communion with God, holy fellowship, the consecrated board: makes sinners exiles from the heaven bound host, lone "off-scourings" amid the miseries of desert life.

6. *Shut without the gates*. God and His people *within*, he "without." The saved within heaven's gates—barred; the lost "without" for ever. Thus the leper stands an emblem of sin's dreadful plague.

Why this picture of horror? That [you may sink in despair? Far otherwise.

III. THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS NEAR.

1. *He comes to the leper*. With healing grace, He draws nigh the foulest, the hopeless.

2. *His remedy is ready and sure*. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean!" was a leper's cry. Hear His reply, "I will, be thou clean."

3. *None need be an outcast* from His fold. He opens grace and glory to the penitent and trustful soul. [Comp. "Christ is all."]

Topic: LEPROSY, A PARABLE OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

A. As it affects the Moral Constitution of Man (Vv. 1-45).

Leprosy has always been regarded as a mysterious as well as a malignant disease. Unlike other diseases, it was to be detected and treated by the priests. Probably the disease was acquired by the Hebrews while badly fed and hardly worked in Egypt. Their skin would become liable to cutaneous diseases on account of exposure to the dust of brickfields and heat of the burning sun. In the whole range of Scripture is no other malady so fully described. Invested with such prominence and importance, the Hebrews would be (a) *put on their guard against ceremonial defilement*: (b) *filled with the spirit of religious fear*: (c) *stimulated to desire spiritual purity*. The patient, as he repaired to the priest,

convicted of pollution, would be humbled, and have thoughts suggested to his mind of unworthiness and sin.

I. LEPROSY WAS MYSTERIOUS IN ITS ORIGIN. Neither the patient nor the priest could tell exactly how or when the disease originated; they had to attend to the symptoms, and concern themselves about the reality and *removal*. The priest could not look into the springs of life and analyse the seeds of the evil. So, moral evil, that affects our race, is mysterious in its origin; we can detect and trace its symptoms, prove its presence; it corrupts the springs of our moral nature, vitiates all the faculties of the soul. We know by *history, observation*, especially by *experience*, that we are children of a sin-smitten race, the taint is in our blood, and only requires favourable circumstances to assert its malignity and power.

II. LEPROSY WAS INSIDIOUS IN ITS PROGRESS. For a while the person affected might be unconscious of its presence; and even the priest might find difficulty in passing judgment after careful examination. It was liable to break out at any time, and assume various aspects. So, with depravity having its seat within, at any time, and under any circumstances, it may reveal its presence and power—develop the most alarming symptoms. Little spots, so-called sins of inadvertency, slight infirmities, may secretly develop into morally corrupt habits, and disfigure the whole life.

III. LEPROSY WAS DETESTABLE IN ITS SYMPTOMS. Every phase of it was associated with uncleanness. The patient not only became loathsome to himself, but offensive to society. Mental and moral anguish would accompany physical pain. The disease would disfigure and deform the frame, rendering life almost intolerable. So, sin produces moral disfigurement, induces all kinds of sorrow. Holiness is beautiful, but wickedness is hideous. Our moral sense puts its stigma upon vice. Moral impurity God loathes, and will ultimately destroy. Society has its lazar-houses, where depravity may not only be checked, but where its hideous symptoms may be hidden from beholders. Such sins as those spoken of in Rom. i. 21-32 justify the statement of Isaiah i. 5, 6, concerning the offensive features of moral corruption.

IV. LEPROSY WAS INVETERATE IN ITS TENACITY. When once it asserted itself, the sufferer would have to be prompt and persevering in his efforts to get it eradicated. The priest had to make very close scrutiny, to re-examine, and put the leper under repeated probation. Any contact with contagion would suffice to revive the old evil in all its virulence. There was the pre-disposition in the blood, *the secret of the trouble was there*. So, with moral depravity, it has been transmitted in our blood, the springs of life are vitiated. Sin is indigenous, and defies complete eradication in this life. Only one sinless Being has lived on our earth, He was immaculately conceived; *we*, are “born in sin, and shapen in iniquity.” Leprosy defied all human means to remove it; through the instrumentality of the divinely appointed priest alone it succumbed. *Education, reform*, etc., cannot cure the depravity of the heart, nothing short of “the fountain opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness.” Through the mercy of God we can be “abundantly pardoned” here, and become “without spot” hereafter.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: B. AS IT AFFECTS THE EARTHLY CIRCUMSTANCES OF MAN (Vv. 45-59).

One of the first penalties the leper suffered was *excommunication*. No sooner did the priest detect disease, than he commanded withdrawal on the part of the sufferer from healthy society, in order that the infection might not spread.

I. HE WOULD BE SHUT OUT FROM THE DOMESTIC CIRCLE. So sin socializes, unfits men for the joys and purity of hearth and home; frequently the morally impure have to be excluded from the company of the virtuous.

II. HE WOULD BE SHUT OUT FROM THE SECULAR CIRCLE. Not permitted to return to his tent, he would be unfit to take his place in society, and fulfil his duties in the world. So wrong-doing and moral turpitude will render men unfit for society, and necessitate their incarceration for reformation and restraint.

III. HE WOULD BE SHUT OUT FROM THE SACRED CIRCLE. Although allowed to repair to the priest, he would not be allowed to mingle and take part in the services of the house of God, the priest shut him up in seclusion. So evil shuts men out from communion with God and His people. Those composing the Church are persons who become separate, and who touch not the unclean thing. The saddest aspect of sin is that *it separates the soul from God*; and, but for the intervention of our great High Priest, would shut us out from His presence for ever.

How circumspect, therefore, we ought to be! How anxious that the leprosy of our souls may be cleansed!—F. W. B.

Topic: SINFUL SURROUNDINGS (Vv. 47-57).

Notice was to be taken of leprous garments and houses; and, no matter what their texture or value, if found to be incurably diseased, were to be unscrupulously destroyed. By these things we are taught—

I. THAT GREAT CARE SHOULD BE EXERCISED IN THE SELECTION OF OUR SURROUNDINGS.

We are not *absolutely* creatures of circumstances, but are marvellously affected by them. We are not responsible for our parentage, nor the early environments which give bias and tone to after life. These are circumstances unforeseen and uncontrollable, to which we are compelled resignedly to submit. But we have to make many of the influences that enwrap us like garments, as we go through life.

- (a) *The clothes we wear.*
- (b) *The books we read.*
- (c) *The company we keep.*
- (d) *The places we frequent.*
- (e) *The scenes we visit.*

All these may have a pernicious and demoralising tendency; they may be leprous, and introduce sin through the *gateways of the town* of man's soul. How suitable, then, the advice in Psa. i. and in Proverbs of Solomon.

II. THAT PROMPT AND DECISIVE ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN WHEN OUR SURROUNDINGS AWAKEN SUSPICION.

(a) *Avail ourselves of judicious advice.* The leper took anything he suspected to priest for scrutiny. Let us test our surroundings by the teaching of our Great High Priest; for there can be no high morality without His religion.

(b) *Suspend the suspected thing till scrutiny has been made.*

Suspected garments were shut up seven days; and repeated if needed. Let us be shy of suspicious books, places, etc. Have them fairly investigated.

(c) *If the suspected thing be righteously condemned, let unconditional destruction of it immediately ensue.*

The leprous garment was to be consumed with fire. So let us break off at once from bad company or vicious books. The converts at Ephesus burnt their wicked books; that ensured—

- (1) *That they should do the owners no more harm;*
- (2) *That they should not corrupt others, and—*
- (3) *Showed the reality of conversion.*

Things that will not wash, that will not improve by washing, are not to be relied on. Sin is not an *external deformity, a trifling irregularity, infirmity, or*

falling; but in the soul, degrading all its powers, which, if not cleansed, will ultimately get its desert, in everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: THE WONDROUS WORKING OF GOD'S GRACE (Vv. 12, 13, 45, 46).

The God of Israel could bear with infirmity, blemish, failure, but the moment it became a case of defilement—in head, beard, forehead, or any part—it could not be tolerated in the holy assembly (vv. 45, 46). Here was the leper's *condition*, the leper's *occupation*, the leper's *place*. What more humiliating than this! Excluded from the only spot in all the world in which Jehovah's presence was known or enjoyed. In that poor, solitary leper behold—

I. A VIVID TYPE OF ONE IN WHOM SIN IS WORKING.

It is not a helpless, *convicted* sinner who is here portrayed, whose guilt and misery have thoroughly come out—a fit subject, therefore, for God's love and the Saviour's blood—but one in whom sin is actually working, one in whom there is the positive energy of evil.

1. *So long as sin is working* there can be *no fellowship* with God or with His people. "He shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." How long? "All the days wherein the *plague* shall be *in him*." This is a great practical truth: the energy of evil is the death blow to communion. It matters not what the amount of the evil be, if it were but a foolish thought, so long as it *continues to work* it must cause suspension of fellowship.

2. *A suggestive paradox in God's dealing with sinners*. When the plague "*break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him*," etc., "he is clean" (vv. 12, 13). The moment a sinner is in his true place before God, the matter is settled. Directly his real character is fully out, no difficulty remains. When the soul is before Him with the cry, "*Just as I am!*" the free grace of God flows down to him. "When I kept silence," etc. (Psa. xxxii. 3, 4); but when "I acknowledged my sin," etc. (v. 5), "*thou forgavest*." The moment a sinner takes his true place *as one thoroughly lost*, guilty, and undone, as one in whom there is not a single spot on which the eye of Infinite Holiness can rest with complacency, so bad that he cannot possibly be worse, that moment there is a perfect settlement of the entire matter.

II. THE GRACE OF GOD DEALS WITH ACKNOWLEDGED SINNERS.

1. *The more evidently a man is a sinner the more clearly is established his title to the grace of God*, and to the work of Christ, "for Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust," etc. (1 Pet. iii 8). The gospel applies itself to all who are on the ground of being lost. It is there, and there alone, that grace can meet the guilty. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

2. *To have a hopeless view of one's self is the beginning of salvation*. So long as a sinner thinks there is a single spot which is not covered with the direful disease, he has not come to the *end of himself*. It is when his true condition is fully disclosed to view, and he sees himself "wretched, and poor, and miserable," that there opens to him the meaning of *salvation BY GRACE*.—*Evolved from "Notes on Leviticus" by C. H. M.*

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER XIII.

V. 2.—*Theme*: FIRST SYMPTOMS OF DEPRAVITY TO BE SUSPECTED.

As soon as a person had suspicion that leprosy was in the blood, before he was certain,

or society had branded him, he was to repair to the appointed priest, and submit to a careful examination. If the priest pronounced the presence of disease, the sufferer was to

acquiesce uncomplainingly to the decision. We have suggested—

I. BY WHAT SIGNS INDWELLING DEPRAVITY MAY BE DETECTED.

(a) *Uprising of evil desire.* "When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising." Inordinate cravings, sensual promptings, etc.

(b) *Uprising of inflamed passions.* "A scab or bright spot." Evil, like leaven, soon spreads, and demonstrates its existence; though secret at first, it reveals its vitality and virulence in a palpable manner. Sin has its roots in lust, evil desire; and, when hidden lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. In first transgression, the lustful looking preceded the tasting and fatal eating of the forbidden fruit. Let us check the looking and inward longing, and seek to arrest the uprisings of inward depravity, thus nip sin in the bud.

Indwelling depravity cannot always be detected by (a) *personal feelings*; or (b) *personal inconvenience*. Many diseases, at their beginning, are insidious and flattering: do not occasion pain, or seem to impair the strength.

II. BY WHAT TESTS THE EXISTENCE OF INDWELLING DEPRAVITY MAY BE PROVED.

(a) *By comparing ourselves with divine descriptions of sin.* Probably the Hebrews were furnished with directions to guide them in self-examination, to indicate when they had need to have recourse to the priest. God, in His great mercy, has given a description of sin in the Holy Scriptures; and, by comparing ourselves with the mirror of the Word, we may detect the uprisings of depravity, and see what ravages sin commits in our moral nature.

(b) *By repairing to persons competent to guide us in our investigation.*

The leper was to be brought to the priest; who, under divine guidance and authority, would give needed counsel. So now—although there are no priests after the Aaronic patterns—persons anxious about their souls and the removal of sin, do well to confer with the ambassadors of Christ, who have obtained healing of the plague of their own hearts, and seek help from heaven to direct anxious inquirers who ask, "What must I do to be saved?"—*F. W. B.*

V. 5.—*Theme: SCRUPULOUS CARE IN DEALING WITH DEPRAVITY.*

The priest exercised great patience in examining every case brought before him; he did not cloak or cover, or seek only to slightly heal; the course adopted was searching and thorough; Sin is not to be treated as a slight moral indisposition, but as a *serious radical disease*.

I. DEPRAVITY, LIKE LEPROSY, MAY SOMETIMES APPEAR "AT A STAY." This might be the outcome of—

(a) *Heredity.* Life healthy transmitted by parentage—ability to resist inroads of infection, development of disease. So, though piety does not run in the blood, yet pro-

pensities and dispositions are inherited, and check or quicken depravity.

(b) *Organisation.* The fires of lust will kindle quicker in some natures than in others. Some persons have animality so preponderating that Satan seems able easily to get the advantage over them.

(c) *Environment.* Pure surroundings help to repress tendencies to go wrong, to develop dispositions to virtue. The restraints of a *godly home*, refining influences of a *good education* may stay the tide of depravity that otherwise would break forth with great volume and power.

II. THOUGH APPARENTLY "AT A STAY," DEPRAVITY, LIKE LEPROSY, MAY BE UNABATED IN ITS VIRULENCE.

Though the priest did not at first detect signs of disease, yet it may have been lurking dormant in the system, and waiting only for a favourable occasion to awaken into activity. This might occur from

(a) *Inward irritation*, or

(b) *Outward influences.*

We do not know what depths of depravity are within us, till some unexpected temptation stirs them, till the enemy comes in upon us as a flood.

III. THE ARREST OF SYMPTOMS OF DEPRAVITY MAY ISSUE IN THE REMOVAL OF THEIR CAUSE.

(a) *When sinful habits are stayed, their fires may burn out.*

(b) *When sinful habits are stayed a new life is to be exhibited.*

The healed leper was to "wash his clothes and be clean." He was to appear among society as a new creature, both in conduct and character. The life of recovered lepers would be (1) *beautiful*, (2) *holy*, (3) *useful*, (4) *happy*. So of every *saved and sanctified soul*.—*F. W. B.*

V. 9.—*Theme: SIN NOT TO BE CONNIVED AT.*

It was the *duty* of the leper to go to the priest; of society, to see that he went: "he shall be brought unto the priest."

I. A MAN WITH LEPROSY NOT TO BE LEFT TO HIS MORBID FEELINGS.

He not at liberty to neglect means of recovery. No excuse, no willingness to commit his case to fate or chance to exonerate him from obligation to own his malady. Liberty in society is only lawful as it is compatible with the general good. The leper must go to priest, for—

(a) *His own sake.*

(b) *Sake of others.*

So sinners ought to repair to great High Priest for similar reasons.

II. A MAN WITH LEPROSY TO BE DIRECTED TO MEANS OF CURE.

Friends would take and introduce him to priest, especially those who had obtained healing themselves. We have a right to interfere with the liberty of our fellows when it is for their real and unmistakable good. Let us take sinners to Christ, the Great Phy-

sician. He is *able* and *willing* to heal, as He healed the lepers in the days of His flesh. He removes leprosy of sin.

The leper was not to puzzle his brains about such questions as—

(a) *Why was leprosy permitted?*

(b) *How is it generated?*

(c) *How is it cured?*

Enough for him to *own it; avail himself of means of recovery. Useless, absurd, dangerous* to hide or disown it. So with leprosy of sin, it is a good sign when it is acknowledged, sorrowed over, taken to Him who alone can remove depravity, and make our souls as clean as spotless wool, as white as virgin snow.—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 2, 10 18, 24, 29, 44.—*Theme: DEGREES OF DEPRAVITY.*

Obviously, in leprosy there were varieties in kind, as well as symptoms. So in depravity it assumes various forms, manifests itself in different ways, though all may be grouped under the denomination, *sin*. We have suggested—

I. **INHERENT DEPRAVITY.** "In the skin of the flesh a rising" (v. 2).

II. **QUICKENED DEPRAVITY.** "Quick raw flesh in the rising" (v. 10).

III. **AGGRAVATED DEPRAVITY.** "In sight, lower than the skin" (v. 20).

IV. **VIRULENT DEPRAVITY.** "The quick flesh that burneth" (v. 24).

V. **HIDEOUS DEPRAVITY.** "Plague upon the head, or the beard" (v. 29).

VI. **TOTAL DEPRAVITY.** "The priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague is in his head" (v. 44).

Thus depravity culminates in disfigurement of "the human face divine," suggesting the fact that sin has marred the image of God in man, and deranged the whole of his intellectual and moral powers.

What an evidence of spiritual blindness, that men do not see the hideous nature of sin. No wonder that God—who sees every

secret sin—should hate it, and provide for its removal. Those who voluntarily close their eyes to their sinful state, and die impenitent will be moral suicides.—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 45-47.—*Theme: RESULTS OF UNREMOVED DEPRAVITY.*

When the leper was pronounced "utterly unclean" by the priest, the case was regarded as desperate and hopeless. So, when sinners become exceedingly vile, and defy every effort made for their amendment, the following things ensue:

I. **CHARACTER DESTROYED.** The leper's clothes were rent; so, sin ruins the character of its victims.

II. **INTELLECT DETHRONED.** The leper's head was bare; so, the mind of the abandoned sinner becomes *neglected, deformed, and unprotected.*

III. **INFLUENCE PERNICIOUS.** The leper's upper lip covered, to indicate that the breath had become exceedingly corrupt. So, sin changes the tongue from being a wholesome tree, to a pestilential stream of polluting influences.

IV. **LIFE CORRUPTED.** "He is unclean." All the springs of life become impure, the whole man is corrupt. So, sin defiles the body, soul, and spirit; pollutes *thought, word, and deed.*

V. **CONDITION SOLITARY.** "He shall dwell alone." Sin cuts men off from society with each other, from holy angels, from God. Religion unites men with the divine Father; and with each other, in the bonds of holy brotherhood.

VI. **SELF-CONDEMNED.** The poor leper cried "Unclean, unclean!" Wherever he went he proclaimed his complaint. So sinners—whether they know it or not—proclaim, wherever they go (by their character), the depravity that debases them; and, if at last excluded from the place of the holy, they will own the justice of the sentence that excludes them.—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XIII.

DEVELOPMENTS.

"The Present is the living sum-total of the whole Past."—CARLYLE, *Characteristics*.

"Consequences are un pitying. Our deeds carry their terrible consequences, quite apart from any fluctuations that went before, consequences that are hardly ever confined to ourselves."—GEORGE ELIOT, *Adam Bede*.

"Large streams from little fountains flow
Tall oaks from little acorns grow."

—DAVID EVERETT.

"From little sparks may burst a mighty flame."—DANTE.

"Things bad begun make strong themselves
by ill."—*Macbeth, III. 2.*

TRANSMITTED EFFECTS:

"And out of darkness came the hands
That reach through nature, moulding men."
—TENNYSON, *In Memoriam*.

"The seed we sow another reaps;
The wealth we find another keeps;
The robes we weave another wears;
The arms we forge another bears."
—SHELLEY.

"The evil that men do lives after them."
—*Julius Cæsar, III. 2.*

“No act of man, nothing (how much less the man himself!) is extinguished when it disappears; through considerable time it still works, though done and vanished.”—CARLYLE.

“No action, whether foul or fair,
Is ever done, but it leaves somewhere
A record, written by fingers ghostly,
As a blessing or curse, and mostly

In the greater weakness or greater strength
Of the acts which follow it.”

—LONGFELLOW, *Christus*.

UNCLEAN.

“The seeds of all my sins are in my heart,
and perhaps the more dangerous that I do
not see them.”—M'CHEYNE.

“Great sins make great sufferers.”—ANNA
K. GREEN.

CHAPTER XIV

Leprosy Cleansed.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—In the day of his cleansing. Remedy and respite came to the pitiable leper. Although his case seemed forlorn and dismal—unclean, and an outcast—yet the hope was left to him that the plague might be healed, and he be again restored to society and the sanctuary. The darkest lot of human life is illumined by hope; faint may be its ray, yet it breaks the dreariest gloom. Weary indeed were “*all the days* wherein the plague was in him” (chap. xiii. 46), but after long waiting there might come in due season “*the day* of his cleansing.” Yes, the possibilities of better things cheer us in every adverse case; the promises of God alleviate the desolation of all who wait for Him, even as the outlook for “the accepted time and the day of salvation” cheers the languishing soul in its conscious misery and sin. To every plague-bound soul this solace remains—“the day of his cleansing” may perchance come.

V. 3.—The priest shall go forth out of the camp. No restoration from banishment to God, no removal of the bane of uncleanness, except through priestly mediation. Between the soul and salvation comes the priest. And the whole work of reinstating the outcast in his lost privileges begins in this act of the priest going forth to the place of the leper's banishment. The coming forth of Christ Jesus to us, to where we were in our banishment, that was the initial incident in our restoration to God. No one but the priest could come nigh a leper without contracting defilement; no one but the sacred person of our divine Priest could approach us “in our sins” and both Himself remain “holy, harmless, undefiled,” and also bring the unclean life back to purity and privilege.

V. 4.—Two birds, cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop. Symbols of ceremonial and sacrificial cleansing. The one bird was killed, the other set at liberty. The one bird *dead*, symbolising that the leprous life of the victim was now also dead; the other bird *free*, symbolising that henceforth a new life of liberty was set before the restored leper. Or the evangelical symbolism may suggest to us in the slain bird the *death*, and in the soaring bird the *resurrection* of Christ—two aspects of His perfected redemption for the sinner.

The “cedar” in Scripture is the symbol of loftiness and pride, and leprosy was regarded as God's rebuke for arrogance and haughtiness. “Hyssop” symbolised lowliness. Tradition affirms, “Pride was the cause of the distemper, which cannot be cured till man becomes humble, and keeps himself as low as hyssop.”

“Scarlet,” a binding of crimson wool, by which the cedar and hyssop were

connected; suggestive of "sins as scarlet," and equally of the blood of atonement; or it may symbolise the now purified and healthy blood flowing in the cleansed leper's veins.

V. 7.—**Sprinkle upon him seven times.** Welcome to the leper those sprinklings of the blood; each one being a testimony of his deliverance. And to a sin-burdened life how welcome "the blood of sprinkling." There is no impatience while the sign of cleansing is "seven times" repeated. Naaman might resent the requirement of the seven washings in Jordan; but it was in ignorance of the fact that "seven" is the sign of perfectness. The life which craves emancipation from uncleanness and banishment, frets not under the repeated application of the purifying blood; it is to him "precious blood," and his outcry is "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity." They who have experienced the bitterness of sin, weary not under the process of cleansing.

Vv. 8, 9.—**He that is to be cleansed.** The first process of personal purifying restored the leper to the camp, the place of acknowledged relationship to Jehovah; he entered the society of Israel. Even so does the repentant sinner, who has been recalled from his outcast life, seeks to cleanse himself from evil ways and outward defilements, and then takes his place amid the congregations of God's people. It is the beginning of his new and better life. He ventures not yet into "his tent," nor treads the floors of the sanctuary; for these nearer and more sacred felicities require a fuller sanctifying. He must be "clean" who would dwell in "the camp"; doubly cleansed who could enter the *family* of God's people in happy "tent" fellowship; supremely sanctified if he would tread the sanctuary of holy privilege, accepted within the very presence of the Lord.

Vv. 10-20.—**He shall take two lambs, etc.** For now, at the end of seven days the soul is to come "before the Lord" (v. 11); and who will venture near Him without sacrifice? The priest leads him to the very "door of the tabernacle," waves the "trespass offering" in God's presence, slays the "sin offering and burnt offering in the holy place," then applies the trespass-offering blood, to the person of the suppliant together with the oil of consecration, making atonement for him, that he may be clean. The priestly ministries, and the sacrificial offerings reveal to us the works of Jesus; the applied blood and oil suggest the gracious offices of the Holy Spirit. All the most effective methods of purifying are called into requisition if a leper is to be made acceptable to God. True types of the needs of guilty men. It is not by easy and superficial processes they can be reinstated in grace. The priestly offices and sacrificial merits of Christ, the direct ministries of the Holy Spirit in applying the healing virtues of redemption, are imperative for their acceptance with the Lord. The sinner needs *all* that Christ and the Spirit can do for him if he is to stand without spot or rebuke before God.

Vv. 21-32.—**If he be poor.** Poverty is left without plea of inability by such concessions; and equally is saved from fear of rejection by such evidence that God thinks specially of the poor.

Vv. 33-53.—**Leprosy in a house.** A law given in the desert which was applicable to their future lot in the Land of Promise. It is thus a hostage that they *would* "come into the land of Canaan." God sees the end from the beginning. He knows the way we take, and He arranges the goal we shall reach. It is so in our earthly movements; it is certainly so in our spiritual pilgrimage.

God would have our homes pure. No care could be too minute, no toil too heavy, no sacrifice too serious, in order to keep the house clean from plague. The habitations of the righteous should be free from all impurities; the walls bared of all suggestions of wrong thoughts and passions; the house free from every enticement to indulgence and sin. Modern Art is responsible for many a plague spot on the walls of our houses; and Luxury is to-day laying decoys on our tables which allure to habits whose issue is sin. Christian houses should be

free from all occasions to such defilement. At all costs, though it mean the parting with ideal pictures and valued sculpture in the adornment of our rooms, or the removing of indulgences from our board, which may encourage in our children impure thoughts or perilous habits, let us show ourselves to be God's people by keeping our homes clean. For a Christian home is earth's best type of the beauteous and blissful heaven.

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: THE LAW OF CLEANSING (Vv. 1-3).

The "*law of cleansing*" is clearly and emphatically shown at the outset; man's part in his own purifying is to "stand still, and see the salvation of God." All is to be done for him, nothing done by him. The leper must make no advances, could effect no purifying; he must for ever remain unclean and an outcast if help and deliverance are not brought him. And in the redemption, in the recreation of the sinner, all must be of God, all of grace; "not of works, lest any man should boast." [Addenda to chap. xiv., *Helplessness*.]

I. GUILTY MAN'S ABSOLUTE HELPLESSNESS.

1. His *position*. The leper's place was outside the camp, in the place of (symbolical) banishment from God. He was consigned to solitude, dreary isolation, beyond the reach of human aid. Doubly outlawed, from God and man; all help divorced from him; far off from the agencies of healing and amelioration; shut out from divine and human regard. In the ranks of sinful men and women to-day, there are thousands equally outlawed from help; living far off from God, apparently untouched by gracious influences of heaven, never hearing of Christ, unarrested and unawakened, living as outcasts. Nor do their fellow men come to their aid; "no man careth for their soul;" they are shunned as criminals, abandoned as hopeless. Let not this be supposed true only of the lower classes of society; in the *highest* stations there are those of whom, so far as sacred agencies reaching them, God seems to say, "Let them alone!" and to whom no delivering help or saving word ever appears to come from those who know the way of salvation.

2. His *condition*. Beyond human aid, certainly the leper was beyond *self*-aid. How could he act to secure his own cleansing? He could only communicate defilement to everything and every one he touched. He was a defiled and a defiling leper; could make nothing clean, only unclean. Without any helper, he was absolutely helpless. Are sinners thus? Can we minimise or escape our guilt? If it were possible for us to do "works of righteousness," they would not diminish the guilt to our past account or obliterate present sinfulness. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; "there is none that doeth good and sinneth not." It is mournfully true that the unclean cannot act any single part for the removal of their uncleanness.

Add to this the fact that *one leper could not cleanse another*, and the sum of his helplessness is complete. Neither in himself nor in his fellow-men, clean or unclean, could deliverance or healing be found.

When shut out from men we are shut up to God. Grace meets us in our extremity. Jesus finds him whom men "cast out" (John ix. 35), and receives sinners whom society rejects (Matt. ix. 11, 12).

When penitence has wept in vain
Over some foul dark spot,
One only stream, a stream of blood,
Can wash away the blot.

II. GOD'S ABOUNDING HELPFULNESS.

Since his *only* resource was in God, He alone devised and accomplished the plan of his cleansing.

1. The *outgoing of divine help*. "The priest shall go forth out of the camp." He was in this the "minister of God," acting out God's purpose. In the priest God approached the leper. Later in time, to guilty men there came the Supreme Priest; man could not, in his sin, come to God, but God came to man in Christ. And still He comes, by mediatorial agencies, to the lone spirit in the misery of sin. The first step in a sinner's salvation is taken by God. He does not shrink from leprous scenes. Where sinners are the Saviour comes. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us" (1 John iv. 9, 10).

2. The *process of divine cleansing*. Having "began a good work," God carries it on to completion (vv. 5, 7). Sacrificial bloodshedding follows (v. 6), then the blood of sprinkling is applied (v. 7) in token of redeeming merits communicated; followed by the soaring bird (v. 7), symbolic of the *risen life* into which God's grace calls the soul whose death is both symbolised and substituted in the offering slain.

3. *Cleanness proclaimed*. The priest "shall pronounce him clean," that it may convey glad assurance to the sufferer, that he may fearlessly claim the privileges now his. A wondrous hour to the stricken spirit is that when God pronounces him clean; it brings with it the "peace of God which passeth all understanding," it imparts strong confidence and acceptance to the long outcast life. For as truly as the leper heard, and heard with eagerness, the priest's voice of acquittal, so to the sinner entering into the Saviour's grace comes the "witness in himself," the voice of blessed testimony for the Lord, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace."

One only hand, a piercèd hand,
Can salve the sinner's wound.

"I am the Lord that healeth thee." [Addenda to chap. xiv., *Cleansed*.]

Topic: ANXIETY FOR RECOVERY (Vv. 1-3).

Medicinal remedies were not prescribed for leprosy; it was treated more as an *uncleanness* than as a disease, and the sufferer repaired not to the physician, but *the priest*. From the decision of the priest there was no appeal. In the leper was expected—

I. **WILLINGNESS TO BE HEALED.** There was anxiety in the congregation that the diseased should submit to the required regulations, and become quickly healed. The leper must not, through feelings of shame, hide his complaint, or keep from the necessary scrutiny. He must be willing to submit frequently, if needed, and follow closely the directions given. The first step towards *moral recovery* is to know, and *acknowledge* the plague of sin in the heart; to have *anxiety* to be searched by the candle of the Lord, and have every evil way rooted out. It is good when an anxious inquirer exclaims from solemn conviction: "I am altogether as an unclean thing, and my righteousness is as filthy rags."

II. **CONFIDENCE IN HIS HEALER.** Faith in the priest would lie at the basis of the leper's obedience to the requirements of the Ceremonial Law; abandoning all dependence in any other means. The priest was to confirm the cure God had wrought by directing a process of cleansing, which would exercise and prove the offerer's faith. The priest was the representative of Jehovah; the directions he gave were to be regarded as the commands of the Lord; confidence in him, and implicit obedience to his directions, were accepted as compliance with the expressed purposes of God.

To be completely recovered from the leprosy of sin, unshaken confidence must be reposed in Him who alone has power to heal, who alone can give us the in-

ward witness that we have passed from death unto life. Meeting the priest outside the camp, as mediator between God and His people, would give comfort and composure to the suppliant for mercy; so, God coming to meet us in the likeness of man, and unattended by overawing manifestations, awakens confidence in the earnest seeker after salvation. Willingness to be saved, belief in the Saviour, personal appropriation of the blessings of redemption, are the *sole* and *indispensible* requisites for deliverance from sin and death,—*F. W. B.*

Topic: REMEDIAL MEASURES (Vv. 4-9).

Leprosy, next to death, was regarded as a symbol of the pollution and loathsomeness of sin. The care taken in the purification of the leper may be regarded as peculiarly referring to the fact that sin separates man from all pure and holy beings, or the whole family of God, and as setting forth the restoration of the penitent to the company of all faithful people, by means of the great appointed sacrifice. The ceremony to be observed would impress the mind of the restored, not only with the fact that he had become whole, but that a fresh tide of life had started in his veins; and, as he saw the live bird escape and soar towards heaven, he would probably have suggested to his mind that, henceforth, he was to rise superior to earthly things, and seek those that are above.

I. RESTORATION TO THE DIVINE FAVOUR IS THROUGH DIVINELY APPOINTED SACRIFICES.

The leper may have wondered what connection there was between the sacrifices and the cleansing he desired; yet it was not for him to question but to obey, and accept gratefully the blessing conferred. So, in what *we* are commanded to do for our cleansing and sanctifying the reason may not be apparent, but, since God has enjoined obligations upon us, exceptions and questionings are excluded. These offerings certainly suggest that only by the sacrifice of the life of a substitute can we be cleansed from defilements, only by compliance with divine directions can we obtain restoration to divine favour.

II. WHEN RESTORED TO DIVINE FAVOUR, THE FACT SHOULD HAVE PUBLIC DECLARATION.

The leper was to be cleansed at the door of the tabernacle, "before the Lord," and *there* he was to be pronounced whole when the rites of purification were completed. Thus the whole camp would know that the man who had been unclean and excommunicated was now recovered, and re-admitted into the society of his friends. His ear, hand, and foot having been consecrated by the priest, a pledge was given that henceforth a new life would be lived before Israel. So, when persons are restored from the plague of sin, and cleansed by the influences of the Holy Ghost, public confession is *expected* and *becoming* to the honour of God, and for the encouragement of goodness. Christ has enjoined the duty of confessing Him publicly upon all His disciples, and declared that He will be ashamed of those in the last day who are now ashamed of Him.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: PROGRESSIVE CLEANSING (Vv. 8-20).

Until a change came upon the leper's state which was both (a) a *conscious* change to himself, and (b) an *evident* change to the priest, nothing could be done towards his admission to God's fold. So long as a sinner remains dead in his sin, without feeling or desire towards salvation, destitute of penitence and faith, the way of his reception to the community of Christ's redeemed is barred: he must, in contact with the priest, prove his awakened state.

This initial movement accomplished, there follows the application of the merits of sacrificial blood, and the liberation of the soul for a freed and a resurrection life, as one "alive from the dead," alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. These are all the *basis incidents* of the Christian life, upon which are superadded the fuller cleansings, the advancing experiences, the higher privileges.

I. FULLER CLEANSINGS.

The seven-fold sprinklings (v. 7) declare the reiterated application and the abounding virtues of the atonement of Christ. But there is yet more to come. Note:

1. *Human co-operation with God's working.* The priest's acts stand for the divine operations in the sinner's cleansing; but the man himself has to "co-work together with God"; he must shave himself and wash himself. The sinner must "put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust" (Ephes. iv. 22; comp. Colos. iii. 8-10); rid himself of all sinful excrecences, and taints, and indulgences, and habits. He must also apply the pure water of the Word, the truths and precepts of religion, enforcing upon himself the sacred teachings and requirements of the gospel. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (Jno. xv. 14). "Sanctify them through thy truth" (Jno. xvii. 17). "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (Jno. xv. 3).

2. *Repeated efforts after perfect cleansing.* What was done at first before he could be admitted to the camp, the congregation of Israel (v. 8), must be repeated seven days after, even more scrupulously and minutely (v. 9), as a preparation for his entering his own "tent" (v. 8) and the "tabernacle" of the Lord (v. 11). It is needful that he who has been living in sin reform his life and cleanse his ways before he becomes even an attendant on sacred scenes, entering into the *camp and society* of Christians; but if he is to come into the *more intimate fellowship of the saints* ("tent" nearness, and family intimacy), and into *personal communion with the Lord* ("tabernacle" access to God), he must purge himself of every relic of his former life of impurity, get rid of his old self, and seek a more thorough cleanness by most sedulous use of sanctifying gospel aids. The sources of spiritual cleansing are Scripture, prayer, self-mortification, cross-bearing after Jesus, the Holy Spirit's energies, the culture of a godly mind and a pure heart. [Addenda to chap. xiv., *Sanctification.*]

II. ADVANCING EXPERIENCES.

That soaring bird was emblematic of the freed and aspiring career now set before him. The whole of the new life came not to him at a bound: he had to "go from strength to strength," to move forward by intervals and stages.

1. *Time intervals* separated his experiences. Though allowed to come into the camp at once he had to put "seven days," a slow space of time, between that event and the next,—entrance into his tent; and "on the eighth day" followed his presentation before the Lord in the tabernacle of the congregation. The soul being "made nigh," translated "from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son," moves onward by time stages; and sometimes the intervals are wide, years coming between the successive incidents of his progress. Human nature is *sluggish*, cannot move rapidly into new conditions of life; and so also it is *slow to apprehend* the transformations of grace. They must come by deliberate advances upon the renewed life, or the soul is overwhelmed and confounded; "we are changed into the same image *from glory to glory*, as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

2. *Attainments* follow successively. To the *priest*, the *camp*, the *tent*, the *tabernacle*. Is there any of us who can "count himself to have attained, or already perfect"? Much advance has through divine love and help been made; but there are further possibilities. "To the *mark* for the *prize* of our high calling of God." [Addenda to chap. xiv., *Progress.*]

III. HIGHER PRIVILEGES.

Blessed the initial incident to the long outcast soul which brought him to the priest, in living contact with one who could declare him clean. Glad the experience of his cleansing which gave him qualification again for the fellowship with Israel.

1. *According to fitness so is privilege regulated.* The first cleansing only gave him access to the camp (v. 8); the seven days' waiting qualified him to enter his tent (v. 8); the after purging fitted him for the tabernacle. More grace for those who aspire higher. But the successive advancements in the divine life come according to our preparedness to enter into them.

2. *Spiritual favours increase as we go forward.* The longer we live in Christ and press forward in the culture of Christian virtues and habits, the more blessed becomes our state; more intimate and assured enjoyments, richer delights and loftier elevations. Piety gives not its most precious fruits at the outset. The luxuries are more entrancing, the triumphs are more splendid, the satisfaction is more complete, the virtues are more Christ-like the longer we abide in grace and seek the things that are above. The most blissful sanctuary life has yet only began to "taste" how gracious the Lord is. The most ample application of the "blood" and "oil"—graces of redemption and consecration—may be exceeded by the still richer realizations; for "He giveth *more grace.*" So may we advance nearer yet, till we "appear in Zion before God," and gain the highest sanctity and the loftiest bliss."

Topic: GRACE FOR THE POOR (Vv. 21-32).

"The law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, whose *hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing.*"

"If he be poor": thus opens the gentle message of Heaven to the needy. "And cannot get so much." What then? Let him bring the lesser offering, and it shall be accepted for his atonement as readily as the larger offerings (v. 8) of the rich man who *is able to get "that which pertaineth to his cleansing."*

I. POVERTY IS NO BARRIER TO GOD'S CLEANSING GRACE.

1. Grace meets the needy one just *where* he is, and *as* he is. The atoning blood is brought within reach of the very lowest, the very feeblest. All who need it can have it. "*He that hath no money,*" etc. (Isa. lv. 1).

2. *The lowly need fear no heedless disregard.* Man may despise them, put them aside: not so our gracious Saviour. Within those whose lot is hard there may be beauteous souls, "rich in faith."

Let us be very tender;
The lowliest soul may be
A temple of priceless treasure
That only God can see.

II. POVERTY HAS NO INFLUENCE IN THE MERITS OF ATONING SACRIFICE.

1. The *value of atonement lies*, not in the offerer's social status and resources, but in the *sacrificial blood*. It is not what we are, but what Christ is and has done for us, that forms the sure basis of our acceptance. The sacrifice of the cross has the same efficiency to every soul that brings it before God as his offering, whether lowly or wealthy. And in the smaller offering, equally with the richer, there was exhibited the full value of the atoning work, "precious blood," a spotless victim, a perfect substitute for man's uncleanness.

2. *The acceptance of the poor is guaranteed* by this sacrifice. There need be no trepidation in the breast of the lowly, the feeble, the needy, the misgiving; all are welcomed on the ground of an offering such as they are "*able to get.*" Nothing beyond. Jesus said of the woman, "*She hath done what she could.*"

III. POVERTY AFFORDS NO EXCUSE FOR FAILING TO SEEK GOD'S MERCY.

1. *Without the presentation of sacrificial offering none could be readmitted to divine favour and fellowship.* God would not dispense with atonement, however straightened the individual's case. Every one, the poorest, must come with sacrifice. Christ Jesus must be every one's trust and hope. And there is grace in His meritorious cross for each. God will allow none to excuse themselves. Sacrifice or rejection!

2. The *terms of admission to the divine life* are that we bring *our utmost*. "Such as he be able to get." Not pleading poverty as a reason for doing poorly, offering a meaner presentation than is justifiable. The poor may not cover themselves from God's requirements by their penury: but must bring "such as they are able to get," their *very best*. None may "offer to God that which costs him nothing." God would reject it as a "vain oblation." The widow's mite was pleasing to Christ as being "all her living."

"Little faith" is but a poor offering to bring to Christ: but if the trembling and anxious soul can *only* bring that, "it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not."

Our *treasury offerings* to the sanctuary, our *working energies* in Christian service, our talents for *speaking to others* for Christ, or in *prayers* to God for blessing on sacred work; all stand on this divine principle, "such as he be able." Then the sacrifices will be welcomed, and the soul admitted into all the fellowship and felicities of grace. [Addenda to chap. xiv., *Poverty*.]

Topic: PURITY IN THE HOUSE (Vv. 34-53).

It awakes wonder that leprosy could cling to the walls, could fix itself upon the very stones of a house, in some cases defying purgation, necessitating, therefore, the demolition of the structure and the casting out of all its fouled materials into an unclean place. The precautions here so expressly given show the *danger*, and denote that *God abhorred house defilement* equally with uncleanness in the human person. It is not alone that "sinners shall not dwell in His sight" (Psa. v. 4, 5), but unclean *things* were revolting to Him—"whatsoever (as well as whosoever) worketh abomination or maketh a lie" (Rev. xxi. 27) is hateful to Him. So God is *emphatic in condemnation* of any *defiling thing in His people's abodes*. Themselves clean, their *homes must be pure*.

I. HOUSEHOLD CLEANLINESS SHOULD DISTINGUISH THE ABODES OF THE GOOD.

1. Surely a *pure mind will express itself in scrupulous cleanliness in its surroundings*. Virtue and piety are as sensitive plants, recoiling from every physical uncleanness.

Burns speaks of the devout Cotter's return to

His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wife's smile.

Goldsmith marks the Traveller's delight as

His loved partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her *cleanly* platter on the board.

It would prove a pleasing study to note how *character may be tested* by such minute domestic purities.

2. Certainly the *cleanliness of a home reflects its influence upon those who dwell therein*. If the occupants' purity stamps itself on the house, the condition of the house casts back impressions of the occupant.

Thomson says:

Even from the body's purity, the mind
Receives a secret sympathetic aid.

And not less so from the purity of home scenes.

3. The *motive to such cleanliness* will be with the Christian a regard for God's

approval. What care would not Martha feel that every spot and article in her Bethany home should be spotless and bright, knowing that the Lord Jesus might be there any hour as a Guest. Cleanliness is fostered by a spirit of reverence.

A servant with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for *Thy laws*,
Makes that and th' action fine.—*Geo. Herbert.*

4. *Such care for simple home satisfactions* renders the dwellings *delightful* to its inmates. It is the sense of the purity and the carefulness which we find at home that leads us to rest so confidently there. Suspicion and detraction may disturb thought and spoil enjoyment when in scenes which love and piety have not made sweet for us; but all is good and genial at home. "No little room so warm and bright" (Tennyson) anywhere in the great world, as that where gentle hands have made all so satisfactory for us.

And though, as the French proverb affirms, "to every bird its nest is fair," yet it is not easy to believe it fair if the nest be fouled.

The sober comfort, all the peace which springs
From the large aggregate of little things;
On these small cares of daughter, wife, or friend,
The almost sacred joys of home depend.—HANNAH MORE.

II. HOME SANCTITIES WILL BE SCRUPULOUSLY MAINTAINED BY THE GODLY.

1. *Impurities would force entrance into the homes of God's people still.* Not leprous spots cleaving to the structure, but *moral* plague spots and *intellectual* defilements. *Nude art*, and sensuous pictures, and indecent drawings, by which incautious parents adorn their rooms; *books* and magazines, containing articles and stories in which there is a taint upon virtue, or a sneer against truth, are recklessly laid upon the table, because it is fashionable to subscribe for such literature. *Companionships* press into our family enclosure, which it is difficult to refuse; friendships which are desirable for worldly ends are allowed in Christian households, but whereby is fulfilled the warning, "evil communications corrupt good manners." Verily in all such cases "it seemeth to me there is, as it were, a plague in the house" (v. 25).

2. *Devout minds will resolutely cleanse from the family all such defilements.* It would not be easy or pleasant work to "empty the house" (v. 36), to "take away the stones in which the plague is" (v. 40), to "have the house scraped within round about" (v. 41); but the work has to be rigorously done in the name of God! "*Abhor that which is evil!*" giving no assent or connivance to what may defile. *Duty*, not agreeableness, is the Christian's law. Parents are home-guardians. The husband is the *house band*. There may be no looseness in the keeping of the home. "If any provide not for his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. v. 8).

Home has been designated "Heaven's fallen sister"; and it is—where pure and hallowed—the nearest similitude to Heaven. To Adam, paradise was home; to the Christian, home should be paradise. Let there be unsullied purity in the house.

Around each pure, domestic shrine,
Bright flowers of Eden bloom and twine,
Our hearths are altars all.—KEBLE.

III. HABITATIONS INCURABLY DEFILED ARE DESTINED TO DESTRUCTION.

There is no alternative. If the plague cannot be arrested and removed, the habitation must be demolished; "he shall *break down the house*" (v. 45).

1. *Destroyed habitations*; let them warn against the faintest beginnings of error and sin, against the connivance of the slightest dereliction from sanctity. Wrong works ruin! Purest homes have become devastated by incautious inattention to small impieties. If a house is to be saved, sin must be out-barred.

2. *Sanctified homes.* Evil may be purged (v. 49). Ask *holy visitants* to come

in ; not "priests" now, but the presence of the good, the virtuous, the Christian, and let the *atoning blood* (v. 50) have application, and "the *running water*" of God's word, the living stream of sacerd truth, be used. There is remedy for home defects and defilements ; and the doom of a family may be averted, the "salvation of a house" (Luke xix. 9) may be secured, by the admission therein of the Saviour Himself, and the graces of His kingdom, the agencies of religion, and the sanctifying influence of family prayer and Scripture reading ; for so the plague shall be expelled, and the house "shall be clean" (v. 53). [Addenda to chap. xiv., *Home.*]

OUTLINES OF VERSES ON CHAPTER XIV.

V. 2.—*Theme*: CLEANSING THE LEPER. "This is the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: he shall be brought unto the priest."

Consider—

I. THE DISEASE.

1. *Its peculiar designation.* Leprosy the "plague of boils" (Deut. xxviii.), which applies very forcibly to sin.

2. *Its distinguishing characteristics.* Small in appearance ; so in a vicious course of life. It *gradually spread*, as does sin spread over all the powers and faculties of a man.

3. *Its pernicious consequences.* The malady was injurious to *society*, as being infectious and pernicious ; to the *person himself*, excluding him from all society, civil and religious. So sinners corrupt others, while their abominable ways shut them from the communion of the faithful.

II. THE CURE OF THE DISEASE.

1. *No human means could be availing.* The leper would gladly have cured himself. No art of man was effectual (2 Kings v. 7). We have no remedy of man's devising for sin (Rom. vii. 19, 24).

2. If the leper was cured, it was *by God alone, without the intervention of human means.* Comp. Luke xvii. 14 ; Isa. li. 7. Nothing was prescribed or attempted for the removal of this distemper. And none but God can remove sin, etc. Rom. vii. 10, 18 ; Ephes. v. 9 ; 1 Pet. ii. 2.

3. *But the cure was associated with blood and water.* And to be cleansed from the leprosy of sin we must have applied the blood and spirit of Christ (1 John i. 7 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 25).

II. THE CONFIRMATION OF THE CURE BY THE PRIEST.

1. A person was *not to be pronounced clean on a sudden.* The priest was to use much caution and deliberation. *Caution* should be exercised by ministers and office bearers in the church towards those who are candidates for fellowship.

2. *When it evidently appeared that soundness had been imparted* to his disordered body, this was *declared with due solemnity.* Here we see the pre-eminence of our High Priest ; for while the priest merely *declared* the leper healed He most effectually heals.

Let those *infected* with the leprosy apply to their souls the divinely appointed remedy ; and—

Let those who have been *cleansed* from it carefully discharge the duty enjoined on them (v. 10, etc.).—*W. Sleigh.*

V. 3. *Theme*: DIVINE COMPASSION EXHIBITED.

The lonely leper, desiring an audience with the priest, would go towards the camp, and wait for the opportunity to present his case. The priest, ascertaining that his services were required, would go forth out of the camp, and discharge his duty. This would indicate that the condition of the leper—

I. THOUGH HELPLESS WAS NOT HOPELESS.

He could not cure himself—no mortal man could cure him, but the priest, as *medium* of communication from heaven, could be the *channel* of cleansing. Helpless in the presence of men, he was hopeful in the presence of the Lord. So, sinners, reprobated by their fellows, are renewed and restored by their Maker. The condition of the leper—

II. THOUGH REPULSIVE WAS NOT IRRECOVERABLE.

He was shunned by society, and branded as unclean ; but the priest came out of the camp and met him, showing that Jehovah had not given him up, was not unwilling to heal him. God, by sending His dear Son into our world, has come forth to meet us, not to speak from a distance, and treat us as reprobates, but He has come *close to us, touched us, worn* our humanity, that we may be healed. Here, indeed, is divine compassion ; meeting us, not in disdain or to destroy, but to sanctify and save.—*F. W. B.*

V. 4.—*Theme*: A TYPE OF REDEMPTION.

Though the rite prescribed here was to be observed *after* the leper was cured, yet it may be regarded as typical of the offering made for the removal of sin from the soul of man.

I. THE LEPER'S CLEANSING WAS PROCURED BY—

(a) *Infliction of death.* Two live, clean birds brought to priest ; one of them killed, its blood sprinkled on leper to be cleansed, seven times. Through sacrifice of life of

Christ, through His blood, we have forgiveness of sins.

(b) *Victory over death.* The living bird after being dipped in the blood of the slain bird was let loose in the open field. Here we get, if not type—yet illustration, of conquest over the grave by Him who bare our sins in His own body on the tree.

II. THE LEPER'S CLEANSING WAS COMMUNICATED BY—

(a) *Personal application.* The blood was sprinkled upon the person to be cleansed. So, nothing short of actual contact with virtue of Christ's death will cleanse from sin.

(b) *Repeated application.* The blood was sprinkled seven times, to denote that the cure was thorough and complete. We need the constant application of the merits of Christ's sacrifice to remove the guilt we are constantly contracting from contact with a sinful world, and the uprising of remaining depravity in our hearts.

Thus, coming to the priest, and submitting to the ordinance of cleansing, the leper would be taught—

(1) *Humility.* He would be deeply impressed with his corruption and unworthiness.

(2) *Gratitude.* That God had devised means whereby so helpless a condition might be met, so miserable a state be changed.

(3) *Responsibility.* If cleansed thus he would be a new creature; expected to live a new life; under lasting obligation to Him who had given the healing. So, in redemption; those who are saved are taught humility, gratitude, consecration. "Ye are not your own," etc.—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 8, 9.—*Theme: SANCTIFICATION.*

Personal efforts of the leper for himself to follow services performed for him by the priest. He to co-operate with the divine means employed. In directions given, means of sanctification are suggested, such as—

I. PURIFICATION OF ASSOCIATIONS. Leper to "wash his clothes."

II. MORTIFICATION OF SELF. "Shave off all his hair."

III. MEASURES OF REFORM. "Wash his flesh in water."

IV. SCRUPULOUS SELF-EXAMINATION. "Tarry out of his tent seven days."

V. CONGENIAL SOCIETY. When cleansed, the leper was restored to the worship of the tabernacle, publicly presented at the door before the Lord. He was then allowed to mingle with the sacred and social life of the nation.

Sanctification, a *progressive* work. We are "being saved" in this life. Our complete purification hinges on perseverance in use of divinely appointed means. Constant circumspection and introspection essential. Sanctification on earth culminates in presentation before the presence of the Lord in heaven, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 21, 22.—*Theme: NO EXCUSE FOR NEGLECTING MEANS OF CLEANSING.*

As in other rites, provision is here made, so that even the poorest were not shut out from ordinance of healing, so that none could make excuse in justification of neglect. There was—

I. GRADATION IN THE OFFERINGS. The leper was to offer "such as he could get." God does not expect more than we can do. He demands the best we can offer; if we offer our best He accepts it.

II. EQUALITY IN THE OFFERERS. Whatever they brought they all stood upon a moral level before Jehovah. He makes no distinctions, in the bestowment of His mercy, between rich and poor.

III. COMPLETENESS IN THE RECOVERY. The smallness and poverty of the offering did not hinder a full blessing coming on the leper; all alike pronounced clean when conditions complied with. The merits of Christ's sacrifice more than make up for any defects and deficiencies in our services. Though we and our works are less than nothing, He is all and in all.—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 17, 25, 28, 29.—*Theme: COMPLETENESS OF CLEANSING.*

The leper was not only cleansed from defilement, delivered from past disabilities, but introduced to a new life. He is now the servant of Jehovah, and expected to enter into solemn covenant with Him. There was to be henceforth—

I. DEVOUT ATTENTION TO DIVINE COMMANDS. The "right ear" of the cleansed leper touched with blood and oil.

II. ENERGETIC SERVICE. The "right hand" touched, etc.

III. READY OBEDIENCE. The "right foot" touched, etc.

IV. INTELLIGENT CONSECRATION. "Oil poured upon the head." Thus all our powers should be set apart for the service and glory of Him who has interposed to save us, and who sets us apart as His peculiar people by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 33, 34.—*Theme: LEPROUS HOUSES.*

Material things not evil in themselves, yet, since the Fall, they have often become vehicles of contamination, incentives to depravity. Man has disfigured the world and made it like a leprous house, so that "the whole creation groans and travails" on account of sin, syren songs are sung to beguile the unwary, and wrecking lights are held out from scenes which appear both beautiful and safe. The leprosy of lewdness, licentiousness, cling to many a dwelling in the midst even of civilised Christian society. Thus—

I. THE WORLD—AS THE HOUSE OF OUR RACE—HAS BECOME LEPROUS. Let us beware of its tempting, tainting influences.

II. THE BODY—AS THE HOUSE OF THE SOUL—HAS BECOME LEPROUS. It contains not only

seeds of mortality, but of depravity. Corruption clings to all its issues and powers. The world will be purified by the final wrecking fires; the vile body of our mortality is to be changed by our risen Lord, if we live and die to Him.—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 45-49.—*Theme*: DEPRAVED SURROUNDINGS TO BE DEMOLISHED.

Every effort was to be made to effect the complete cleansing of leprous houses; such efforts failing, the houses were to be pulled down and the materials carried to an unclean place without the city. So—

I. STRENUOUS EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO PURIFY CORRUPT SURROUNDINGS. In the world; our own homes; in our bodies; in our hearts.

II. COMPLETE DESTRUCTION MUST ENSUE WHERE CORRUPTION IS INCURABLE. At length the house was demolished, to prevent spread of infection, to show hatefulness of corruption. So, in the end, when period of probation is over, all uncurd depravity will be removed to an unclean place; the finally impure, even in surroundings, will be destroyed. Purity shall ultimately triumph over corruption, and happiness over misery.—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XIV.

HELPLESSNESS.

A physician, attending a Christian patient, became concerned to gain such spiritual assurance and joy in Christ as the sufferer manifested, and asked how it might be secured. He replied:

"Doctor, I have felt that I could *do nothing*, and so I have put my case in your hands; I am *trusting in you*."

He saw the simplicity of the way, absolute helplessness, but absolute trust in Christ; and he found peace therein.

"Lord, save me from my sin;
Thine is the work alone;
Come to this erring soul of mine
And make that power known."
—OFFORD.

CLEANSED.

"His garb was simple, and his sandals worn;
His stature modelled with a perfect grace;
His countenance the impress of a God.

He looked on Helon earnestly awhile,
As if His heart were moved; and stooping
down

He took a little water in His hand
And laved the sufferer's brow, and said,
'Be clean!'

And lo! the scales fell from him, and his
blood

Coursed with delicious coolness through his
veins,

And his dry palms grew moist, and on his
lips

The dewy softness of an infant's stole.
His *leprosy was cleansed*; and he fell down
Prostrate at Jesus' feet, and worshipp'd
Him."

—WILLIS: *Room for the Leper*.

SANCTIFICATION.

"Justification regards something done *for* us; *sanctification*, something done *in* us. The one is a change in our state, the other in our nature. The one is perfect, the other gradual. The one is derived from obedience to the Saviour, the other from His Spirit. The one gives a title to heaven, the other a

meekness for it. Suppose you had a son; you forbade him to enter a place of contagion on pain of losing all you could leave him. He goes, and is seized with the infection. He is guilty, for he had transgressed your command; but he is also *diseased*. Do you not perceive that your *forgiving* him does not *heal* him? He wants not only the father's pardon, but the physician's aid. In vain is he freed from the forfeiture of his estate, if he be left under the force of the disorder."—JAY.

"Who would be cleansed from every sin
Must to God's holy altar bring
The whole of life—its joys, its tears,
Its hopes, its loves, its powers, its years,
The will, and every cherished thing."
—ALLIS.

PROGRESS.

"Flying birds are never taken in the fowler's snare."—SECKER.

"He never was so good as he should be, who does not strive to be better than he is."—WARWICK.

"It is so with all climbing: Every upward step makes another needful; and so we must go on until we reach heaven, the summit of the aspiration of time."—H. W. BEECHER

"All growth that is not growth towards
God
Is growing to decay."—GEO. MACDONALD.

POVERTY: THE SAINTLY POOR.

"The shell may be coarse which encloses the pearl. An iron safe may hold treasures of gold. A broken frame may contain the most beautiful picture. Poor believers may be rich Christians."—BOWES.

"There was no part of creature-holiness that I had so great a sense of the loveliness of as humility, brokenness of heart, and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing that I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted after this—to be before God as in the dust; that I might be as nothing, and that God might be *All*; that I might become a little child."—EDWARDS.

"The Emperor heard that the *treasures of the Church* had been confided to St. Laurence; he was brought before the tribunal and required to confess where those treasures were concealed. He answered that in three days he would show them. On the third day St. Laurence gathered together the sick and the poor, to whom he had dispensed alms, and placing them before the tribune said, "Behold! here are the *treasures of Christ's Church*."

"God's riches to my soul be given,
And 'tis enough for earth and heaven!"
—HANS SACHS.

"That life on earth may be the best
In which by want the soul is tried;
For He whose word is ever sure,
Hath said that 'Blessed are the poor.'"
—WELD.

HOME.

"A man's house should be on the hill-top of cheerfulness and serenity; so high that no shadows rest upon it; and where the morning comes so early and the evening tarries so late that the day has twice as many golden hours as those of other scenes. Home should be the centre of joy."—BELCHER.

"Oh, happy home! oh, home supremely blest,
Where Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, art entertained

As the most welcome and beloved guest,
With true devotion and with love unfeigned;

Where all hearts beat in unison with Thine,
Where eyes grow brighter as they look on Thee,

Where all are ready at the slightest sign
To do Thy will, and do it heartily."

CHAPTER XV.

Secret Physical Impurities.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

Secret impurities, whether of men or women, are carefully discriminated here as resulting from guilty sexual intercourse, and as the effect of natural infirmity. God has stern thoughts for the licentious, He brands him as polluted and polluting, and interdicts from all privileges those who have become basely defiled.

Yet even where no moral vileness attaches to the uncleanness, where the impurity is the consequence of physical weakness and natural processes, God enforces exclusion. For although the Lord is very pitiful to our weaknesses, "knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust," commiserates our secret maladies, and "breaks not the bruised reed," nevertheless, only the clean can be allowed free enjoyment of social and spiritual favours within the camp and congregation of His "holy nation."

Considering even the sanitary value of these prohibitions and laws we discern God's wisdom and benignity, for they placed the ban on self-destroying indulgences and arrested contamination of loathsome diseases. But as a witness to the necessity of moral and spiritual purity in the person and habits of God's people these restrictions are full of significance. "Cleanse thou me from *secret faults*."

HOMILETIC HINTS.

I The distressing vileness of fallen human nature. An ever-flowing stream of uncleanness. While un sanctified by grace, not only is it true concerning the "vile body" that "in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing," but all its habits and infirmities are corrupt and corrupting. What occasion is left for "glorying in the flesh"? Let those who vaunt the dignity of human nature

see its revolting side in this chapter. Then "every mouth shall be stopped, and all become guilty before God."

II. The stainless sanctity required in God's presence. Any soil, stain, or mark of impurity must close the unclean from coming near where He dwells. Jehovah had associated Himself with this people, was in their midst; and as He could not bear defilement He insists on the most rigorous sanctity, in their persons, their privacy, their homes, their worship. It carries its appeal to us that we "perfect holiness in the fear of God." "Wash you, make you clean, put away your evil from before mine eyes."

III. The bounteous provisions made for the sinner's cleansing. The redeeming blood and purifying water are again available: *atonement* through Christ, and *sanctification* through the Spirit and the Word; these are efficacious for even vilest stains and most loathsome impurities.

Thus, while "in the body," whose every habit and infirmity affirms its natural corruptness, we can hope for renewing grace through the redemption and washing which the gospel offers to all who will "wash and be clean."

"We have the blood of Christ!" said Schliermacher, and so passed away to glory.

NOTES.

i. *Indecencies* both shock a virtuous mind, and are signally offensive to Divine Holiness.

ii. *The human frame*, formed for noble uses, may be most basely degraded by forbidden indulgences.

iii. *Low passions*, if allowed sway, inflict miseries on others, entailing them in the humiliation of communicated uncleanness.

iv. *Hidden* physical impurities are as minutely marked by the Omniscient Eye as are the flagrant leprous taints.

v. A more emphatic *loathing* is noticeable in God's denunciation of these secret sexual uncleannesses than of any other forms of human defilement.

vi. Our *Lord's healing* of the woman's secret malady (Mark v. 25 27) may be allowed to denote the *Source of help* to all who ask deliverance from corrupting weaknesses and vicious tendencies.

vii. Infinite pity has provided expiation for, and cleansing from, even our basest sins, equally as for our natural infirmities.

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: THE ODISIOUSNESS OF PERSONAL IMPURITY (Vv. 1-14, 19-27).

These regulations, which at first sight may appear *indelicate* and *unnecessary*, were "holy, just and true." Among the licentious idolatrous Egyptians Israel was to become a model for purity; no secret sin of any kind tolerated among them. Laws necessary to the physical and moral well-being of the whole nation ought not to be considered offensive. A vast multitude was to be conducted through the wilderness with a crowded encampment of tents. Nothing, in such a case, would keep them pure and make social life tolerable but such rigid legislation as the Mosaic regulations enjoined. These regulations:

I. ASSERTED THE NEED OF SCRUPULOUS PERSONAL PURITY.

Not only were the people to be on their guard against diseases such as leprosy, which revealed itself by outward manifestations, but against *secret impurities* which might be known only to the persons suffering therefrom.

Thus the encampment of the wilderness would be kept from degenerating into a hotbed of impurity and disease. Into whatever flagrant sins the Jews as a nation fell, they never became notorious for impurity or immorality; and, to this day, the ranks of the licentious are conspicuously free from members of the family of Abraham. The gospel is not less rigid in its demands for personal purity; indeed, it probes the moral nature of man more deeply, and demands purity of thought and desire as well as of word and deed. *Unaccomplished vicious purposes* are regarded as performed. The gospel condemns every species of impurity that would defile the body, and teaches higher morality than the ceremonial law ever reached.

II. SUGGESTED THE NEED OF COMPLETE MORAL SPOTLESSNESS.

Having to *repair to the priest*; and, when cleansed, to *appear before the Lord*, would naturally suggest to the mind the necessity of absolute purity of heart in the service of Jehovah. He who demanded the complete removal of all pollution from the physical frame, must require truth and purity in the human heart. All sin is a diseased and wasteful outflowing of the vitality of the soul. As none were too impure to apply to the priest, no case so desperate but might be cured, so the vilest of the vile may repair to our Great High Priest, who is able and willing to save to *the uttermost of human need, in all the world, through all time.*—*F. W. B.*

Topic: THE CONSEQUENCES OF PERSONAL IMPURITY (Vv. 13-18, 28-33).

The laws of nature cannot be set aside, or perverted, without the infliction of penalties upon the delinquent. This world is a place, though not *the* place of punishment for sin. Impurity of life entails *weakness, suffering, shame*; disgrace and deprivation were the penalty borne by those ceremonially defiled, teaching us—

I. THAT PERSONAL IMPURITY NATURALLY ENTAILS DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES.

The body becomes deteriorated, the stamina reduced, when vices of a secret character work in the dark at the basis of life. *The mind* becomes enfeebled, *the soul* debased. The sensualist and impure carry the brand of their iniquity upon their countenance, signs of their immoral character in their gait. Personal impurity bars the gate to heaven! for there nothing that defileth or worketh abomination can enter. Its consequences extend to others; for morally unclean persons carry contamination wherever they go, as the law declared the unclean did in the cases before us. The Jews were taught that the slightest touch conveyed defilement; so, sinful influences, however apparently slight, vitiate and convey moral infection. Blessed be God we are taught—

II. THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF PERSONAL IMPURITY MAY BE ARRESTED AND REMOVED.

Persons and things defiled by contact with the unclean could be cleansed by being bathed in water, and the presentation of two clean live birds for an atonement. Thus, not only the unclean persons could obtain cleansing, but the entail of their corrupt influences could be stayed. The stains of guilt, the course of sin, can only be arrested and removed by the intervention of the Lord. The consequences of sin in our *world* can only be counteracted by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, and the sacrificial life of the spotless Lamb of God.

Note 1: The Laws respecting *uncleanness* could *not have been invented by man*; for human nature does not voluntarily inflict penalties upon itself, does not bring its vices into the light of day, and arraign them at the bar of public opinion; for, "men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil."

Note 2 : Instead of sin flowing secretly from our words and deeds, corrupting ourselves, and contaminating others, "*light*" is to shine from us, pure, cheerful, penetrating, divine. Thus shall our lives redound to the glory of God, and contribute towards the moral regeneration of our race.—*F. W. B.*

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER XV.

V. 2.—*Theme*: THE SECRET FLOW OF SIN. "When any man hath a running issue out of his flesh, because of his issue he is unclean."

Jehovah demands *purity of body*, as well as of *mind and heart*, in those who profess to be His people, and draw near to Him in sacred worship. Our bodies, not to be despised or neglected, but kept pure, as *the handiwork of God*, and as *the dwelling-place of the human soul*. The uncleanness here spoken of, probably the outcome of secret wantonness, or open licentiousness, or self-pollution. Secret sins, witnessed by no one but ourselves and God, vitiate the springs of life, and waste the substance of which our bodies are composed. Thus the Moral Governor of the universe has set His inevitable stigma upon all wrong-doing. By this statute we have suggested—

I. THAT SIN IS AN IMMORAL ISSUE FROM WITHIN MAN. *Not a complexion*, that may easily be changed; *not an excrescence*, that clings to the surface only; *but a radical defilement* issuing from the heart, which is the fountain of life. How disgusting and injurious sin is! How inveterate its hold upon our nature! Flowing from within, it often escapes detection, and defies all merely human remedies for its removal. "In us, that is in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing;" when we would do good evil is present with us. Sin is not to be got rid of by change of scenery or society. Those who retreat from the world—*hermits, monks, nuns*, etc.—carry their evil propensities with them, and the secret flow of sin does not cease. However moral the *outward* life may be, out of the heart will flow *secret pride, unbelief, lust, evil thoughts*, which defile the soul and burden the conscience with guilt.

II. THAT SIN THUS POLLUTES EVERY THING IT COMES IN CONTACT WITH. Whatever the persons mentioned in this chapter touched became unclean; showing how exceedingly contagious the defilement was. So sin pollutes and transmits itself. Like a serpent, its trail is left wherever it goes. The *beauty* of the world, its *bounties* and *pleasures*, have been distorted and abused by the contaminating touch of sin. Let us pray to be kept from secret sins. Suggestions to evil come up the corridors of memory, flash from pictures in the chambers of imagination. Indulgence in secret impure desires will induce and excite the flow of moral evil from the heart, wasting the powers of the soul, corrupting every circle that it touches. Sin *indisposes* and *incapacitates* men for pure society and holy service.

If not stayed, consequence death. Blessed be God! sin has been atoned for, may be removed; death has been abolished, life and immortality brought to light by the gospel.—*F. W. B.*

V. 13.—*Theme*: THE RADICAL CURE OF SIN. "And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue," etc.

Though the uncleanness here mentioned was so deeply rooted and virulent, yet it was curable; the persons cured were restored to their former positions in society, and declared whole in the presence of the Lord. We learn here—

I. THAT SIN CAN BE REMOVED ONLY THROUGH ATONEMENT. "The priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord." The water and the blood that flowed seem to typify the fountain opened upon the cross in the Saviour's side. In every instance under the law where sin was to be forgiven some pure life had to be offered as an atonement, the innocent suffered as a substitute for the guilty. Thus the *roots* and *principles* of the gospel of Christ are found in the economy of Moses.

II. THAT THE REMOVAL OF SIN CAN ONLY BE COMPLETED BY SANCTIFICATION. The ablutions of the candidate for cleansing indicated that only by persistence in the means of grace, and thoroughness of dedication to the conditions of mercy, can we become sanctified. *At eventide* the cleansed person became clean; so, when life's day is over, and the shadows of death close upon the believer, the work of sanctification, which has progressed through the whole period of probation, will become complete; the "*vile body*" will be laid aside, the emancipated and immaculate spirit be "*present with the Lord.*"

Obviously, contaminating influences may be communicated *unexpectedly* and *unintentionally*. What need to pray, as David did (Ps. li.), "Wash me thoroughly," etc. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews urged them to seek to have their "bodies washed with pure water, and their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." Christ can arrest the flow of sinful influences, as He stayed the issue of the poor sufferer, recorded Mark v. 29. The gospel dispenses with the burdensome ceremonials of the Law; but, all they pointed to is *preserved* and *fulfilled*, for "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XV.

SECRESY.

"Go to your own bosom
Knock there: and ask your heart what it doth
know."—SHAKESPEARE.

SELF MASTERY.

"I will be lord over myself. No one who
cannot master himself is worthy to rule."—
GOETHE.

"A little fire is quickly trodden out:
Which, being suffered, rivers cannot quench."
—Henry VI.

PASSIONS.

"The passions may be humoured till they
become our master, as a horse may be pam-
pered till he gets the better of his rider; but
early discipline will prevent mutiny and keep
the helm in the hands of reason."
—CUMBERLAND.

"His soul, like bark with rudder lost,
On passions' changeful tide was tost;
Nor vice, nor virtue, had the power
Beyond the impression of the hour;
And O! when passion rules, how rare
The hour that falls to Virtue's share!"
—SCOTT.

"No man's body is as strong as his ap-
petite: but heaven has corrected the bound-
lessness of his voluptuous desires by stinting
his strength and contracting his capacities."
—TILLOTSON.

"What profits us, that we from Heaven derive
A soul immortal; and with looks erect
Survey the stars; if, like the brutal kind,
We follow where our passions lead the way?"
—CLAUDIAN.

VICE.

"Vice stings us even in our pleasures; but
virtue consoles us even in our pains."—COLTON

"Why is there no man who *confesses* his
vices? It is because he has not yet laid them
aside. It is a *waking* man only who can tell
his dreams."—SENECA.

"Men only feel the *smart*, but not the vice."
—POPE.

VIRTUE.

"Virtue that transgresses, is but patched
with sin;
But sin that amends, is but patched with vir-
tue."—SHAKESPEARE, *Twelfth Night*, I., 3.

"Wisdom and virtue require a tutor;
though we can easily learn to be vicious with-
out a master."—SENECA.

"God sure esteems the growth and com-
pelling of one virtuous person more than the
restraint of ten vicious."—MILTON.

"The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt
joy,
Is virtue's prize."—*Essay on Man*, POPE.

CHAPTER XVI

The Great Day of Atonement.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—Come not at all times into the holy place within the veil. It was but natural that the solemn judgment which befel Nadab and Abihu "when they offered before the Lord and *died*" (v. 1) should have rendered Aaron apprehensive lest he also might err in his ministries before Jehovah. God's message of direction, therefore, came to guide him in his sacred duties; for He will show the good and the right way to such as desire to do His will, albeit He is swift to rebuke those who adventure to act presumptuously in His sacred presence.

For I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. Shall we not "stand in awe and sin not" where we know that God is present? That "cloud" softened His exceeding glory, so as to allow the eye of mortal man to look and yet live;

and that "mercy-seat" suggested the divine pitifulness towards the sinner who desired to approach Him in reconciliation. Nevertheless, there might be no trifling, no profanity in His holy light; for God is severe as well as gracious. Man should fear before Him. And since there is no scene where God is not present, should we not cultivate reverence, and live as in readiness to meet Him? Within His house still there should be solemnity; His worship demands homage; "the Lord is in His holy temple." He will be gracious to the lowly and devout wherever they approach Him, shielding His great glory from them as with a "cloud" while they seek with supplications and offerings His "mercy seat."

V. 3.—Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place. Only "once a year"; on the august *Day of Atonement*. This restriction carried a pensive lesson: "that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest"; that the hindrances to man's free approach to God had been only partially removed; that no provision was in existence for his abiding in the holy presence. Man might, by special arrangements of grace, enter where God dwelt, but he could not tarry there. Because atonement was not then complete; for types could not "take away sins" so satisfactorily as to qualify man for continuous nearness to God. Only in the perfect work of Jesus Christ can sinners gain abiding fitness for this highest privilege.

Sin offering and a burnt offering. These again meeting the twofold aspects of atonement (*vide* chaps. iv. and vi.); meeting every requirement of God's holiness and of man's guilt.

V. 4.—He shall put on the holy linen coat. Attired "in fine linen, clean and white" (Rev. xiv. 7, 8), symbolic of a blameless righteousness:—the inherent perfection and purity of Christ our High Priest, and the derived sanctity of His redeemed and priestly followers. Being divested of His glorious robes, and appearing simply in these "garments of righteousness," suggests to us our Lord's condition while He was engaged in making "atonement"; His majesty and splendour laid aside, but adorned with faultless sanctity and grace. Such meek purity became Him most while engaged in the sad work of atoning for human transgression and wrong.

Vv. 5-10.—Two kids of the goats: the one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. The two goats formed *one* sin offering. God takes His share and is well pleased therewith; for there was a portion in Christ's sacrifice which was specially welcome to His Father, the perfect worthiness, the sweet subjection, the willing suffering of His Son—that was "*the Lord's lot.*" The other part was for the sinner's release, removing from the transgressor the guilt and penalty of sin; and in the virtue of Christ's work through which we have "remission of sins" we find *the sinner's "lot."* "As far as the east is from the west so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Psa. ciii. 12).

Vv. 11-19.—The sin offering for priest, people, and sanctuary. The incidents were as follows; the young bullock was slain; while its blood was being gathered into a vessel Aaron entered within the veil carrying a censer of burning coals in his right hand and a platter of fragrant incense in his left; placing the burning coals at the foot of the Ark he cast the incense thereon and thus filled the Most Holy shrine with a soft cloud, thereby veiling the Ark from open vision: he then returned for the vessel of blood, and going again within the veil he sprinkled the Mercy Seat therewith, thus making atonement for his own sin and for his priestly associates; for the "sweet savour of Christ" and the "blood of sprinkling" are needed even for consecrated and priestly souls. Leaving the Holy of Holies, where the incense still burned, he offered on the altar the goat which had been allotted as the sacrifice for the *people's* sin, afterwards re-entering the veil to sprinkle also its blood of atonement upon and before the Ark. Thus three entrances were made that day into the Most Holy of All. No other priest was allowed within the tabernacle (v. 17) during these

Azazel. The two goats were placed with their backs to the people, and the faces toward the sanctuary (westward). The high priest now faced the people, shook the urn, thrust his two hands into it, drew out the two lots, laying one on the head of each goat. Popularly it was considered a good augury if the right hand lot had fallen "for Jehovah." The two goats must be altogether alike in appearance, size, and value. The lot having designated each of the two goats, the high priest tied a tongue-shaped piece of scarlet cloth to the horn of the goat "for Azazel," and around the throat of the goat "for Jehovah." The goat that was to be sent into the wilderness was now turned round face to the people, waiting, as it were, till their sins should be laid on him to carry them forth "to a land not inhabited." Afterwards the high priest, laying both his hands on the head of this goat, confessed and pleaded as follows :

"O Lord, the house of Israel Thy people have trespassed, rebelled, and sinned before Thee. I beseech thee, O Lord, forgive now their trespasses and sins which Thy people have committed, as it is written in the law of Moses, Thy servant, saying that in that day there shall be 'an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.'"

While the prostrate multitude worshipped at the name of JEHOVAH, the high priest turned his face towards them as he uttered the words "*Ye shall be cleansed,*" as if declaring to them the absolution and remission of their sins.

A strange scene was then witnessed; the priests led the sin-burdened goat through "Solomon's porch," and, as tradition has it, through the eastern gate which opened upon the Mount of Olives. Here an arched bridge spanned the intervening valley, and over it they brought the goat to the Mount of Olives, where one, specially appointed for the purpose, took him in charge. Tradition enjoins that he should be a stranger, a non-Israelite. Scripture tells us no more of the destiny of the goat that bore upon him all the iniquity of the children of Israel than that they "shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness" (v. 22), but tradition supplements this information.

The distance between Jerusalem and the beginning of "the wilderness" is computed at nearly 90 *stadia*, making precisely ten intervals, each half a Sabbath-day's journey from the other. At the end of each of these intervals there was a station, occupied by one or more persons detailed for the purpose, who offered refreshment to the man leading the goat, and then accompanied him to the next station. By this arrangement two results were secured: some trusted persons accompanied the goat all along his journey, and yet none of them walked more than a Sabbath-day's journey. At last they reached the edge of the wilderness; here they halted, and the attendant, viewing afar off, while the man led the goat forward, tore off half the scarlet tongue and stuck it on a projecting cliff; then, leading the animal backwards, he pushed it over the projecting ledge of rock.

If tradition be correct on this point it must have been a modern innovation, for originally the goat was set free.

There was a moment's pause, and the man, now defiled by contact with the sin-bearer, retraced his steps to the last of the ten stations, where he spent the rest of the day and night. But the arrival of the goat in the wilderness was immediately telegraphed by the waving of flags from station to station, so that in a few minutes after its occurrence it was known in the temple.

In a subject so obscure great difference of opinion exists as to the significance of the word "Azazel." Those opinions most worthy of notice are: It is to be taken—

1. *As a designation of the goat itself.* Most old interpreters hold this view: regarding it as meaning the goat sent away, or let loose. In accordance with this the Vulgate renders it *Caper emissarius*; Luther, *der ledige Bock*; the Septuagint uses the term $\delta \acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\mu\omicron\mu\acute{\alpha}\iota\varsigma$ applied to the goat itself. Theodoret

and Cyril of Alexandria, consider the meaning of the Hebrew to be *the goat sent away*, and regard that as the sense of the word used in the Septuagint.

2. *As the name of the place to which the goat was sent.* Thus Vatlabus, Deyling, Kimchi, Abenezra, and others regard it as the desolate spot in the wilderness; Bochart and Carpvoz as any lonely place; and the Arabian version, some Rabbins, LeClerc and others, as "Mount Azaz," or the cliff down which the goat was thrown.

3. *As a personal being to whom the goat was sent.* They, Gesenius, Ewald, Rosenmüller, Dr. Wette, Knobel, and many of the Rabbins think that "Azazel" was an evil demon. Origen considers it was Satan. Spencer supposes the goat was given up to the devil, and committed to his disposal. Hengstenberg affirms very confidently that "Azazel" cannot possibly be anything but another name for Satan. He repudiates the notion that the goat was in any sense a sacrifice to Satan, but urges that it was *sent away laden with the sins of God's people*, now forgiven, in order to mock their spiritual enemy in the desert, his proper abode, and to symbolize by its free gambols *their exalting triumph*. He argues that the origin of the rite was Egyptian, and that the Jews substituted Satan for Typhon, whose dwelling was the desert.

4. The interpretation most harmonious with the scope of Scripture and with the nature of the service is that "Azazel" denotes "*a free going away*," or "*an entire and utter removal*." Michaelis and Jahn give the former rendering of the word, and Tholuck, Thompson, Bähr and Winer the latter.

Dr. Endersheim (in his work, "*The Temple, its Ministry and Service*"), says, "The word *Azazel* is, by universal consent, derived from a root which means 'wholly to put aside,' or 'wholly to go away.' Whether, therefore, we render the *la-Azazel* by 'for him who is wholly put aside,' that is *the sin-bearing Christ*, or 'for being wholly separated,' or 'put wholly away, or aside,' that is, the putting away of sin, the truth is still the same, as pointing (1) to the *temporary and provisional removal of sin* by the goat 'let go' into 'the land not inhabited,' and (2) to the *final, real, and complete removal of sin* by the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. liii. 6)."

And, as if to add to the significance of the rite, tradition has it that when the sacrifice was fully accepted, the scarlet mark which the scapegoat had borne became *white* (Isa. i. 18), but adds that this miracle did not take place for forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

"Smith's Dictionary" (see Day of Atonement) suggests that "*the slain goat*" should be viewed as setting forth the *act of sacrifice*, in giving up its own life for others "to Jehovah," in accordance with the requirements of divine law: and the *goat which carried off its load of sin* for "complete removal," as signifying the *cleansing influence of faith* in the sacrifice. . . . But for us the whole spiritual truth has been revealed in historic fact, in the life, death, and resurrection of Him who was made sin for us, who died for us, and rose again for our justification. This Mediator it was necessary should in some unspeakable manner unite death and life.

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: A UNIQUE DAY IN ISRAEL (Vv. 2, 3).

I. A LAW OF SEPARATION: *Hindrances to abiding nearness to God.* "That he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil."

1. *God was enclosed from man* within that veil; man excluded from God: *sin's effect.*

2. *No permanent abiding place had been secured for even the most privileged within God's presence; atonement was not perfect* (Heb. x. 1-4).

3. *Perfection for man could not come of Levitical priesthood or sacrifices: and the faulty, the unclean, could not abide in God's sight.*

II. A LAW OF RECONCILIATION: *Atonement removing obstructions from between man and God. Access within the veil effected, through—*

1. *A spotless priest.* "These are holy garments" (v. 4). "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place" (v. 3).

2. *The ample atonement.* "With *sin-offering, and burnt-offering*" (v. 3); satisfying all God's claims against the sinner; and sufficing for all man's guilt and requirements.

3. *Privileged recipients.* "Make atonement for himself and his house" (v. 6); representing the Church (Heb. iii. 6).

III. A LAW OF FELLOWSHIP: *Admission into the most sacred Presence.*

1. *By blood of sprinkling:* Evidence of substitutionary death. "Seven times" applied (v. 14): *perfect redemption.*

2. *By merits of the Saviour's grace; sweet incense burned before the Lord* (v. 12, 13): "*sweet savour of Christ.*" By the fragrant merits, by the precious blood of Christ, we may "*enter into the holiest.*" [See Addenda to chap. xvi., *Mercy Seat.*]

Topic: TYPICAL ENACTMENT OF ATONEMENT (V. 3, seq.).

Both the day and the observances were authorised of God (vv. 1, 2); both, therefore, divinely important. (1) In regard to the definiteness of the day. (2) In regard to the meaning and order of its ceremonies.

I. THE TYPICAL MEANING OF THE JEWISH ATONEMENT DAY.

1. *The divinely stated reason for its appointment* (v. 16).

(1) The fact of sin and the necessity for its expiation by blood, both unmistakeably and divinely declared. This is significant, as it bears upon the atonement of which this was only a type.

(2) Sin necessitates atonement if it is to be pardoned: "without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22).

(a) Aaron's personal preparations typical of the purity and holiness of our Lord (v. 4: Heb. vii. 26).

(b) Aaron's typical work (vv. 17, 18).

i. Our Lord was absolutely alone in His great atoning work.

ii. Though Aaron here typifies Christ, he must not himself forget that he is a sinner, and therefore must atone for his own sins. In this he was *not* a type of Christ (Heb. vii. 27).

(3) This fact bespeaks the antagonism of sin against the divine will, and the holiness and righteousness of the divine character.

2. *The divinely appointed measures for its observance.*

(1) In respect to the agent to carry out the measure.

(a) It was not anyone who volunteered, but Aaron the priest (vv. 2-6).

(b) So is the case of our Lord (Heb. v. 4, 5).

(2) In respect to the measures themselves.

iii. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled first upon the mercy seat eastward, and then before the mercy seat (v. 14), and then in the "holy place," and lastly upon "the altar that is before the Lord." Thus the atoning blood was sprinkled everywhere, from the throne of God within the veil to the altar which stood in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation (comp. Heb. ix. 23-28).

iv. Now follows the typical act of releasing the live goat (vv. 20-22).

The two goats were designed to represent the two aspects of Christ's atone-

ment : First, that on which "the Lord's lot" fell being doomed to death showed that the DEATH of Christ alone could vindicate the majesty, truth and holiness of the character of God. Secondly, the live goat over which Aaron confessed the people's sins, and thus typically was ordained to "bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited" (v. 22), signified the completeness of the divine act in the remission of the sins of him who, by confession and faith in Christ, transfers them to Him.

v. An instructive and significant scene follows (vv. 27, 28). The burnt offering represents consecration. Here, first, of our Lord ; having atoned for our sins, He has consecrated Himself to His Father for His Church, to protect, guide, sympathise with, intercede for, and ultimately present her without spot unto the Father (Eph. v. 25-27 ; Jno. xiv. 3 ; Rom. viii. 34). Secondly, we have here represented the consecration of the believer.

vi. The perpetuity of this memorial.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. The hatefulness, heinousness, and guiltiness of sin are here shown.
2. God's desire to provide for the removal of its guilt, and the prevention of its consequences demonstrated.
3. The comprehensiveness of the provision in the atonement.—*Rev. D. C. Hughes.*

Topic: THE SLAIN GOAT AND THE SCAPEGOAT (Vv. 8-10, 15, 16, 21, 22).

On this day many victims died. Each holy altar, each holy place received the reconciling sign of blood. Each sacrifice proclaims that substituted sufferings avail.

Christ, their full truth, has once laid down His life. That once is all-sufficient for all the sins of all His people.

But in the service of the atoning day one part stands singularly forth. Two goats are brought for a sin offering. The priest receives them at the tabernacle door. Lots are cast. Man's mind may not select. Some unseen hand takes one for death and bids the other live. This scene reveals the council of eternal love. Before the worlds, God's will called Jesus to the saving work. Each portion of the scheme was pre-resolved. Each was consigned to His receiving hands.

I. THE SENTENCED GOAT DIED ; and mark the *uses of its blood.*

With this the high priest ventures within the mystic veil ; the mercy seat receives the drops ; the holy tent is strewn throughout ; seven times the golden altar's horns are touched.

1. Blood is our peace. The wounded conscience writhes ; sin is deepest misery. But when the Spirit shows the blood, all dread forebodings cease. It proves that peace is signed in heaven.

2. Blood has a sin-expelling power. How can that be loved which pierced the Lord ?

3. Blood drives Satan back. Nothing can daunt him, no place exclude him, but this blood of Christ.

4. Blood bars the entrance to doom. A Christ-washed soul may not enter there.

5. Blood removes the hindrances to heaven. Behold the countless multitudes before the throne. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

6. The blood fills paradise with songs. This is the substance of their mighty anthem : "Thou wast slain," etc. They cannot sing above who have not washed on earth.

II. THE LADEN GOAT IS LED AWAY.

1. On its head is transmitted all Israel's guilt. The substitute receives the whole. The scapegoat takes the burden on its head.

2. It is borne by him afar; beyond the camp, beyond all sight, beyond the track of man. Unseen, unknown, forgotten, it departs from mortal view; buried in oblivion's land.

Faith knows this scapegoat well; there is no brighter picture of full pardon of all sin in Christ. Daily the soul tells out all its sin upon the head of Christ, who waits to bear it, and carry it far away. Christ hastens away with the accursed load, and God's all-searching eye finds it no more.

Is the east distant from the west? Can we move through the intervening space? As we advance the horizon still recedes; infinite separation divides. Thus far the scapegoat bears our guilt away (Psa. ciii. 12).

Can we recover what is buried in ocean depths? Such is the grave of sin (Micah vii. 19).

Are objects visible upon which the back is turned? Thus sins are hidden from God (Isa. xxxviii. 17).

How does a mass of blackening clouds wrap the sky in a pall of impenetrable night! Heed the voice of pardoning grace: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgression," etc. (Isa. xlv. 22).

No search finds His people's sins. A land of infinite forgetfulness conceals them (Jer. l. 20).

God's pledge stands. "I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. xxxi. 34). The scapegoat ordinance confirms the truth.

Ponder this ordinance. Sins, many, vile and hateful, pass to our Scapegoat, and so pass away. Faith transfers them; Christ removes them; God forgets them.

Have your hands touched the Scapegoat's head? If not, your loathsome load remains.—*Dean Law.*

Topic: INTERCESSION OF CHRIST (Vv. 12-14).

"And he shall take a censer full of burning coals from off the altar, and his hands full of sweet incense and bring it within the veil."

We derive great advantage from being able to compare the Old Testament with the New. Since we see religion is essentially the same thing in all times and ages.

There are not two ways of acceptance with God: one under the law and another under the gospel—but one way for Jew and Gentile: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, etc."

The fault of the Jews who entered not into the proper spirit of their own religion: that they valued the shell of their religion, but saw not the Pearl of great price. They fully estimated, perhaps over estimated the adornments of the casket, but certainly overlooked the bright Jewel within. They rejoiced in the pomp of their worship, the splendour of their ritual, the imposing grandeur of their sacrifices and the miraculous attestation that their religion came from God, but were strangely remiss in not discovering its real spirituality of design, and its intimate connection with the person and work of Christ. They cried "*The Temple of the Lord are we,*" but when the Lord of the Temple came, they treated Him with opposition and contempt. Had they been *good Jews*, they would have been good Christians. Our Lord implies this—"If ye believed his writing (marg.) ye would have believed my words." If they had been true disciples of Moses they would have been of Christ.

Let us be warned, and pray that we may see the spiritual design both of their dispensation and of our own.

1. THE DOCTRINE OF THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

i. *As typically exhibited under the law.*

Here Moses describes the ceremony of the great day of expiation and atonement. Aaron went into the most holy place to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice before the mercy seat. No human being was permitted to accompany him. All the worshippers remained without (Luke i. 8, 9, 12). Aaron was to enter on behalf of the children of Israel—so that what he did within the veil was not merely on his own account but on theirs, all of which was a great type of Christ (Heb. ix. 11). He used *no words*, but what he did was significant enough. He appeared there that the virtue of the blood shed on the altar might be applied to the acceptance of the tribes he represented in the forgiveness of their sins, and the answer of their prayers. Herein a type of Christ.

2. *As actually fulfilled in Christ.* He not only suffered on the cross, but ascended. Not on His own account but ours.

It mainly consists in His presenting Himself before God in our nature, and in the merit of His finished atonement as the ground of our acceptance, and in the intimation of His will (in thought if not in words), that the purchased blessing of His salvation may be theirs, and that all law-charges and accusations against them may be hushed and cancelled.

“To appear in the presence of God.” Not for Himself but for us. Teaching us that His state of transcendent happiness has not removed Him to an inaccessible distance, and has neither dissolved nor impaired His gracious connection with us, but maintains, without any detraction from His own perfect bliss, the most generous sympathy with our interests and wants.

It puts a glory on His atonement—that everything is to pass through His hands. A shining testimony of the holiness of God, and the efficacy of Christ's work. No wonder if, having finished His work, He should appear above with large accessions of splendour to repossess the glory He had before all worlds. But here is the point of admiration, He does not appear for His benefit but *for ours*. Illustrated by common analogies:—as an advocate appears on behalf of his clients; a king on behalf of his subjects; a general as representative of his troops; a priest at the altar as representative of whole body of worshippers; so Christ appears as the representative of all His believing people. As our King He appears in beauty; as Captain of salvation appears victorious; as Elder Brother; as Priest, Counsellor, Advocate.

Grand expression of His *love*. Not content to offer one life on the Cross. He consecrates His new existence. Though raised to the throne of reverence, does not overlook His little flock (John xvii.).

II. THE BENEFITS WE DERIVE FROM IT.

i. *The forgiveness of our sins.* “If any man sin.” After all done for us, we are guilty and undeserving. But while our sins are crying out against us on earth, Christ is pleading in heaven.

Every contrite sinner has liberty to apply by faith the merits of the atoning sacrifice. Nay, every sinner is condemned for not doing this. “*Whosoever cometh.*” But for this, our state would be less safe than under the law. Every Jew, to whatsoever tribe he belonged, might carry his sacrifice to the priest, and as he saw him enter the veil might say, “He is gone thither for me, sprinkled the Holy Place for me.” So every Christian now.

ii. *Relief of our sorrows.* Christ possesses a capacity of sympathy, especially in mental distresses, tenderness of conscience, etc. Hannah prayed, but Eli's heart was not touched with feeling of her infirmity.

iii. *The acceptance of our duties.* These are maimed and imperfect. Enough evil in them to render them offensive and displeasing to God. But Christ presents them (Rev. viii. 2).

Your tears of penitence, labours of faith, songs of gratitude, vows of obedience,

He presents. Amid worship of angels, saints, and martyrs He disdains not to present the sighings of the prisoner, the tears of contrite, the prayers of the child whose mind is opening to devotion, and ejaculation of dying.

iv. *The frustration of spiritual enemies.* Satan is the avenger, but Christ is our advocate. "Peter, I have prayed for thee."—S. THODEY, A.D. 1840.

Topic: THE WORTH OF SACRIFICES (Vv. 16-30).

Of all the days of the Jewish year this was *The Day*, the meeting-time of God and man.

The priestly tribe could minister on all other days; none but the High Priest on this. No foot but his should press the floor of the sacred tent. Dressed in purest white, repeatedly cleansed with pure water, he entered—*one man for the nation*, into the holy of holies.

What did the elaborate ritual of the day mean? If divine forgiveness depended upon such a day, then why did the world wait for twenty-five hundred years before the Day's appointment? If absolutely necessary, why was not the day and its ritual enjoined upon Abraham, and even upon Adam in Paradise? What is the meaning of sacrifice? Observe—

1. *God's character is not changed by sacrifice.* He neither regards sin with less hatred, nor loves the sinner less in consequence. The burnt offerings and sacrifices of the centuries have not added jot or tittle to His immeasurable love. The sacrifice of Calvary was the natural outcome of the divine nature, rather than the means of changing that nature. This sacrifice, like all others, expressed His *change of attitude*.

2. *These mere sacrifices possessed no intrinsic value.* In themselves considered, sacrifices are a "vain oblation" (Isa. i. 13; comp. Mic. vi. 7; Psa. li. 16; Heb. x. 6). So, though thousands stood by the altar with their offerings, with a multitude of sacrifices, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

Bearing these facts in mind, that the divine nature is unchanged by them, also that mere sacrifices are displeasing to Him and powerless to take away sin; what is their nature and history, and why commanded?

Of the 4,000 years ending with the Sacrifice of Calvary, 2,500 had passed ere sacrifices were instituted. God says by Jeremiah, "I spake not unto your fathers concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Jer. vii. 22). They were instituted after the sinful worship of the golden calf at Sinai.

But the fact is evident that they were instituted because *there was a necessity*: yet since, as we have seen, it was *not a necessity on God's part*, it must have been for man's sake.

In the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement God proclaims eternal truths.

I. THE DIVINE TESTIMONY AGAINST SIN.

These were the chosen people whose God alone was holy. Yet behold the people all in abasement: it is the cry, "We have sinned!"

1. *Not one of all the people could offer a sacrifice*: not one was sinless: the high priest alone was allowed to act for them.

2. *One spot alone was sacred*, curtained with richest fabrics: and this one spot thus curtained was the divine rebuke against sin.

II. THE BASIS OF ATONEMENT.

Our sinfulness cannot change God's nature, although it changes His attitude towards us.

1. The whole sacrificial order of the Day of Atonement was *given for the cleansing from sin*. Just as Christ afterwards came to "save His people from their sins."

2. *Every sacrifice was one of blood, from Abel's downward.* Why? "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it you upon the altar to make an atonement for your soul."

3. This affirms that the *God of love must respect His holy law* even at the expense of death. These sacrifices were the elementary lessons declaring that by-and-by the law would be made honourable by the costliest of all sacrifices.

III. THE NECESSITY FOR A PERFECT HIGH PRIEST.

In silence, on that great silent Day, stood priests and people while the high priest entered the holy place and fulfilled his task.

1. *His unworthiness for such deeds* was impressed upon him every moment. He must offer sacrifices "for himself": then five times he washed his whole body, and ten times his hands and feet. He must lay aside his own garments and wear the whitest linen.

No imperfect man could become a perfect priest, any more than an imperfect sacrifice could give a perfect conscience. Salvation depends on a more perfect High Priest than Aaron.

2. *Our Great High Priest needed no such cleansing.* "He offered himself without spot to God."

Verily the Day of Atonement was the culminating day of Jewish history. Its sunrise was upon Sinai, its sunset upon Calvary. In the morning the people said to Moses, "Let not God speak to us lest we die!" but in the evening the surging crowd heard the sacred lips proclaim to a world longing for salvation, "IT IS FINISHED!"—*Rev. David O. Mears.*

Topic: FULL ATONEMENT.

"This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year (Levi. xvi. 34).

The day of atonement was pre-eminently intended to typify that great day of vengeance of our God, which was also the great day of acceptance of our souls, when Jesus Christ "died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." That day of atonement happened only *once a year*, to teach us that only once should Jesus Christ die; and at a set and *appointed time*; not left to choice of Moses, or convenience of Aaron, but on a peculiar set day (v. 29), to show that God's great day of atonement was appointed and predestinated by Himself. Christ's expiation occurred but once, and then not by any chance; God had settled it from before the foundation of the world; and at that hour when God had predestinated, on the very day that God had decreed Christ should die, was He led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers He was dumb.

I. THE PERSON WHO WAS TO MAKE THE ATONEMENT. *Aaron the high priest* did it. "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place; with a young bullock for a sin offering and a lamb for a burnt offering." Inferior priests slaughtered lambs; other priests at other times did almost all the work of the sanctuary; but on this day nothing was done by any one, as a part of the business of the great day of atonement, except by the high priest. Old rabbinical traditions tell us that everything on that day was done by him, even the lighting of the candles, and the fires, and the incense, and all the offices that were required, and that, for a fortnight beforehand, he was obliged to go into the tabernacle to slaughter the bullocks and assist in the work of the priests and Levites, that he might be prepared to do the work which was unusual to him. All the labour was left to him. So Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and He only, works the atonement. There are other priests, for "he hath made us priests and kings unto God." Every Christian is a priest to offer sacrifice of

prayer and praise unto God, but none save the high priest must offer atonement, go within the veil, slaughter the goat, and sprinkle the blood.

2. The high priest on this day was a *humbled priest*. "He shall put on the holy *linen* coat, and he shall have the *linen breeches* upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a *linen girdle*, and with the *linen mitre* shall he be attired; these are holy garments" (v. 4). On other days he wore the golden garments; the mitre with a plate of pure gold around his brow, tied with brilliant blue; the splendid breastplate, studded with gems, adorned with pure gold and set with precious stones; the glorious ephod, the tinkling bells, and all the other ornaments wherewith he came before the people as the accepted high priest. But on this day he had none of them. On that day he humbled himself just as the people humbled themselves. /Jesus Christ, when He made atonement, was a humbled priest. He did not make atonement arrayed in all the glories of His ancient throne in heaven. Upon His brow there was no diadem save the crown of thorns; around Him was cast no purple robe, save that which He wore for a time in mockery; on His head was no sceptre, save the reed which they thrust in cruel contempt upon Him. But oh! adore Him, for it was the simple clean linen of His own humanity, in which He made atonement for your sins.

3. A *spotless high priest*; and because there were none such to be found, Aaron had to sanctify himself and make atonement for his own sin before he could go in to make an atonement for the sins of the people (v. 3). Yea, more, before he went within the veil with the blood of the goat which was the atonement for the people, he had to go within the veil to make atonement there for himself (vv. 11-13). Aaron must not go within the veil until his sins had been typically expiated, nor even then without the burning smoking incense before his face, lest God should look on him and he should die, being an impure mortal. Moreover, it is said, that he had to wash himself many times that day (vv. 4, 24). So you see it was strictly provided for that Aaron on that day should be a spotless priest; not so as to nature, but, ceremonially, care was taken that he should be clean. But we have a spotless High Priest, who needed no washing, needed no atonement for Himself; needed no incense to wave before the mercy seat to hide the angry face of justice; needed nothing to hide and shelter Him; He was all pure and clean. Adore and love Him, the spotless High Priest, who, on the day of atonement, took away guilt.

4. The atonement was made by a *solitary high priest*—alone and unassisted. "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place" (v. 17). Matthew Henry observes, that no disciple died with Christ: when He was put to death His disciples forsook Him and fled; they crucified none of His followers with Him, lest any should suppose that the disciple shared the honour of atonement. Thieves were crucified with Him because none would suspect that they could assist Him: but if a disciple had died, it might have been imagined that he had shared the atonement. God kept that holy circle of Calvary select to Christ. O glorious High Priest, Thou hast done it all alone. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." Then give all the glory unto His holy name, for alone and unassisted He made atonement for your guilt.

5. Again, it was a *laborious high priest* who did the work on that day. There were fifteen beasts which he slaughtered at different times, besides the other offices, which were all left to him. He who was ordained priest in Jeshurun, for that day toiled like a common Levite, worked as laboriously as priest could do, and far more so than on any ordinary day. Just so with our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what a labour the atonement was to Him! It was a work that all the hands of the universe could not have accomplished; yet He completed it alone. There was the bloody sweat in Gethsemane, the watching all night, then came the shame, the spitting, the cruel flagellations in Pilate's hall; then there was the

via dolorosa through Jerusalem's sad streets; then came the hanging on the cross, with the weight of His people's sins on His shoulders. Ay, it was a divine labour that our great High Priest did on that day—a labour mightier than the making of the world: it was the new making of a world, the taking of its sins upon His almighty shoulders and casting them into the depths of the sea. Jesus, though He had toiled before, yet never worked as He did on that wondrous day of atonement.

II. THE MEANS WHEREBY THIS ATONEMENT WAS MADE.

“And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering” (v. 5; see also vv. 7-10). The first is the type of the means whereby the atonement was made.

1. It answered all the pre-requisites of every other thing sacrificed; it must be a *perfect, unblemished goat of the first year*. Even so was our Lord a perfect man, in the prime and vigour of his manhood. And further, this goat was an eminent type of Christ from the fact that *it was taken of the congregation of the children of Israel* (v. 5). The public treasury furnished the goat. So Jesus Christ was, first of all, purchased by the public treasury of the Jewish people before He died. Thirty pieces of silver they had valued Him at, a goodly price; and as they had been accustomed to bring the goat, so they brought Him to be offered; not with the intention that He should be their sacrifice, but unwittingly they fulfilled this when they cried “Crucify Him!”

2. Though this goat, like the scapegoat, was brought by the people, *God's decision* was in it still. Mark, it is said, “Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.” This mention of lots is to teach that although the Jews brought Jesus Christ of their own will to die, yet, Christ had been appointed to die. Christ's death was fore-ordained, and there was not only man's hand in it, but God's. “The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” So it is true that man put Christ to death, but it was of the Lord's disposal that Jesus Christ was slaughtered, “the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.”

3. Behold the goat marked out to make the atonement, and *see it die*. The priest stabs it. Mark it in its agonies; behold it struggling; observe the blood. Ye have here your Saviour. See His Father's vengeful sword sheathed in His heart; behold His death agonies. Mark the blood from His open side. As the blood of the goat made the atonement typically, so thy dying Saviour made the great atonement for thy sins.

4. That blood was *taken within the veil*, and there sprinkled. So with Jesus's blood, “Sprinkled now with blood the throne.” The Saviour's blood has made atonement within the veil; He has taken it there himself. By this one offering atonement was made for ever.

III. We now come to the EFFECTS.

1. One of the first effects of the death of this goat was *the sanctification of the holy things which had been made unholy*. “He shall sprinkle it upon the mercy seat: and he shall make an atonement for the holy place,” etc. (v. 15). Where God dwelt should be holy, but where man comes there must be some degree of unholiness. This blood of the goat made the unholy place holy. So of this sanctuary, our praises and our prayers, there is blood on them all; our holy Sabbath services have been sprinkled with the blood of the great Jesus, and as such they will be accepted through Him. Is it not sweet to reflect that our holy things are now really holy; that though sin is mixed with them all, and we think them defiled, yet the blood has washed out every stain; and our Sanctuary service is as holy in God's sight as the service of the cherubim, and is acceptable as the psalms of the glorified; we have washed our worship in the blood of the Lamb, and it is accepted through Him.

2. The second great fact was that *their sins were taken away*. This was set forth by the scapegoat. The first goat was a type of the atonement; the second is the type of the effect of the atonement. The second goat went away, after the first was slaughtered, carrying the sins of the people on its head, and so it sets forth, as a scapegoat, how our sins are carried away into the depths of the wilderness. But mark, this goat did not sacrificially make the atonement: it is the fruit of the atonement; but the sacrifice is the means of making it. So by the death of Christ there was full, free, perfect remission for all those whose sins are laid upon His head. For on this day all sins were laid on the scapegoat's head—sins of presumption, ignorance, uncleanness, sins little and sins great, sins against the law, morality, ceremonies, sins of all kinds were taken away on that great day of atonement.

3. An interesting fact is here worth mentioning. Turn to chap. xxv. 9, and you will read: "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the *jubilee* to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." So one of the effects of the atonement was set forth to us, the scapegoat is gone and the sins are gone; and no sooner are they gone than the silver trumpet sounds.

The year of jubilee is come,
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home.

On that day sinners go free; on that day our poor mortgaged lands are liberated, and our poor estates which have been forfeited by our spiritual bankruptcy are all returned to us. So when Jesus dies, slaves win their liberty, and lost ones receive spiritual life again; when He dies, heaven, the long lost inheritance, is ours. Blessed day! Atonement and jubilee ought to go together. Have you ever had a jubilee in your hearts? If you have not, it is because you have not had a day of atonement.

4. One more effect of this great day of atonement: *entrance within the veil*. Only on one day in the year might the high priest enter within the veil, and then it must be for the great purposes of the atonement. Now, the atonement is finished, and you may enter within the veil; "Having boldness, therefore, to enter into the holiest, let us come with boldness unto the throne of the heavenly grace."

IV. WHAT IS OUR PROPER BEHAVIOUR WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

1. "This shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall *afflict your souls*" (v. 29). That is one thing that we ought to do when we remember the atonement. Sure, sinner, there is nothing that should move thee to repentance like the thought of that great sacrifice of Christ which is necessary to wash away thy guilt. "Law and terrors do but harden," but methinks, the thought that Jesus died is enough to make us melt. It is well, when we hear the name of Calvary, always to shed a tear, for there is nothing that ought to make a sinner weep like the mention of the death of Jesus. On that day "ye shall afflict your souls." And even you, Christians, when you think that your Saviour died, should afflict your souls: ye should say,

Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sov'reign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

Drops of grief ought to flow, to show our grief for what we did to pierce the Saviour. "Afflict your souls," weep for Him that died; weep for Him who was murdered by your sins.

2. Then, we are to "*do no work at all*" (v. 29). When we consider the atonement, we should rest, and "do no work at all." Rest from your works as God did from His on the great Sabbath of the world; rest from your own righteous-

ness; rest from your toilsome duties; rest in Him. "We that believe do enter into rest." No longer seek to save thyself; it is done, it is done for aye!

3. When the priest had made the atonement, after he had washed himself, he came out again in his glorious garments. When the people saw him they attended him to his house with joy, and they offered burnt offerings of praise on that day: he being thankful that his life was spared, and they being thankful that the atonement was accepted; both of them offering burnt offerings as a type that they desired now to be "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." Let us go into our houses with joy. The atonement is finished; the High Priest has laid aside the linen garments, and He stands before you with His breastplate, and His mitre, and His embroidered vest, in all His glory. How He rejoices over us, for He hath redeemed His people, and ransomed them out of the hands of His enemies. Come, let us go home with the High Priest; the atonement is accepted, and we are accepted too; the scapegoat is gone, our sins are gone with it. He hath given unto us a day of atonement, and a day of acceptance, and a year of jubilee.—C. H. Spurgeon, A.D. 1856: *Abbreviated.*

Topic: THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (Vv. 1-5).

The Mosaic ritual here reaches a climacteric point. On this annual day of national expiation every kind of sin was confessed and atoned for, which might have escaped notice before. Propitiation being offered for the whole nation, all the people received forgiveness. The day gave all other days a deeper meaning, its rites interpreted and intensified all other ceremonies. Notice—

I. THE TIME; when the day of atonement was instituted. "After the death of the two sons of Aaron." (a) *It was just after a great catastrophe.* The fire of the Lord had flashed out, revealing the divine indignation against the reckless priests. Thus the Lord showed, that, though the workers may sin and die, the work must go on; that in the midst of deserved wrath He remembers mercy. (b) *It was just at a great crisis.* The Jewish theocracy was being consolidated, and those rites and ceremonies completed that would distinguish the Jews for ever from all other nations. The basis was being laid, broad and deep, for the operations of God to bless the world. All the light of nature and revelation, of the patriarchial dispensation and the human conscience, was centred in the day of atonement. (c) *It was just before a great career.* Israel had before them a great mission, they had been miraculously delivered from Egyptian bondage, were to pass the wilderness and enter the promised land. They were to be the custodians of the Word of God, and the representatives of real religion. Through them all the nations of the earth were to be blessed; with them Jehovah would dwell; by them, make Himself known to the world; and eventually through their posterity He would come, and in very deed would dwell with man on the earth.

II. THE PERSON by whom the atonement was to be made. "The Lord said unto Moses, speak unto Aaron thy brother," etc. Any of the priests could offer the daily sacrifices; but, the annual one could be offered by the high priest alone. For so great and distinguished an office (a) *a human agent was selected.* A man—feeble, sinful, sorrowful, and dying—Moses' brother, and a brother of the whole race. What dignity God puts on man! How He selects feeble agents to accomplish mighty results, and makes men co-workers with Himself in the most solemn and sublime engagements. (b) *A human agent was directed.* Moses—to convey directions about the duties Aaron should perform in connection with his high office. The Lord never calls men to work for Him without giving them, at the same time, *ability* to do it, and *directions* how to do it. Aaron but faintly foreshadowed our great High Priest; for Christ was God, as well as man, and needed not to be instructed. He knew the Father's will completely, and did it perfectly; and knew also what was in man, and needed for man.

III. THE SPIRIT *in which the person was to officiate.* Aaron was not to come at all times unto the holy place; so, he was to possess (a) *a reticent spirit.* His sons, who were slain before the Lord, had not restrained themselves, but rushed unbidden into the holy place; Aaron was to take warning by their fate, hold himself under restraint, not be too free and familiar with sacred things, even though he might be tempted to go into the holy of holies more than once a year. (b) *A devout spirit.* The most holy place was calculated to inspire the priests with reverent feelings. That it was to be entered but once a year would impress the mind of Aaron with religious awe, as well as the fact that, on entering, he had to attire himself in special vestments and offer specified sacrifices. The holy of holies was the audience chamber of the theocratic King, the seat and throne of the divine kingdom among men. The peculiar privilege of meeting God face to face once a year demanded the deepest solemnity and profoundest reverence. (c) *A sanctified spirit.* Not only was Aaron to feel becomingly reverent, when he offered the atonement, but he was also to possess a suitable disposition in other respects. He was commanded to lay aside his splendid pontifical robes, and attire himself in the simple sacerdotal garments of an ordinary Levite. He did not appear now as the representative of the people simply, but as a sinful man seeking pardon for himself and the whole nation. The clean white linen in which he officiated would symbolise *purity*; and the complete washing before putting it on would represent *sanctity of character.*

When Christ came to our world to atone for men, He laid aside His glory and took upon Him the clean white garment of the virgin's nature; He came in a spirit that pleased God, that met all the requirements of the divine law, thereby securing a perfect and everlasting righteousness, which is unto all and upon all who believe.

IV. THE RESULTS *the officiator was to expect.* The Lord, always present in the cloud upon the mercy seat, had promised the people that on the day of atonement He would "*appear*" unto them. (a) *There would be the special manifestation of the divine presence.* Not in the cloud of incense ascending from the swinging censer in Aaron's hand, but in the supernatural cloud that did not waste away—did not change like other clouds; that was lighted up, not with rays of the natural sun, but with beams of divine brightness. The divine appearance was supernatural. (b) *There would be the mysterious manifestation of the divine presence.* The Lord would appear, but it would be in the cloud, His glory would be veiled; for no man could literally see His face and live. The Deity was to be seen "*through a glass darkly.*" He was to be apprehended, but not comprehended. (c) *There would be the gracious manifestation of the divine presence.* It was upon "*the mercy seat*" that the Lord promised to appear. Had the Deity erected a judgment seat, instead, among the people, they would all, not only have been condemned, but speedily consumed. But the day of atonement would work propitiation, and win both pardon and peace.

If the gospel is in any part of the book of Leviticus, we have it here; and, read in the light of the ninth chapter of Hebrews we see the great atonement of the Redeemer foreshadowed in the ceremonies connected with this national day of expiation. Through Christ's atonement the veil has been rent in twain; we may now draw *near* to God, and *know* Him as our Father; for Christ was "*the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person.*" Through Him we have now received *the atonement.*—F. W. B.

Topic: AARON'S SIN OFFERING FOR HIMSELF (Vv. 5-14).

The holiness communicated and imputed to the high priest at his consecration, did not free him from liability to commit sin and incur guilt. Hence, previous

to presenting an atonement for the sins of the whole nation Aaron was commanded to present a sin offering for himself and his house. He needed clean hands and a pure heart when entering into the most holy place. According to the word of the Lord so Aaron did. Observe—

I. *It was AN OBEDIENT ACT.* The bullock was to be taken and slain by the high priest's own hands, indicating ready and unquestioning acquiescence with the divine will. Such obedience is still indispensable to acceptable worship and sacrifice.

II. *It was A FRAGRANT ACT.* A censer full of burning coals, of the fire from off the altar of the Lord, was taken within the veil, and sweet incense, beaten small, put upon the fire, that its fragrance might fill the holy place.

III. *It was A REVERENT ACT.* The cloud of the incense was to cover the mercy-seat, that the offerer die not. He was not to gaze with unclouded eyes upon the place where God made Himself specially known. He was to be reminded of the infinite and unapproachable majesty, as well of the infinite meekness and mercy of Jehovah; and, that though privileged to draw near the mercy seat, he must worship with profound reverence.

IV. *It was A SUPPLIANT ACT.* The blood of the bullock was to be sprinkled upon the mercy seat, eastward, and before it, with his finger seven times. The incense would not only denote *cheerful* but also *expectant* worship, for it suggests the sweet and ascending nature of prayer. The blood sprinkled on and before the mercy seat would seem to cry for mercy; and indicate, not only *prayer*, but *propitiation*.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: AARON'S SACRIFICE COMPARED AND CONTRASTED WITH CHRIST'S.

I. ANALOGY.

(1) *Both were divinely appointed.* Aaron was chosen and anointed to be the high priest of Israel. Christ was set apart, and ordained as the High Priest of man, and "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows."

(2) *Both atoned "alone" on the great day of atonement.* No one was allowed to enter the most holy place with Aaron; and Christ "trode the winepress alone"; neither man, nor angels shared with Him the suffering and oblation of the cross.

(3) *Both were divinely accepted.* Assurances were given that the great oblation would be accepted; and, when offered, indications were vouchsafed that Jehovah was well pleased. Aaron's return from the solemn seclusion of the most holy place was proof he had pleased Jehovah; for unacceptable sacrifice would have been visited with death to the offerer. So, when Christ came from the darkness of the grave after His atonement it showed He was accepted, and Jehovah satisfied.

(4) *The blessings of both were discriminately dispensed.* The atoning blood only bedewed those who felt and confessed their guilt. So, while the atonement of Christ is sufficient for all, it is only efficient and applied where hearts are truly broken and contrite.

II. DISPARITY.

(1) *Aaron had to make the atonement once a year; showing how imperfect and temporary the efficacy of his offering was; but Christ offered His atonement once for ever, never to be repealed or repeated.*

(2) *Aaron atoned for himself, needed to obtain pardon before he could atone for the people; but Christ was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," and needed not to atone for Himself; He "did no sin, neither was any deceit found in his mouth."*

(3) *Aaron offered a sacrifice that was provided for him; but Christ offered Him-*

self; was both priest and victim; and it was the infinite dignity of His nature that gave infinite value to His sacrifice.

(4). *Aaron offered a material sacrifice, but Christ "poured out his soul unto death."* He gave His blood, *i.e.*, His life and love to reconcile the world unto God.

(5). *Aaron offered for HIMSELF and the sins of ISRAEL ONLY.* Christ did not offer for Himself but *He offered "for the sins of the whole world."*

(6). *Aaron's offering only atoned for inadvertant sins, for faults and failings of men;* for high-handed sins, and wilful transgressions there was no remedy; when those were discovered, they were met with the penalty of death. *But the sacrifice of Christ atones for ALL SIN, even the most flagrant and heinous (see Heb. x.).—F. W. B.*

Topic: RATIFICATION OF THE STATUTE OF THE ATONEMENT (Vv. 29-34).

Special significance was given to the day of atonement by directions concerning it being reiterated, by freedom from all ceremonial defilement being insisted upon. The priests burnt incense every day on the golden altar *without* the veil, but the high priest alone was permitted to enter into the holy of holies *within* the veil once a year. This statute would awaken solemn reflection, and be an abiding precaution against undue familiarity with the visible symbolic presence of Jehovah. The day of atonement was to be observed—

I. ANNUALLY. "And it shall be a statute for ever unto you." The tenth day of the seventh month (Tisri) in every year was to be observed down to the time when the great antitype would render the annual repetition of the rite unnecessary. The day gave a rounded completeness to the oblations of the year; the ceremony would be perpetually needed, for each succeeding generation would require the blessings of propitiation and forgiveness.

II. PUBLICLY. The whole nation was commanded to join in celebration with great unanimity. "Whether it be one of your own country, or of a stranger that sojourneth among you." The blood of the sacrifice was to be taken by the high priest within the veil, and sprinkled secretly upon the mercy seat, but he was to reappear among the people, pronounce publicly his benediction, and show openly that the sacrifice had been completed, the end of the ceremony secured. The service included, because it was intended for, all.

III. TRANQUILLY. "It shall be a sabbath of rest to you." No manner of work to be done by any who were in the camp. Thus disengaged from all secular toil, the people could concentrate their thoughts upon the solemn engagements of the day, with undistracted minds and undivided hearts. The exercises of the day were not sanguinary struggles with the Almighty for victory over His wrath against sin, but an exhibition of His mercy in opening a way of propitiation for all who would embrace opportunity. The tranquillity of the day of atonement was symbolic of the rest of soul Israel might enjoy under a consciousness of sin forgiven and restoration to the divine favour; suggestive of the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and which those enjoy who are made one with Him by sacrifice.

IV. CONTRITELY. "Ye shall afflict your souls." According to many Jewish writers, the children of Israel submitted to manifold deep humiliations on that day, observed it as a solemn fast. They were not commanded to afflict their bodies or rend their garments, but to present the sacrifice of broken and contrite hearts, which God will never despise. This would necessitate the suppression of worldliness, the repression of every sinful passion. When the hands of the high priest were placed upon the head of the scapegoat, and the sins of the people confessed, faith and repentance were to be exercised or the ceremony

would be a mere farce, and offensive to Him who expects worshippers to draw near in spirit and in truth.

Many objections have been alleged against the doctrine of atonement by vicarious sacrifice, against propitiation by "blood." Those difficulties dwindle away as the light of the New Testament is thrown upon them. The Epistle to the Hebrews shows that "blood" represented life, which is symbolic of (a) *priceless worth*; (b) *highest sanctity*; (c) *choicest gift*. Thus the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, because it represents and means that His *life and love* were poured out for the sake of the world's redemption.

Against the doctrine of divine mediation reason can bring *no valid objection*; for nature, by abundant analogies and illustrations, suggests its probability in the realm of grace. The sacrifice of Christ was (a) *universal*; (b) *efficacious*; (c) *voluntary*; (d) *final*. Our duty and privilege to accept the blessings typified by the day of atonement. Our only hope for time and eternity is in Christ. The music that will hush all the discords of earth swells from the new song of Moses and the Lamb.—*F. W. B.*

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER XVI.

V. 2.—*Theme*: UNDUE FAMILIARITY IN DIVINE THINGS CHECKED.

"He shall come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the *mercy seat*."

The day of atonement, the most solemn day in the Jewish Calendar. Everything about it calculated to awaken interest and solemnity. Other offerings had respect to particular persons and sins, *this* to the whole nation and all sin. Thus was prefigured the great sacrifice of Calvary, which atoned for sins of whole world. Nadab and Abihu had displayed presumption and irreverence in drawing near to the Lord, and for their wicked conduct had been slain; now, Aaron is commanded not to go into the holy of holies but once a year, lest he should also die. Notice—

I. THAT ACCESS INTO JEHOVAH'S PRESENCE WAS RESTRICTED. Every day ordinary offerings could be presented, and divine favour secured; but, lest the people should become unduly familiar, and therefore irreverent, restraint was put upon their communion, they were not allowed to enter the most holy place at all, and the high priest only on the day of atonement. Access into God's special presence could only be—

1. *In a special place*. The holy of holies; within the veil, where was the mercy seat crowned with the shekinah cloud. God is everywhere, His favour may be secured in every place; but, His full presence and glory are only beheld in heaven, within the veil.

2. *At special times*. On the day of atonement special revelations were made of divine mercy, special benedictions were bestowed upon the people. God's love was signally displayed when Christ effected the atonement upon the cross; special blessings come upon man on the days of rest that remind us of the seal of the atonement, of the resurrection of Jesus on the morning of the third day.

3. *By special persons*. Only the high priest could enter within the veil, thus teaching Israel how great and worshipful Jehovah was. There was only One in the whole universe who could offer atonement for the sins of the world, and appear in the presence of God for us, the Son of God, the man Christ Jesus.

4. *After special preparation*. Aaron had to present offerings for himself, and become cleansed from all ceremonial uncleanness, the preparation very thorough and complete. Christ, our Great High Priest, needed not to sacrifice for Himself, nor to seek purification; but He was made perfect through sufferings, and passed through the baptism of Gethsemane on the way to Calvary.

5. *For special purposes*. Aaron went in to atone and intercede, to fulfil the will and purposes of Jehovah in relation to Israel. Christ died to remove sin, to open gate of heaven to all believers, for the regeneration and redemption of humanity.

II. THAT SUCH RESTRICTION WAS MERCIFUL AND BENEFICIAL.

(a) *Impressed the people with the deep solemnity of the ceremony*.

(b) *Produced profound reverence in their hearts for the worship of Jehovah*.

(c) *Awakened expectations of special blessings*.

The veil of the Temple has been rent in twain; we may go with holy boldness to the throne of grace; yet reverence ought to be cultivated, worship is to be associated with godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 10-12.—*Theme*: SIN REMOVED.

The two goats, presented at the door of the tabernacle before the Lord, were but one offering, though one was allowed to escape into the wilderness. The goat slain would indicate

that atonement could be effected only by the shedding of blood; the scapegoat would teach that in atonement sin is not only forgiven, but *completely taken away*. The gospel and the law agree here.

I. THAT SIN TO BE FORGIVEN MUST BE CONFESSED. The people could not atone for their sins, but they must offer the sacrifice of broken and contrite hearts. As Aaron laid his hands on the goat and confessed the sins of the people he would be showing in the most emphatic way that *personal faith and repentance* were needed in order that guilt might be forgiven. So God requires still that those who seek His pardoning mercy shall feel sorry for their sins and confess them with humble, lowly, and believing hearts.

II. THAT SIN TO BE FORGIVEN MUST BE REMOVED. Not connived at or covered up, not clung to and repeated when the pardon is secured, but taken away for ever; not only the guilt, but *the love and practice of sin gone*. Christ atoned for, and removed sin. Redemption is to produce *sanctification and righteousness*. Holiness is the outcome of propitiation, the end of the law and the gospel. Christ has secured by His atonement pardon for the guilt of sin and the annihilation of its existence when His kingdom shall be complete, and He "all and in all."—*F. W. B.*

V. 13.—Theme: INTERCESSION.

The incense may be regarded as symbolic of the merits of the atonement and intercession of the high priest. Sweet ascending fragrance from live coals off altar of sacrifice suggests concerning intercession—

I. ITS BASIS. Sacrifice, mercy-seat: the cloud covered the place where God met propitiously with man.

II. ITS SANCTION. God commanded it; had it before Him. Aaron could swing the censer with holy boldness *when* and *where* divinely directed.

III. ITS EFFICACY. Saved life of the priest, "that He die not"; showed that the ceremony had been acceptably observed; gave Aaron warrant to complete the rite and bless the people. Our great High Priest presents the merits of His own sacrifice within the veil; the fragrance of His life and death avail for all who come to God by Him. Our prayers and praises may rise mingled with the merits of His intercession, and find acceptance in the holiest of all.—*F. W. B.*

V. 24.—Theme: SUPREME DEMAND FOR HOLINESS.

THE MERCY SEAT.

"Propitiation," or *mercy seat* (the same word as in Heb. ix. 5). If we would have mercy it must be through Christ; out of Christ no mercy is to be had. We read in the old law—

Aaron, having offered the appointed sacrifice, laid aside his linen garments, washed his person in pure water, arrayed himself in his gorgeous vestments, and stood before the people as their earthly representative and head. Every act in the service pointed to the holiness of God, to His disapproval of every form of sin. Sanctification from the stains of guilt, and assumption of the beautiful garments of holiness, essential to acceptable fellowship with the Lord; for—

I. DEFILEMENT CANNOT APPEAR IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. Only sin can separate between God and man, but sin, producing defilement of the soul, withdraws the sinner far from God, renders him unfit for the divine presence. When our first parents sinned they fled from the presence of the Lord; the atonement heals the breach, effects righteousness within a man, and shows how the perfect righteousness of another may be set over to his account; and this because—

II. PROVISION HAS BEEN MADE FOR THE REMOVAL OF DEFILEMENT. Aaron's ablutions of his flesh were symbolic of moral cleansing, and suggest to us how guilt may now be removed. In the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness we may have every stain removed, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. The old man, with the lusts of the flesh, must be put off, and the new man put on, transforming the worshippers into new creatures in Christ Jesus.—*F. W. B.*

V. 30.—Theme: THE ATONING SACRIFICE.

Israel was taught both helplessness and need, in that atonement had to be made for the nation by one who stood as mediator in its stead. Atonement was made in Jehovah's own way, the people were to reverently submit to the arrangements, and by repentance and faith avail themselves of the blessings presented. Observe—

I. THE ATONEMENT WAS OF A VICARIOUS CHARACTER. The innocent suffered for the guilty, the priest atoned for the people.

II. THE ATONEMENT SECURED SPIRITUAL PURITY. "That ye may be clean from all your sins."

(a) *The moral depravity of man needed it.*

(b) *The holy nature of Jehovah demanded it.*

Once, in the fulness of time, atonement has been made for the sins of the world; a way has been opened for the removal of guilt here, for admission unto perfect holiness and blessedness hereafter.—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XVI.

First: None might come into the holy of holies, where the mercy seat stood, but the high priest; signifying that we have nothing to do with mercy but through Christ our High Priest.

Secondly: The high priest might not come

near the mercy seat without blood (Lev. xvi. 14), to show that we have no right to mercy but through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ's blood.

Thirdly: The high priest might not, upon pain of death, come near the mercy seat without incense (Lev. xvi. 13), indicating that there could be no mercy from God without the incense of Christ's intercession.

So that, if we would have mercy, we must get a part in Christ.—*Watson.*

THE SCAPEGOAT.

There was in the year 1856 exhibited in the Art Union a fine picture of the scapegoat dying in the wilderness: it was represented with a burning sky above it, its feet sticking in the mire, surrounded by hundreds of skeletons, and there dying a doleful and miserable death. Now, that was just a piece of gratuitous nonsense, for there is nothing in the Scripture that warrants it in the least degree. The rabbis tell us that this goat was taken by a man into the wilderness and there tumbled down a high rock to die; but, as an excellent commentor says, if the man did push it down the rock he did more than God ever told him to do. God told him to take a goat and let it go: as to what became of it neither you nor I know anything; that is purposely left. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away our sins upon His head, just as the scapegoat, and He is gone from us—that is all: the goat was not a type in its dying, or in regard to its subsequent fate. God has only told us that it should be taken by the

hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The most correct account seems to be that of one Rabbi Jarchi, who says that they generally took the goat twelve miles out of Jerusalem, and at each mile there was a booth provided where the man who took it might refresh himself till he came to the tenth mile, when there was no more rest for him till he had seen the goat go. When he had come to the last mile he stood and looked at the goat till it was gone, and he could see it no more. Then the people's sins were all gone too. Now, what a fine type that is if you do not enquire any further! But if you will get meddling where God intended you to be in ignorance, you will get nothing by it. This scapegoat was not designed to show us the victim or the sacrifice, but simply what became of the sins. The sins of the people are confessed upon that head; the goat is going; the people lose sight of it; a fit man goes with it; the sins are going from them, and now the man has arrived at his destination; the man sees the goat in the distance skipping here and there over the mountains, glad of its liberty; it is not quite gone: a little farther, and now it is lost to sight. The man returns, and says he can no longer see it; then the people clap their hands, for their sins are all gone too. Oh! soul; canst thou see thy sins all gone? We may have to take a long journey, and carry our sins with us; but oh! how we watch and watch till they are utterly cast into the depths of the wilderness of forgetfulness, where they shall never more be found against us for ever.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

CHAPTER XVII.

The Sanctity of the Blood.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 4.—And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle. A captious mind will ask, Why is not sacrifice acceptable to God wherever offered? Surely it is in the spirit of the offerer, rather than in the circumstances of the offering, that piety consists. Wherefore, then, this insistence on mere conditions, and importance attached to the place of sacrifice? But God meets such contention of thought with absolute interdict; *He* is the authority in human life and sacred regulations; and “who art thou that repliest against God?” Even when “your ways are not my ways” (Isa. lv. 8), the LORD must be obeyed, and *His terms of dealing with sinful creatures* be observed as absolute. Yet more. There was *wisdom* in those requirements; for the Israelites had been so trained to superstitious and heathenish ideas in Egypt as to need this fencing about in order to restrain them from lapsing, all but unconsciously, into the snares of familiar

idolatrous practices. Our God is gracious in all His ways; His commandments are not grievous; but, knowing our tendencies to err, He arrests us at the first symptoms of erring, and shows us the path of safety, the plan of acceptance.

V. 5.—The sacrifices which they offer in the open field. [See Addenda to chap., *Sacrifices unto devils.*] They had learned this from the Egyptians, who peopled the scenes of nature with deities (v. 7), and Israel continually fell into this old habit, and sacrificed in groves and on high places; it was the snare of their whole after history. We may be redeemed from our spiritual bondage, and become pilgrims to Canaan, yet all the journey through the *power of old habits pursues us*, and would reassert itself upon us. Therefore the urgency with which God's Word prohibits any and every concession to "the former lusts in our ignorance." We must shun lurking perils.

V. 8.—Whatsoever men there be. It was an inflexible regulation, binding upon "the house of Israel," and also upon "*strangers that sojourn among you.*" For evil may be introduced by the society we entertain, the guests who visit us. And hospitality was to be restricted by divine laws. How ensnaring often becomes the courtesy which we think due to "strangers"! There is a tendency to relax from steadfast principles of righteousness and lofty habits of piety at such times as guests are staying in our homes. This is to lower God's standard in accommodation to men. It must not be; strangers in godly homes must conform to the godly laws which are there supreme; the children of God must never yield to unhallowed customs of their guests; hospitality must be no excuse for impiety.

V. 10.—I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood. God claimed the blood as being "the *life*" of the creature. He has ownership in all His creatures, and we should acknowledge Him therein. But this law has emphasized the value of blood as the symbol also of *atonement* (v. 11). And He would have every act, even of eating and drinking, testify of the atonement required by sinners. The table could not be spread for "strangers" (v. 12), nor could any one, Israelite or stranger, seek recreation and pleasure in "*hunting*" even, but the significance and sacredness of "the blood" must be recognised. We have reason, indeed, to regard as most suggestive and precious the blood of atonement. It leads our thoughts to Him whose death has gathered into itself all virtue for redemption. How dreadful the consequences of counting that "blood of the covenant an unholy thing!" (Heb. x. 29).

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: THE SOLEMNITY OF SACRIFICE PUBLICLY RECOGNISED (Vv. 1-10).

Jehovah's concern for solemnity and purity in apparently trifling things revealed His intense hatred for sin, His supreme love for holiness. The demand for purity extended to private individual acts no less than to public national observances. The blood of all beasts slain for food or sacrifice was to be presented at the door of the tabernacle, to check the people from wanton destruction of animal life; to remind them that all life is from the Lord; its destruction under His cognizance. This injunction would—

I. PREVENT IDOLATRY. The idolatrous practices of the Egyptians, among whom Israel had lived, would have implanted a tendency in the people to relapse into heathenish superstitions during their encampment in the wilderness. The Egyptians sacrificed to the goats, or field devils—supposed to inhabit the wilderness—to avert their wrath, and secure their favour. To ensure that no idolatrous

sacrifice should be offered in the camp the blood of every slain animal was to be presented before the Lord, as an acknowledgement that Jehovah was the sovereign King in Israel. God is the proprietor of all life, to Him all ought to be solemnly dedicated.

II. STIMULATE OBEDIENCE. Probably the Hebrews could not see the reason for so rigid a command, it was for them to render unquestioning obedience believing in the wisdom of their great Lawgiver, in the righteousness of His precepts. When enactments seemed meaningless, and ceremonies superfluous, the human was always and in every case to be subordinated to the divine will. Thus the discipline of the Jewish economy educated loyal and implicit surrender of all the faculties of heart and mind. Under the gospel dispensation we are saved by faith, which is the gift of God; yet, "faith without works is dead." Faith and love must prove their *existence* and *genuineness* by obedience to the commands of Christ.

III. PERPETUATE ALLEGIANCE. These arrangements were to continue in force through succeeding generations. In coming constantly to the door of the tabernacle, and making its services the constant theme of attention, the Israelites would be carrying out the first great injunction of the decalogue, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." Identifying the tabernacle with the domestic acts of life, with acts performed to provide material food, would tend to keep in vivid remembrance the fact that everything was to be done to the glory of God. It is still so; every meal should become a sacrament, all we do should be done devoutly and heartily as unto the Lord.

IV. AWAKEN GRATITUDE. Coming so frequently to the door of the tabernacle with the blood of animals slain for food or sacrifice would remind the Hebrews how constantly they were indebted to Jehovah for all the temporal and spiritual blessings they enjoyed. They would thus trace their mercies to the Source from which all good and perfect gifts flow to man.

V. PROMOTE HOLINESS. Such constant reference to the tabernacle would keep the Lord perpetually before the people, and act as a solemn restraint upon their conduct. In common as well as sacred meals, in the tent as well as in the tabernacle, "Holiness to the Lord" was to be inscribed above all. As the Israelites presented the blood at the door of the tabernacle they would be reminded of the sacredness of life; have suggested to their minds the necessity of complete self-surrender to Jehovah. The New Testament has no diviner injunction than this, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

VI. BEGET REVERENCE. As the people drew nigh to the door of the tabernacle they would be reminded of the august authority of God in demanding such obedience and annexing such penalties to disobedience. The justice and jealousy of God would fill every devout worshipper with profound religious awe. In all Christian worship godly fear should have its place, "for our God is a consuming fire."

VII. INDICATE RECONCILIATION. The fact that the people were permitted thus frequently to approach the tabernacle proved that Jehovah was propitious, and delighted in mercy. He had come to dwell with men because He delighted in their company and fellowship. If those who drew near to God only fulfilled the conditions He saw fit to lay down, there was no need for slavish fear or apprehensions of disapproval. That God expects us to live in His favour and fear denotes the fact that He is reconciled to us, and that the only thing that hinders our bliss here and hereafter is unwillingness to be reconciled to Him.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE (Vv. 8, 9).

1. God has a right to say where and how He will be worshipped, and He has exercised the right. He has told us the way in which He will be approached.

2. The way to life may be narrow, but there is no one, with the Word of Truth in his hand, who may not discover it and follow it.

3. Of old God gave minute and ample instruction to His people ; they were to approach Him by *sacrifice*, and that sacrifice was to be offered *on the altar* of burnt offering ; “ there shalt thou offer ” (Deut. xii. 13, 14). It mattered not in what the offering consisted, expiatory or eucharistic, the requirements as to the *place of presentation* was the same—the place which the Lord had chosen and made His habitation.

“ Even those animals which were slain for food in the wilderness were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and *there killed*, and their blood sprinkled on the altar. If an Israelite did not bring the animal which he intended for food to the door of the tabernacle, but killed it elsewhere, God declared that blood should be imputed to him ” (*Bonar on Leviticus*, chap xvii.).

A. WHAT ADMONITORY PURPOSE WAS THEREBY SERVED.

i. The people were *indellibly impressed with their need of atonement*. Every time an intelligent Israelite took away life he must have felt his own life was forfeited to God, and that by the blood of sacrifice only could it be redeemed. The very preparation of his food impressed him with the truth that life is the gift of God. But if this is Old Testament truth, it is New Testament truth also (see Jno. vi. 51 ; iii. 36).

ii. *Idolatry was the root sin of the ancient nations* ; and the head of every family, as priest in his own house, might sacrifice to whatever god he pleased. To correct this in Israel was one of the admonitory purposes of this enactment that all sacrifices should be offered at the house of God.

B. WHAT SACRED AND EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE UNDERLAYS THIS REGULATION.

i. *The tabernacle was a type of the Lord Jesus* ; and just as the Israelite could only worship God by sacrifice at His own dwelling, so we can only present our offerings to Him through Christ. “ By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually,” etc. (Heb. xiii. 15 ; Col. iii. 17).

ii. The altar of brass was the place of sacrifice (v. 6), *on which burned the inextinguishable fire*, symbol of divine holiness and endless propitiation. It stood *between* the door of the tabernacle and the *Skekinah* within the veil. An interposing sacrificial altar, the Cross of Jesus stands between the human offerer and the Holy God. Had not Christ, our Atonement, put Himself between us and what we deserved wrath had fallen upon us.

C. WHAT PRACTICAL OBLIGATION THIS RESTRICTED SCENE OF SACRIFICE ENJOINS ON US NOW.

i. The altar was the *one way of approach* ; even so, Christ is the one way to the Father (Jno. xiv. 6).

ii. *Excellencies* in the offerer or the offering *could not neutralize the necessity* for coming in this only way to God. The Jew's sacrifice might be, in itself, all that was required, but offered elsewhere than at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation it was refused. Though we be generous in disposition, upright in walk, reverent in manner, not for these, but for Christ's sake, can we be accepted.

iii. But *contact with that altar imparted sanctity*. Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy (Exod. xxix. 37). The first touch of Christ by faith delivers from guilt.

iv. *At the cross* God is to be found and enjoyed. Only at the cross will He be merciful to our unrighteousness, and only in Christ meet us in grace. [*Comp., The Gospel in Leviticus.—J. FLEMING, D.D.*].

Topic : BLOOD PROHIBITED AS FOOD (Vv. 10-12).

This divine enactment forbidding blood as food was much older than the tabernacle ordinances : was given to Noah directly after the flood (Gen. ix. 4). Reiterated now to the Israelites (chap. iii. 17 ; vii. 26) ; and the *reason* for the

statute is now assigned: "the blood is the life of the flesh, and is given to man to make an atonement for his soul." [See Addenda to chap., *Life in the Blood.*]

1. BLOOD SACREDNESS: *solemnly appointed by God for a most gracious purpose.*

Instances from the *Old Testament*:

Abel's offering of "the firstlings of his flock" (Gen. iv. 3-5), securing emphatic approbation over Cain's fruits of the ground.

Noah's altar sacrifices after the flood (Gen. viii. 20, 21).

Job's patriarchal offerings of sacrifices for propitiation and thanksgiving (Job i. 5).

Moses' entire system was atoning and sacrificial by means of blood. "No remission of sins without the shedding of blood."

The blood was to be *used for no other purpose.*

The *New Testament* testimony.

Prophecy had foretold that Messiah would "redeem Israel" (Psa. cxxx. 8), and "make an end of sins" (Dan. ix. 24); and it should be *done by blood*: "wounded for our transgressions" (Isa. liii. 5, 10).

At the Eucharistic Supper Jesus took the cup and said, "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28).

The apostles testify to the same truth: "We have redemption through his blood" (Col. i. 14, 20).

The cry of the Church on earth and in heaven tells the sacred truth, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. i. 5, v. 9).

God has "given to us the blood for the atonement of the soul."

II. BLOOD APPROPRIATION: *emphatically restricted by God for this one sacred purpose.*

It is refused for food, and its mal-appropriation protected by penalties of a very appalling nature.

1. It would *lower the dignity and defile the sanctity of blood* if allowed for common uses. All serious regard for the "atonement" virtue which lay in the blood would have left their minds had it not been thus exclusively reserved. There is no less danger of irreverent minds "counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing and doing despite to the Spirit of grace" (Heb. x. 29). In this prohibition of a familiar use of solemn things God sought to fence His people from a sin easily besetting them. God would have us touch sanctities with awe.

2. It would *perpetuate in their thoughts their need of "atonement"* to have blood thus interdicted for all other purposes. "Atonement" would confront them as their daily necessity, even at their meals. And it should be "ever before us" that we are sinners needing the atonement of Christ; it is gracious for God to make us daily see and realise our case and the urgency of our need of that "precious blood of Christ."

3. It would *lead on their hopes to the effectual and final sacrifice which Messiah would present.* The very weariness of this continual presentation of blood in sacrifice would deepen the longing for Messiah's sacrifice; which should end all provisional offerings. A tired traveller hails sight of each sign-post as it tells him *home is near.*

All the ancient types *pointed men onwards*: God would concentrate human desire on the promised Saviour.

Now He makes all teaching and experience of man *point human hope and faith backwards*, on the finished work of redemption, on the One Sacrifice of Jesus—"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sin through faith in his blood" (Rom. iii. 25).

A WARNING: *Christ must be used as an Atonement.* His "blood" must be recognised as of infinite urgency and value for sinful men. Whoso dares take

Christ as his food, refusing His sacrificial work, seeking to appropriate and enjoy Jesus as a Teacher, Example, Friend, but repudiating him as a Sin Offering, a Redeemer of the ruined soul, he falls under the menaces of these words of God, Christ's blood must be realised as a supreme necessity for man, as an "atonement for his soul."

Topic: HOLY BLOOD (Vv. 10, 11).

With stern command God sets a fence around all blood. All reverence enshrines it. An awful sanctity exempts it from the food of man.

What if offence occur, if rash hands bring it to the board for food? Then penalty frowns terribly, wrath darkens, excluding judgments follow.

But why is blood thus sanctified?

I. IS NOT BLOOD THE ALTAR'S FOOD?

Yes: there is its constant flow: it is the stream from expiring victims. It reminds of *death* as the *desert of sin*, and bears witness that *remission of sin* is prepared. Then it is linked with *expiating grace*. Thus:

II. IT POINTS TO CALVARY'S CROSS.

It shadows forth the wrath-sustaining death of God's co-equal Son. It introduces Jesus bleeding that souls may live. It is the symbol of *redemption's price*; emblem of the one atoning Lamb.

Hence till Jesus came the same forbidding voice was heard: Touch not the blood! It is devoted to God. It is most holy unto Him. It pictures out *redeeming suffering*. It is "atonement for the soul."

We live in gospel light; the wondrous death is no more veiled in mystic types. We gaze with open vision on the blood-stained cross; may approach the fountain opened in the Saviour's side; may there wash our every sin away.

Shall we, thus privileged, *fall short in reverence*? Think of the grand antitype, Christ's blood; ponder its *worth*, its *use*, its *mighty power*, its *unspeakable results*.

i. Its glorious *worth*. Enter the Garden. The Sufferer seems a lowly man. Man verily He is, or He could possess no human blood. But in that lowly body Deity dwells. He is the Mighty God. It is the "blood of God" (Acts xx. 28).

ii. Its gracious *use*. The sinner is justly sentenced to woe. Nothing but boundless substitution can release. Jesus is God, and He brings blood divinely efficacious. He is an able Saviour, for blood flows in the channel of omnipotence.

iii. Its effectual *power*. It is the ransom price of all the saved. Their number baffles number. Each was defiled with darkest stains of guilt. But now behold them. Robes white; not one stain spoils; penalties all paid. The blood has saved.

iv. Its precious *results*.

1. It is the *peace* of all believing souls. The day of awakened conscience was one of bitter woe. The thundering law denounced, the wrath of God menaced. But the Spirit led the trembler to the cross. Faith heard the assurance, "Though your sins," etc. (Isaiah i. 18); faith gazed, and found full repose.

2. It is the source of *sanctifying grace*. He must flee sin whose eye is fixed on the blood. Can he love that which gave those wounds to Christ? The sight of calvary slays the love of sin.

(a) Make it *your study*. For every thought here is food. Angels gaze and they adore. But they glean no advantage from it. To you it is salvation's price; the gate of heaven.

(b) *Love* it. It is proof of God's love, that Jesus loves you better than Himself. That mind is rock which is not melted by such flame.

(c) *Praise* it. All lips commend the charms of beauty and heroic deeds. But what so beautiful as grace leading Jesus to the cross? Where is noble act like His surrender of Himself for you?

(d) *Use it.* Every hour, when *temptation's darts* are flying round; it will "quench the fiery darts." When you *seek light* from scripture's pages; those lines are brightest in which blood is seen. Use it in *prayer*; it is the plea of pleas. In *sanctuary rites*: the service is cast out which is not hallowed with blood. Use it in *all holy work* for God: it consecrates the motive, way, end; and harvests grow from seeds sown in blood. And *when death draws near* use it: it ensures heaven, where it may be the eternal theme.—DEAN LAW.

Topic: A DIVINE PROHIBITION (Vv. 10-16).

Of all the sacrifices offered in the Tabernacle, the expiatory were the most important; that offered on the Day of Atonement the climax of all. The virtue and worth of the offering were symbolised in the blood of the victims; to it, therefore, peculiar solemnity and sanctity were attached. Noah and his descendants were forbidden to partake of flesh with the blood: thus, the way was prepared for the strict prohibition of this chapter. In putting a guard around the seat of animal life Jehovah taught the Hebrews—

I. THAT BLOOD WAS TO BE REGARDED AS A SACRED THING. Not because it was unwholesome, or unclean, or repulsive, was blood not to be partaken of, but because by it atonement was made for the sins of the soul. From the earliest history of our race God had taught that life must be given for life; and that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins. Thus blood became—

(a) *The means of expiation.*

(b) *The symbol of reconciliation.*

(c) *The type of the one great vicarious sacrifice*; by virtue of which all the Mosaic offerings were efficacious and accepted.

There was nothing so precious on earth, in the estimation of God, as life; upon it, therefore, He set His most solemn seal; to it He attached rigid regulations; and around it He erected His righteous restraint.

II. THAT, BEING A SACRED THING, BLOOD WAS NOT TO BE SHED HEEDLESSLY; or to be, under any circumstances, partaken of.

Acting under such prohibitions, Israel would be distinguished from the heathen nations, who recklessly shed blood, and who not only offered it to their gods but partook of it themselves. Jehovah, as the sovereign Lord of all life, reserved the symbol of it to Himself; it was to be in no way degraded, not left anywhere carelessly exposed, but treated with profound deference. A check was thus put upon indiscriminate slaughter, and in every creature slain for food, or sacrifice, the operator, by the divine restriction he was under, would be reminded of the absolute sovereignty of the Lord.

III. THAT DISREGARD TO THESE PROHIBITIONS WOULD INCUR THE RIGHTEOUS DISPLEASURE OF THE PROPRIETOR OF ALL LIFE.

Disobedience would not only displease God but incur excommunication from His presence. The enactments may seem severe, but they were needed under the circumstances of the wilderness, and taught lessons of circumspection and moral purity, calculated to lift the people from depraved and degrading practices. The guilt of taking life could only be atoned for by the sacrifice of life. Thus, in the fulness of time, Christ, by shedding His precious blood, by offering His divine infinite life a ransom for the souls of men, satisfied the claims of divine justice, opened the way to heaven for every man. Figuratively, and by faith, we are to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, but care must be taken that the acts are not performed unworthily, nor must the blood of the covenant be trampled under foot and counted an unholy thing. Those who persist in abusing or despising the precious blood of Christ will wonder and perish in the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed.—F. W. B.

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XVII.

SACRIFICES UNTO DEVILS (v. 7).

The word *Seirim*, here translated "devils," literally means *hairy or shaggy goats*, and then *goat-like deities*, or *demons*.

The *Egyptians*, and other nations of antiquity, worshipped goats as gods. Not only was there a celebrated temple in Thmuis, the capital of the Mendesian Nomos in Lower Egypt, dedicated to the goat image Pan, whom they called Mendes, and worshipped as an oracle and as the fertilising principle in nature, but they erected statues to him everywhere. Hence the Pan, Silenus, satyrs, fawns, and woodland gods found among the *Greeks* and *Romans*; and hence, too, the *goat-like forms of the devil*, with a tail, horns, and cloven feet, which obtain in Medieval Christianity, and which may still be seen in some European cities.

The terror in which the devil, appearing in this Pan-like form, created in those who were thought to have seen him, has given rise to our expression *panic*.—*Ellicott's Commentary*.

LIFE IN THE BLOOD.

This statement (v. 14) that "*the life of the flesh is in the blood*" had stood in the Mosaic Scriptures for 3,600 years before philosophers, scientists, and anatomists had found their way to this physical truism.

That the blood holds the vitality of the entire bodily structure is given here as a fact of *revelation*; and it lay in the Bible for nearly 4,000 years before anatomists discovered the fact by their research. Now it is acknowledged as a principle confirmed by elaborate and accurate experiments.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Incestuous Marriages: Domestic Purity.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—Speak unto them and say, I am the Lord your God. Jehovah is the sole lawgiver, His word the one law to His people: ungodly customs and usages claim no heed from them: what He wills is absolute. Relationship to, and fellowship with God are based upon implicit obedience. There must be cheerful acceptance of His authority in all the details of life. Ethics are to be decided by the word divine, for who but "the Lord" should erect the standard of rectitude for man?

V. 3.—After the doings of the land of Egypt. The Israelites dwelt amid a people of corrupt and debasing habits for so long a period that it was with difficulty they purged themselves from sympathy with familiar evils. They who enter upon the new life of grace in Christ Jesus find that their "old sins" follow close upon their steps and exert seductive influence. To "cast out the old leaven" is a necessity still, if we would enjoy the favours of our redeemed lot and our new-covenant relationships. What "Egypt" approved or "Canaan" practised may no longer regulate the godly life; but, What saith the Lord?

V. 5.—He shall live in them. Social health and spiritual blessedness will always attend obedience to God's just and benign "statutes." Violation of the laws of humanity, the laws of rectitude and purity, bring physical decrepitude and social disaster.

Here note that these words form the basis of the Old Testament doctrine of *salvation by works*. Obedience secures life—sacred and eternal life. These words are quoted by the prophet Ezekiel (xx. 11, 13, 21), and by the Apostle Paul

(Rom. x. 5 ; Gal. iii. 12.), as summarizing the teachings of Moses' dispensation—the merits of works, justification by obedience. We, in gospel times, realise life through faith ; salvation in Christ's merits, and not in our own. Yet the beneficent law stands for ever : that observance of God's law is salutary ; for "life" is most truly realised now by those whose conduct is godly, and blessed rewards are assured hereafter to those who do those things which please the Lord.

Vv. 6-18.—None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin. The prohibited cases of intercourse or marriage are : the son's own mother, and consequently, by inference, the daughter's own father (v. 7) ; a stepmother, and, by inference, a stepfather (v. 8) ; a full sister or half-sister (v. 9) ; a granddaughter (v. 10) ; a half-sister (v. 11) ; an aunt (v. 12) ; an aunt by marriage (vv. 13, 14) ; a daughter-in-law (v. 15) ; a brother's wife (v. 16) ; a step-daughter, and a step-granddaughter (v. 17) ; polygamy is interdicted (v. 18), the adding "a wife to her sister," and this during the wife's "lifetime." The inference in each case carries prohibition also to the corresponding relationship : as *e.g.*, half-brother (v. 9) ; uncle (v. 12) ; son-in-law (v. 15), and so on throughout. Every marriage alliance is to be ruled by the initiatory definition (v. 6), "Near of kin" ; and the instances specified show this near kinship to include cases of consanguinity and also equally of marriage relationship. Let this interpretation be applied to the question of the "deceased wife's sister."

The important law running through all these regulations is : Fidelity in wedlock ; scrupulous honour in the marriage relationship ; the door is to be closed on all occasion of jealousy or illicit love. Home bonds are to be cherished as all too sacred and precious for passion or caprice to trifle with. God will have family obligations loyally and vigorously maintained.

Vv. 19-23. Crimes against Purity. How shamefully vile humanity may become ! What a gross being is he whom God pities and would save ; and how low has he fallen whom Christ would lift up to sanctity and bliss !

Vv. 24-30. The land is defiled. The well-being of a land depends on the morality of its inhabitants. National decay sets in when the people become abandoned. The records of national life, from ancient times till now, emphasise the precept, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. xiv. 34).

SECTIONAL AND TOPICAL HOMILIES.

Topic : UNACCOMMODATING GODLINESS (Vv. 1-5).

"After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwell, shall ye not do ; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do," etc.

Danger lurks in example ; customs lure us from strict integrity ; easy to fall in with prevailing habits, sentiments, ideas. With "men of *this* world" who have no disposition to "come out from among them, be separate, and touch not the unclean thing," the current maxims and methods are accepted without challenge, they stream along with the flow of social life ; they yield themselves unresistingly to the popular course.

Herein lies the distinction, the distinguishing element of piety ; it refuses to allow *custom* to dominate either *conscience* or *conduct*.

1. WORLDLY SEDUCTIONS EVERYWHERE ENVIRON THE GODLY LIFE.

"After the doings of the land of Egypt, and after the doings of the land of Canaan."

1. Ensnarements are not escaped *by change of place*. He who thinks to flee the world by exchanging "Egypt" for "Canaan," will find the world still at his heels. To quit your gentle home for the cloister or the nunnery; to forsake one sphere of business for another in hope of fleeing the sanctioned malpractices of trade; to attempt to be "not of the world" by any process of mere exclusion and avoidance of places and people, is a fallacy; for evil is everywhere, in some guise or disguise; and from the snares of sin and the sanctions of impiety there is no hiding-place in "this present evil world."

2. Ensnarements are not left behind with the *advance of years*. Forty years were spent by the Israelites in the desert, between "Egypt" and "Canaan"; yet that distance of time would not liberate them from the seductions of worldliness. What they left behind them in "Egypt" they would meet again, in altered forms, in "Canaan," when at length they reached that land. No Christian ever advances beyond the reach of evil and the subtleties of the world. What he had to fight with during his Egyptian life he will have to fight with all his career through. Time does not rid the godly of this seductive peril.

3. Ensnarements are not absent from *coveted scenes of privilege*. "Canaan" was the hope and desire of every Israelite. It was a "goodly land," the inheritance of faith, the goal of pilgrimage. "Egypt" was a scene of bondage and grief, *type of a sinner's lot ere redeemed*. But "Canaan" was suggestive of liberty, prosperity, privilege, *symbol of the Christian life of sacred rest, freedom, and joy in the Lord*. Yet even within "Canaan" the snares of sin would be encountered; no release from danger, a stern necessity to "watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation"; and this in most delightful and hallowed hours, amid spiritual favours and privileges. Even the happiest Christian life is encompassed about with "the sins that so easily beset us." [See Addenda to chapter xviii., *Custom*.]

II. SANCTIONED IMPIETIES MUST BE EVERYWHERE SHUNNED BY THE GODLY LIFE.

The *Egyptians* were the most civilised and majestic people of the age; and their "doings" and "ordinances" may represent the usages of society and culture: the customs of refinement and respectability. The *Canaanites* were a rude and unpolished people, easy and free; and their "doings" and "ordinances" answer to the popular maxims and habits, the pleasures and practices current among the less educated, the customs of the masses.

1. *Wherever our place, whatever our station, godliness repudiates and renounces sin.*

Yes: and every form of sin; personal or social; secret or open; sanctioned or unpopular. The man of God loathes impurity, shuns impiety. Not fashioning himself to the standard of morals around him, he has "no fellowship with the unfaithful works of darkness, but rather reproveth them."

2. *An accommodating conscience, and an obliging disposition, must be allowed no sanction in commerce with the world. "After their doings ye shall not do!" "Neither shall ye walk in their ordinances."*

And to my mind, tho' I am a native here,

And to the manner born, it is a custom

More honoured in the breach than in the observance.—*Hamlet*.

3. Amid prevailing error it is *the business of godliness to show the right and good*. What else is the significance of our Lord's words: "Ye are the light of the world"; "ye are the salt of the earth"? It is neither convenient or advantageous to assume this attitude of resistance against the cherished "ordinances" of *social, literary, or professedly religious* life. But the Christian is among men with a divine business, to put wrong to the blush; to pronounce by his virtues against all vice, by his spirituality against all earthliness of soul, by his self-denials against all low indulgence, by his lofty worship against all dead formality or careless irreverence.

Religion is the fearless yet beautiful exhibition of the Piety, whose soul sincere,

Fears God, and knows no other fear.

III. AN INFLEXIBLE DIVINE STANDARD EVERYWHERE REGULATES THE GODLY LIFE.

1. The standard of *divine relationship*. "I am the Lord your God" (v. 2). Israel's "doings" were to take tone and character from this fact—their God was the Lord; He was *theirs*, and they *His*. Living under the influence of that solemn relationship, their conduct should harmonise with His perfections—"holy as He is holy." It is the hourly obligation of the Christian, to "walk worthy of the Lord," to "walk so as also He walked."

2. The standard of *divine teachings*. God has told us His will; in precept and commandment we have our directory of conduct. His word is to be "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path." None can err through lack of instruction. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." This is the law for Israel everywhere: "Ye shall do my judgments, and keep *mine* ordinances, to walk therein" (v. 4).

3. The standard of *divine claims*. God's ordinances were not imperious exactions; He deserved all He asked of Israel in return for His grace and love to them. Already they were, by His almighty arm, redeemed from "Egypt," and they were journeying to "Canaan, whither I bring you." They owed Him loyal obedience, loving regard, cheerful acquiescence. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?" "How much owest thou unto my Lord?" What claim on your life comes from His cross?

4. The standard of *divine promise*. "Keep my statutes, which if a man do *he shall live in them*" (v. 5). *Present* gains and comforts, *eternal* life and bliss. For "godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." [See Addenda to chap. xviii., *Religion*.]

Topic: NONCONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

"After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwell, shall ye not do" (v. 3).

Israel now under the drill and discipline of Jehovah. The pilgrimage through the wilderness to be a period of moral probation. Moral precepts now associated with positive commands. The need of this injunction seen from—

I. THE INHERENT PROPENSITY OF HUMAN NATURE TO WORLDLINESS. Indulgence of animal appetites, exclusive concern for present enjoyment, inclination to conform to prevailing customs, worldliness congenial, and therefore easy to our fallen nature; these things show the need for the call to nonconformity to the world.

II. THE EXALTED MISSION TO WHICH ISRAEL WAS CALLED. The nation was selected to be the repository of divine truth, the community among which Jehovah would specially display His goodness and glory. Israel was not to move with the evil stream of tendency making for unrighteousness, but to become singular, come out from the ungodly, and touch not the unclean thing. This, the true idea of a Church—drawn out, separated from the world. Christ taught that those who escape a worse than Egyptian bondage are to be known by the nonconformity to the world, separation from sin, "light of the world," "salt of the earth," "city set on a hill."

To become thus peculiar and distinguished for holiness would require, on the part of Israel—as it does of Christians—(a) *Deep rooted repugnance to sin*; (b) *resolute resistance of temptation*; (c) *prayer for divine assistance*; (d) *heroic struggles after self-conquest*. To achieve victory over the world is life, to sustain defeat is death. While in the world, let us seek not to be of it. While not praying to be taken out of the world, we should pray to be kept from the evil.—F. W. B.

*Topic: THE BLESSEDNESS OF OBEDIENCE.**"If a man do, he shall live in them" (v. 5).*

The legislation to which Israel was expected to submit was not an arbitrary and despotic code of laws imposed to humble them and force them into subjection; but a government of righteousness that would secure the glory of God and, at the same time, the salvation of man. Jehovah entered into covenant with His people, and engaged to fulfil all His gracious promises, if only the conditions were secured upon which their fulfilment was made to hinge. The way of life and the way of death were set before the people; they were exhorted to embrace the former, warned to escape the latter. Punishment was annexed to disobedience, reward to doing well. Thus the world was taught through the Mosaic legislation—

I. THAT LIFE IS NOT AN IDLE DREAM. Time was not to be spent in self-gratification, or wasted in wanton wickedness. Life, though brief, and like a vapour, to be turned to something real, spent in doing the will of God. Life not a period for lounging or loitering, but for *service, conflict, progress*. It is the morning, the seed time of eternity; let us improve each golden opportunity, and remember whatsoever we sow that shall we reap,

We live in thoughts, not breath; in deeds, not years;
 In feelings, not in figures on the dial:
 We must count time by heart-throbs,
 He most lives, who thinks most, feels the noblest,
 Acts the best.

II. THAT MAN IS NOT A CREATURE OF CIRCUMSTANCES. Israel was not to be the victim of the environments of Egypt, from which they had just emerged; nor of the influences that would encircle them in the land towards which they were journeying. They were not to drift but to *live*—not to be moulded by circumstances, but conquer them, and leave the stamp of their piety and loyalty wherever they went. They had the faculty of reason, the prerogative of choice, were responsible for the use they made of the privileges they enjoyed. Though Jehovah commanded, He did not coerce, the people were left free to obey or rebel. With *life* attached to obedience, surely the people would be led to (a) *resist every seduction to disobedience*; (b) *avoid every place, person, and thing that would suggest sin and incite to wrong doing*; (c) *covet above everything else the favour of the great king, who declared Himself, "I am the Lord your God."* Concerning the commandments of the gospel, in the language of its glorious Author, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."—*F. W. B.*

*Topic: GOD'S HOLY NAME.**"Neither shalt thou profane the Name of thy God" (v. 21).*

Peculiar solemnity attached to the divine name; it conveyed to the minds of the Hebrews ideas of the infinite greatness and glory of Jehovah's nature. It was hedged in by special sanctity, and gave infinite importance and power to everything to which it was attached. The sacredness of the name of the Lord, and the command to keep it holy—

I. SHOWED HOW CLOSELY HE IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH HIS PEOPLE. He was one with them, called them into close fellowship, and His honour was bound up with their character and conduct. If Israel fell into sin and shame, Jehovah's name was profaned.

II. SHOWED HOW IMMACULATELY PURE JEHOVAH IS. His name was emphatically holy and distinguished from all other names known in earth and heaven. The nature of Jehovah so transparently pure that every kind of evil, however trivial in appearance, was to be scrupulously avoided for His sake.

III. SHOWED HOW HEINOUS ALL SIN IS. Sin is odious and repulsive when we remember (a) *Its brutish and fiendish influences*; (b) *how it defiles the perpetrator, and contaminates society*; (c) *how it brings punishment here and torment hereafter*. But sin appears most abominable in its nature and awful in its consequences when regarded as *an insult to the Almighty, a profanation of His holy name*. Let us hate and forsake sin because God hates it; let us view it in the light of Gethsemane and Calvary. The love of Christ will not only conquer our selfishness, and constrain us to holy consecration, but make us hate and forsake every form of iniquity in thought, word, and deed. Life will not be the dragging out of a miserable existence, but a triumphant march to the heavenly Canaan, if we seek to become cleansed from all unrighteousness, and to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord."—*F. W. B.*

Topic : CONJUGAL CHASTITY ; OR, HOLINESS IN THE HOME (Vv. 1-30).

In this chapter *moral* precepts are associated with ceremonial observances. The home life of Israel was to be kept pure, sexual intercourse to be righteously restricted. The people among whom Jehovah would dwell must be clean in their domestic habits, pure in their social relationship. The natives of Canaan became so addicted to the vices here interdicted that by a retributive providence they became exterminated. These statutes, being moral, are of perpetual obligation; were not destroyed, but fulfilled in the ethical teaching of Christ and His Apostles. The fire of divine anger against impurity burns with greater intensity in the New Testament than in the Old. Observe—

I. THAT THE SOCIAL AFFECTIONS OF HUMAN NATURE ARE PRONE TO BECOME WICKED AND WILD.

Man was made at first with social instinct and affections; therefore, it is "not good for him to be alone." In the one help-meet made for him would be found congenial society, conjugal bliss. In the first family marriage relationships were entered upon among its own members, but as the race multiplied it was to the general advantage of families to marry out of their own circles, that the purity and unity of the race might be preserved. Bounds within which the affections might be indulged were divinely revealed, and the displeasure of the Almighty unmistakably announced against every infringement or perversion. The natural propensity to inordinate affection is confirmed (a) *By history*. Nations and individuals, mentioned in sacred and profane history, present sad proofs of the excesses into which social love will run when the reins are thrown upon the neck of lust. (b) *By observation*. In our own land and age, amid abounding religious advantages, and restraining influences of civilisation, what vice, immorality, conjugal unfaithfulness, and domestic impurity, abound! Deeds of infamy are done that the powers of darkness may blush to look upon, which the stern hand of the law and the sweet influence of the gospel are aiming to prevent and remove. (c) *By experience*. "When we would do good evil is present with us," and the most invincible enemy we have to contend with in our hearts is the *Goliath of lust*. Our animal passions are our "body of death," that often wrings from us the doleful exclamation, "O wretched man that I am." Pure Platonic love is a splendid but Utopian idea. The best of men have found it necessary to watch carefully the issues of life, to keep the body under subjection, lest passions intended to play honourably become prolific sources of corruption and misery.

II. THAT GOD HAS THEREFORE PROMULGATED SUITABLE LAWS TO RESTRICT THE SOCIAL AFFECTIONS OF HUMAN NATURE.

The springs of national purity are in the homes of the people; when the home life is corrupt the knell of a nation's greatness is tolled by the hand of doom. *Expediency, conscience, and self-love* might, in some instances, suggest restrictions in the indulgence of sensuous affection; but nothing short of such regulations as those here enjoined could effect the desirable end. And these regulations were enforced with great authority—on the ground of Jehovah's sovereignty and holiness, "I am the Lord your God." From such an authority there could be no appeal, for it respect and obedience would be demanded. Thus, all incest and unchastity were (a) *detestable to Jehovah*; (b) *an outrage upon human nature*; (c) *incompatible with man's physical, mental, and moral well-being*; (d) *in antagonism to the laws and forces of the universe*. These statutes exhibit the *wisdom and goodness* of our great Creator; that as a holy and righteous Father He cares for the best interests of His children by wedding holiness and happiness in indissoluble union. Having made man, He knew what was in him, what was best for him; being his natural and moral governor He could justly impose what prohibitions He saw fit.

III. THAT THOSE LAWS DEMAND IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE FROM ALL WHO KNOW THEM.

Whether *positive or moral*, divine precepts ought to be obeyed, for (a) *they are all sovereign*. Emanate from the King of kings, from the Source of all authority and power. God has *absolute right* to command or restrain. (b) *They are all humane*. Everything interdicted would be good for man to shun, for vice is *cruel, degrading and filthy*. (c) *They are all salutary*. The *Individual, the Family, the Church, the State*, all made healthy, pure and strong by avoidance of every species of immorality, by the practice of moral virtues. (1) *To keep these divine commandments was life*. They tended to prolong his life, make it worth living, secure the favour of the Almighty, which is better than life. (2) *To break them was death*. Those who indulged in corrupt heathenish habits would be cut off from among the people. Immorality debases, deteriorates, and entails death. Let but the divine laws regarding purity be rigidly observed, the social fabric of a nation will rest upon a rock; neglected, it will sink into the mire of corruption, into the pit of oblivion. To go on in sin that grace may abound is a *foul heresy, injurious to man, detestable to God*. The gospel gathers up the teachings of the law and the prophets, and shows that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XVIII.

CUSTOM:

"Man yields to custom, as he bows to fate,
In all things ruled—mind, body, and estate."
—CRABBE.

"Custom calls me to't:—

What custom wills, in all things should we do
it?"—*Coriolanus*, II. 3.

"New customs

Tho' they be never so ridiculous,
Nay, let them be unmanly, yet are followed."
—*Henry VIII.*, I. 3.

RELIGION:

"The body of all true religion consists, to
be true, in *obedience to the will* of the Sovereign

of the world, in a *confidence in His declarations*,
and in *imitation of His perfections*."—BURKE.

"Piety, like wisdom, consists in the dis-
covery of the rules under which we are actu-
ally placed, and in faithfully obeying them."
—FROUDE.

"Life and Religion are one, or neither is
anything. I will not say neither is going to be
anything. Religion is no way of life, no show
of life, no observances of any sort. It is
neither the food nor medicine of being. It is
life essential."—GEO. MACDONALD.

"A religious life is a struggle and not a
hymn."—MADAME DE STAEL.

CHAPTER XIX.

Practical Piety: Religion in all Relationships.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say: Nowhere else in the whole of Leviticus does this direction to address “*all the congregation*” occur; a fact which indicates the importance of this section of the decalogue. And in the precepts of this chapter, traversing the entire range of personal, social, and religious life, we have the law summarized—“the whole duty of man” in epitome.

Reverence for parents (v. 3); sabbath observance (v. 3); repudiation of idolatry (v. 4); the conditions of acceptable sacrifice (vv. 5-8); regard for the poor in harvest gleanings (vv. 9, 10); honesty in act and speech (v. 11); fidelity to oaths (v. 12); commercial integrity (v. 13); consideration for sufferers, the deaf and blind (v. 14); impartiality in justice (v. 15); avoidance of slander (v. 16); care for one's neighbour (v. 16); gentleness yet faithfulness to other's faults (v. 17); malice to be shunned (v. 18); hybrid products forbidden (v. 19); the crime of seduction (vv. 20-22); regulations concerning fruit growths (vv. 22-25); blood to be put aside as food (v. 26); and sorceries and superstitious practices avoided (v. 26); prohibition of heathenish manners and rites of mourning (vv. 27, 28); traffic in vice condemned (v. 29); regard for the sabbath and sanctuary (v. 30); necromancy denounced (v. 31); respect for the aged commanded (v. 32); courtesy to strangers (vv. 33, 34); honesty, in trade (vv. 35, 36): and all based on the grand requirement that the “*statutes and judgments*” of “the Lord” were to be the rule of their conduct in all relationships and all transactions.

The righteousness which God delights in pervades our whole life, purifies all habits, ennobles all actions, stamps character with rectitude and conduct with integrity. Religion is for daily life; not for sacred scenes and solemn hours, but for every place, every moment; sanctifying the full manhood, elevating all action, dignifying all aims. There is not a plan or project, not a fault or foible, not a vice or misdemeanour, not a social or sacred duty, but the thought of God is upon it, and He has a word in condemnation or sanction respecting it. He “with whom we have to do” overlooks nothing in our behaviour, “neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are open and naked to the eyes of Him” (Heb. iv. 13).

How scrupulously should we, therefore, speak and act; not in reluctant submission but in cheerful obedience; His “laws within our heart”; His “statutes our song”; delighting to do His will. For He who requires such minute dutifulness shows concern that none should suffer at our hands, and therefore that we should suffer nought from others. Divine benevolence regulates these requirements, and all are detailed indications of His fatherly eagerness for His children's comfort. Only in right doing is there happiness, whether in the family, in society, or in the church, hence God requires the right to be maintained in all relationships; and when His “will is done on earth” earth will be a reflection of heaven.

HOMILIES ON CHAPTER XIX.

Topic: THE RELIGION OF MORALITY.

i. Piety is not to be all *ecstatic*. Tabor heights, Beulah rhapsodies, third-heaven visions—these are not the whole of religion, nor indeed the standard of a

sacred life. There is the piety of daily work, of common things. Easier to be religious when we are on the *wing* soaring, than when we are on our *feet* struggling.

ii. Piety may not become *eclectic*. There are divine precepts and laws congenial to us, others the reverse. Yet we may not select. Directions concerning the "Sabbath and sanctuary" are easier and more pleasant to heed than those against tale-bearing, fraud in business, gleanings on the fields, etc. But "these ought ye to have done, and not to have left the others undone."

iii. Piety should not be narrowly *egotistic*. God's laws and directions call us out of ourselves, give no room for selfishness, self-assertion, individualism. Think of *others first*, care for the "poor" (v. 9), your "neighbours" (vv. 13, 17), bearing no malice (v. 18), etc. Let self give place; "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. ii. 4).

iv. Piety must never become *elastic*. There is a peril of the godly man relaxing and relapsing from strict and severe rectitude; stretching his convictions, and accommodating himself to prevailing tastes or personal fancies. Here is rigid law; to that he must bring all conduct; by this standard all his behaviour must be ruled. Avoid an easily adjusting religion, straining and shaping itself to the conveniences of the hour, and the inducements of temptation, and the impulses of the carnal heart.

I. RELIGION REQUIRES THE MORALITIES OF FAMILY LIFE.

God asks that there be "first piety at home." [See Addenda to chapter, *Morality*.]

1. *Family dutifulness among children*. "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father" (v. 3). This is the "first commandment with promise" (Ephes. vi. 2). The word "fear" enjoins *respect, felt and shown*; generous *succour* and attention to their comfort; *obedience* to their rule and desires.

2. *Purity in conjugal relationships*. Between *husband and wife* there should be strictest fidelity. Any departure from morality is severely denounced as the violation of the sanctities of family bonds (vv. 20-22). "No man should go beyond or defraud his brother" in this matter (1 Thess. iv. 4-6). And equally, with sternest reprobation, God marks the *traffic in vice* (v. 29). There have been parents sufficiently "earthly, sensual, devilish," to be capable of this foul crime against a child. Jehovah would have the home *clean and loving and hallowed*.

3. *Homage for the aged* (v. 32). Venerating the "hoary head," and caring for the "old man" gently in his drooping years, and paying him the courtesies and attentions due to one who has lived a lengthened life and is nearing eternity.

II. RELIGION REQUIRES THE MORALITIES OF NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONSHIP.

In the *narrowest circle of our neighbours*, near residents, there should be the cultivation of rectitude and goodwill. The *yet larger range of neighbourliness* is taught us in our Lord's parable of the Good Samaritan—care for anyone in need.

1. Every device of *deceitfulness* is to be abhorred (vv. 11, 12). No advantage to be taken, no trickery practised, no falsity condoned.

2. All *oppression and injustice* is to be shunned (v. 13). Straightforwardness in dealings, considerateness in payment of his dues.

3. *Slander and whispering* are denounced (v. 16). How disastrous this pernicious habit has proved! (see 1 Sam. xxii. 9, 18; Ezk. xxii. 9, etc.). Yes: and as harm may come to a neighbour from *doing nothing* equally as from our slandering him, God denounces our "standing," *i.e.*, standing still, when inactivity might let a neighbour's blood be shed, either in *accident from which we could rescue him*, or from the *stroke of justice when we could prove him innocent*.

4. *Generous concern* for a neighbour is inculcated. "Hate" to be closed from thine "heart"; then venturing to "*rebuke*" him if he be going into "sin" (v. 17); yet never allowing malice to urge thee to "*avenge or bear grudge*"; but to "*love thy neighbour as thyself*" (v. 18). In this last precept is summed up all the moral aspects, the *human side of religion*.

III. RELIGION REQUIRES THE MORALITIES OF CIVIC BENEVOLENCE.

A man of God is not less a member of society, of the state, or of the nation because he is religious. He has duties *towards his fellow-citizens* as such.

1. *The prosperous are to care for the "poor."* When the harvest is being reaped (v. 9) there is to be a generous dropping of ears for the poor : and so with the vine gathering (v. 10).

2. *The healthy are to be pitiful to the afflicted.* Instead of despising and maltreating "the deaf" and "the blind" (v. 14), all the instincts of philanthropy—which is piety humanized—prompt "the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak."

3. *Hospitality for the stranger* (vv. 33, 34). A willing asylum should be offered to any fugitive or sojourner : there might be no national exclusiveness or selfishness : the generous hand should be outstretched to any one who would find a home amid the people of God.

IV. RELIGION REQUIRES THE MORALITIES OF HONEST TRANSACTIONS.

1. *Impartiality in the administration of justice* (v. 15). If the high courts of judgment should be demoralized by no cupidity, certainly our personal conduct should be swayed by no servility. The "poor" and the "mighty" should have equal justice at our hands : not one law for the rich and another for the poor.

2. *Fairness in the transactions of trade* (vv. 35, 36). Honesty in commerce ; in forming *estimate* of articles of purchase ("in judgment"), not saying "It is nought, it is nought," etc. (Prov. xx. 14) ; as well as in *selling* and *buying* these articles.

V. RELIGION REQUIRES ALL MORALITIES TO BE JOINED WITH THE ELEVATED SANCTITIES OF WORSHIP.

Just as that religion is wrong which consists in *serving God to the neglect of man* ; so is that as surely wrong which fulfils duties to man but *neglects God's claims*. Week-day righteousness needs to be crowned by sacred solemnities on the sabbath and in the sanctuary.

1. Family life should be *hallowed with Sabbath sanctities*. "Keep my Sabbaths" (v. 3) ; for that is the day of days in which to instruct the household in sacred duties. When God is revered in the home family reverence will not wane.

2. *Delusive idolatries will be escaped by homage for Jehovah on His day.* Keeping His Sabbaths will correct the perils of "turning unto idols" (connect v. 3 thus with v. 4).

3. *Worship of the Lord should be with sacrificial offerings* (v. 5-8) ; for man is a sinner, and must come with propitiation to God's altar.

4. *God's sanctuary should be held in reverence* (v. 30) ; "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together" (Heb. x. 25) ; but coming with solemn thought and prayer.

5. *All superstition to be sedulously shunned.* Heathenish delusions (v. 26-28), and "familiar spirits" (v. 31). God should fill the spiritual life of man ; and Him only should we serve.

Topic : THE GENIUS OF THE MOSAIC LAWS.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying," etc. How repeatedly these words occur previous to enunciation of statutes to Israel, to indicate that Moses was only the amanuensis, or mouthpiece of Jehovah, and that the statutes demanded devout attention and implicit obedience. The repetition of sundry laws recorded in this chapter furnishes a fair specimen of the whole economy, embraces

principles and doctrines exhibited in the realms of *Nature, Providence, and Grace*. Looked at as a whole, they suggest the following trains of thought :—

I. THEIR STRIKING ANALOGY WITH THE CONSTITUTION OF NATURE. This accords with what might have been expected *à priori*, viz., that God would govern men by *similar* laws to those by which He governs the world, that between physical and spiritual laws there would be close correspondence. The laws here promulgated were :

(a) *Unsystematic in their arrangement*. Like the glorious diffuseness in nature, where the geologist and botanist can make their scientific arrangements from world-wide materials, scattered here and there in great profusion ; so, in the Mosaic economy, running through Leviticus—and through the whole Bible—are sundry precepts unformulated, unscientifically arranged, leaving scope for the sanctified soul of man to arrange in a course of systematic theology.

(b) *Disciplinary in their character*. Nature's laws teach man that he is a probationer ; that if he obeys, safety and happiness will ensue ; if he disobeys, danger and death will await him. The Mosaic laws taught that whatsoever a man sows that shall he reap, that retribution follows closely on the heels of the wrong-doer. Thus, the law was a schoolmaster, teaching self-restraint, and enforcing lessons upon human conduct that have been the basis of all good government in the world, the germs of all pure morality among men.

(c) *Merciful in their tendency*. The law put no embargo upon anything that would minister to the real welfare of the human race, only pernicious habits were condemned. The *weak*, the *poor*, the *aged*, *parents* and *strangers*, all were to be treated with kindness ; sympathy and aid were to be extended to them. Even towards the brute creation care and kindness were to be exercised, nothing was to be wantonly or unmercifully treated. Nature's laws exhibit kindness and mercy in their operations ; even in their sternest moods they work for good, and in the end produce happiness.

(d) *Mysterious in their operations*. Many of nature's laws perplex and puzzle the greatest minds, *seem* inconsistent with the perfect wisdom and goodness of the Infinite Author of the universe. And in the Levitical code many of the sacrificial rites and ceremonial observances *seem* strange and ambiguous. These facts teach us (i.) *how comprehensive God's laws are* ; (ii.) *how limited our knowledge is* ; (iii.) *how incumbent faith, humility, and resignation are upon all who would know the will of the Lord and do it*.

II. THEIR BENEFICENT INFLUENCE UPON THE NATIONAL LIFE OF ISRAEL. The people were in great danger of becoming corrupt, from their recollections of their surroundings in Egypt, from their inherent tendency to depart from the living God ; the system of sacrifices instituted among them, the ceremonial laws to which they were expected rigidly to submit, would keep them distinct from the surrounding nations, lift them to a high standard of national greatness. The prohibition of all *false swearing, fraud, deception, tale-bearing, selfishness, revenge*, and every kind of private and public immorality, would conduce to the safety and stability of the Hebrew Commonwealth. The Levitical laws, while they taught the people that they were *one as a nation*, also enjoined upon each *individual responsibility*. The whole nation was one great family, mutually related to each other, all amenable to Jehovah, their Father and King. The religion of the Bible exalts the life of any nation that follows its precepts. Those—where the Holy Scriptures are regarded as the foundation of national greatness—will be found in the van of the civilisation of the world.

III. THEIR SPECIAL ADAPTATION TO ELEVATE THE WHOLE NATURE OF MAN. The laws respecting uncleanness, restraining the animal passions and appetites, securing rest one day in seven, would conduce to man's physical well being. Powers of the mind would be awakened and expanded by efforts required to apprehend and obey the elaborate ritual of the tabernacle. The moral powers

would be cultivated by everything having reference to purity of heart, and the spotless supremacy of Jehovah. Thus Israel were shown that God took special interest in them, that they were not like the brutes which perish, but servants of the Lord, children of the great King, being educated for higher future employment. They had access to the *house of the Lord*; listened to the *Word of the Lord*; were led by *chosen servants of the Lord*. These facts would lead them to look onward and upward, present to them the way to pardon and peace, to fellowship with God and meekness for Heaven.

IV. THEIR ELEMENTARY FORESHADOWINGS OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE GOSPEL.

(a) *In the supremacy of their claims.* Everything was to be subordinated to the demands of Jehovah; so, Christ said, "seek ye first the kingdom of God," etc. (b) *In the object of their observances.* Holiness was the end of everything in the law; so, the gospel—in the precepts of Christ and His apostles—demands purity of heart, sets holiness as the mark of our high calling, to which is attached the prize of heaven. (c) *In the substitutionary character of their sacrifices.* The Hebrews were taught to consider their guilt transferred to the victim offered for them; through it, in some way, they were forgiven, accepted of the Lord; so, in the gospel, through the one great sin offering guilt is removed, the favour of God secured, heaven opened. The services of the tabernacle, the statutes of the Levitical law, were calculated to suggest the priceless value of the human soul, the existence for it of a life beyond, of which the present is introductory and preparatory. In the gospel all these *foreshadowings* are presented as *substantial realities*, just as indefinite twilight merges into revealing distinguishing day.—F. W. B.

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER XIX.

V. 2.—*Theme*: PERSONAL HOLINESS.

"Ye shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy."

The glorious end for which the law was given, every ceremonial precept enforced, was that the people should become holy. The holy nature, name, will and purpose of Jehovah demanded that those who would be constantly drawing near to Him in the tabernacle services should come out from the heathen world, forsake their sinful customs, and become conformed to His commandments, which were—

I. WORTHY OF JEHOVAH. Not one can be characterised as mean or unmerciful; some of them may seem beyond, but not one against, reason. The unreaped corners of the field, the gleanings of the harvest, the grapes left upon the vine for the poor and the stranger in the land, would speak of the *considerateness* of Jehovah for the physical wants of the people; and the injunctions against fraud, against hating in the heart, against impurity in social life; the command, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"; all these injunctions *pointed to the heart* as the seat of all holiness, and demanded that the *motives* by which the Hebrews would be actuated should be pure. Such a code of laws, with such humane and holy ends, reflected glory upon the supreme Lawgiver, proving that He is holy, that His nature is on the side of righteousness.

II. BENEFICIAL TO ISRAEL. Everything was to be avoided that would work deterioration in the physical constitution, for vice and impurity produce feebleness and decay. Want of reverence for parents and the aged; lack of sympathy for the suffering and infirm, bring ruin into the domestic and social circle. Greed, dishonesty, unrighteousness, work disintegration and disaster in the commercial world. The holy laws of God were a barrier against all these terrible evils by demanding personal holiness in everyone who heard these injunctions.

The disposition of the heart and mind was to be brought into conformity with the will of Jehovah, "ye shall offer at your own will." The people were not slaves, to do reluctantly the will of God, or perform services and offer sacrifices in a mechanical manner; they were the Lord's free men, and from wills in harmony with Him were to obey His statutes. Thus inward, personal holiness would be secured, Jehovah's glory displayed. The great end of the gospel is holiness of heart and life. The Christian Church is a community of "saints." The redeemed in heaven are those who are faultless, without spot in the presence of God's unsullied glory.—F. W. B.

V. 3.—*Theme*: FAMILY PIETY.

"Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my Sabbaths; I am the Lord your God."

I. *In home life the SPIRIT OF FEAR DEMANDS CULTURE.*

1. *No dutiful submission to parents* where "fear" has no place in children's hearts. This "fear" not slavish but respectful, leading to an unresisting spirit, and obedient behaviour.

2. *No proper basis of obedience* where duty is *not made forceful by the requirements of religion*. "Keep my sabbaths," making piety an integral part of home-life; thus fortifying the claims of parentage by the teachings of God's Word and His house.

II. *In children, both their HUMAN AND DIVINE RELATIONSHIPS SHOULD BE FOSTERED.*

1. This requires *piety in the parents*. How else can they show their children the ways of the Lord? Parents are to their children God's representatives and viceregents on earth.

2. This will cultivate *piety in the children*. "Keep God's Sabbath" in the home: bring upon young hearts and minds the graces of religion, the delight of "holy psalm and song," the teachings of Jesus, the bliss of adoption through Christ; and "bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

III. *IN SABBATH HABITS the family needs be devoutly educated.*

1. *Sabbath leisure* gives opportunity for parental attention to the religious interests of the family.

2. *The Sabbath solemnity* is helpful to the effort of leading children's thoughts to godly instruction.

3. *Sanctuary services and ordinances* should form themes of teaching and interest in the home on sabbath days.

Children, thus trained in early recognition of God by parents who link themselves with God in holy life and word, and who "make the Sabbath a delight" in their homes, assuredly will not depart from the ways of religion, but tread early the path after Jesus. [See Addenda to chapter, *Family Piety and Sabbath and Sanctuary*.]

V 3.—*Theme: FILIAL OBLIGATIONS.*

"*Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father.*"

Under the patriarchal dispensation the father was to be revered not only as the head of the family, but as the priest in the home circle. The tent and the altar were reared together, children were expected to honour their parents by becoming attention to social and sacred duties. In the decalogue the claims of parental authority were enforced; and, being here reiterated, the Hebrews would be taught those duties which, disregarded, bring discord and misery into the home. Natural instincts prompt filial fear, but undutifulness to parents will often spring up with other moral delinquencies to which our fallen nature is prone. Want of reverence for parenthood—

I. *EXHIBITS BASENESS OF HEART.* The affections must have become corrupt, the feelings hardened, when parents are dishonoured.

II *INCURS THE DIVINE DISPLEASURE.* It is God's will that children should reverence their parents; to disobey His will is to dishonour and displease Him.

III *ENTAILS DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES.* A special promise was made to those who would obey in these particulars, and in several parts of Scripture threatenings of punishment are annexed to disobedience. Obedience should be *reverent, affectionate, cheerful and constant*. "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."—*F. W. B.*

V. 5.—*Theme: WILLING OFFERINGS OF PEACE.*

See homilies on Chapters iii and vii. Compare specially Outline, Chapter i., v. 3, p. 14, *VOLITION IN WORSHIP.*

V. 9.—*Theme: HARVEST GLEANINGS.*

How notable are the provisions made in the Mosaic law for the poor.

The Sabbatical year (Exodus xxiii. 10, 11; compare Deut. xv. 12, 15)

The equalization of the atonement money for poor and rich, thus establishing the value of the poor as equal to the rich (Exodus xxx. 12).

The same minute directions for the poor man's offerings, showing God's equal interest in his sacrifice (Levit. ii., etc.).

And here the command that the harvest and vintage gleanings should be left (vv. 9, 10).

Notice—

I. *THAT THE HUMANE LAWS OF MODERN TIMES, respecting gleanings privileges, are all based upon this Mosaic command*

Everywhere there is a popular feeling that the farmer should allow, and was not entitled to prevent the poor from gathering what the reaper left behind.

In England the custom of gleanings had very nearly passed into a *legal right*, for there is an extra judicial dictum of Lord Hall, in which he says that those who enter a field for this purpose are not guilty of trespass; and Blackstone (iii. 12) seems to adopt his opinion. But that has since been twice tried, and decided in the negative in the Court of Common Pleas; the Court finding it to be a practice incompatible with the exclusive enjoyment of property, and productive of vagrancy and many mischievous consequences.

"It is still, however, the *custom* all over England to allow the poor to glean, at least after the harvest is carried" (Chambers).

The law of Moses directed a liberal consideration for the poor at the seasons of harvest and ingathering. The corners of the field were not to be reaped; the owner was not to glean his own fields; and a sheaf accidentally left in a field was not to be fetched away, but to be the possession of the poor gleaners.

Although the permission to glean was a favour, it required no special influence to

secure it; for Ruth secured this liberty without any recommendation (Ruth ii. 2, 3).

II. *That a benevolent helpfulness in respect of the poor is a SPECIAL OBLIGATION OF THOSE WHO ENJOY PLENTY.*

1. *With God in thought*, the rich will spare of their abundance that the poor may be fed. And this is the meaning of this sealing sentence, "I am the Lord your God" (v. 10). You owe all to Him, especially in harvest; and, therefore, share with the needy His gifts to you.

2. *Amid harvest rejoicings, gratitude should incite to generosity.* What render to God? "As ye have received, give!" Seek occasion to gladden others—those in need. Gladness which has no kindly outlet and expression makes men selfish and hard. God is lavish; let your "hands be open" also (Psa. cxlv. 16).

3. Kindness to the poor has especial assurances of divine approval. "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." "The liberal soul shall be made full." But He will requite those who neglect the poor (Psa. ix. 18; xii. 5).

III. *That this generous consideration for the poor is a TOKEN OF GOD'S REGARD FOR THE LOWLY.*

1. *Their maintenance* engaged the divine attention. For them "the corner" of the field was claimed from the reapers, and to them was assigned the right to clear the ground. It was their part in the national soil, the poor had this heritage in the land. And God enjoins on His Church now to "care for the poor." They are Christ's bequeathment to His disciples. "The poor always ye have with you."

2. *Their salvation* is prominently sought in the gospel. "To the poor the gospel is preached." And "God hath chosen the poor rich in faith." He who showed concern for their physical supply and maintenance, as emphatically manifests His desire that they be "blessed with all spiritual blessings" in Christ. Therefore—

(a) The poor should cherish a grateful and trustful hope in their God.

(b) They should value the high mercies of redemption in Christ beyond all the kindnesses of His providence. For the favours of providence only affect them temporally, but "the riches of His grace" are of eternal consequence. Therefore, "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

(c) Let none, because of lowliness or poverty, despond of God's favour. All His regulations prove that "he careth for you." Look unto Him with assurance. "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Psa. xxxiv. 6).

"His love ordained the seasons,
By Him are all things fed,
He for the sparrow careth,
He gives the poor their bread :

Every bounteous blessing
His faithful love bestows :
Then magnify His glorious Name
From Whom all goodness flows."

V. 10.—*Theme* : JEHOVAH'S RIGHTEOUS DEMANDS.

"I am the Lord your God."

Though the record of divine revelation contains no argument to prove the existence of God, it repeatedly asserts the fact; all the forces of nature, all positive and moral statutes, are traced to the sovereign will and absolute authority of Jehovah. The Hebrews were taught that their obedience was not to be governed by the customs of society, their own preferences or prejudices, but by the declared will of Him Who had sovereign claim to them and theirs. Thus they were emphatically taught—

I. *The absolute supremacy of Jehovah.* No imaginary deity was to be brought into competition, or comparison with Him. He, the Eternal, Infinite, Almighty, Creator, and Governor of all things. He had right to assert His claim to universal homage; to settle the question of the human mind about the divine existence. God has spoken, declared His existence, and character; to doubt that word, deny that existence, impeach that character, indicate derangement of the mental powers, and debasement of the heart.

II. *The absolute character of their obligations.* They belonged to the Lord, He claimed them as His own peculiar people. All idols were to be forsaken (v. 4), the worship of Israel was not to have its basis in ignorance, or origin in fear, but in the recognition of the obligations under which Jehovah's relationship and dealings had placed them. He was a jealous God, and would not share worship with another. Having received such a revelation of the divine character and claims, Israel was under obligation to render intelligent, cheerful, devout, constant, implicit, willing obedience. The divine claims to obedience are unrelaxing, declarations of our obligations unrepealed. "Ye are not your own," etc. "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God," etc. The divine supremacy of Christ places us under binding obligation to serve Him loyally; His self-sacrificing love constrains us to serve Him lovingly.—F. W. B.

V. 12.—*Theme* : FALSE SWEARING.

All nations have severely punished perjury. The Egyptians with death or mutilation; the Greeks with heavy fines and ultimate loss of all civil rights; the Romans visited it with the penalty of death.

These ancient nations all held that the gods were especially incensed by this crime, and that a divine Nemesis pursued the perjurer. [See Addenda to chapter, Perjury].

I. WHAT SWEARING BY GOD'S NAME ENTAILS.

1. *Acknowledgment of His Omniscience.* It calls Him to witness, and imprecates Him as the avenger of falsehood.

2. *Acknowledgment of His Righteousness.* He is to be the umpire and arbitrator. We call in as a witness to our fidelity only such a one as is himself faithful and true, and will act a right part. Such is God. Man's use of His name is an appeal to the certainty that He will judge aright.

II. WHAT PERJURY IN GOD'S NAME ENTAILS.

1. *An insolent affront upon God's character.* It is infamy, daring insolence, the degradation of His most holy name for unholy ends. It invokes Him to act as a witness that a lie is true. Yet He loathes falsity. It is defiant trifling, an affront to the God of truth. It "profanes his name."

2. *A certain visitation of judgment.* He "will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exod. xx. 7). Certainly, therefore, He will punish lying and profanity. Having been called in as a witness to a lie He will prove that He witnessed it. Thus to insult His love of truth and defy His power to vindicate it, and trail the purity of His character in the mire—before whom the very angels veil their faces as they adore Him—will ensure a just requital (Heb. x. 30). And "there shall in no wise enter the heavenly city any who loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. xxi. 27).

V. 13.—Theme: FAIRNESS TO HIRED LABOURERS.

I. WORK IS A JUST BASIS FOR AN EQUITABLE CLAIM.

Therefore it should be paid for, not *patronisingly*, nor *grudgingly*, but as a due. The labourer has given you his *time, strength, ability, and ingenuity*; he has a *right* to an equivalent from you, and should not be treated ignominiously, but respectfully, in asking a just return.

II. WAGES CANNOT RIGHTEOUSLY BE DEFERRED AFTER WORK IS DONE.

During a day of toil the labourer has put his capital into your service, spent his life for that period for your advantage and gain. You are to that extent his debtor; to detain his wages is to make yourself more his debtor, and delay in payment should be compensated with increment. "Short reckonings make long friends."

III. MASTERS SHOULD STUDY THE POSITION AND COMFORT OF THOSE THEY EMPLOY.

A poor man has no capital, wants prompt settlement; he lives day by day upon his hard earnings. His strength—expended by the day's toil—must be replenished for the morrow's work. To hold back the means for his nourishment is to rob him of the morrow's capital, his replenished energy. And he may have dependents in his lowly home waiting to share in the earnings of the day. Hold not back his dues "all night until the morning," lest your inconsiderateness inflict privation and embitter poverty. Comp. Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; Jer. xxxii. 13; Mal. iii. 5; James v. 4. [See Addenda to chapter, *Business and Work.*]

V. 14.—Theme: DEAF AND BLIND.

i. *As witnesses to AFFLICTIONS POSSIBLE TO ALL*, they call for our commiseration.

ii. *As sufferers of DIREFUL INFIRMITIES*, they should enlist our gentle care and generous helpfulness. "Eyes to the blind."

iii. *As pensive illustrations of MAN'S FRAILTY* they should incite our gratitude that God made us to differ.

Consider—

1. How *mean* the act of ridiculing those who carry the grief of such bodily infirmities. "But fear thy God," for He will requite.

2. How *swift* was the compassion of Jesus towards those sad children of infirmity.

3. How glad the outlook of the heavenly life for such as suffer here—if they have hope in Christ. For "there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain."

V. 15.—Theme: IMPARTIAL JUSTICE.

I. JUSTICE PERVERTED.

In every nation and age wealth and influence have effectively distorted the administration of justice.

Poverty and weakness have borne cruel and basest wrongs by reason of their very helplessness.

II. JUSTICE INFLEXIBLE.

Poverty may not be pleaded in arrest of justice. He, who being poor, acts wrongly, may not make poverty his screen; he must bear his guilt. A *sentimental pity* for the poor would thwart the ends of righteousness. Sin is sin whether committed in rags or in ermine. [Comp. Exod. xxiii. 3.]

A *servile courtesy* to the "mighty" is equally subversive of righteousness. A perfidious king is as guilty a traitor to his country as a perfidious subject. Neither station nor purse should sway the balances of justice.

As in the *sanctuary*, so at the bar, there should be "no respect of persons." [Comp. Jas. ii. 6, 19, with verses 2-4.]

III. JUSTICE CERTAIN.

God will judge those who now administer or pervert judgment. "Every man shall give account of himself to God."

The "*supreme Judge* of all the earth" will do right. He "*discerns judgment*" now, and will *dispense justice* at the last day. [See Addenda to chapter, *Justice.*]

V. 16.—Theme: TALE-BEARING AND SLANDER.

I. CHARACTER IS IN THE KEEPING, and therefore at the mercy of acquaintances.

1. Therefore *supremely value* each other's good name.

2. *Jealously defend* a worthy reputation.

3. *Scornfully silence* the *unproved rumours* of evils. [See Addenda to chapter, *Slander.*]

II. CHARACTER MAY BE RUTHLESSLY SHATTERED by sinister whisperings.

1. For *listeners are ready to entertain* and repeat slander.

"Man's inhumanity to man!"

2. *Aspersions feed on the inventiveness of malice.*

Proof not asked; nothing therefore to check or refute the slander. And "lying lips" find delight in adding to the lie as they pass it on.

3. *Reputation is easily damaged.* That which only a lifetime can build an hour may defame.

III. CHARACTER IS SO PRECIOUS THAT ITS TRADUCERS SHOULD BE LOATHED.

1. *Dread a tale bearer as a destroying pestilence.*

2. *He who wrongs another's reputation may next wrong yours.* By heeding his slanders you encourage his vile trade, and slander must find new victims!

3. *Put to shame all tale-bearers with ruthless severity.*

Note—

i. There is *enough of woe abroad* without increasing it.

ii. As we need our many evils to be *pity*ed by man and pardoned by God, let us with "charity hide sins," not expose them.

iii. There is *grace in Christ*, and energy in the Holy Spirit, by which to perfect a good life and win a good name, which even enemies of religion shall be unable to defame or destroy.

iv. The *light of the final judgment* will refute all slander, and bring every secret thing to the open gaze of the world.

V. 18.—*Theme: NEIGHBOURLY LOVE.*

"*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*"

Disinterested love is difficult to cherish, and is all too rare.

The contraries of love are everywhere rife: jealousy, rivalry, cruelty, selfishness, greed, hate.

An unloving spirit is an ungodly one; for a malicious man is as unlike God as an immoral man is; the slanderer is as cruel as the murderer.

I. ALL TRUE HUMAN LOVE HAS ITS ROOT AND ORIGIN IN GOD.

It is a ray of His glory, a breath of His Spirit. A *mother's love* is a divinely-implanted instinct. So the love of *friendship* is heaven-born. And *neighbourly love* is an inspiration from God. The fine feelings of *benevolence*, of *philanthropy*, of *charity*—all aspects of the divine spirit of love are of Him. And *Christian love*, the love of God, love for Christ, the *brotherly love* of saints, all come from our drinking in the spirit of Jesus.

II. EVERY EXPRESSION OF TRUE HUMAN LOVE HAS HEAVEN'S HIGHEST APPROVAL.

Our love *Godward* is the rising of the flame towards its Source, and is as a "sweet savour of Christ" to Him.

Our love for *man* is the outbreathing of the mind of Christ in us, the diffusion of the very spirit of Jesus.

Love for God and for man, let it prevail, and it brings *heaven's blessedness within the human breast*, and will make our bleared and distracted earth again like heaven.

III. NEIGHBOURLY LOVE HAS AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ILLUSTRATION.

1. In seeking to *turn him aside from sin* (v. 17). [See Addenda to chapter, *Neighbourliness.*]

2. In *bearing patiently any wrong* received from him (v. 18).

3. In *praying and working for his conversion* to God.

4. In *leading him to the Saviour* you have yourself found; as did the woman of Samaria her neighbours.

A. *Cultivate kindness and generosity by communion with Jesus*; and that will so fill your soul with *pity for the erring*, and *yearning for their deliverance*, as will make it easy to love your neighbour.

B. *Consider how many evils you have wrought*, which men have had to condone and God to forgive, and then you will take meekly the wrongs others have done you.

C. *Live with eternity in view*, and act towards others more as you will wish you had done in the Day of Account, and through the everlasting ages.

D. *And as opportunity goes by swiftly*, do at once what love prompts, and "do it with thy might." There are wounds waiting to be healed, hearts to be comforted, estrangements to be conciliated, errors to be forgiven.

"*Love thy neighbour.*" with like depth and thoroughness as thou lovest "thyself."

V. 19.—*Theme: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF STEWARDSHIP.*

"*Ye shall keep my statutes.*"

The Israelites knew that the land towards which they were moving was given them for their inheritance, they were to possess it, and enjoy its abundant resources. But they had to remember that it was Jehovah who had delivered them from Egypt, who would conduct them through the wilderness, and to whom they would be responsible when they would get to the end of their wanderings, and enter upon the land flowing with milk and honey. In Canaan they would be the Lord's husbandmen, and stewards, to farm the land according to His will. "Ye shall keep my statutes." They would be reminded of their stewardship in—

I. THE SACRIFICES THEY OFFERED TO THE LORD (see preceding Homilies on offerings). As the Hebrews brought the best of their substance and offered it to the Lord, they would recognise the claims of the Highest and Holiest to themselves and all they possessed.

II. IN THE PORTIONS THEY RESERVED FOR THE POOR. They were the almoners of the Lord, and at His command must see that the needy did not perish from want. Covetousness and selfishness were alike condemned; they could not do as they pleased with the grapes and corn.

III. IN THE NON-PARTICIPATION OF UNCIRCUMCISED FRUIT. The young trees were to be left for four years, the fifth year they might partake thereof. Thus a curb was put upon their appetites, and the first-fruits were to be wholly devoted to the Lord. Thus the

earth would be to Israel God's banqueting house, and the people were to partake only of those things which the divine host considered good for them and the land.

IV. IN THE PRESERVATION OF PRODUCE AND STOCK FROM ADULTERATION. There was to be no breeding between diverse kinds of cattle, no mingling of seed in sowing a field, no mixing of materials in fabrics for garments. These injunctions would not only be in harmony with Jehovah's requirement of purity in heart and life, but would keep before the minds of the people the fact that corn and cattle, food and clothing were all under His surveillance. He was the proprietor of all; to Him account must be rendered for all.

V. IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THEIR COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS. Here we see (vv. 35, 36) how thorough and searching the morality of the Mosaic law was. The Hebrews were to avoid every kind of wrong-doing. Religion was to affect their business transactions, cover the whole of their secular life. In everything they did they were to remember that the eye of the Lord was on them, they were His servants, under obligation to do all to His glory, according to the principles of righteousness.

Under the new dispensation we are stewards in the kingdom of Christ. We are responsible for the use we make of the talents entrusted to us. The gospel does not exempt us from responsibility to live righteously all our days; all the precepts of the moral law are summed up in the golden law, as enunciated by Christ, "Thou shalt love," etc. Christianity demands a holy, righteous life, as well as a sound scriptural belief.—*F. W. B.*

Theme: THE DUTY OF REPROVING OUR NEIGHBOUR. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him."

The ritual or ceremonial law was such "a yoke as neither our fathers nor we (says Peter) were able to bear." Yet many excellent moral precepts are interspersed among those laws. Several in this chapter (vv. 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16). In this injunction consider—

I. WHAT DUTY IS ENJOINED, AND WHAT SHOULD BE REBUKED.

1. *To tell anyone of his fault*, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon him." *Sin*, therefore, is the thing we are called to reprove, or rather him that commits sin. Do all we can to convince him of his fault, and lead him in the right way.

2. Love requires that we also *warn him of error* which would naturally lead to sin. If we do "not hate him in our heart," but love our neighbour, we shall generously warn him of mistakes likely to end in evil.

3. *Avoid reprovng for anything that is disputable*. A thing appears evil to me, therefore if I do it I am a sinner before God. But another is not to be judged by my conscience. So I must only reprove for what is clearly

and undeniably evil, *e.g.*, profanity, insobriety: Few who are guilty of these will defend them, when appeal is made to their conscience in the sight of God.

II. WHO THEY ARE WE ARE CALLED TO REPROVE.

1. There are *some sinners we are forbidden to rebuke*. "Cast not pearl before swine," *i.e.*, brutish men, known to be immersed in sins, having no fear of God before their eyes. Do not expose the precious pearls, *i.e.*, the sublime doctrines of the gospel, to their contempt, and yourself to injurious treatment. Yet if we saw *such* persons speak or do what they themselves know to be evil we ought to reprove them.

1. Our "neighbour" is *every child of man*, all that have souls to be saved. If we refrain because some are sinners above other men they may perish in their iniquity, but God will require their blood at our hands.

3. Else, in the lower world there might be *upbraiding of us for our neglect of duty*, through which souls, *left unwarned*, failed to "flee from the wrath to come."

4. Yet, the reprovng is *not to be done in the same degree to everyone*. First it is particularly due to our *parents*, if needing it; then to *brothers and sisters*; then to *relatives*; then to our *servants*; to our *fellow citizens*; members of the same *religious society*; watch over each other that we may not suffer sin upon our brother. To neglect this is to "hate our brother in our heart"; and "he that hateth his brother is a murderer." It imperils *our own salvation* to neglect this duty.

III. WHAT SPIRIT AND MANNER SHOULD MARK OUR PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY.

1. There is *considerable difficulty in doing it aright*. Although some are specially qualified to do it *by grace*, and skilful *by practice*. But, though difficult, we must do it; and God will aid us.

2. How most *effectual*? When done in "the spirit of *love*," of tender goodwill for our neighbour, as for one who is the son of our common Father, as for one for whom Christ died, that he might be a partaker of salvation.

3. Yet speak in the spirit of *humility*. "Not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think." Not feeling or showing the least contempt of those whom you reprove; disclaiming all self superiority; owning the good there is in him.

4. In the spirit of *meekness*. "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Anger begets anger, not holiness.

5. Put *no trust in yourself*; in your wisdom or abilities; speak in the spirit of *prayer*.

6. And as for the *outward manner*, as well as the spirit, in which it should be done; let there be a *frank outspokenness*, a plain and artless declaration of *disinterested love*. It will pierce like lightning.

7. With *great seriousness*, showing that you

are really in earnest. A ludicrous reproof makes little impression, or is taken ill.

8. Yet there are exceptions when a little *well placed raillery* will pierce deeper than solid argument. "*Ridiculum acri fortius.*" "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes."

9. *Adapt the manner to the occasion.* By few or many words as the situation determines; or by no words at all, but a look, a gesture, a sigh. Such *silent reproof* may be attended by the power of God.

10. *Watch for a fair occasion.* "A word spoken in season, how good it is." Catch the "*Mollia tempora fandi,*" the time when his mind is soft and mild.

11. But should a man be left alone *when intoxicated*? I dare not say so; for instances are forthcoming of its having had good effects. Despise not the poor drunkard. Many of them are self-condemned, but they despair. He that tells a man there is no help for him is a liar from the beginning. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

12. You that are diligent in this labour of love *be not discouraged.* You have need of patience. That "you reap, if you faint not."

When a *religious movement* is abroad it will be accompanied with a *spirit of reproofing.* All who are awakened by God's Spirit will be reprovers of outward sin.—*John Wesley, M.A., Sermons lxxv.*

Vv. 26, 31.—*Theme: WICKED SUPERSTITIONS.*

I. A PROOF OF MAN'S ARRANT ALIENATION FROM GOD.

He will create oracles, consult devils, anything rather than seek unto God.

II. A RECOGNITION OF DARK SPIRITUAL AGENCIES OPPOSED TO GOD.

Scripture does not declare these "familiar spirits" to be unreal; it acknowledges them, and records man's dealings with them: Samuel and Witch of Endor. [Compare Acts xvi. 16.]

III. A REPROBATION OF SUCH PERSONS AS CLAIM TO BE "MEDIUMS" OF INTERCOURSE WITH SPIRITS.

"Regard not them." God disowns them. A fearful case they are in who make this their trade. Heaven denounces them, and will exclude them. Spiritualists are in no favour or league with Deity.

IV. A PROHIBITION OF ALL USE OF THESE WICKED MYSTERIES.

Man is to deal alone with Deity, with God in Christ, with the Holy Spirit. They who "seek after wizards," and "use enchantments," are *offending God*, and are "defiled by them."

Prayer brings us direct to Him who is the "Father of lights"; and He giveth liberally to "any who lack wisdom and will ask of God" (James i. 17, and 5).

Jesus Christ is the one Mediator, and "ever liveth to make intercession for us." There should be no intercourse with the spirit world

but *through Jesus*, and through Him *with the Father alone.* [See Addenda to chapter, *Superstitions.*]

Vv. 3 and 30.—*Theme: SACREDNESS OF THE SABBATHS.*

"*Ye shall keep my Sabbaths.*"

All days belong to God, and should therefore be kept sacred, but He has seen fit to anoint one day in seven with the oil of gladness above its fellows. The Sabbath is a divine institution dating from Eden, is associated with the completion of the great work of creation. It was heaven's antidote to the curse of labour. Let us consider:

I. FOR WHAT PURPOSE WAS THE SABBATH ORIGINALLY INSTITUTED?

Certainly not because God *needed* it: though on He rested from His labours and sanctified it. It was made for man, that in it he might enjoy; (a) *physical repose*; (b) *mental recreation*; (c) *spiritual profit*; (d) *uninterrupted opportunities for divine worship.* Godlessness has ignored its claims, selfishness has begrudged its weekly advent and call from secular engagements. The observance of one day in seven for the repose and refreshment of body, mind and heart brings blessings to man and glory to God.

II. FOR WHAT PURPOSES THE SABBATH HAS BEEN PERPETUATED UNDER THE NEW DISPENSATION.

The change of day, the less rigid demand for its ceremonial observance, have not lessened its importance and necessity. It is still to be observed as a day of rest from secular toil, and specially devoted to the work and worship of Jehovah. The Christian Sabbath is associated with the completion of the great work of redemption. Christ set His *appropriation and approval* upon it by making special posthumous appearances to His disciples on the *first day* of the week. The conduct of the apostles gives authoritative sanction to the observance of the first day instead of the seventh; and the Holy Spirit has set His seal of approval upon the change, not only by the descent at Pentecost, but by exerting His saving power, as Christians have met for worship and extending the Redeemer's Kingdom on the *Lord's Day.*—*F. W. B.*

V. 32.—*Theme: HOMAGE FOR AGE.*

That is, *when and—*

i. *Because the aged REPRESENT MATURE WISDOM.*

ii. *Because the aged record LONG YEARS SPENT IN OUR SERVICE.*

iii. *Because the aged demonstrate GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE.*

iv. *Because the aged are SOLEMN ADMONITIONS OF LIFE'S DECAY.*

v. *Because the aged suggest NEARNESS TO ETERNITY.*

vi. *Because the aged exhibit the RICHEST FRUITS OF GRACE.*

vii. *Because the aged mark the LINE OF GOD'S COVENANT BLESSINGS for descendants.*

viii. *Because the aged REPRESENT ON EARTH HIM WHO IS THE "ANCIENT OF DAYS."*

(a) Youth should *venerate* the aged (Job xxx. i. 12; Isa. iii. 4, 5).

(b) Age should *influence and hallow* the young (2 Tim. i. 5).

[See Addenda to chapter, *Old Age*.]

V. 33.—*Theme: COURTESY TO STRANGERS.*

I. WE OURSELVES ARE STRANGERS ON THE EARTH.

"For ye were strangers in the land" (v. 34).

1. *Dependent* on other care than our own; human and divine.

2. *Transient*, soon to leave, resting but a little while on earth.

Observe: it is good to see in the case of others an analogy with our own; it will foster *sympathy*, and *helpfulness*.

II. COURTESY SHOULD ROOT ITSELF IN GENEROUS LOVE.

"Thou shalt love him as thyself."

1. Acting to the stranger as if the service were being rendered to us. This will teach us *what* to do, and *how* to show kindness.

2. Recognising that we may perchance be in the stranger's position. As thus needing kindness, let us now exhibit it.

3. Opening our hearts in *ungrudging benevolence*. "Love" gives lavishly. Courtesy should not be meagre and superficial.

III. GRATITUDE TO HEAVEN PROMPTS US TO GENEROUS KINDNESS.

"Ye were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God."

1. *Memory of God's rescue* should constrain us to care for others.

2. *God's relationship to us* requires that we illustrate His *lovingkindness*.

3. His commands to courtesy cannot be evaded with impunity.

"I was a stranger and ye took me not in: Depart!"

Vv. 35, 36.—*Theme: BUSINESS HONESTY.*

i. SOCIAL LIFE IS BASED UPON COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS.

Each bringing to the other some product of skill or toil. We cannot supply a fraction of our own wants, we must buy; and we have also, in turn, something to sell. Business is the outcome of this *reciprocal dependence*. Each can, each *must* help the other; or social and civic life would be impossible.

ii. DISHONESTY IS SUBVERSIVE OF THE VERY BASIS OF SOCIAL LIFE.

It breaks *confidence*, alienates *intercourse*; closes friendly relationships, substitutes roguery for righteousness, and wrecks all goodwill.

Pleasant to reflect—

1. *How much trade honour* there is among men.

2. How surely *trickery* brings discovery, and therefore penalty, on rogues.

3. How *honesty* is ever winning respect and reward.

iii. JUSTICE SITS OBSERVANT OF ALL DECEITFUL DEEDS.

"I am the Lord."

He sees all secreties; weighs all balances; hates all dishonesties; will requite all deceipts.

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XIX.

MORALITY.

Morality is the object of government. We want a state of things in which crime will not pay, a state of things which allows every man the largest liberty compatible with the liberty of every other man.—EMERSON, *Fortune of the Republic*.

"O let us still the secret joy partake
To follow virtue even for virtue's sake."
—POPE.

FAMILY PIETY.

Where Abraham pitched his tent, there he built an altar.

"We are really what we are relatively."
—P. HENRY.

"Children are what their mothers are."
—LANDOR.

SABBATH AND SANCTUARY.

"O day of rest! How beautiful, how fair,
How welcome to the weary and the old!
Day of the Lord! and truce to earthy care!"
—LONGFELLOW, *Christus*.

Sin keeps no Sabbaths.

Of a well spent Sabbath Philip Henry used to say: "If this be not the way to heaven, I know not what is."

POOR.

"This mournful truth is everywhere confessed,
Slow rises worth by poverty depressed."
—SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Poverty is the only load which is the heavier the more loved ones there are to assist in supporting it."—RICHTER.

CHARITY.

"They serve God well,
Who serve His creatures."
—MRS. NORTON.

"He is truly great, that is great in charity."
—THOMAS A. KEMPIS.

"To pity distress is but human; to relieve it is Godlike."—HORACE MANN.

PERJURY.

"Sworn on every slight pretence,
Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
While thousands, careless of the damning
sin,
Kiss the Book outside, who ne'er looked
within."—COWPER.

BUSINESS AND WORK.

"Business dispatched is business well done,
but business hurried is business ill done."—
BULWER LYTTON.

"All true work is sacred; in all the work,
were it but true hand labour, there is some-
thing of divineness."—CARLYLE.

"In every rank, or great or small,
'Tis industry supports us all."—GAY.

"For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep."
—KINGSLEY.

JUSTICE.

"Heaven is above all yet; there sits a Judge
That no king can corrupt."
—*Henry VIII.* iii., 1.

"He who the sword of Heaven would bear,
Should be as holy as severe;
Pattern in himself, to know
Grace to stand, and virtue go;
More nor loss to others paying
Than by self-offences weighing."
—*Measure for Measure.*

"Four things belong to a judge: to hear
courteously, to answer wisely, to consider
soberly, and to decide impartially."
—SOCRATES.

"The virtue of justice consists in modera-
tion, as regulated by wisdom."—ARISTOTLE.

SLANDER.

"One evil tongue," say the Jews, "hurts
three persons, the speaker, the hearer, and
the person spoken of."

"A lost good name is ne'er retrieved."
—GAY.

"I hate the man who builds his name
On ruins of another's fame."—GAY.

"'Twas slander filled her mouth with lying
words:
Slander, the foulest whelp of sin."
—POLLOCK.

"Low breathed talkers, minion lispers
Cutting honest throats by whispers."
—SCOTT.

"Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as
Snow, thou shalt not escape slander."
—*Hamlet.*

"Convey a libel in a frown,
And wink a reputation down."
—SWIFT.

NEIGHBOURLINESS.

"We cannot show ourselves more friendly
to any man than by an early reproof of his
error, or, as it is here expressed, *by not suf-
fering sin upon him.* 'Tis a mercy to meet
with reproof (though late) from others; but
to be soon reproved is much mercy. Every
good, the sooner it comes to us, the better it
is."—CARYL.

SUPERSTITIONS.

"Superstition is related to this life, religion
to the next; superstition is allied to fatality,
religion to virtue: it is by the vivacity of
earthly devices that we become superstitious:
it is, on the contrary, by the sacrifice of these
devices that we become religious."—MADAME
DE STAEL.

OLD AGE.

"Life's shadows are meeting Eternity's
day."—JAS. G. CLARKE.

"Age is not all decay: it is the ripening,
the swelling, of the fresh life within, that
withers and bursts the husk."—GEO. MAC-
DONALD.

"Thus fares it still in our decay,
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away,
Than what it leaves behind."
—WORDSWORTH.

CHAPTER XX.

Social and Moral Crimes.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—Again thou shalt say to the children of Israel. These denunciations of sin (already denounced in ch. xviii.) are to be repeated in the hearing of the nation. The holy God would have these social and moral commands re-

iterated that they may be emphasised upon the people's attention. When sins are pleasant to us, when inclination leads us towards them, it is scarcely in human nature to halt at the first command to desist. Evil indulgence deadens sensibility to God's voice. Although the law of heaven denounces iniquities, yet when the sins are cherished, we are very slow to "turn at God's reproof." Therefore, God speaks once more, "*Again thou shalt say.*" "For God speaketh once, yea, *twice*, yet man perceiveth it not" (Job xxxiii. 14). He knows our disposition to lurk in the enjoyment of our sins, therefore pursues us with His voice, reiterating the warning words.

Vv. 3 and 5.—I will set My face against that man. Penalty is now attached to prohibition. God emphasises His denunciations by affixing terrible punishments to corrupt deeds. For a sinner will find he has to do with something more than divine expostulations and commands; "God is *angry* with the wicked," and to crimes against righteousness He has attached doom. They who will not pause at persuasions will be overtaken with punishments.

V. 4.—If the people hide their eyes. Connivance at wrong entails joint-guiltiness in the deed, and joint-penalty. Affection and friendship often lead us to wink at errors and misdemeanours in those we love, but we thereby become "partakers of their sins" (Rev. xviii. 4), and shall "receive of their plagues."

** Compare foregoing chapters for suggestive readings on the verses following.

It is specially noticeable that the *penalty* rather than the *sin* of all misdemeanour is distinctive of this chapter. If men are not restrained from evil practices which the law has denounced as *sin*, it may be they will shun them when the law annexes to them *death!* How gracious is this act of God: making it so clear to us that transgression of the law is not only *repulsive to Him*—as being *sin*, but also *destructive to us*—as entailing death. There are minds less startled by the heinousness of wrong as God sees it than with the disastrous consequences which wrong brings on themselves. Yet God appeals even to the selfishness of sinners as a motive to shun sin.

Vv. 22-27.—A separated and sanctified people. God had separated Israel from all the nations of the earth, to *exhibit His holy character* in their purity and to *illustrate the reward of holiness* by possessing "the land flowing with milk and honey"; thus connecting purity with privilege, as cause and consequence. Being thus "separated" by God (v. 24), they were to separate themselves by distinctive conduct (v. 25), and show themselves before the less favoured nations as "holy unto the Lord" (v. 26).

If thus it behoved the Jewish people to maintain sanctity, surely we, who are chosen in Christ Jesus and called to be saints, should show forth the virtues of the Lord, and thus connect holiness of life with our enjoyment of the inheritance which is made ours by grace.

HOMILIES.

Topic: THE AXE LAID AT THE ROOT OF MORAL EVIL.

Here, commandments already given are repeated and enforced with renewed authority and power. Repetition essential to inculcation of knowledge, and fixing indelibly the truths taught. The vices into which Israel was liable to fall are odiously repulsive to the virtuous human mind; how inexpressibly abominable they must have been to the nature of the immaculately holy God! *Inward* as well as *ceremonial* purity demanded of the Hebrews, hence the constant call to *circumspection* and *consecration*. One great purpose running through the whole economy—the recovery of man from the practice, guilt, and penalty

of sin. Looking at this chapter in the light of the circumstances under which it was given we learn—

I. CONSTANT VIGILANCE ENJOINED AGAINST ENSNARING SIN. The people of Israel were not elected to divine advantages unconditionally, exempted from responsibility for the use they made of their privileges. The elaborate and searching character of the laws by which they were governed denoted (a) *that the people were very depraved by nature, and ever prone to sin*; (b) *that they were liable to yield to temptations arising from remembrances of the sinful habits of the Egyptians*; (c) *that they would be ever coming in contact with seductions to wrong-doing* (v. 22). Every vice—condemned in this chapter—is an outrage upon decency and the moral sense. Nature sets her face against all such iniquity, sets her burning stigma upon immorality. Filthy practices entail retributive consequences. As a great family of which Jehovah was the head, Israel was to guard against everything indecent and indelicate. Nothing could destroy them but inward corruption, every weapon formed against them would be futile if they kept pure in character, faithful in allegiance to the Lord. Abandonment to the abominations of the heathen would bring down the indignation of heaven, and the land whither they were going would cast them out as apostates and reprobates.

II. TREMENDOUS RETRIBUTIONS ATTACHED TO WRONG-DOING. Expressions of divine displeasure against sin (in this chapter) are very strong, punishments threatened very awful. It mattered not who the person might be upon whom the guilt of idolatry and licentiousness might be brought, the sentence was to be executed. The penalties seemed severe, but they showed (i.) *the holiness of the divine law*; (ii.) *the detestable nature of sin*; (iii.) *the retributive character of guilt*. The fate of sinful nations was to be a warning to the Hebrews. The revealed indignation of Jehovah against every kind of moral evil, was to lead the people to avoid the approach and appearance of evil. These righteous statutes calculated to awaken devout reflection, rigid self-examination.

Under grace in Jesus Christ we are elected to privileges, predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son. The world is to see the purity of the divine nature reflected in the light of our Christly lives. We are expected, by Him who has called us out of nature's darkness, to represent and thus recommend the religion which, like its Author, is pure and undefiled. Unfaithfulness to our sacred trust, unholiness in our lives, will forfeit the favour of our Master, destroy peace, produce spiritual ruin. The grand object of redemption is not mere salvation from sin's consequences, but its complete removal from the human soul and the universe of God. Nowhere as in the gospel of Christ does the fire of indignation burn so fiercely against unrighteousness and impurity, its intensest heat is centred in the mysteries and sufferings of the cross.—*F. W. B.*

Topic : CAPITAL OFFENCES.

"And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people." (v. 3).

How frequently we read in this chapter of excommunication and death. The words "he shall surely be put to death" occur again and again; flash after flash of the lightning of divine wrath, peal after peal of the thunder of divine condemnation startle us, as the various crimes are indicated towards which such judgments are directed. As we reverently gaze and listen, we learn—

I. TO WHAT DIABOLICAL DEPTHS HUMAN DEPRAVITY CAN SINK. Those who indulged in Molech worship, committed murder of the most horrible kind, and in the heathen temples immoralities of the most degrading and disgusting character

were practised. Vice was not confined to public places, but its pollutions cursed the most sacred and delicate relationships in life. Human nature can sink into a condition of degradation, compared with which the natural habits of the brute creation are pure and noble.

II. TO WHAT A FEARFUL EXTENT THE DIVINE ANGER CAN TURN. "God is Love," and it is equally clear from nature and revelation He is also holy, just, and true. He is angry with sin, and with the sinner while He loves and indulges in sin, and such announcements of anger against the guilty as this chapter contains, show God is a consuming fire against evil; He sets His face against it, visits its perpetrators with death. Only by infliction of death upon the sinner's Substitute, can the claims of divine justice be met, the divine anger against sin be averted.

III. TO WHAT FATAL ISSUES TRANSGRESSION OF THE DIVINE LAWS CONDUCTS. (a) *The loss of divine favour.* "I will set my face against that man." Nothing can be more awful than to incur the antagonism of the Almighty. (b) *The loss of congenial society.* "And will cut him off from among his people." He shall be excommunicated, an exile and outcast for ever. The loss of the favour of God, banishment from the society of the blessed, will constitute the punishment of the finally impenitent.

IV. TO WHAT SOLEMN FACTS THESE DIVINE DECLARATIONS POINT. Unquestionably: (a) *To the heinousness of sin.* That it required atonement, to be forgiven; that unforgiven it entailed death. (b) *To the righteousness of God's law.* That it denounced every kind of iniquity, could not be broken in the smallest point with impunity. (c) *To the holiness of God's name.* Jehovah's nature arrayed against even secret sins; where He dwelt, where His name is recorded, nothing impure must be allowed.

CONCLUSION. Human nature is still the same, prone to depart from the living God, liable to sink to the lowest depths of sensuality and guilt. The anger of God still burns against evil, His face set against evil-doers. Sin, if unrepented, unremoved, brings death, destruction from the presence of the Lord. As of old, so now, but *with greater freeness and fulness*, a way is open for pardon, purity, peace. In the Christian Church, proclaimed in the glad tidings of the gospel, we have—

1. *Higher examples of holiness.* Especially in our Exemplar, Christ Jesus.
2. *Loftier precepts to guide us.* Ethics of the gospel transcend those of the law.
3. *Stronger inducements to urge us.* Not fear but love, the gospel motive.
4. *Superior prospects to cheer us.* Life and immortality have been brought to light by the gospel; we may look forward to an eternity of rest in the Canaan above.—F. W. B.

Topic: CONNIVANCE AT INIQUITY.

"If the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man when he giveth his seed to Molech," etc. (v. 4).

(a) *Evils are allowed to pass unrebuked.* From *indifference*: a total unconcern about either right or wrong, piety or sin. Or from *indolence*: habitual inertia, unwillingness to take any trouble to set wrong-doers right, or rescue the debased from their degradations.

(b) *Errors are permitted to flourish unmolested.* From *contempt of truth*: caring nothing for sacred knowledge, content to let others dwell and to dwell themselves in ignorance or delusion, serving Molech or any other fallacy, as they may prefer. Or from *false charitableness*: pleading that if men but be loyal to the light they had, or faithful to convictions they cherish, as their standard of duty and code of religion, it matters little what errors thrive. But consider—

I. APPALLING INHUMANITIES WROUGHT UNDER SANCTION OF RELIGION.

"Giveth his seed unto Molech." Tender infants offered up to devouring fires. *Heathenism* has its frightful records: the car of Juggernaut; the funereal fires for widows: the abandonment of aged parents; children cast into the Ganges; etc.

Romanism has its catalogue of enormities; prison tortures; inquisitorial horrors, faggot fires of martyrdom, etc.

II. PATHETIC UNCONCERN OVER THE ENORMITIES OF SIN.

Superstition is but one of the many foul products of sin; and the barbarities wrought through superstition are but a fraction of the cruelties developed by sin.

1. There is a *common callousness* respecting the miseries rampant. The victims of sin are everywhere—in debased homes, in asylums, in prisons: poverty, brutality, villainy: yet society connives at it all, and avowed Christians lift not the burdens with one of their fingers.

2. *A willing ignorance* of existing woes prevails. The people of the land *hide their eyes*. How different this from—

The keen spirit, which
Seizes the prompt occasion, makes the thought
Start into instant action, and at once
Plans and performs, resolves and executes!

A true *grief for sin*, and *pity for the sinner*, and hatred of what degrades the soul of man and dishonours God, would stir us to generous activity.

III. DELUSIVE SELF SATISFACTION AMID PREVAILING WRONG.

It is not enough that we "hide our eyes." When men err and sin around us—

1. *Not to know* may be criminal ignorance. Each man is set in charge with the other; and we owe it to him that we inform ourselves of his condition and conduct. To pass by on the other side "is no excuse for letting the sufferer die."

2. *Not to share in his deed* does not exonerate us from his sins. If we connive at his deed we to a degree both sanction and encourage it. We ought to "rebuke the unfruitful works of darkness." But instead of that we give consent by our silence, by our ignoring them.

3. *Not to stay the inhumanities* which are being inflicted renders us chargeable with complicity. What brutality to stand inactive while children were being sacrificed to Molech! What cruelty to let the helpless suffer, the deceived perish, the sinner be lost!

IV. CONNIVANCE AT INIQUITIES SEVERELY ADJUDGED BY GOD.

"Then I will set my face against that man" (v. 8).

1. The *watchman's duty* is to raise the sound of warning. [Comp. Ezekiel xxxiii.]

2. Yet every man *who will keep his eyes open* sees the occasion and necessity for this ministry of protest, and warning, and rescue. He who sees not is guilty of "hiding his eyes from the man." *Sinners* are everywhere; *sufferers* are everywhere.

3. Judgment will be based on *our actions to others*. "Inasmuch as ye *did it* unto me"; or, "inasmuch as ye *did it not*" (Matt. xxv. 41, 45).

Note: Our urgent duty in the world is to—

(a) Rebuke sin and wrong-doing, and seek to check its ravages.

(b) Be alert amid opportunities to rescue the victims of iniquity from their woes.

(c) Our own salvation is without guarantee unless we also seek "by all means to save some." For we may inherit judgment for neglect of those "ready to perish."

(d) The very spirit of Christianity incites to eager and loving endeavour to "convert the sinner from the error of his ways, save his soul from death, and hide the multitude of his sins."

Topic: THE POSSIBILITIES OF SANCTITY (Vv. 7, 8).

Certainly "this present world" (Titus ii. 12) is not very friendly or favourable to active sanctity.

Yet it is the only world in which the human character and life can rise out of sin into active sanctity. Death closes the door on opportunity. "As the tree falleth so shall it lie."

Hence the urgency and repetition of this call of God, pleading with men to "sanctify yourselves." Is it possible to effect this? How may we thus attain to sanctity? By

I. ABSTINENCE: A STEADFAST NEGATION OF ALL TENDENCIES AND INDUCEMENTS TO IMPURITY.

There must be diligent, strenuous and minute regard to every "Thou shalt not" of God's Word. Assuredly, all sinful propensity in us must be *repressed*; all habits of evil *denied*; all indulgence of impure imaginations and desires *refused*. "Taste not, touch not, handle not." "Put off the works of darkness." "Crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." This chapter shows us how in many sinful ways and works of the flesh we must "*deny ourselves*."

In order to this negation of all unholy dispositions and practices we shall need that "grace may abound." For sinful man is "weak through the flesh." But this grace is available to us in Jesus Christ.

II. OBEDIENCE: THE DILIGENT PRACTICE OF ALL THE DUTIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF HOLINESS.

The *affirmative* side of sanctity is certainly not less important than the negative. "*Do this and thou shalt live*." "*Ye shall keep my statutes and do them*" (v. 8).

A practical piety is imperative. To secure that the "house be empty and swept" is something; iniquities cast out of the heart and life: but the good, the true, the devout, the lovely must also be brought in. To have the vine pruned and purged of all dead and fruitless boughs is necessary; but equally it is desiderated that what remains should "bring forth much fruit."

He who would "sanctify himself" must therefore cultivate pure affections, thoughts and desires; practise the duties and obligations of religion, maintain habits of rectitude and godliness: "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." He who is "watchful unto prayer," "alive unto God," quick to heed and obey His word, will not fail to attain to these affirmative qualities of sanctity.

III. ASSISTANCE: DIVINE CO-OPERATION SUSTAINING AND SUCCEEDING HUMAN EFFORTS TOWARDS SANCTITY.

"Sanctify yourselves" (v. 7), for "I am the Lord which sanctify you" (v. 8).

All His (1) *disciplinary corrections and afflictions*; (2) *Scripture teachings and promises*; (3) *spiritual communications and religious privileges*; (4) *gifts and comfort of His Holy Spirit*; (5) *purifying power of the indwelling love of Christ*, are resources of God's sanctifying, with which He seals our earnest endeavours after holiness.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 12, 13).

Topic: THE GRIEF OF UNDUTIFUL CHILDREN.

"Every one that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death," etc. (v. 9).

Family life should be a source and centre of consolation, affection and delight;

parents proving a comfort and benediction to their children, and children bringing gladness and honour to their parents.

Home is the sphere of harmony and peace.

Fearful is the conception of an accursed family: abusive children, agonized parents! It is the most dreadful perversion which earth contains; love changed into cursing; duty into rebellion; purity into foulness; rest into hateful strife and war. It is clearly true of such children that they are—

I. A GRIEF TO THEIR PARENTS. Bitter the very thought—"he hath *curst* his father or his mother."

1. The grief of *blighted hopes*. What tender and bright expectations were centred in the little one as parents first looked upon their cherished child!

They are idols of hearts and of households,

They are angels of God in disguise.—*Chas. M. Dickenson.*

Terrible the grief when all glad hopes are desolated, and what promised joy and love only yields a "curse."

2. The grief of *outraged affection*. No stint of fond thought and care is lavished on the child.

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is

To have a thankless child.—*Shakespeare.*

3. The grief of *frustrated prayer*. Over the children's heads parents have bowed in supplication to God, and pleadings full of heartfelt fervour have been poured. Yet is this what results—a "curse" in the home, a terror to the parental heart!

4. The grief of *ruined happiness*. How can joy ever again dwell in the parent's soul against whom his own child has risen with "cursings"? It must darken all the light of earthly gladness; and it must deeply shade even the anticipations of heaven—for no place in "the Father's house" will be found for a child who brought a curse into his earthly home.

II. A GRIEF TO THEMSELVES. Dreadful the penalties which are threatened—"he shall surely be put to death; his *blood is upon him.*"

1. *God's anger* will be upon him. A wicked son or daughter knows this awful fact before the judgment day arrives; God loathes the child who curses a parent. It is a terrible thought to carry through life.

2. *Human contempt* will be won. For all respect and trust is forfeited by a child whose behaviour is so cruel; society shuns the unnatural creature where his or her conduct is known.

3. *Conscience* can never have peace. Children who have outraged home and left the parental roof have been harrowed through years with the woes of an "accusing conscience," and traversed lands and seas to weep over a parent's grave.

4. A *retributive justice* pursues them. Their own crime re-appears against them: for the very quality in themselves that rendered them capable of "cursing" their parents will betray itself in all relationships in after years, making them *hateful* and *hated*, and lay them open to the consequences. And this vile quality will *re-appear in their offspring*, and win back from their own children's lips like "curses" which they once uttered themselves. God follows such cruelty to parents with relentless rigour. Penalty overtakes this crime in this life and doom awaits it hereafter.

III. A GRIEF TO GOD.

1. *Undutifulness to parents* is inseparable from *impiety towards God*. Such sons and daughters are always godless, alien from all sacred duties and claims: "a smoke in God's nostrils," a dishonour to His laws.

2. *Outrage to parental relationship* and feeling is felt by God as an *outrage on His own Fatherly love and grace*. He feels a parent's grief; and wrong done to so tender a relationship is a wound to the divine Father's heart.

3. In His "*beloved Son*" and "*holy child Jesus*" God shows the fulness of

affection which should mark a child: and it degrades the very name of a "son" and a "child," the relationship which Jesus assumed, when it brings a curse upon human parents instead of love.

4. *Home is God's earthly type of heaven*: and a home filled with "cursing" is a peculiar abomination to Him who designed our earthly homes to be a fore-taste here of "the Father's house" above. It is a most offensive and sorrowful evidence of the ravages which sin—"the abominable thing God hates"—has wrought in His world. How different this delineation of a "cursing" child from the *poetic* and the *divine* idea of a child.

A sweet new blossom of humanity

Fresh fallen from God's own home to flower on earth.

Let parents, with diligent prayer and training, bring their children to Jesus; who alone can cast out the evil spirit from a child. [Compare Matt. xviii. 14, 21.]

Topic: THE HEBREW CHURCH.

"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine" (v. 26).

The Hebrews were not only a *royal nation*, with Jehovah for their King, but they constituted an *established church*, not by the edict of any earthly monarch or political assembly, but by a royal proclamation from the Court of Heaven. That the people might know and ever remember the high dignity thus conferred upon them, Moses was directed to proclaim the fact in association with the promulgation of laws demanding holiness of heart and life. The Hebrew Church was composed of persons—

I. SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD, "have severed you from other people." They had been delivered from Egypt, protected, preserved, guided, exceeding great and precious promises vouchsafed to them, beside laws for the regulation of their lives. They had been severed from other nations that they might become distinguished for purity, and be the means of blessing the world.

II. SEPARATED FROM SIN. "Ye shall be holy unto me." All the rites and ceremonies imposed upon them were to this end. The divine image, lost by the fall, was to be restored. Holiness, to which the people were called, would not only produce happiness in the restored, but yield pleasure to Jehovah, whose name is holy.

III. CONSECRATED TO THE LORD. "Holy unto me." The people were not to live for self-gratification, they were not their own or at their own disposal, their wills were to fall in with the divine will, they were to be holy for Jehovah's sake. All the services of the tabernacle, every sacrifice offered, would remind the worshippers of their duty to surrender themselves unreservedly to Him who had set them apart for His own service and glory.

IV. OWNED OF THE LORD. "That ye should be mine." Herein we see the *condescension* of Jehovah, to take into His possession, as His intimate friends, such unworthy creatures as the Hebrews were. We see His infinite *goodness* in providing for their wants and educating them for a sublime position among the nations of the earth. He owned them, they were therefore to feel themselves at His disposal, and to act implicitly under His direction.

The same things hold good in the Christian Church. Believers are to come out from the ungodly, be distinct from the world. They are to be separate from sin and touch not the unclean thing. They are to be consecrated to the Lord, their motto "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." They are not their own, but bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ. Let us warn others against sin; watch over our own hearts; pray for help to resist every temptation; avoid everything likely to contaminate; avail ourselves of every aid to growth in grace and progress in holiness.—F. W. B.

Topic: GODLY DISTINCTIVENESS (Vv. 22-26).

It manifests itself in, and results from:—

I. A UNIQUE CODE OF MORAL AND SACRED LAWS.

“Ye shall keep all *My* statutes and all *My* judgments, and do them” (v. 22). No other people had a *standard of morals*, or a *directory of religious regulations* comparable to these.

II. A STUDIOUS AVOIDANCE OF THE CUSTOMS OF UNGODLINESS.

“Ye shall *not walk* in the manners of the nations,” etc. (v. 23). Conformity to the world was prohibited. However sanctioned, or desirable, or seemingly harmless, the customs of the ungodly were to be shunned.

III. A CAUTIOUS SELECTION OF SOCIAL ENJOYMENTS AND INDULGENCES.

“Ye shall put difference between clean and unclean,” etc. (v. 25). Palate not to be gratified, tables not to be spread with promiscuous viands. God’s wish and word were to rule them in every *enjoyment*; and *self restraint* was to mark them in every gratification.

IV. A HERITAGE OF SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AS GOD’S PEOPLE.

“Ye shall inherit their land, a land that floweth with milk and honey,” etc (v. 24).

Sinners *lose* earthly felicities, as the penalty of their impiety: “therefore I abhorred them” (v. 23).

The godly *possess* rich heritage of good as the mark of God’s favour: “I will give it unto you to possess” (v. 24).

V. A SEAL OF DIVINE SANCTITY RESTING UPON THEM.

They show themselves to be—

1. *Divinely “separated”* (v. 24) from other people. Their history and career attest God’s dealing with them as with no other people.

2. *Divinely sanctified*. (“Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people” (v. 26). For the very “beauty of the Lord” rests upon the character and conduct of those He redeems.

Note:

(a) God *claims* His people: they are not their own; may not follow their own desires and delights, He is their law, they must surrender to Him. “That ye should *be mine*” (v. 26). It is a blessed fact to *belong to God*: but it carries its obligations.

(b) *Privileges are conditioned upon fidelity* (v. 22). The inheritance would be forfeited if obedience were withheld. All God’s covenant promises to us wait upon our loyalty to Him. “Ye are my friends *if ye do*,” etc.



CHAPTER XXI.

Purity of the Priesthood.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 1.—Speak unto the priests . . . there shall none be defiled. If it was important that the whole community of Israel should maintain ceremonial and moral purity, it was certainly not less urgent for “the priests, the sons of Aaron.” Through the past ten chapters the laws have had reference to the “congregation of Israel”; the divine word now comes to His ministers within the sanctuary.

These priests were types of *Christ*, and also of the sacred character and sacerdotal ministry of *believers*: their life and service should therefore be inviolate, consecrated, worthy. For Christ was "holy, harmless, separate from sinners"; and His followers, who maintain His witness in the world, are also to be "holy and unblamable." This sanctity is now to be typically enacted and foreshadowed in the conduct and ministry of these priests.

Vv. 2-4.—Contact with the dead entailed ceremonial uncleanness, and excluded from the sanctuary for a week. For a priest to be disqualified for his functions was both derogatory to his sacred office and a most serious interruption of his duties. In Christians who are "priests unto God" there may be neither disqualification for, nor interruption of, their ministry. Human claims, and even domestic sorrows, may not intercept the Christian life: that must be maintained unchecked whatever befalls us. Happy we that the succour of our Lord so supports us in our griefs and bereavements that, instead of checking us in our Christian life and work, they qualify us for even a richer ministry for Christ among men.

Vv. 5, 6.—Marks of mourning prohibited. For they who live near God's presence, in the joy of His favour, both have such consolations in Him as to temper grief over bereavement, and also realise the world beyond the dark veil which has fallen between them and their loved ones. Therefore, by moderating their distress, they would teach us how to "sorrow not as others who have no hope." Even in our darkest sorrow let us never "profane the name" which we are to glorify; remembering our high office and privileged standing in Christ.

Vv. 7-9.—They shall not take a wife, etc. Called himself to a hallowed life, the priest must preserve himself from faulty alliances. Marriage should be regulated by fitness. There should be moral harmony, spiritual sympathy, between man and wife; emphatically so with all who profess Christ. "Be ye not unequally yoked together."

Vv. 10-15.—He that is the high priest, etc. The ordinary priests were allowed, when death fell on their nearest relationships, to relax their ministries awhile; but not so the *high* priest; for his absence from the tabernacle would arrest all the services of the sanctuary, while his contact with the dead would disqualify him to intercede for the people before God.

Vv. 16-24.—He that hath any blemish, let him not approach, etc. Physical malformations necessarily unfit men for solemn public offices when they attract observation, disturb reverence, and induce ridicule. Yet, although bodily infirmities still offer a natural obstruction to any one so afflicted entering the ministry of the Christian Church, they create no barrier to usefulness in many other honourable and hallowed paths of service. Within a deformed body may dwell a beautiful soul; and "our feeble frame" need not disqualify us for gracious and loving work in the Church of our Lord.

Our Divine Priest was in all points perfect—"without blemish"; in Him God was "well pleased." No defect mars His acceptance as He appears in the presence of God for us, and no infirmity in person or character exposes Him to the depreciation of men. He is the faultless Jesus; "fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely."

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: SACRED RELATIONSHIP DEMANDS SANCTITY OF LIFE.

"*Speak unto the priests, There shall none be defiled; the bread of their God do they offer, therefore they shall be holy*" (vv. 1-6).

If there is one fact more notably emphasised than another in this address to *priests*, it is this: their

I. ABSOLUTE AND INDESTRUCTIBLE RELATIONSHIP.

Every son of Aaron was a "priest." Of this union with Aaron it is observable that—

1. It results from a *living relationship*. By *birth* he was connected with Aaron, a lineal descendant of God's High Priest. And no truth is more a truism than that every Christian is by birth-relationship connected with Christ—born a priest, entering the spiritual life a "priest"; not rising later into the priestly relationship, but the moment he is quickened and becomes a believing and a living soul, he is a "priest unto God."

By no process of *spiritual development* or *self-culture* or *studied effort* does the convert to Christ become a "priest"; he is that by virtue of his living relationship to the High Priest: for as all the sons of Aaron were priests, so are all the sons of God through their connection with Christ. The spiritual priesthood is the appendage of our spiritual birth.

2. The relationship is *inalienable and indestructible*. *Conduct* is not the basis of relationship with Christ, but *life*. A son of Aaron might be defiled "for the dead" (v. 2), yet he did not thereby cease to be related to Aaron. If we were only priests to God as our conduct was faultless, who could stand? If none remained a "priest" longer than he preserved himself undefiled, who would hold the spiritual office an hour? We are all unclean; defile ourselves continuously with "the dead," the guilty and contaminating things of earth. But "our *life is hid* with Christ in God"; and by virtue of that life-union we remain priests.

3. *Imperfections of nature and character* do not sever relationship. A "blemish," deformity of body, proved a disqualification for ministry, but did not destroy association with Aaron. Yes; there is *exclusion from high and honoured services* in consequence of *irremediable defect and fault*; and Christians with incurable weakness of disposition, worldliness of sympathy, infirmities of character, vacillation of purpose, are thereby set aside from honour in the Church and highest ministries for their Lord; yet still the relationship to Christ continues, for it is a birth-relationship, based upon a life-union with Jesus. Christ is our life, and Christ liveth in us. We are therefore in priestly connection with our High Priest.

But though relationship is absolute and indestructible—

II. PRIVILEGE IS DEPENDENT AND CONDITIONAL.

1. *Defilement is a disqualification* for near fellowship and highest enjoyment of the priestly relationship. Contact with "the dead" was forbidden; it excluded the priest from the service of God until cleansed anew and so reinstated. All contamination works disqualification, therefore "touch not, taste not, handle not." A priestly life should be pure. "Keep thyself pure." "The temple of God is holy." "Unspotted from the world." Spiritual favours are surrendered by the Christian the moment he *defiles himself*. Privilege is connected with purity. Near fellowship is for the uncorrupt.

2. *Defect is a disqualification* for highest service for our Lord. [See v. 17, etc.]

Physical deformities even now form a natural barrier to the loftiest offices in the Church of Christ. Not unfitting the sufferer for many lowlier and less public ministries; for sacred grace is not dependent upon physical "form and comeliness." [See Addenda to chapter, *Bodily Infirmities*.]

Defects of character, of mental and moral constitution, also exclude from loftiest stations and services in the Christian kingdom. They are a barrier to such positions in the church as require noblest qualities of character: for eminence gives influence; and he who moves in the public gaze must be free from such weaknesses of will, or principle, or conduct as would lay him open to inconstancy. For such infirmities would bring reproach and derision on the Holy Name we bear. There is; ill for the weak and defective a relationship with Christ "for

by grace are they saved"; but not eminent position in the Church. "He shall eat the bread of his God: only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish" (vv. 22, 23). [See Addenda to chapter, *Bodily Appearance.*]

A. *All imperfections in Christians work deprivation.*

(a) Loss of *near fellowship* with God in most privileged secrecy.

(b) Forfeiture of rights to *most sacred services* in connection with the sanctuary.

(c) Refusal to *represent God* before men, exclusion from the solemnities of priestly station and function.

B. *Sacred relationship* summons to *exalted sanctity.*

(a) Avoidance of all forms and causes of *contamination* (v. 1).

(b) *Customs*, harmless in themselves and not forbidden to others, must be shunned by priestly souls (vv. 5, 6).

(c) *Indulgences and relationships* are to be regulated by our exalted standing in Christ (v. 9).

(d) Life must be lived under the *power of the "anointing"* (v. 10), the "unction of the Holy Ghost."

Only thus can we maintain ourselves as "a spiritual priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet: ii. 5).

Topic: DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD TO BE KEPT INVIOLETE.

That the Levitical priests were to be blameless and without blemish, indicated the peculiar sanctity of their office, and the holiness of Jehovah, whom they represented among the people. The priesthood filled the gap between the Holy God and sinful man, the offerings they presented were the means of securing fellowship at the mercy seat, pardon for national and individual offences. The directions to the priests respecting their qualifications for the service of the tabernacle were repeated before all Israel, that the people might recognise the office and dignity of those who were solemnly set apart for sacerdotal duties. The directions of this chapter taught the priests—

I. THAT THEIR PATRIOTISM WAS TO BE SUBORDINATE TO THEIR SUPERIOR SAINTLY OFFICE.

When tidings came to the priests of any great sorrow in the camp of Israel, of suffering and death, human sympathy would prompt them to repair to the spot and condole with the bereaved; but they were not to "be defiled for the dead among the people," nor surround the dead body, nor join in the necessary obsequies. However patriotic they might feel, and however much they loved their people, the claims of their office were paramount; they had a great work to do, and could not turn aside to mourn for the dead, except under very special circumstances. Even natural, as well as national sympathy, was to be suppressed, nothing was to be done that would in any way produce ceremonial defilement. These restrictions would be for the best interests of the people, as in obeying them the priests would not neglect those duties in the discharge of which priceless blessings came from the presence of Jehovah to Israel.

II. THAT THEIR PERSONAL APPEARANCE WAS TO BE APPROPRIATE TO THEIR SAINTLY OFFICE.

Directions had already been given respecting vestments. [See former Homilies.] The heathen priests mutilated their bodies, disfigured their features, corrupted themselves with vicious habits; the Hebrew hierarchy were not to practise such things, their bodies, as well as their hearts and minds, were to be kept whole and pure. The exquisite beauty of nature—even in the minutest things—betokens the tastefulness of the great Creator. He loves the lovely, is pleased

with the beautiful; the unsightly and discordant are incompatible with His glorious purposes. It is a serious deficiency in the equipment for efficient service, when the physical powers are feeble, or bodily appearance repellent. Those who minister before the Lord should be free as possible from all physical defects, mental obliquity, and moral obtuseness, as well as from flagrant wrongdoing.

III. THAT THEIR CONJUGAL ALLIANCES WERE TO BE HELPFUL TO THEIR SAINTLY OFFICE.

Celibacy was not imposed upon the Levitical priesthood, but full and strict directions given respecting their matrimonial engagements. They were not to marry persons beneath them in dignity, or concerning whose chastity and morality anything detrimental was known to exist. For a priest to take an unsuitable wife would be to beset his office with insuperable embarrassments. By her evil communications his good manners would become corrupted. None of his family could act wrongly without some unfavourable reflection being cast on him. This ancient statute has a good lesson for modern days. Too much care cannot be exercised by Christian ministers in the selection of help-meets for life; the Church, as well as the home, will be affected for good or evil as the wife and children of the minister of Christ conduct themselves before the people.

As the ages progress, less importance will become attached to physical blemishes than to mental and moral defects. The moral standard of human measurement is divine, and will outlive all other authority. The cause of Christ has often been injured by its members yoking themselves with unsuitable partners; the purity and harmony of home life will conduce to the light and sweetness of church life. The house of the Lord must not be profaned, nor must anything be allowed in the character of its ministers calculated to bring its hallowed services into ridicule or contempt. Ministers of Christ should aim to *live above suspicion*, to be renowned for moral worth, and to be highly esteemed for their work's sake. Such favour will be the foreshadowing of the approval of the Master in the last great day.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: QUALIFICATIONS FOR SACRED SERVICE (V. 4).

Impossible that the ceremonial rites and observances, and the elevated spiritual teachings of Leviticus could have been the inventions of the Hebrew priesthood. Uninspired men, under the sway of human passions, would have exempted themselves from disabilities and censures and accorded to themselves unrestrained license. Though the priests were peculiarly honoured, and permitted to draw very near to God, yet they needed to observe ceremonies for spiritual cleansing, they needed to resist temptation, and seek forgiveness the same as ordinary men. The priests—

I. WERE TO BE FREE FROM PHYSICAL BLEMISHES arising from heredity, accident, acquired malformation, or self infliction.

II. WERE TO AVOID ALL CONTACT WITH EVIL. Everything that would disqualify and detain them from regular consecrated service was to be sedulously avoided, (a) all contact with things ceremonially unclean, (b) all unholy alliances of a social and domestic character. These directions needed because the priests—

III. WERE THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LORD. Bore His name, reflected His nature, executed His laws. He sanctified them, set them specially apart to be mediators between Himself and the people.

IV. WERE THE EXEMPLARS OF THE PEOPLE. Possessing special advantages, called to exalted duties, exempted largely from other cares, the priests were

expected to exhibit conspicuous holiness, to become examples to Israel in all things that Jehovah commanded.

V. WERE TYPES OF THE PREDICTED REDEEMER. Especially was this so in the character and work of the high priest. His sanctification from all defilement, admission into the holiest of all, presentation of the blood of the atonement before the mercy seat, etc. ; all were, as the epistle to the Hebrews teaches, typical of Him, who, in the fulness of time, would abrogate the ceremonial law of Moses.

In the Christian dispensation, where all believers are kings and priests unto God, spiritual qualifications are required for sacred services. Freedom from physical blemishes, avoidance of contact with contaminating influences, non-association with uncongenial companions, will tend to make service for Christ more efficient. Every physical, mental, and spiritual excellence is necessary to adequate equipment for the work of the ministry, for the service of the sanctuary. Persons may serve God well who are encumbered with various deficiencies, but they can serve Him better who have few, and could serve Him best if they had none. We are called upon to be imitators of God ; the world is to see the divine likeness in us. The Christliness of our lives is to be so unmistakable that men shall recognise us as having been with Jesus. "Let your light so shine before men," etc.—*P. W. B.*

Topic : ALLOWANCE FOR HUMAN INFIRMITY (V. 22, 23).

How fitting that the priests who were commanded to offer spotless sacrifices should themselves be without blemish. How fitting, also, that in a dispensation of types and symbols, respect should be paid to the purity and perfection of the body, which would naturally be regarded as mirroring the faculties of the soul. Impressions are produced upon the spirit through the corporeal senses, the physical *appearance* of the priests, therefore, as they officiated at the altar, would affect the tone of devotion in the people. It would be for the best interests of Israel, as well as for the glory of Jehovah, that no one with a blemish should take a prominent part in the services of the tabernacle. Consider—

I. THE INFLUENCE PHYSICAL INFIRMITIES OUGHT TO EXERT UPON THE HUMAN MIND.

They are often the cause of perplexity and pain, but they should always awaken (*a*) *Reflection* : Why has disease invaded the frame so "fearfully and wonderfully made" ? Why such malformations and imperfections in organs originally designed for healthy and harmonious activities ? The reply comes—Sin has done all the mischief, caused all the infirmities and pains. (*b*) *Caution* : If the body is so liable to disease and injury, to many disqualifications for fulfilling the great purposes of life, surely we cannot exercise too much vigilance in warding off injury, in avoiding everything that would vitiate the springs of life, or disorganize and corrupt our mortal bodies. (*c*) *Humility* : A body so liable to disease, weakness and death, so marred by sin, is not a thing to be proud of and idolised ; at the best it is a body of death, only the feeble vehicle of the soul, a muddy vestment of decay grossly shutting us in from hearing and seeing the beauties and harmonies of heaven. The soul demands our *first, constant, supreme* care.

II. THE HINDRANCE PHYSICAL INFIRMITIES MAY PROVE IN THE DISCHARGE OF SACRED DUTIES.

Though the heart might be consecrated, the mind willing, priests with physical defects were not allowed to perform sacerdotal duties. Though no such exclusive regulations are in force in the Christian Church, yet physical defects are serious drawbacks to efficient service ; *lameness, deafness, blindness, loss of*

voice, general debility, deformity, deficiency, etc., not only make the appearance unattractive, but unfit the person for complete and thorough service. There may be full and acceptable service rendered in the heart, the frail body disqualified for outward service may become a temple of the Holy Ghost. "They also serve who wait."

III. THE CONSIDERATION PHYSICAL INFIRMITIES RECEIVE FROM HIM WHO MADE US.

Those disqualified to serve at the altar of the tabernacle were not wholly excommunicated, were not expelled from the precincts of the sanctuary or deprived of its sacred provisions. They might eat the priest's portions of the meat, sin, and trespass offerings, of the shewbread, and other priestly perquisites; probably also they aided the officiating priests by performing various subordinate duties. Thus we get an illustration of the fact mentioned by David, "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." Evidently (a) *physical features are not an invariable index to the qualities of the soul*. Some of the most lovely looking creatures are the most ferocious and deadly—tigers, serpents, etc. Some of the most uncomely frames have been known to possess exquisite minds, sublime spirits; and *vice versa*. (b) *Physical features are not the signs by which Jehovah judges of real worth*. Priests with blemishes were simply excluded from prominent conspicuous duties, the Lord owned them, "He shall eat the bread of his God." The Lord looketh not upon the outward appearance (as a rule, and never when judging of real worth) but upon the heart. To Him, *character*, not circumstances or appearances, is the criterion by which the favour is bestowed. All through the Bible, election and promotion are based upon character. (c) *Physical features will neither distort nor disqualify in the future life*. The believer's body of humiliation is to be fashioned like unto the Saviour's glorious body; no imperfection of any kind in the perfect state of the purified. Those who suffer from physical infirmities may gather comfort from foregoing considerations; those who are largely exempt from them shall bear the infirmities of the weak. Our blessed Master will not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax. He can make us strong in weakness, we may glory in infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon us.—F. W. B.

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XXI.

CELIBACY:

"Lust may be in the heart though it be not seen by others; as guests may be in the house though they look not out of the window."—BOWEN.

BODILY INFIRMITIES:

"Our bodily infirmities, blessed be God, cannot exclude us from His heavenly glory. And they who, on many accounts, may be disqualified for the work of the ministry, may serve God with comfort in other stations in His Church."—SCOTT.

"Though such blemishes do not disable men from the ministry of the gospel, such remarkable deformities as apparently procure contempt should discourage any from undertaking that work, except where such persons feel irresistibly called to it. But that which in the Evangelical ministry is most liable to exception is such blemishes in the *mind* or manners as render such men in-

competent to teach others and unfit to be public examples."—*Assembly's Annotation*.

BODILY APPEARANCE:

Auxilium non leve vultus habet.

[A pleasing countenance is no slight advantage].—OVID.

"'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all."
—POPE.

"I pray Thee, O God, that I may be beautiful within."—SOCRATES.

"Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity."
—*Merchant of Venice*, II. 9.

"Though nature with a beauteous wall
Doth oft close in pollution, yet of thee
I will believe, that thou hast a mind to suit
With this thy fair and outward character."
—SHAKESPEARE.

“ Handsome is that handsome does.”
—GOLDSMITH, *Vicar of Wakefield*, I.

“ Charms strike the sight, but merit wins
the soul.”—POPE.

Gratior ac pulchro veniens in corpore virtus.
[Even virtue is fairer when it appears in a
beautiful person.]—VIRGIL.

“ How this grace
Speaks his own standing! What a mental
power
This eye shoots forth! How big imagination
Moves in this lip! To the dumbness of the
gesture
One might interpret.”—*Timon of Athens*, I. i.

“ What tender force, what dignity divine;
What virtue consecrating every feature!”
—YOUNG.

CHAPTER XXII.

Priestly Privileges Forfeited by Uncleanness.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 1.—Profane not My holy name in those things which they hallow unto Me. Holy things must not be touched with unclean hands. What God hallows should be revered. To treat heedlessly any sacred thing profanes that *Name* with which it has become associated. If this applied to the altar offerings of the ancient tabernacle, surely it applies to our holy things—the Scriptures, the Sanctuary, the Lord’s Day; for the Divine Name is linked to them, they are hallowed unto Him, and must not be profaned. More forcibly this requirement applies to lives hallowed in consecration to Christ; they must not be profaned by fellowship with evil, lest it lead to “that holy name by which they are called being blasphemed.”

V. 2.—That soul shall be cut off from My presence. Did not the devouring fire consume Nadab and Abihu? Infliction of such severe penalties was a measure necessary in that age for the enforcement of duty, for inculcating correct ideas of Jehovah’s sanctity and authority. Priests, by their privileged access to His “presence,” might lapse into incaution; and as their favours were special, so their warnings were emphatic. If we dwell “in the light,” how appalling the possibility of being thrust into outer darkness! Having preached to others, how fearful to think of becoming a castaway! Such possibilities should arouse privileged souls to “take heed lest they fall.”

V. 10.—There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing. Hospitality is everywhere in Scripture commended; we should be “careful to entertain strangers.” But guests in our homes do not, on that account, become qualified to share the covenant privileges of religion, which are reserved to those who are Christ’s. Relation to God as a priest is a personal matter; and as a spiritual priest each believer is entitled to sit at the sacred table—yes, to feast in the very banqueting house of sovereign love—but we have no authority to extend these divine favours to others who have no priestly relationship to God, even though they have domestic or friendly relationship to us. Courtesy or magnanimity may not obliterate the spiritual distinctions with which God separates men.

V. 11.—But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat. So that when a soul becomes a priest’s possession, he shares the priest’s privileges. Its counterpart is in those we win to Christ—not by “money,” but by the energies

of Christian persuasion and influence; bound to us in the obligations of love. Our converts enter into our sacred enjoyments: "Ye are all partakers of my grace" (Phil. i. 7).

V. 14.—If a man eat of the holy thing unwittingly. Intruding where he ought not; taking advantages for which he had no qualification; enjoying sacred food for which he had done no sacred service. This is "trespass" (v. 16). Yet all assumption of religion without being in heart religious, all church offices and emoluments held by unchristian men for the sake more of "gain than godliness"—this is profanation, and these "bear the iniquity of trespass."

Vv. 17-24.—*Physical perfectness required in animals sacrificed.* For they were suggestive of the *perfect Christ*, and must therefore have no defect; and they betokened the *perfect life* which believers are called to devote to God: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

V. 25.—Neither from a stranger's hand, etc. Offerings must be faultless, and the offerer must be qualified. Precious gifts from unhallowed hands God cannot accept. Leave the gift on the altar, and enter first into sacred relationship with God through Christ. Our standing "in Him" is of supreme importance; until we are thus "*nude nigh*," we cannot acceptably "*draw nigh*."

V. 32.—I will be hallowed . . . I am the Lord which hallow you. It is for that sublime end we are sanctified. Men seek their own salvation, God seeks their sanctity; because salvation is a selfish goal, while sanctity is a testimony for God to men and angels. The work of divine grace in us is not merely for our gain, but to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour," to show the holy character of God to those who "take knowledge of us," and thus help to fulfilment the prayer, "Hallowed be thy name."

HOMILIES ON CHAPTER XXII.

Topic: A SOLEMN REGARD FOR HALLOWED THINGS.

"That they profane not my holy name in those things which they hallow unto me"
(V. 2).

Religion is a sacred inward life. It consists not in outward things, such as symbols and ceremonies, which it uses and calls to its aid, but in the soul's acceptance with God, in its homage of Him, and in its glad resignation to Him and service for Him.

Yet *religion has its outward expression* in material things which it "*hallows*." It does this by their consecration to God's service and honour. What in itself may be common and worldly becomes sacred when dedicated to religious purposes. And in this act of hallowing worldly things, religious men show their difference from the ungodly, who merely keep all earthly things for worldly and human ends, devoting none to God. But the children of God will have "things which they hallow unto me."

I. MAN'S ABILITY TO RENDER THINGS HALLOWED.

1. *Places*: As *sanctuaries* devoted to God's worship. *Homes* consecrated by piety and prayer. Select *scenes of retirement*, as some secret glen where a devout soul goes apart for meditation, etc., like Isaac at the well Lahai-roi. A *lowly room or shed*, used for gathering two or three in Christ's name for reading and exhortation.

2. *Seasons*: As the "Lord's day"; or appointed days, as "holy days"; or a fixed hour for bending the knee with some distant friend; or times in which to commemorate God's work in history.

3. *Possessions*: As *wealth* set apart for Christ; or *time* deliberately determined to be spent in Christian work; or some *particular object* we dedicate to the

Master's use—as Peter's boat, which he lent to Christ from which to preach to the multitudes on the shore.

4. *Persons*: Our *own* lives with all their talents and affections, “they gave themselves unto the Lord”; or a *child*, as Hannah dedicated Samuel; or a *band of Christian workers* sent forth on a specific mission.

II. MAN'S TENDENCY TO PROFANE THINGS HALLOWED.

1. As when regard for the sanctity of *holy scenes* ceases; the *sanctuary* fails to be in thought “none other but the house of God and the gate of heaven”; or *home piety* and prayer are discouraged by neglect.

2. Regard for the solemnity of *sacred seasons* declines; the *Sabbath* is not cherished as “a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable”; *prayer times* are let slip disregarded.

3. Regard for the *divine claim on our possessions* abates; we “keep back some part of the price”; we recall from its dedicated purpose some consecrated object.

4. Regard for *true spirituality* in ourselves and others wanes; the “first love” waxes cold; the eagerness for our child or families to become Christian abates in the presence of their worldly interests and prospects.

III. MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT THINGS HALLOWED.

1. They are *no longer ours*, either to recall from consecration or to divert to ourselves. *Money* was not Ananias's after he had professedly given it to Christ. And “Ye are not your own.” Vowed to the Lord, our appropriation of it, or diversion from its sacred purpose, is profanation.

2. *God's name becomes identified* with “things hallowed unto Him.” What a dishonour and derision to God and religion if, *e.g.*, a *church* should be debased and turned into a tavern or a theatre: if a *Christian home* be degraded into a habitation of libertines and revilers: if a *sanctified life* returns again to the vileness of iniquity. Scoffers then will “blaspheme that holy name by which we are called.”

3. When anything is “hallowed” it is a *witness amid ungodliness for religion and the unseen*. The tendency of man is to grow absorbed in material things, to attend merely to his physical and earthly interests. “Things hallowed” to God speak to men of what is divine, spiritual, eternal, and they cannot be removed from amongst us without danger of men sinking lower into dark materialism, and so forfeiting all the benefits which Christianity has brought into our national, social, and individual life.

(a) *The Bible* deserves to be cherished as a hallowed book, yet how many neglect it: how many deride it: how many read it only to disobey it.

(b) *The cross* is a symbol of a most pathetic, solemn, yet precious fact—the death of Jesus. Yet to how many Protestants has it become a mere *trinket* for adornment: while to many Romanists it has become an object of idolatrous *superstition*.

(c) *The bread and wine* are tokens of a finished redemption and our fellowship with Christ by faith. Yet they may be “eaten and drunk unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body,” as if they had no solemn meaning: or they may be travestied on the “altar” of Ritualists, and in the Papal “mass.”

“Then beware,

And make thyself all reverence and fear.”

“*Speak, that they profane not my holy name in those things which they hallow unto me.*”

Topic: DEFILING HOLY THINGS.

“*Whosoever goeth unto the holy things, which the children of Israel hallow unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from my presence: I am the Lord*” (V. 3).

Caryl says, “The very heathen had this notion, they would not admit any to

their religious services unless they were prepared: therefore one cried out to the people when they came to sacrifice, 'All you that are unclean and profane go far away from these sacrifices.' Not only the word of God but the very light of nature taught them not to meddle with holy things till they were themselves sanctified."

In proof of this stands that saying of *Aeneas* to his father when he came from the war, "*In genitor,*" etc. "Father, do you meddle with the sacrifices: but as for me it is a sinful thing to touch them till I have washed myself at the fountain."

Cicero teaches a noble reverence for things hallowed: *Res sacros non modo manibus attingi, se ne cogitatione quidem violari fas fuit.* "Things sacred should not only not be touched with the hands, but not violated even in thought."

Yet there have been priests of our holy religion—yes, ministers of the gospel of Christ—and men in sacred eminence, who have defamed Christianity by their levity and sacrilege, until verily—

Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires.—POPE.

ADMONITORY INCIDENTS :

Belshazzar converted the consecrated vessels of the temple into instruments of luxury and intemperance, touching holy things while himself unclean; but the hand of indignant judgment wrote in flaming letters upon his banqueting hall his sentence of doom.

Herod polluted the sepulchres of the saints with a sacrilegious search for treasures supposed to be hidden there, when God made fire rise from the earth to devour the infamous men who touched holy things with their uncleanness upon them.

Antiochus ransacked the very temple of God; *Heliodorus* emptied the treasures of their consecrated moneys; *Pompey* defiled the Sabbath and the sanctuary; *Crassus* despoiled the house of God of ten thousand talents; but their careers all tell the story of seathing judgment for defiling holy things, that ruin is ever the avenger of sacrilege.

Judas dared to touch with foul hands the sacred person of Christ, and sell Him for money; but the curse fell upon him, and he perished in his iniquity.

"That soul shall be cut off from my presence; I am the Lord."

Topic: IRREVERENCE AMID SANCTITIES (Vv. 1-16).

The heathen hierarchy practised and exemplified the *debasement* of the idols they represented and professed to propitiate. Jehovah declared holiness indispensable to acceptable service in His presence. The Hebrews were taught by symbol, by ceremonies which appealed to their senses—truths concerning holiness which, under the gospel, are more fully enforced by the teachings of the Holy Ghost. In order that undue familiarity with holy things might be prevented—

I. A LINE OF DEMARCATION WAS TO BE DRAWN BETWEEN SACRED AND SECULAR THINGS.

For the performance of sacred duties there were fixed places and set times; no priest was to officiate when physically, ceremonially, or morally impure. "Speak unto Aaron and his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel." Why such strictness? (a) *Because sacred things enshrined the name of the Lord.* "That they profane not my holy name." (b) *Because sacred things honoured the name of the Lord.* "These things which they hallow unto me." Still required that those who bear the vessels of the Lord shall be holy, and make a difference between sacred and secular things.

II. A LINE OF DEMARCATION WAS TO BE DRAWN BETWEEN PURITY AND IMPURITY OF CHARACTER.

No priest was to officiate at the altar in a state of unfitness, under penalty of excommunication. "That soul shall be cut off from my presence: I am the Lord." This declares the priest to be fallible and frail; need for constant watchfulness lest the altar become polluted. Under the new dispensation a fountain full and free is open for sin and uncleanness. As kings and priests unto God, believers are expected to exhibit in their lives the fruits of the Spirit. Christianity has not relaxed the demands of the law for holiness of character, the standard is even higher, for "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."
—*F.W.B.*

Topic: THE BEST FOR THE HIGHEST (Vv. 17-30)

The sacrifice—not the officiating priest—was the centre of the Levitical economy. He existed for the altar, not it for him. If absolutely necessary that priests should be holy, equally so that the offerings should be perfect, especially when regarded in the light of the epistle to the Hebrews as of typical import, as shadows of good things to come. Every offering was to be presented—

I. WITH A WILLING MIND. "Freewill offerings, which they will offer unto the Lord for a burnt offering." The authoritative commands of Jehovah did not interfere with free agency; the judgment and moral sense of offerers were appealed to, they were to choose what God had chosen. Unless voluntarily, there could have been no moral quality in the services they rendered. No virtue, where no possibility of vice, at least *in a probationary state*. At the erection of the Temple the same willingness was required. In the service of Christ we are to present ourselves *willing*, as well as *living* sacrifices.

II. WITH PERFECT OBEDIENCE. "Whatsoever hath a blemish shall he not offer." No unwholesome or unsightly thing was to be laid on the altar. The Highest *deserved*, as He demanded, the best. Obedience in the offerer thus required to be complete; no withholding, or withdrawing. (a) *That the holy harmony of the economy might not be broken.* (b) *That the spotless antitype might be clearly foreshadowed.*

God still demands *the best* we can offer, *the vigour and vivacity of youth; the most wakeful and valuable portions of our time; the choicest and richest fruits of our substance.*

III. WITH A GRATEFUL HEART. "Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye offer the bread of your God." Offerings were to be presented by those who knew the Lord and would be actuated by devoted love. Acquaintance with God, reconciliation with Him, must precede offerings on His altar. The *character* of the giver, more than the nature of the gift, determines the divine estimate of offerings.

IV. WITH A LOYAL SPIRIT. The constant reiteration of the declaration, "I am the Lord," rendered obvious that all ought to be done with the profoundest reverence for the divine majesty. The Hebrews were to acknowledge Jehovah as their sovereign king. Time has not altered these conditions of acceptable offering. *Energy, time, means, etc.*, all to be cheerfully surrendered to Him who is our Prophet, Priest and King. We owe Him the best of everything; He sacrificed the best—His life—for us; how irresistible the words of the apostle, "For ye are not your own," etc.—*F.W.B.*

Topic: BLEMISHES IN OUR SACRIFICES

"Whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer; for it shall not be acceptable for you" (V. 20).

Reference is to sacrifices. All religious service is of the nature of sacrifice.

"Whatsoever, etc." (Text).

I. Read this requirement of perfect sacrifices, and by it let us *test our regard for the SABBATH SERVICES.*

God has once, at least, read us a very solemn lesson of the manner in which He regards lost Sabbaths. Seventy Sabbatical years the Jews allowed to drop out of their calendar. Seventy years were spent by them in captivity. A fearful presage to us of what might be the national judgment, if, as a church and people, we went on to blot out from amongst us our day of rest. And yet, is that fear groundless? Are we not already gone far towards such a state of things? Is not the Sunday, to a fearful extent, an omitted day? The fourth commandment an omitted commandment? Such as the Sunday is, so is the week. It is the keystone of the arch of our secular life. The folly and sin of most men is, they begin by making the Sunday a blank day. And as a blank becomes intolerable, therefore the day proves to them listless, weary, worldly, profane. A taste for spiritual things needs to be cultivated and prayed for. A vague mind, a dull feeling, the sense of its being a long day each time the Sunday comes round—these afford proof that to us heaven is still very far off, that the bright and beautiful world is not "*our own place.*" To pass a little more into detail, ordinarily everyone will agree that if the Sabbath be obligatory, then it is assuredly obligatory thus far—

1. That there be *regular attendance upon public service.*

2. Of the other hours of the day, that a part be spent in *private devotional exercises*, a part in *religious reading*; that a higher and more sacred *tone of conversation* be maintained; that some work of piety and love be performed.

These are but *some* of the most obvious and necessary Sunday duties and Sunday enjoyments. How do many of us acquit ourselves in this matter? Has the sacrifice of the seventh portion of our time, which we profess to offer week by week, any "*blemish*"? An unoccupied day must prove an unpleasant day. We omit duty, therefore God omits blessing. Need we look further than our Sundays, idle, &c., for many a disappointment and discontent and bitterness of life?

II. By this test let us *judge our SANCTUARY WORSHIP.*

Examine ourselves in the house of God. Difficulty of keeping the mind collected and devout results from want of *due preparation.*

1. Something may be said respecting the *posture of body* we assume in the sanctuary. Position of body re-acts upon the mind. Indolence is associated with, and leads to, irreverence. Kneeling is required equally by the dignity of God and the weakness of our nature.

2. So with the *voice.* Difficult to over-estimate how much is lost (*a*) To the beauty of our services; (*b*) To the glory of God; (*c*) To our own souls, by the silence so many of us maintain, both in the responses and in the service of song. But there are more *serious* "*blemishes*" in our sanctuary sacrifices than these. Where is—

(1) The *constant mental effort* essential to true worship, and proper in the presence of God?

(2) The *self-distrust* due from such sinful creatures as we?

(4) The *self-discipline* to bring ourselves into responsiveness to God's Spirit?

(3) The *inward up-looking* for divine light and grace?

(5) The frequent reminding ourselves of *what we are and what God is*

(6) The *simple spirit of self-application*?

(7) The *faith* to give wings to prayer?

Well might St. James say "Ye have not because ye ask not, or ask amiss." "*Blemish on sacrifice*" drives the flame down again.

III. By this test let us *examine our observance of THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.*

A word in solemn affection to some. You never *attend* the sacrament to celebrate the Lord's death at all. Others, if at all, so *irregularly* as almost to

turn the attendance into a mockery. Do you consider that that with which you so deal is none other than the dying command of the Lord and Saviour: the highest and best of all the means of grace? And yet you habitually pass it by. Can there be any limit to the evil which such an omission may be entailing upon your soul? Your religion is barren of joy if your soul fails to realise peace; if your prayers work no effect; if your faith seems to rest on no reality; if you gain no sense of forgiveness. Well, there is a chain of cause and consequences here; we must divide its links. The soul's losses all fasten themselves into the soul's omissions. Note:

1. Happy for us that we can turn from all our poor "blemished" sacrifices to that pure and perfect sacrifice of Christ, which has been offered "without blemish and without spot" for us.

2. Only let us never forget that he who would safely trust in the power of that "Sacrifice" for his salvation, must take the spotlessness of that Sacrifice for his daily pattern.—Anon.

Topic: UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE PEREMPTORILY ENFORCED (Vv. 31-33).

The pilgrimage of Israel through the wilderness was of a probationary character, affording a suggestive emblem of all human life. The natural tendency of the human will to rebellion required imperative commands to subdue and bend it to the obedience of the just. The minute and exacting requirements of the Mosaic ritual would train the people to humble obedience. Such peremptory statutes were based upon:

I. WHAT JEHOVAH WAS IN ISRAEL. "I am the Lord." The Lord had perfect right to enjoin what obedience He chose upon His subjects. In the midst of Israel Jehovah was King, His word went forth with power. Let all the inhabitants of the earth stand in awe of Him, and obey His voice, for it is still universally true, "The Lord reigneth."

II. WHAT JEHOVAH WAS TO ISRAEL. "Your God." To carry out His wise and benevolent designs towards the race, God saw fit to make Israel His chosen people, custodians of His written word, channels of blessing to the whole world. Israel was under the most solemn obligations to obey divine statutes, to conform to the divine will. Under the new dispensation no stronger motive can prompt to Christian consecration and obedience than the declaration of the apostle to the Gentiles, "Whose I am, and whom I serve."

III. WHAT JEHOVAH HAD DONE FOR ISRAEL. "That brought you out of the land of Egypt." The Exodus had exhibited the goodness of the Lord. Wonders had been performed, unexpected channels of deliverance had been opened, abundant supplies had been vouchsafed to them. Obligations to obedience were many and weighty. The goodness of God calleth us to repentance. Redemption from the slavery of Satan and sin should constrain to obedience. Translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, this the becoming question of the soul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

IV. WHAT JEHOVAH WOULD DO WITH ISRAEL. "I am the Lord which hallow you." The Lord's purpose in selecting Israel as His peculiar people, was not only that His name might be hallowed among them, but that their hearts might become sanctified by His presence. Holiness was the supreme end of the Mosaic ritual. Ceremonially and symbolically priests and people were made holy by (a) the rites they observed; (b) the sacrifices they offered; (c) the manifested presence of the Lord.—F.W.B.

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER XXII.

V. 1, 2.—*Theme*: THE JEALOUSY OF JEHOVAH.

Human nature inherently prone to presumption and irreverence. Upon the priests was enjoined the most scrupulous care, lest in any way they disgraced themselves and dishonoured Jehovah. Small gifts were not excluded from the altar of the Lord, but all blemished offerings were, to teach Israel (a) *The supremacy of the divine will*. What He required, not what they might feel disposed to offer, must be presented. (b) *The necessity of unquestioning obedience*. "I am the Lord," Enough for Israel to know that the Lord required it at their hands. The jealousy of Jehovah for His name and glory would inculcate the need of—

I. CONSTANT CIRCUMSPECTION. Sacerdotal duties so intricate and various, the priests would require to exercise unrelaxing vigilance.

II. CAREFUL DISCRIMINATION. Offerings to be unminged; in strict accordance with minutely prescribed directions.

III. COMPLETE CONSECRATION. Everything to be done to the full; no reserve, shortcoming, or withdrawal. No imperfection in servant or service tolerated in the tabernacle worship.

Inherited and unavoidable disabilities for public service form no barrier in the way of divine favour. *A willing heart* is accepted when the accomplishment of its sincere purpose is impossible. *Willingness and ability* characterise the service of the Upper Temple. Scrupulous care still to be exercised, that there be no profanation of God's Name, Day, Book, House, Ordinances.—F.W.B.

V. 10.—*Theme*: HOLY FEASTS FORBIDDEN TO STRANGERS.

"There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing."

Salvation is common, open to all; but privileges are special, reserved to consecrated souls. [See "Suggestive Readings" on the verse.]

These "strangers" in the priest's house represent persons near the Kingdom of Grace but not within it.

I. FRIENDSHIP with the *godly* does not confer qualification for religious privileges. Not though we be *guests* in the home of a minister of Christ's sanctuary; not though we enjoy Christian *intimacy* and *affection*, do we on that account become qualified to share the covenant blessings of religion.

Personal alliances and family intimacies with God's people do not render us partakers of their grace.

II. *Enjoyment of religious intercourse* does not create qualification for sacred privileges.

Within the priest's home there would be much religious *converse*, and acquaintance

with the meaning of religious truths and duties; but *knowledge* of divine things, and the advantage of *holy conversation*, do not necessarily lead to spiritual life.

"Having all knowledge and understanding all mysteries profit nothing" if there be not inward life and personal love.

III. Residence in HOLY DWELLINGS does not confer qualifications for saintly privileges.

Though resident in the priest's home, "strangers" might not partake of the priest's food.

Attendance on the sanctuary; frequenting holy places; being continually near God's *servant* in sacred scenes; all this may be without personal piety.

Being a doorkeeper in the house of God; a persistent attendant at sacred services; maintaining a constant connexion with the sanctuary; these do not ensure and guarantee a state of grace, a qualification for the privilege of sanctified souls.

Apply:—

1. *Better be "strangers,"* near though not in the kingdom, than *aliens* far off from all the allurements and opportunities of religion.

2. Though "strangers," the way is possible in the gospel for such to *become partakers* of the feasts of redemption and of grace. "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers," etc. (Ephes. ii. 12).

Nearness to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and spiritually "priests unto God," should help forward a religious life until those once "strangers," yet *guests*, become *welcomed to the feasts* of sacred love. [See outline on v. 25, *Holy Ministries refused from Strangers.*]

V. 20.—*Theme*: UNBLEMISHED SACRIFICES.

"But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer; for it shall not be acceptable for you."

Everything laid on the altar to be free from (a) *bodily disease*, (b) *national deformity*, (c) *acquired defects*. These defects, emblems of moral blemishes, which disqualify for service under the gospel—*depraved passions, crooked conduct, defection from duty, indulgence in any kind of sin*—will render the most costly offering obnoxious to the divine mind.

Men present blemished sacrifices to the Lord—

I. WHEN THEIR GIFTS ARE NOT PROPORTIONATE TO THEIR MEANS. Many profess to give to the utmost of their ability, when they only give a pitiable fraction from the abundance with which God has prospered them. Such blemished sacrifices God rejects.

II. WHEN THEIR GIFTS ARE NOT THE SYMBOLS OF SELF-SACRIFICE. No offering is accepted except presented in a willing and devout spirit: God expects living sacrifices, the wealth of human love—all the heart

mind, soul, strength; then other gifts as evidences of complete self-consecration.

III. WHEN THEIR GIFTS ARE PRESENTED TO PROCURE SALVATION. Sensuous worship, ritualistic observances are valueless; only the merits of the one all-atoning sacrifice of Christ can render the most perfect gifts acceptable.

Let but the heart be wholly given to the Lord, then not the doctored or decayed, the refuse or leavings, the chaff or dregs, but the best, costliest, and brightest will be consecrated to the Lord.

These things read in the light of the New Testament teach—(a) *How completely the spotlessness of Christ fulfilled the rigid requirements for perfection in Jewish sacrifices.* (b) *How the material offerings of the tabernacle were adapted to prepare the way for the proclamation of what they foreshadowed.* (c) *How the constant demand for holiness in offerings and offerers reiterated the abiding facts, that Jehovah is spotlessly holy; and that "without holiness no man can see the Lord."*—*F.W.B.*

V. 25.—*Theme: HOLY MINISTRIES REFUSED FROM STRANGERS.*

If "strangers" might not eat the feast reserved for priestly souls (comp. on v. 10) so neither would God allow them to minister at the altar of His sanctuary.

This interdict demands—

I. That MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL be themselves *true-born sons of God.*

II. That WORKERS IN THE CHURCH be chosen exclusively from those *in spiritual fellowship with God's people.*

III. That SACRED OFFERINGS, gifts laid on the altar of religion, are *only acceptable as the giver is a sincere Christian.*

IV. That A SPIRITUAL STATE is the *supremely precious thing* in God's esteem; not *what* we bring, but *what we are* ourselves who bring the offering.

NOTES:—

1. God abhors *hallowed services* by *unhallowed souls.* "They shall be not accepted for you."

2. *A gracious relationship* to God in Christ must *precede* all attempts to please Him by service or gifts.

3. From saintly souls *every offering, however lowly,* is a "sacrifice well pleasing unto God," as a token of sonship and love.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Israel's Holy Festivals.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—Concerning the feasts of the Lord. Religion has its joy seasons, its festive aspects. Israel's sacred feasts symbolised the festivals of the Christian soul, those holy delights which believers now realise in their life of faith and fellowship.

(a) *Sacred festivals,* breaking in upon the monotony of the year, and arresting society amidst its common worldly employ, confer valued benefits on humanity; they are a temporary reprieve from the clamour of secular toils, and set men free for refreshment and rest; while they also incite to some degree of religious interest and gratitude, for they witness to gracious events in God's redeeming purposes for the world, and summon the multitudes to gladness in commemoration.

(b) *Spiritual joyousness,* that sacred gladness we inherit in Christ, and of which those festivals were but suggestions and scintillations, has its special and more emphatic seasons within the experience of the Christian; for although religion brings into the soul an enduring happiness and a perennial feast of love, there are times when richer enjoyment of divine fellowship and privilege delights the godly man, and his holy relationship to Christ and the Church fills him with profounder satisfaction and bliss. The sun's light shines steadily on throughout

the entire day, but there are occasional intervals when his beams burst forth in more resplendant glory.

V. 2.—Holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Heathenism had its wild, licentious orgies; Christianity claims sanctity for all its festivities. On all pleasures and delights it inscribes "Holiness to the Lord." Happiness must be holy. God sends gladness into the soul He redeems, and its joy must be always kept pure.

Yet, in this arrangement that the feasts should be "*convocations*," emphasis is placed on the fact that our joy should be sympathetic and communicative, not isolate and selfish. Redeemed men have common reasons for happiness and praise; God would have them meet together in grateful celebration, fostering a sacred friendship, entering into each other's joy. Sin has drawn society together in the sympathy of sorrow and degradation; religion re-unites those it blesses in the fellowship of sacred gladness.

V. 3.—The sabbath of rest. As the oldest of all sacred festivals, and the most frequent in recurrence, God places the sabbath in the front; it brings to toil-worn lives a day of "rest," it announces to weary souls that sacred rest which Jesus gives, it foreshadows to life's pilgrims Zionwards the "rest which remaineth" when heaven is reached.

The sabbath rest is to be enjoyed, not in selfish ease, but as a time for meeting with God's people in *sacred assembly*, "a holy convocation," and as a season for devout *social fellowship*; "it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings."

V. 5.—The Lord's passover. A commemoration of grand events: spared from the angel's stroke of death, freed from the cruelty of oppressive slavery. Redemption and emancipation—such truths are proclaimed now to man through the "sacrifice of Christ our Passover." Christians who have experienced the deliverance, and escaped into the "glorious liberty" of faith, should celebrate with joy this work of God's salvation; for if Israel kept holy festival in memory of the Egyptian rescue, surely we should "keep the feast" (1 Cor. v. 7, 8).

Vv. 7, 8.—Ye shall do no servile work; but ye shall offer an offering made by fire. They who are gathered under the merits of the Paschal Atonement are set free from "servile" toils. No more "servile work" now for the sinner, no weary efforts, no fruitless endeavours, no degrading labours; for the "offering made by fire," the sweet incense offering of Christ, has gone up to God, and it is enough. The soul is set free from legal "work," and now stands an observer of the meritorious offering which rises to heaven as "by fire." Not the labours of our hands but the offering on Calvary: with that "sweet savour of Christ" God is well pleased; and sinners stand acquitted with their trust fixed on the accepted sacrifice.

V. 10.—Bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest. The paschal offering foreshadowed the death of Christ, the "sheaf of first-fruits" His resurrection. And equally is symbolised the risen and renewed life into which all Christians emerge from their death in sin, under the quickening of God's Spirit. Further, it predicts the final resurrection of those who "sleep in Christ." "Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming." And as our resurrection *body* at the last day will be "fashioned like unto his own glorious body," so, meanwhile, should our resurrection *life* be graced with all the perfections of His character. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Surely every soul called from sin to grace, raised from death unto life, should seal the outset (see v. 14) of His spiritual career by an act of "first-fruits" consecration, which should be the pledge of an after "harvest" of devoted service to the Lord.

V. 16.—Number fifty days, and offer a new meat offering. This was the feast of Pentecost, which opened with the presentation of the first-fruits barley sheaf, and was to be closed with the offering of a loaf made from the ingathered

wheat harvest. It celebrated the completion of the harvest season. It thus testified that God had given an abundant ingathering, and had blessed His people with bread. In the Christian Church the "first-fruits" were the foretoken of harvest abundance; for Christ's resurrection guaranteed a great ingathering of souls; and on the day of Pentecost the spiritual harvest was brought in unto the Lord. It was exactly "fifty days" after Christ arose from the dead that the Holy Ghost was given, and the bountiful ingathering of converts was secured for the church (Acts ii.).

V. 24.—**A memorial of blowing of trumpets.** It was the rallying note amid the camp and throughout Israel, making known the opening of a new era. The "Feast of Trumpets" proclaimed the arrival of "New Year's Day," for the civil year began on "the first day of the seventh month." With a great outburst of joy-strains the new epoch opened. Suggestive of the new era upon which a redeemed soul enters, the Christian convert starts forth as with music and gladness upon a holy career. The trumpet notes are typical of the *Gospel call*, by which men are aroused to regard and seize the first opportunity presented them. It prefigures also that mighty trumpeting at the end of time, which will summon living and dead to the day of God, to which those in Christ will first respond (1 Thess. iv. 16), but which will awaken all who sleep to a new era for universal humanity (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52).

V. 27.—**A day of atonement.** In chap. xvi. the ritual of the great day is elaborately given; here the spirit and temper of the people is described, the whole congregation was to bow before God abased and penitential. It is well if only once every year we chasten "and afflict" our souls with humiliating thought of our sin, and bend before Jehovah with contrite hearts. Alas, there is need that we bemoan our demerit, and thus contemplate the "Atonement." Yet how precious the fact that, while like a penitent we stand in shame for our sin, the "Day of Atonement" proclaims redeeming efficacy and grace for all who lay their hand and hope on the sacrificial Lamb.

V. 34.—**The Feast of Tabernacles.** It is minutely directed in v. 40 that they were to take "boughs of goodly trees," affording shade and shelter and suggestive of God's overshadowing care and covenant; "branches of palm trees," emblematic of victory (Rev. vii. 9), for they were the triumphant host of God marching onward to possess Canaan; and "willows of the brook," symbols of plenitude and prosperity (Isa. xlv. 4). This dwelling in booths seven days every year (v. 42) would perpetuate the memory of their pilgrim career, their dependence on divine care and providence, and God's unfailing sufficiency for them from the outset to the close of their journey to Zion. And shall not we also keep in remembrance the years in which we have been "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," through which the Lord has surely led us, never failing in the watchfulness of His providence or the sufficiency of His grace? "Thou shalt remember all the ways the Lord thy God has led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what is in thine heart" (Deut. viii. 2).

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: THE SABBATH OF REST (V. 3).

Levitical enactments, its rites and regulations, its festivals and solemnities, were all transient and Jewish. The Sabbath is not to be classified with these: it is not one of many institutes of Israel. It preceded the wilderness encampment, was anterior to the enactments of Sinai. The Sabbath dates with man's creation, it began in Eden. It is pre-æval law. Its origin preceded sin.

If thus *remote its origin*, what of its *permanency*?

It was recognised through Antediluvian times. Noah kept it within the ark, sending forth his dove after seven days' interval. Moses urges its observance, and this, not after its promulgation on Sinai, but at the outset of the encamping of the Israelites in the desert (Exo. xvi. 23), as being an institute well understood; it had, therefore, been known to them through their Egyptian bondage. It was no novel statute, therefore, when incorporated in the decalogue on Sinai.

In Jewish history it became re-inforced with all the solemnities of the giving of the law, the Sabbath's sanctity was inscribed on stone with the finger of God.

The line of prophets in succession urged its solemnity, and denounced its neglect and violation.

Our Lord re-asserted its authority, "The Sabbath was made for man" (Mark ii. 27), for all men, for all ages. And now—

Sabbaths are threefold, as St. Austin says;
The first of time, or Sabbath here of days;
The second is a conscience trespass free;
The last a Sabbath of eternity.—*Herrick*.

I. THE WEARY LIFE OF MAN CALLS FOR THIS INTERVAL OF SABBATH REST.

1. *Each individual life requires it.* Toil wastes our physical fabric, the strain on nerve and brain wears away the energy of life. The rush of daily duties consumes all leisure, allows no pause for bodily rest, no repose for thought, or attention to the soul's great concerns.

2. *Family life demands it.* Amid the eagerness of worldly work parents and children are scattered, each to a separate scene and diverse tasks. Yet home is a unity; family life is a blended harmony. There is need for a lull in the clamour; a truce for the rallying together of the scattered ones; that home might quietly re-construct itself, and family life be realised.

3. *Moral life calls for it.* A worn and spent state of body, nerve, and brain, brings with it a relaxed will, an enfeebled moral purpose. With recouped physical energy comes reaffirmed force of mind and character. A pause for bodily rest is essential for this moral resuscitation.

4. *Spiritual life cries out for it.* Amid the arid scenes of the world the soul droops and thirsts. It pants for the living streams. And as Christ called His disciples apart to rest awhile, so does the Sabbath; giving to overtaxed lives the sacred joy of going apart with Jesus.

Enquire: *Is this inflexible command of God necessary in order to conserve the Sabbath?*

If man so greatly needs it, would not his need assert itself, and lead men to perpetuate the beneficent institute without a divine command?

Answer: (a) Man's *greed* would lead him to *deny a Sabbath to himself*. His lust of gain, and clamour for success, would drive him on to ruinous absorption in earthly schemes and lucrative pursuits. "The love of money" urges on to suicidal indifference to all higher interests. He would never let a day go each week from his eager life. "Time is money"; and if a Sabbath brings no gain to his grasping hands it is a day lost.

(b) *Nor would selfish men concede the Sabbath's rest to weary toilers.* Already the oppressed and overwrought workers find it difficult to arrest the encroachments of trade on the sanctities of the Lord's Day. Heartless employers would snatch precious hours from the Sabbath, and force their servants to labour. Men would not give the holy day to their fellows if no divine law interposed to check such infringements.

Every interest, therefore, of human life, is bound up with the maintenance of the Sabbath as a day of rest. [See *Addenda* to chapter; SABBATH.]

II. THE SIN-WORN SPIRIT OF MAN SIGHS FOR THE CONSOLATIONS OF SABBATIC SACRED REST.

The Sabbath is but typical of the rest of faith which the gospel brings to burdened souls.

1. *All trials cease* when the spirit enters into the Sabbath rest which Jesus gives. The sinner "ceases from his own works" (Heb. iv. 10). Worn with labour, and heavy laden with the burdens of conscious unrighteousness, the toiling soul comes to the Saviour (Matt. xi. 28). A heavenly day, a serene Sabbatic life, dawns upon him at once, and in the restfulness of faith, trusting all to Jesus, he desists from fruitless efforts to "establish his own righteousness," and sits down at the feet of Jesus. It is the Sabbath rest of his life begun.

2. *Our daily conflicts and crosses* render the Sabbath privilege a precious consolation to the believer. Resting in Jesus does not render the world a restful scene to the Christian. Nor does human life cease to know the common griefs and struggles of existence. Whereas also, the keen longings of the soul for fellowship with Christ finds few occasions for gratification amid the busy hours of the week. How welcome, therefore, to the believer is the day of rest! By "still waters" and amid "green pastures" he roams, in all the solemn delights of leisurely meditation: and his soul is "restored" (Psa. xxiv.). To his troubled heart comes the solace of the "peace" which only Jesus gives (Jno. xiv. 1, 27). Within the sanctuary, "soothed with holy hymn and psalm," quickened by fellowship with saints, and renewed through waiting upon God, he gains "times of refreshing" and strengthening of soul. He drinks of the brook by the way and lifts the head with freshened vigour for life's journey. Full oft the rejoicing soul, glad in Christ, and refreshed by the Sabbath privileges, has to say,

Thou art a cooling fountain
In life's dry, dreary sand;
From thee, like Pisgah's mountain,
We view the promised land;
A day of sweet reflection
Thou art, a day of love—
A day of resurrection
From earth to things above.

III. THE LIFE-TIRED SOUL OF MAN LONGS FOR THE SABBATH OF HEAVENLY REST.

All sabbath repose and refreshing on earth; all realisations of the rest of soul Christ gives to the believer, all sanctuary consolations enjoyed on the Lord's day, are but foretastes and foreshadowings of heaven's eternal peace, and joy, and love.

1. *As the sabbath day dawns after the night is spent*, so heaven's sabbath follows death's dark night.

We have to live our life's day of duty and service to confront the responsibilities of worldly trusts and opportunities to "work while it is called day." "This is not our rest." But the shadows at length fall; a hush spreads over the tumult of existence; the hand slackens its hold on the instruments of labour; darkness comes gently down upon earthly scenes. But a "lively hope" fills the Christian soul; a vision of a glorious dawn sweeps across the dimming human gaze.

And a voice, while earth cares fly,
With the closing hours is blending—
"Rest is coming, rest is nigh!"

Night wraps itself around the life: the day of eternity breaks upon the spirit: Heaven's rest is gained. And "there shall be no night there," "neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain; for the former things are passed away." "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: yea, from henceforth, saith the Spirit, for they rest!"

2. *As the sacred rest of faith is gained by the sinner only when he comes unto Jesu*

so the heavenly rest is gained only when the Christian reaches the very presence of his Lord.

“Come unto me,” says Jesus, “and I will give you rest!” Blessed the experience of reaching Him now by faith: but when the soul bursts through the barrier of death and passes the gates of the heavenly city, and finds itself within the “Everlasting Arms,” leaning on Jesus’ bosom, never more to leave the radiant presence of his Lord, then, indeed, will the full rest of heaven be known.

No rough billows heave on the serene ocean of life eternal. No shadow falls on the bright sky of heaven’s bliss. No distance ever more divides the redeemed soul from the rapture of Christ’s presence. “For ever with the Lord”: and therefore there remaineth a keeping of sabbaths for the people of God

Rest, spirit free!
In the green pastures of the heavenly shore,
Where sin and sorrow can approach no more,
With all the flock by the Good Shepherd fed,
Beside the streams of life eternal led,
For ever with thy God and Saviour blest,
Rest, sweetly rest!

Topic: THE SABBATH (V. 3).

Placed first among the Hebrew festivals, the sabbath becomes invested with peculiar honour and importance. It *claimed* priority, dating back to the completion of creation, and reaching forward throughout all time, to be consummated in eternity. The institution and perpetuation of the sabbath secured time for the full observance of sacred duties; and, by its weekly advent, called attention to them. No institution of the Hebrew economy was more frequently referred to, or its observance more strictly enforced. Part of the badge that distinguished Israel from surrounding nations was cessation from worldly toil and complete consecration to sacred service one day in seven. The Hebrew Sabbath was—

I. A SACRED MEMORIAL, of the original institution of a special season for rest and undisturbed attention to divine things. It would be a perpetual reminder of the fact that “in six days the Lord made heaven and earth,” therefore, a constant rebuke to every form of heathenism, where the true God was ignored or unknown. Under the Christian dispensation observance of “the Lord’s Day” is a perpetual memorial of the fundamental fact of Christianity, that the Redeemer’s atoning work was completed on earth when He rose from the grave on the morning of the third day.

II. A SACRED FESTIVAL.

In it God took special delight. He demanded it as *a sacrifice of time* from those whose days really all belonged to Him. Though all *secular* work was to be discontinued, works of mercy, piety, and necessity were to be performed. The Hebrews were to gather together for divine worship and the cultivation of personal holiness. Though God did not *need* the rest—for He never grows weary—yet man needed it; and God rejoiced in it, as its claims were recognised, its duties discharged. It was *a festival*, not a fast; for man to use, not abuse; to be made a delight, not a burden; for, in sanctifying time and strength to the Lord according to His gracious will, man finds his highest and truest joy.

The transfer of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week has not diminished its sacredness, or relaxed its claims. It is still a feast of the Lord, to be devoted to sacred purposes. It proclaims to all the right of freedom from exacting toil, and places all upon a level as the Lord’s free men.

III. A SACRED TYPE.

The law of the sabbath, re-published in the wilderness, pointed to the time when Israel would be able fully to observe it in the land of Canaan. The peculiar sanctity and blessedness of the day may fitly be regarded as typical of the perfect rest of heaven, where all the toils and trials of time will—for those who keep His commandments—issue in the rest and recompense of eternity. In observing the sabbath, we not only obey the divine command, but we follow the divine example (Gen. ii. 2, 3). Thus God is pleased and man is blessed. Thus time becomes hallowed, life worth living, and heaven won. [See also preceding Homily on chap. xix. v. 3.]—*F.W.B.*

Topic: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PASSOVER (Vv. 5-8).

“The first Passover was the commencement of the special privileges of the chosen nation, every subsequent Passover became a pledge of the continuance of those privileges” (Cave).

(a) The feast was *RETROSPECTIVE* and *commemorative*.

Israel's deliverance from the *destroying angel*, and from *Egyptian bondage*, was an event unparalleled in human history. God would perpetuate the memory of so wondrous an incident as a testimony for all time that “salvation is of the Lord,” and that mightiest deliverances can be wrought for His people by our Redeemer.

Thus the *Lord's Supper*, as a commemorative feast, also “shows forth the Lord's death,” leading back our thoughts and faith to “Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us,” and the wondrous redemption wrought for an enslaved Church and a death-doomed world.

(b) The feast was *PROSPECTIVE* and *typical*.

The lamb of the paschal feast foreshadowed “the *Lamb of God*, which taketh away the sins of the world.” For the lamb employed at this commemorative feast was more than a symbol of the victim whose blood was sprinkled on the doorposts in Egypt, it was a *sacrifice*. It meant substitution. It typically “put away sin.”

At the Lord's Supper, Christ said to His followers, “My body is *broken for you*, my blood is *shed for you*.” And Paul adds the testimony that “our Passover is *sacrificed for us*.”

The Identification of the Paschal Victim with Jesus Christ:—

I. *With regard to the SELECTED VICTIM.*

1. Was it a *lamb*? Christ is often so called on account of His innocence, meekness, and resignation (Isa. liii. 7; Juo. i. 29; 1 Pet. i. 19; Rev. v. 6).

2. Was it *taken from the flock*? Christ was chosen from among His brethren, was one of us (Acts iii. 22, 23).

3. Was it a *male of the first year*? (Exod. xii. 5). Because the “male,” being the stronger, symbolised energy and excellence; and in “its first year” was at its fullest and most perfect development; so was Christ all “comely,” in the fulness and perfection of His days.

4. Was it *without blemish*? Christ was altogether spotless and faultless (1 Pet. i. 10; Heb. vii. 25).

II. *With regard to its SACRIFICIAL OBLATION.*

1. As the lamb was *set apart four days* before it was slain, so Christ was, during the last four days of His life, under examination, preparatory to His death (Matt. xxi. 1).

2. As the lamb was *eventually slain*, so was Christ (Rev. v. 9).

3. As its death was *witnessed by the entire assembly*, so was Christ publicly crucified (Luke xxiii. 18).

4. As the time of the sacrifice was "at even" (v. 5), so was our Saviour's death (Matt. xxvii. 45; Luke xxiii. 44-46). [Comp. Sleigh's *Aids to Reflection*.]

III. With regard to the PASCHAL FEAST.

1. The eating of the passover typified that we find in Christ our life, our nourishment, and sufficiency (Jno. vi. 35, 53-56).

2. The spirit in which the feast was to be partaken is indicated in the significance of the "bitter herbs," suggesting a penitential spirit and bitter mourning, in remembrance of our sin (Zech. xii. 10).

3. The regulations for partakers of the feast are significant. Eaten "with haste," indicates the urgency with which we should receive Christ; with "loins girded," denotes our willingness to quit the past for a pilgrim life of faith; with "feet shod," suggestive of rough ways to be resolutely trod; "staff in hand," declares our defence and support.

4. The feast being eaten in companies, teaches the Christian law of union in Church fellowship, that religion may not be isolate. Christ gathers His disciples together at the feast of His Supper, and says, "Eat ye all of it, drink ye all of it."

O wondrous emblems! setting forth His death from whom our life doth flow;
Never can finite reason sound such depths of love, such depths of woe.

Topic: THE PASSOVER (Vv. 5-8).

The Exodus of Israel from Egypt, one of the most prominent landmarks in the history of the nation. The feast of the Passover was the significant memorial by which the memory of that event was perpetuated (Exod. xii.). Not only individual, but national deliverance ought to be remembered.

I. THE HALLOWED MEMORIES IT EMBALMED.

The final plague with which Pharaoh and his people were visited led to the emancipation of Israel, and their departure from Egypt. The miraculous preservation of Israel, the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt, and the means employed to accomplish both were brought to mind when the Passover was observed as the anniversary of the solemn night of death that gave birth to the Hebrew nation.

II. THE SACRED DUTIES IT INDUCTED.

(a) *Humility*. Their own arm had not gotten them the victory, they had been redeemed from abject poverty and slavery. They had nothing in themselves to boast of when they remembered the hole of the pit from which they had been digged. (b) *Thankfulness*: seeing Jehovah had interposed in such a critical juncture for their race, He deserved their heartfelt gratitude, jubilant as the song of Moses, bright as the beautiful sea. (c) *Gladness* that they had escaped exacting toil, cruel oppression, bitter bondage; before them was a career of honour and blessedness, well might their hearts leap for gladness and their feet move with joyful steps. (d) *Consecration*. At the Exodus, Israel started on a new life. Henceforth the people were to be known as the servants of Jehovah, set apart and sanctified for His glory. They were not their own; to them His divine will would be communicated, and through them made known to the world.

In the Gospels the Passover is identified with the feast of unleavened bread, which began and closed with a Sabbath, suggesting the idea of a complete consecrated life. Only unleavened bread was to be eaten at the feast; in all our Christian service the leaven of evil is to be scrupulously avoided. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, let us keep the feast with *humility, solemnity, thankfulness, gladness, devoutness, and consecration*.

III. THE GLORIOUS EVENT IT FORESHADOWED.

About the typical character of the feast there is no room for doubt (see

1 Cor. v. 7, 8). (a) *In the deliverance it affected*; from slavery, degradation, misery, death. (b) *In the means employed for deliverance*; sacrifice of appointed lamb, sprinkling of its blood, etc. (c) *In the co-operation the means demanded*; the people were to believe, obey, fulfil the conditions laid down. (d) *All who embraced the opportunity, and adopted the means, were saved*. Not one house was visited by death where the blood had been sprinkled upon the doorposts and lintel. The above considerations may all be applied to what Christ has done and is for us, and to our duty in relation to His great atonement.

Conclusion. (a) *There was but one way of deliverance*. (b) *It was not invented or suggested by man, but by God*. (c) *Only practical faith availed*. So in relation to the Gospel. The excellence of Christ our Passover is seen in that while many victims were slain in Egypt and they were only efficacious for a select people and one period of time, the Lamb of God by one offering atoned for the whole world and all time. Indifference, as well as unbelief in, and rejection of the world's Redeemer, will be visited with sore punishment, for "how can we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"—F. W. B.

Topic: THE SHEAF OF THE FIRST FRUITS (Vv. 10, 11).

The book of nature is a fruitful study. In all God's works He strives to fix attention on Himself. In feeding the body He would show Himself to the soul.

Harvest time nears. The early promise is fulfilled (Gen. viii. 22). The firstlings of the grain are ripe. The fields of barley wave their golden heads. But shall the gatherers heedlessly reap, and thoughtless hands store the garner? No. On the altar the first sheaf must be laid.

I. THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD MUST PRECEDE EVERY WORK.

The first act of harvest adores the harvest's Lord. The first sickle cuts an offering for God.

1. *Thought of God* should precede all. Let morning dawn with Him. Let adoration introduce each task. Nothing is well done unless begun with God. All is disorder except the First be first.

2. The priest *uplifts the sheaf on high*. The first-fruits represent the entire produce of the fields. The act is a confession that all earth yields is *from* God, and belongs *to* God. Man's toil and care may be employed, but all results are divine.

3. The offering of the sheaf is but *small*. He who might justly claim the harvest, takes but one sheaf. The large abundance remains for man's supply. Thus, while a bounteous Hand fills our garners, while valleys bend with corn and clouds distil their fatness, the Giver makes His small demand. But the little God asks is an acknowledgment of His claim. He is no hard task master; but He requires that He be first in our thoughts: He then gives abundantly into our lives and hearts.

4. But in this demand He shows that all must not be consumed on *self*. We cannot take a sheaf to God now: but the poor need food: famished souls cry for the Word; the heathen perish for the bread of life. Such are the claims on our first fruits.

II. IN THIS HARVEST SHEAF CHRIST IS SET BEFORE THE SEEKING HEART.

1. The name of "first fruits" leads by a straight path to Him. The Spirit's voice is very clear: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept"; "Christ the first fruits: afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 20, 23).

2. The *day of offering* next seals this truth. On the morning which succeeds the Paschal Sabbath the sheaf is waved. On this same dawn *Jesus arose*.

Following this clue, let us gaze on this type. That sheaf—

(a) Brings back thought of the *seed cast into the ground*. Buried in the earth: the frost imprisoned it: storms sealed its interment: but at last it rose into life: victory over death.

Thus Christ descended to the grave: life seemed extinct: the grave made fast its bars: but in vain. He came forth—the First fruit from the dead.

(b) That sheaf relates a tale of *triumph*. It symbolises success. Death fails to hold Him. He is “declared the Son of God with power by His resurrection.” Raise high before God, therefore, your sheaf. It is the exultation of the believer. “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more”: and “because I live, ye shall live also.”

Though that sheaf is alone before God, yet it predicts and guarantees the after harvest.

III. THE HARVEST INGATHERING IS SURE TO FOLLOW THE FIRST FRUITS.

1. Already it is fulfilled in *the harvest of upraised souls*. Believers have been “raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

2. *The rising dead as they quit their graves* shall perfect the fulfilment of this sign. How changed shall they come forth! Decay will bloom into unfading youth: the mortal will be robed in immortality. “We shall be like Him!” The first sheaf predicts your resurrection.

3. A *world-wide harvest*, a glorious prospect is promised; when the whole mass of sanctified and ripened souls shall be reaped from earth’s fields and garnered in glory.—Based on *Dean Law’s* “CHRIST IS ALL.” [See Addenda to Chapter *Harvest First fruits*].

Topic: PENTECOST AND THE SPIRIT (Vv. 15, 16).

The feast of Pentecost was celebrated on the fiftieth day after that in the Passover week on which the wave sheaf was presented to the Lord, and was marked by offering to Jehovah two loaves. It was also known by the name of the “Feast of Harvest,” from its coming at the close of the wheat harvest.

It was attended by *vast multitudes* (comp. Acts ii.), was “a holy convocation,” and it was a day of *gladness and joy* (Deut. xvi. 14).

I. GRATITUDE EXPRESSING ITSELF IN JOYOUS DEDICATION.

1. Of *themselves*; 2. Of their *property*. For Israel not only renewed their self-consecration in worship and sacrifices laid on God’s altar, but also their possessions in the harvest reaped, as expressed by the waving of the baked loaves before Him.

(a) Pentecost thus reminded Israel of their *dependance* on God for the *produce of their fields*, as well as for *higher good*. God is the God of *providence* as well as of *grace*. He is supreme alike in the natural and spiritual worlds. Laws are everywhere the action of His power. “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts xvii. 25).

(b) But *God will be acknowledged* in His gifts and doings. Pentecost, therefore, excited a spirit of *thankfulness*; it kept alive in Israel the feeling of being God’s in what they possessed as well as in what they were. Yet what belongs to Him *He claims*. It is not only ourselves, therefore, that we are to yield to Him, but what we *have*. The burnt offering must not only be laid on the altar, but the baked loaves waved before Him as alike His property.

II. SACRED ASSOCIATIONS CONNECTED WITH THE PENTECOST FESTIVAL.

1. *Historic*. It was commemorative on the *giving of the law on Sinai*. With the chronological data of Exod. xix. before us, it is clear that it was on the fiftieth day after the departure of Israel from Egypt, *i.e.*, after the first Passover, that the law was given, and the national existence of the Hebrews was in-

augurated. Thus *God's manifestation of Himself* to Israel on Sinai, and *His words* to Moses, effected for His wilderness Church what *His Spirit's advent* and *the gift of new tongues* effected for the Christian Church at Jerusalem.

2. *Typical.* It looked forward as well as backward. As the Passover foreshadowed the death of Christ, so did the Pentecost the Spirit's descent. At the Feast of Pentecost the Holy Ghost, who writes the law of God, not on tables of stone, but on "the fleshy tables of the heart," was poured out.

III. THE HARVEST BOUNTY SUGGESTS THE FULNESS OF THE SPIRIT WHICH MARKED THE CHRISTIAN PENTECOST.

1. The endowments of the Christian Pentecost were first for the apostles, giving them *qualification for their life-work*, and ensuring the maintenance of their joy of faith. For "the promise of the Father" they were bidden by Christ to wait at Jerusalem. Until the Holy Ghost came upon them they were not "endowed with power," not prepared to be "witnesses for Christ in Jerusalem and all Judea," etc.

2. But this baptism of power is what *every child of grace needs and may possess*. Discipleship is not of itself sufficient for all that we are required to be in *character and service*. For these we want the *fulness of the Spirit's indwelling*.

What the Spirit was, in the fulness of His indwelling presence, to the first disciples, He is, in a very real and blessed sense, to all so possessed by Him now: "*strengthened with might in the inner man*," and *equipped for a life-work of witness* for Christ Jesus.

The bountiful harvest shows *God's plenitude*, and *His joy in enriching man*. Certainly He is as willing to bestow the abundance of His Spirit. We receive Him by faith, and according to the degree of such faith. The promise of the Spirit, and the bestowment, are both Christ's, and He will never allow the desire for Him to remain unmet. He is too anxious to see us what the Spirit's indwelling alone will make us, to delay or refuse the answer to prayer for this holy gift.

Then will come into our souls grace in increasing supplies, fulness of assurance of faith and hope, and strength added to strength. So endowed and enriched, we shall "yield ourselves unto God, and our members instruments for righteousness." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and faith" (Gal. v. 22).—Outlined from "*Gospel in Leviticus*," by Jas. Fleming, D.D.

Topic: "A MEMORIAL OF BLOWING OF TRUMPETS" (Vv. 23-25).

With reverberating tones of joy this blast of trumpets ushered in Israel's civil year. At earliest dawn of the "first day of the month" the exhilarating notes sounded forth throughout the camp, the land, of Israel. The music strains were continued all day. It was "a Sabbath," for rest from work, for "an holy convocation," but it was a Sabbath of praise, of music, of delight.

I. TRUMPET TONES AWAKEN ATTENTION.

Sleepers would start from their slumbers at that early blast of the trumpets. What need is there that sleepers should awake! Drowsiness is on the souls of multitudes. They dream on heedlessly, letting life glide away, and salvation lie in neglect. Thought sleeps, interest sleeps, spiritual claims and gospel realities are ignored. Eyes are closed from the "Day Dawn," they see not that the Sun of Righteousness has arisen. "It is high time to awake out of sleep."

Clarion notes startle drowsy souls. *Providence* sends out trumpet blasts. The *preacher's words* may startle sleeping consciences. *God's Spirit* may sound the note of arousing in the soul. "Awake, O sleeper: arise and call upon thy God!"

II. *This "blowing of trumpets" ANNOUNCED THE END OF A YEAR.*

1. A year gone! A cause for joy, for glad trumpet tones. Yes! if the year has been spent well. Yes! if God has been known by us as a Refuge and a Faithful Friend; having kept us by His grace, and magnified His sufficiency for us. Yes! if we have escaped perils and conquered foes, and in review can cry, "O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength; now thanks be to God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." Yes! if our "salvation is nearer," heaven nearer, the reward of faithful service nearer, the goal at hand.

2. A year gone! A startling fact; shrill trumpet notes should stir us to alarm. If not saved, if time has run to waste, if we have let slip from us the opportunities of grace, if we are yet in the bonds of iniquity, if still the door of our hearts is closed upon the knocking Christ, if we are without hope and without God in the world, "redeem the time."

III. *The Feast of Trumpets proclaimed A NEW YEAR OPENED.*

The past is past. Opportunities unused are gone beyond recall. Penitential tears cannot bring back the misspent year. Verily God might "cut us down as cumberers of the ground."

1. But a respite is announced. Another year opens. The Intercessor has pleaded "Let be this year also." It is an extension of opportunity to seek the Lord, for sinners to forsake their ways, and unrighteous men their thoughts, to "flee from the wrath to come," to haste to the "hope set before us," to claim the salvation in Christ offered to the penitent and believing. O use the precious respite mercy gives. The trumpets sound; they tell of hope prolonged: seize the precious hour "while it is called to-day."

2. A new era is set before Israel. Gratitude for past mercies, the memory of God's great goodness, the experiences of redeeming and sustaining grace, incite to service, to consecration. "How much owest thou unto thy Lord? Take thy bill and write quickly." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Let love and thankfulness urge to more diligence, more self-sacrifice, more eagerness in use of privileges, more fervent culture of holiness. "Go up higher." "Press to the mark." "Repent, and do thy first works." The trumpet sounds; it rallies the hosts of the Lord to their ranks, to the battle, to brave achievements, to victories for the King.

IV. *Those trumpet blasts were A MEMORIAL OF SINAI.*

When God came down on the cloud-robed peak of the mount, it was a scene of appalling splendour and solemnity. The myriad observers below trembled, "so terrible was the sight." When suddenly a weird trumpet note swelled out on the air, filling all hearts with amaze: and "the voice of the Trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder" (Exod. xix. 19). This "blowing of trumpets" was "a memorial."

1. It led them back to solemn thoughts of God. Because Jehovah was now more graciously dwelling among them in the Holy place, He was still the God of Sinai. We must not presume on His grace. How august and dreadful is He with whom we have to do. "Fear before Him, all ye saints."

2. It recalled the law, as the basis of their covenant relationship. "Do this and live." Such were the terms on which they stood to Jehovah. Transgress, and you die. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." But who can? Is the trumpet blast, therefore, a summons to judgment? It need not be. It declares the standard for righteousness, only to emphasize the mercy which has provided sacrifice that the sinner might propitiate and live.

V. *Assuredly the trumpet is A SYMBOL OF THE GOSPEL.*

"Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound" (Psa. lxxxix. 15). "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega" (Rev. i. 10).

1. *Christ's voice should be heard* in that "blowing of trumpets." It sounds forth in the announcements of the gospel through the Scriptures, through all who tell the message of hope and grace. Jesus speaks to the heart affrighted by the clamour of Sinai's awful peals. The Gospel is the silvery note sending a thrill of comfort and gladness into condemned souls. It is as "music in our ears."

2. *Christianity is a trumpet-toned herald*: hastening through the heavens with the calls of grace to all mankind. "I saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach" (Rev. xiv. 6). All who know the good news should take up the trumpet of Truth and send out the tidings over all the earth.

3. *The Gospel is a joy note* to the world. Not "a voice of thunder," but of sweet melody. It brings "good tidings of great joy"; salvation to the uttermost; cleansing of all sin; a precious Saviour; an upraised cross; a "new covenant" of redemption; of an opened door in heaven for all who cleave to Jesus. Glad indeed are these trumpet tones; they calm the sinner's fears; allure the troubled to peace, win the anxious to faith.

All around us are sad notes: O sorrow, O oppression, O anguished prayer, O dark despair. Earth is a scene of Babel discord. The air clangs with confusion.

But let the Gospel trumpet blow. Its sweet harmonies float, as did the songs of angels over Bethlehem fields, soothing unrest, heralding "peace and good will," thrilling hearts with joy.

And still its heavenly music floats
O'er all this weary world.

VI. A prophetic thought is stirred by those trumpets: *they foretell* THE RESURRECTION SCENE.

The close of time will arrive; the great white throne will be set; the mighty angel will set his foot on the sea and another on the land, and declare that time shall be no more. And then "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. iv. 16). From opened graves the dead shall arise; and you with them.

Listen expectantly for that trumpet blast. At such an hour as ye think not it will sound. Sleepers were awoke when at early dawn the priests blew their trumpets on this Hebrew festival. And *sleepers will awake* at the judgment blast. And "all that are in their graves shall come forth." Be ye therefore ready, so that that day should not overtake you unawares.

Fill the interval with a wise use of life. The Gospel trumpet offers you a perfect righteousness; the judgment trumpet will demand it. The Gospel trumpet bids you robe yourself in spotless garments: the judgment trumpet will call to condemnation those who are not "white and clean," covered with the robe of salvation. Such will arise from death's sleep glad "to meet the Lord in the air, and so to be for ever with the Lord." [See Addenda to chapter "BLOWING OF TRUMPETS."]

Topic: THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS (Vv. 24, 25).

The feast of trumpets is mentioned here for the first time. It was kept on the first day of Tisri, with which the civil year began. It was a time of holy rest, and communion with the Lord through an offering made by fire unto Him. The feast was kept by Israel when they took possession of Canaan, and was characterised by great joy and gladness. The feast was suggestive of—

I. THE COMPLETION OF THE WORK OF CREATION.

The earth (fitted to be the abode of man) was clad in beautiful garments; presented an aspect of great fertility and richness. The Lord pronounced it

good; "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The beginning of the civil year, when the harvest was ripe, and the air was ringing with the shouts of harvest home, would seem suggestive of the beginning of human history, which began amid scenes of plenty, as the first human pair came through the gate Beautiful.

II. THE PROMULGATION OF THE LAW FROM SINAI.

The sounding of the trumpet from morning to evening would remind Israel of the time when the sound of the trumpet called attention to the promulgation of those statutes, in the observance of which they would please Jehovah, and show to the world that they were His people. The feast would call attention to the divine voice, the trumpets would proclaim His right to be heard, the imperative duty of the listeners to hearken and obey.

III. THE BLESSINGS OF THE DEPARTED YEAR.

Israel had been spared through another year. God had been faithful to His promises, all their wants had been supplied. It became them to let their voices be heard in loud and joyful notes; the music of their hearts echoed in vocal praise.

IV. THE BOUNTY OF THE DAWNING YEAR.

As their storehouses were filled with plenty, and their presses burst forth with new wine, anxieties about the future would be allayed, provision would be abundant for man and beast. Israel would have wherewith to satisfy their physical necessities, and to offer the various sacrifices in connection with the tabernacle services. The trumpets would call to thankfulness and cheerful acknowledgment of indebtedness. However rich and abundant the oblations might be, they ought to be presented in the willing and gladsome spirit such words as these inspire, "Of thine own have we given thee; thine is all the glory."

V. THE NEED OF WAKEFUL ALACRITY IN THE SERVICE OF JEHOVAH.

Trumpet peals rousing and stimulating; and, when blown by the priests, loud calls to hearty service. Though no servile work was to be done, yet sacred services were to be performed, solemn sacrifices offered. Israel was to awake and put on strength, enter with special enthusiasm upon the work of the Lord. External material aid may be consistently used to awaken attention and quicken devotion. Illustrative also of—

VI. THE INAUGURATION OF THE GOSPEL AGE.

At the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost was given, and the first fruits of the Gospel harvest were gathered in, the apostles went forth lifting up their voices like trumpets, preaching Jesus and the resurrection. Isaiah in predicting the Gospel age said, "In that day the trumpet shall be blown"; and verily the sound of the Gospel trumpet went speedily through all the earth. John in apocalyptic vision heard the divine voice as the sound of a trumpet; and the voice of God as of a trumpet shall, in the last great day, awake the dead to judgment. Let us begin each year with a feast of trumpets, and each day with a loud call to privilege and duty, that our lives may be one continuous litany and psalm. Then when the morn of eternity dawns, and the shadows of earth flee away, we shall join in singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.—*F.W.B.*

Topic: THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES (Vv. 33-44).

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, five days after the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles began, and (according to additional information gathered from Numbers and Nehemiah) the sacrifices, which were many, gradually decreased in number to the eighth day. Israel was very remiss in observing the feast on entrance upon Canaan; for, from the time of Joshua to Nehemiah, it was unobserved. Obviously, the object of the feast was to keep

alive the spiritual life of the nation, to perpetually renew its youth: The feast was calculated—

I. TO PERPETUATE AMONG THE PEOPLE THE MEMORY OF MIRACULOUS EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THEIR NATIONAL HISTORY.

“That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.” *Emancipation, protection, preservation*, all the miraculous events connected with the exodus from Egypt and the pilgrimage through the wilderness, exhibited the faithfulness and goodness of the Lord. It would be well for Israel to be put in constant remembrance of these things. Such interpositions suggested their *dignity and duty* as a people, and their *destiny* among the nations of the earth. It is good for all peoples, in all time, to remember great national deliverers and deliverances. Surely, *He* should be lovingly remembered who has redeemed us from the bondage of sin and death!

II. TO AWAKEN IN THE PEOPLE GRATEFUL JOY FOR THE COMPLETED FRUITFUL SEASONS OF THE YEAR.

This the crowning, most joyous feast of the year. What a glad picture the people would present, as they sat under their booths rejoicing with the joy of harvest, the roads and fields vocal with the sound of happy voices, and the courts of the Lord resounding with sacred praise.

Permission to indulge in such innocent pleasures taught the people that Jehovah delighted in their happiness as well as in their holiness. “God (as Cowper puts it) made the country, man the town.” The verdure of the grass, the hues and fragrance of the flowers, the abundant foliage of the trees, the luscious fruits and golden corn, remind us that God would have us experience many joys in our earthly pilgrimage, while we look forward to the Canaan of ineffable beauty and undisturbed repose. In the gospel we have provision for all our spiritual wants, *rich, full, free*.

III. TO ENJOIN UPON THE PEOPLE CONSTANT OBEDIENCE TO THE REVEALED COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD.

The large number of sacrifices connected with the feast, and the septennial public reading of the whole law, would train and exercise the people in obedience, revive their knowledge of the Lord and acknowledgment of His sovereignty. In later times there was the additional custom of a solemn libation of water fetched from the pool of Siloam every day at the time of morning sacrifice. The whole ceremony was characterised by great enjoyment and delight. The feast may be regarded as illustrative, if not typical, of (a) *The pilgrim character of the believer's life*. Here we dwell in frail tenements, and have no continuing city. (b) *The advent of the Messiah*; when “God in very deed dwelt with man on the earth.” At one of the celebrations of this feast, Jesus said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” (c) *The latter-day glory of the Church militant*. (d) *The glorious state of the Church triumphant*; where the redeemed are represented as waving palm branches, indicative of peace, conquest, and joy. The Feast of Tabernacles followed closely on the Day of Atonement, thus joy sprang out of sorrow. Blessedness that flows from mediation and sacrifice is incomparable joy. Let sin be atoned for and removed, holiness and happiness inevitably ensue.—*F.W.B.*

Topic: FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES AND INGATHERING (Vv. 33-44).

It is a mistake to suppose that the Old Testament religion was only stern and repressive. It had its side of restraint and self-denial, and thence sprang much of all that was best in the character and happiness of the people. But it had

also its side of cheer and hope, indeed of festivity. Its weekly Sabbaths were intended to be days of delight ; so were its New Moons. Then each season had its great festival, save winter ; the spring its Passover ; the summer its Pentecost ; the autumn its Feast of Tabernacles. Each was a joyful feast ; but the last, falling on a time of the year when all hearts would naturally be glad, was the most joyful of all.

Note some of its more instructive features.

I. IT WAS A PROTRACTED RELIGIOUS MEETING.

As a "feast unto the Lord" it began and ended with a "holy convocation," a coming together for religious ends.

1. These were held in the *central sanctuary of the nation*. All male Israelites were required to attend.

2. The *highly religious character of this feast* appears in the unusual number of its gifts and sacrifices.

3. All the Hebrew festivals were intended to *inspire patriotism*, and promote the *separation of Israel* from other nations ; to remind the people of their covenant relations to God, and bind them in loyal piety to Him.

We should value occasions for holy convocation ; and use them for such religiously joyous ends.

II. IT WAS A THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S BOUNTY IN A COMPLETE HARVEST.

It came at the end of the year, when they had "gathered in the fruit of the land" (v. 39), and was therefore—

1. A *public recognition of divine faithfulness* in giving rain in due season, causing the earth to yield her increase. Hence it was called the "Feast of Ingatherings" (Exo. l. xxiii. 16).

2. A *feast of grateful gladness*. The sixty-first Psalm, supposed to be sung at this feast, well expresses the thought supreme in devout minds. This expressed itself in—

3. A *profusion of gifts and sacrifices*. Multiplied and great mercies demanded the more abounding recognition. [See *Addenda* to chapter, HARVEST FIRST-FRUITS.]

III. IT WAS A COMMEMORATION FOR MERCIES ATTEMPERING HARDSHIPS AND DANGERS.

A part of the command ran thus : "All that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (43, 44).

In such a sight—a whole people deserting their homes, and lodging in temporary arbours, decorated with foliage and fruit-laden boughs—there was something picturesque and inspiring. But—

1. It was also an *impressive memorial*. Israel was again "abiding in tents according to their tribes," as he did when Balaam looked from the heights of Moab, and said, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel," etc.

2. The celebration commemorated *all the diverse experiences of the wilderness*. Not its trials alone, but its triumphs and blessings. Doubtless the materials of the booths were reminders of the different stages of their wilderness journey ; the "branches of palm trees," of the valleys and the plains ; the "boughs of thick trees" of the bushy mountain heights ; the "willows," of the refreshing water brooks.

3. For all times *commemoration has its uses*. To fire the patriotism of a nation, it is helpful to rehearse the memories of its founders and defenders. To rekindle enthusiasm in a noble cause, it is a good thing to recall its early struggles and victories. Stimulus is often found in keeping great days in personal history.

The manner of modern times is to foster pride by celebrating human exploits ; that of ancient Israel was to kindle gratitude and stir obedience by recalling the goodness of God.

IV. *In every aspect this festival was AN EXPRESSION OF THE JOYFUL SIDE OF RELIGION.*

A feast. The people were to "rejoice before the Lord their God" (v. 40). Comp. also Deut. xvi. 14, 15. There was a grand illumination of the court of the Temple; an evening procession in holiday attire, and with branches of myrtle and palm and willow; and a going in *mass* for water, which was poured out at the foot of the altar, while there arose the chant—accompanied with glad music—"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

It was concerning this ceremony that there sprang up the proverb: "*Whosoever hath not seen the rejoicing at the drawing of this water, hath never seen rejoicing at all.*"

1. This joy had its root in the *sense of inward peace which comes from the pardon of sin.* This feast followed close upon the Day of Atonement.

2. The joy was *neither selfish nor lawless.* Gifts for the poor designated it; intimating that life has no true delight that can be separated from either love or duty.

3. How *false the theory that religion, if earnest, is joyless!* It has indeed its restraints and obligations, its laws and duties; but this is a beneficent arrangement, giving zeal to our gladness. Between religion that knows how to be steadfast, self-denying, and heroic, and that

Mirth that after no repenting draws

there can be no quarrel. They go often and well together.

V. *This feast was a type of A GREATER FEAST NOW PREPARING FOR GOD'S PEOPLE.*

Archbishop Trench has reminded us that "on this rests the possibility of a real and not merely arbitrary teaching by parables, that the world of nature is throughout a witness for a world of spirit, proceeding from the same hand, growing out of the same root, and constituted for that very end. All lovers of truth readily admit these mysterious harmonies, to them the things of earth are copies of things of heaven." In this feast there is—

1. *A prophecy of the latter-day rest and joy of the earthly church* (Zec. xiv. 16, 20; and also Isa. xxv. 6, 8). Under the abundant outpouring of God's Spirit, closer fellowship with God and fuller bliss.

2. *The heavenly feast following "the harvest which is the end of the world."* John beheld the scene: "I looked, and behold a great multitude, palms in their hand," etc. (Rev. vii. 9, 10).

Evermore they shall drink of God's river of pleasure. They shall be satisfied with delight.

What assurance have you that, when that bright day dawns, you will witness its rising beam; that when that great feast is spread, you will share in its delights? —*Rev. H. M. Grant, D.D.*

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER XXIII.

V. 2.—*Theme:* "FEASTS OF THE LORD."

I. SACRED LIFE IS ITSELF A FESTIVAL.

1. Divine in its *origin.* "Feasts of the Lord."

2. Blissful in its quality. "*Feasts.*"

3. Enriched with *frequent* delights.

"Feasts;" plural, for God breaks in upon the Christian career, itself a festival, with times of refreshing and incidents of gladness giving "days of heaven on the earth."

II. THE CHRISTIAN YEAR HAS ITS FESTIVITIES.

1. *Time is interrupted by sacred seasons.*

A pause in the rush and absorption of earthly affairs, that God and His doings may have attention and commemoration.

2. *Human life is refreshed by the blessings of religion.*

Even the godless share in the relief and rest which our holy-days, "holidays," bring them.

3. A witness to *what is God's will for man.*

That all should have a joyous life even here.

That heaven should make earth glad; for happiness has its spring in the Lord.

III. GRACIOUS SEASONS ARE APPOINTED FOR THE CHURCH.

God would fill His people with blessedness; so there comes to them:

1. *Days of rest and gladness.* The Sabbath, the anniversaries of great gospel incidents.

2. *Special times of revival.* For quickened life; renewed power; aroused earnestness; rekindled love; awakened prayerfulness; enlarged prosperity.

3. *Foretaste of heaven's joy.* He feasts His saints with felicities at gracious seasons, and the fulness of His favour satiates their souls. In such wondrous seasons, "whether in the body or out of the body, God knoweth," they rise into "third heavens," they find a "feast of fat things" provided, and enter the very "banqueting house" of heaven's bliss.

V. 10.—Theme: FIRST FRUITS SHEAF. "Then shall ye bring a sheaf of firstfruits."

The celebration of this feast could not take place till Israel entered Canaan; for during the pilgrimage through the wilderness there was neither sowing nor reaping, the daily descent of manna from Heaven being adequate to supply daily bread. The first sheaf presented before the Lord *hallowed* and *guaranteed* the complete harvest. It exhibited—

I. THE DEPENDENCE OF ISRAEL UPON THE LORD. The Holy Land was the Lord's. Israel could not claim it by right of inheritance, purchase, or conquest. Being a free gift, reaping a harvest they had not sown, it was fitting the first-reaped sheaf should be presented in a solemn act of worship, acknowledging that the harvest was the outcome of divine goodness and power. Israel would be as much dependent upon divine supply in Canaan as in the wilderness. Israel was to think of themselves last, God was to be owned and honoured first. Though selfishness would reverse the order, the command is, to honour the Lord with our substance, and the firstfruits of all our increase.

II. THE DELIGHT OF ISRAEL IN THE LORD. A meat offering accompanying the waving of the barley sheaf constituted the service a *feast*, not a fast. The fine flour, wine, and oil indicated that the feast was eucharistic, a season of social and sacred joy. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." Offerings should be presented ungrudgingly to Him who loads us with His benefits. The acceptability of offerings depend upon *what* and *how*, as well as upon *what* and *when* presented. The cheerful and loyal heart will devise liberal things.

III. THE DEDICATION OF ISRAEL TO THE LORD. The waving sheaf would excite the people to *gratitude*, and symbolise their devotion to the glory of Jehovah. The thank-offering was accepted through the burnt-offering, denoting that all service must have its basis in complete self-surrender. The sheaf of first fruits, was an earnest that the

whole harvest would be gathered in, and it consecrated the whole. Christ is the "First fruits of them that slept." He rose on the day of the offering of first fruits of Jewish harvest, as an earnest that all who are one with Him, shall be safely gathered in at the harvest home of the world. All our gifts to the Lord must be preceded by complete self-consecration, through the mediation and merits of our Great High Priest.—*F. W. B.*

V. 14.—Theme: SELF IN ABEYANCE. "Ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God."

I. MAN'S SINFUL TENDENCY IS TO INTRUDE SELF BEFORE THE LORD.

1. Through *impatient self-will*.
2. Through a *weak craving after visible enticements*.
3. Through a *habit of ignoring God* in his life.

4. Through the infatuation which *places material gains above spiritual interests*.

II. SUBORDINATION OF SELF IS THE LAW OF RELIGION.

1. God is to be *first* in our affections.
2. Our gratitude should prompt us to *quick recognition of what we owe Him*.
3. Saved by Him, and enriched by His gifts, how natural that He be *adored with alacrity and served with delight!*
4. Christ *Jesus sacrificed self for us*: and has left us an example to make Him *our first thought*.

III. SELF-REPRESSION IS REWARDED WITH RICH BESTOWMENTS.

1. We deny ourselves but for a *brief season*. "Until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering."

2. God gives us a *present reward* for every denial of self for His pleasure: in the approval of conscience, and the witness of His Spirit, and the happiness of a hallowed life.

3. *Earthly denials and crosses* for Christ's sake and God's service, quickly yield to the rich feasts of the heavenly world.

(a) If it become true of any in this *self-indulgence*, "Remember that thou in thy lifetime receiveth thy good things," the loss will come in the future.

(b) Every subjection of self for God now is a pledge of coming bliss. For "he that *abaseth himself shall be exalted*."

V. 15.—Theme: THE FEAST OF PENTECOST; HARVEST HOME.

There were three divinely appointed harvest festivals among the Jews. The Pentecost feast followed the Passover feast, and the presentation of two loaves before the Lord was a token that the corn had been safely gathered in, and an expression of gratitude and acknowledgment of obligation to Jehovah. If Pentecost did not commemorate the giving of law from Sinai fifty days after exodus from Egypt, or typify the day when the Spirit would be given, symbo-

lized by rushing wind and forks of flame; it certainly signified to the Hebrews:

I. THAT TEMPORAL BLESSINGS OUGHT TO BE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED. Ingratitude is a besetting sin. Among the sins for which Israel was rebuked by the prophets, unthankfulness was the blackest. It led to forgetfulness of the Lord, to sensuousness and idolatry. Rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons come from God. He fills our hearts with good and gladness.

II. THAT SUCH ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OUGHT TO BE MADE WITH BECOMING SOLEMNITY.

The observance of the day as a holy convocation, the abstinence from all servile work, and the presentation of various sacrifices, would invest the feast with great solemnity. The burnt offering would remind the people of the sovereign claim of Jehovah to their complete consecration to His service; the sin offering, of their entire unworthiness of the blessings received. Their festivities were not to be marked by frivolity and levity like Bacchanalian orgies, but by sacred devotion and becoming reverence. All seasons of individual and national rejoicing should be free from sinful indulgences and in harmony with a sanctified conscience enlightened by the word of God.

III. THAT BECOMING SOLEMNITY IN SACRED WORSHIP DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE JOY.

Such a festival would sanctify and sweeten the blessing of the year, induce the people to feel, as they sat at their daily board, that they were in God's banquetting house, and that His banner over them was love. In remembering the poor, Israel would have the exquisite joy that benevolence brings, and exemplify Him who is good to all. The fountain of joy springs up close by the altar of sacrifice and unselfishness. Let us not allow the gifts of Providence to stagnate in the Dead Sea of selfishness, but send them forth to gladden weary hearts and desolate homes. The joy of the Lord is the joy of giving; it is more blessed to give than to receive. Love to God and man sums up the whole law, is the new commandment of the Gospel.—*F. W. B.*

V. 17.—*Theme: BEGINNING THE REAPING, "They are the firstfruits."*

No sickle moved in Israel's land before the sheaf had been brought. God's bounteous hand must be revered before man's taking hand may work. Such was the ordinance. This was more than *due worship*, it was *pure delight*.

There is no joy like gratitude. They most enjoy who most perceive and bless the Giver. Earthly comforts should give wings to praise.

But this holy service discharged—

I. ALACRITY PERVADES THE FIELD OF SERVICE.

With cheerful heart, animated look, and rapid step, the crowding reapers hasten forth,

1. *Rich abundance* meets them on all hands.

2. All is *busy joy*. No hand is idle. Life is brisk with work.

II. TOIL WHEN HALLOWED BY GOD'S SMILE IS SWEET.

1. Labour is delight when *God calls toil*.

2. *Every willing hand* finds occasion. And every religious heart will see occasion to be from God.

III. LIFE IS OUR INGATHERING DAY.

1. All about us is *the harvest*.

2. *Every morning* calls us to reap.

3. God's blessing is on the diligent life.

4. The day is gone too quickly for loitering.

IV. EACH WORKER MAY FIND HIS OWN FIELD OF INGATHERING.

1. Ask, "Lord, *what wilt Thou have me to do?*" and He will show where we should go work.

2. The fields are *various*:

1. The *Scripture field* is ever ready. What have you gathered this day from the Bible page?

2. *Duties are individual* and always close to hand. Not a day but some finished obligation should be gathered in. An empty hand proclaims a graceless heart.

3. The world is a wide-spread scene, *thick with precious souls*. These call for ingathering. Here every grain is priceless.

V. THE REAPING METHODS AND APPLIANCES ARE MANIFOLD.

1. *Personal effort* in the hot day of opportunity.

2. *Direction and inspiration of others* in Christian work.

3. *Prayer for gracious hours*.

VI. HARVEST SEASONS QUICKLY GO.

1. *Scenes of eager toil* are soon cleared. Then no more work can be done. They *die around us*; and are gone! How should we hasten.

3. The *hours of work* glide past. Evening comes on. Life is rapid. Opportunity is swift winged.

Woe to the man whose life is not a reaping day. No idler enters the heavenly rest. DEAN LAW.

V. 22.—*Theme: HARVEST GLEANINGS FOR THE POOR.*

Compare on Chap. xix., 9.

V. 27.—*Theme: THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT.*

The day of Atonement is here introduced as a Hebrew fast. It was a solemn preparation for seasons of rejoicing before the Lord at ensuing feasts. As this great day of expiation has been considered in Homilies on chap. xvi., remarks here upon it may be limited. The day was a call to—

I. REPENTANCE. "Ye shall afflict your souls." Not simply the observance of outward rites indicative of penitence, the mortification of the body; but *thorough, sincere, public* acknowledgment of guilt, *heartfelt sorrow* for sin. The call was *peremptory*, for

the soul was to be cut off from the people that did not truly repent. Sin was to be felt, acknowledged, mourned for, and forsaken, in order that it might be forgiven through the atonement. The same call and conditions obtain in the new dispensation. The day was also a call to—

II. RECONCILIATION. Sin excluded man from God, and necessitated restraint and restriction being imposed on the worshippers. On the day of Atonement, as the contrite Hebrews saw their representative enter the most holy place to offer incense before Jehovah, they would see that the distance had been removed, that God was pleased with, and reconciled to them, as they were reconciled to Him. The day was a Sabbath of rest in all their dwellings, so that their piety and purity were to be known in their homes as well as at the holy altar. Blessed be God, through the one offering on Calvary, all who repent towards God and exercise faith in Jesus Christ, may enter into the most holy place and enjoy Divine fellowship and peace. Thus God reconciles the world unto Himself, and repentance culminates in life.—*F. W. B.*

V. 42.—*Theme: SOJOURNING IN BOOTHS.*

“Ye shall dwell in booths seven days: all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths.”

It was commemorative: see v. 43.

It was significant: of

I. CHRIST TABERNACLING IN THE FLESH.

Three facts are suggestive here of Christ's incarnation being foreshadowed in this feast:

1. *John's use of the idea*, “The Word dwelt tabernacled among us, full of grace and truth” (Jno. i. 14).
2. The people's gathering of *palm branches* when persuaded of His Messiahship (Matt. xxi. 8, 9).
3. Christ chose “*the great day of the feast*,” of this very feast of tabernacles, to identify

Himself with one of its incidents. While the waters of Siloam were being, on that eighth day, poured on the altar steps, “Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink” (Jno. vii. 37, 38).

4. Yet *His tabernacle life was not permanent*. Booths are for pilgrims, not residents. And Jesus was here but for a season. “Yet a little while I am with you.”

II. MAN'S INSECURE TENURE ON THE EARTH.

1. A booth of boughs and palms *would quickly wither*: so does our frail tabernacle. What are these bodies but tents of drooping flesh?

2. It was, moreover, *occupied but a few days*: and we are resident in this body only a brief season. Think not to stay long here.

3. The materials of the booths were *of the earth and returned to the earth*: mere growths from the soil, soon to decay and go back to the soil. Even so, “dust thou art,” etc., “of the earth earthy.”

III. A CHRISTIAN'S PILGRIM CAREER.

Israel dwelt in booths through their journey from Egypt to Canaan (see v. 43).

1. Christ's redeemed are *pressing through a wilderness*. It is not their goal.

2. *Rest and content* are not to be sought here. A temporary accommodation is enough.

3. Earth's discomfort gives *out to desire for the "city of habitation"*. And as Israel, weary with their booth-life, craved the sure abodes of Canaan, so we “earnestly desire to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; for in this we groan, being burdened.”

4. God's ordinance of a booth life was a *pledge of the certainty of Canaan*. It assured them that He desired them to journey forward to the goodly land. And He would have us “set our face Zionward.”

[See *Addenda* to Chapter. FRAIL HABITATIONS.]

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XXIII

SABBATH:

“As if a segment of the eternal Sabbath had been inserted in the days of earth, and men wondered at their own happiness.”

—HAMILTON.

Called by the Jews the ‘Day of Light,’ by the Africans ‘Ossa-day,’ the day of silence; by the Cree Indians the ‘Praying day;’ by the early Christians the ‘Queen of days.’

—BOWEN.

“How still the morning of the hallowed day! Mute is the voice of rural labour, hushed The ploughboy's whistle and the milkmaid's song.”—GRAYHAM.

Of a well-spent Sunday. Philip Henry used to say: “If this be not the way to heaven I know not what is.”

“O, day of rest! How beautiful and fair How welcome to the weary and the old!

Day of the Lord! And truce to earthly care!

Day of the Lord, as all our days should be.”

—LONGFELLOW—*Christus*.

“Oh, what a blessing is Sunday, interposed between the waves of worldly business like the Divine path of the Israelites through Jordan. There is nothing in which I would advise you to be more strictly conscientious than in keeping the Sabbath holy. I can truly declare that to me the Sabbath has been invaluable.”—WILBERFORCE.

“I feel as if God had, in giving the Sabbath, given fifty-two Springs in every year.”

—S. T. COLERIDGE.

“Sir,” said a man addressing a minister returning from church on Sabbath morning, “did you meet a lad on the road driving a cart with instruments for harvesting in it?”

“I think I did,” replied the minister, “a boy with a short memory, wasn’t he?”

“What makes you think he had a short memory, sir?” was the surprised answer.

“I think he has,” answered the minister, “and belongs to a family who have short memories.”

“What in the world makes you think so?” asked the man, greatly puzzled.

“Because,” replied the minister in a serious tone, “the Great God has proclaimed from Mount Sinai, ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;’ and that boy has forgotten all about it.”—*Christian Treasury.*

“Now let us repose from our care and our sorrow,

Let all that is anxious and sad pass away :
The rough cares of life lay aside till to-morrow,

And let us be tranquil and happy to-day.

“Let us say to the world, should it tempt us to wander,

As Abraham said to his men on the plain :
“There’s the mountain of prayer, I am going up yonder,
And tarry you here till I seek you again.”

“To-day, on the mount we would seek for thy blessing :

O, Spirit of holiness meet with us there ;
Our hearts then will feel thine influence possessing,

The sweetness of praise, and the fervour of prayer.”—EDMERTON.

HARVEST FIRST FRUITS :

The Hindoos, when gathering in their harvest, before it is removed for the threshing floor, always put aside a part for their gods.

“Lord of the harvest ! all is Thine !

The rains that fall, the suns that shine,

The seed once hidden in the ground,
The skill that makes our fruits abound !

New every year,

Thy gifts appear,

New praises from our lips shall bound !”

—GURNEY.

“BLOWING OF TRUMPETS” :

“The trumpet ! the trumpet ! the dead all have heard,

Lo the depths of the stone-covered charnels are stirred ;

From the sea, from the land, from the south, from the north,

The vast generations of men are come forth.”

—MILMAN.

FRAIL HABITATIONS.

On a house near Tretsey, in Cheshire, built in 1636, of thick oak framework filled in with brick, was this inscription:—“*Fleves si scires unum tua tempora mensem ; ridis cum non scis si sit forsitan una dies.*” [“You would weep if you knew that your life was limited to one month ; yet you laugh while you know not but that it may be restricted to a day”].

“When I get settled, I’ll—” ; so people are always planning ; but how little they think of the uncertainty that lies in the first word “when !”—BOWES.

A father with his little son is journeying overland to California, and when at night he pitches his tent in some pleasant valley, the child is charmed with the spot, and begs his father to rear a house and remain there ; and he begins to make a little fence about the tent, and digs up the wild flowers and plants them within the enclosure. But the father says, “No, my son, our home is far distant, let these things go, for to-morrow we must depart.” Now God is taking us, His children, as pilgrims and strangers homeward : but we desire to build here, and must be often overthrown before we can learn to seek “the city that hath foundation, whose Builder and Maker is God.”—H. W. BEECHER.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Sanctuary Light ; The Shewbread ; Blasphemy Punished.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

Vv. 1-4.—Cause the lamps to burn continually. There is a Light whose radiance never dims, whose glow never pales—self-luminous and eternally lustrous ; “that is the True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (Jno. i. 9). But our illumined lives, made by grace to shine even

amid the beauty of God's sanctuary, these need constant fostering and care, or their glory would wane. Because the virgins slept, neglecting to trim their lamps, their lights faded; and their sudden cry on awakening was, "Our lamps are *going out!*" (Matt. xxv. 8). There is a human responsibility in this matter of keeping our "lights burning" (Luke xii. 35), and we must "bring the pure oil" by which the flame is fed. Self-watchfulness and prayer for grace are inevitable if Christian character is to shine "*continually.*"

Vv. 5—9.—Bake twelve cakes and set them upon the pure table before the Lord. Every tribe was to be represented in this sacred food laid before the Lord, none exempted. Jehovah asks from the Church in its entirety, from all within His Church, that His table be spread with the sacrificial offerings of their love, that He may feast thereupon with satisfaction and delight. If *He* gives riches of salvation to man, *we* may return Him the offerings of our sanctified lives: "they gave their own selves unto the Lord" (2 Cor. viii. 5). Nor may these sacrifices of righteousness be fitful and intermittent; the loaves must be "set in order before the Lord continually" (v. 8), even as the devotion of our affections and services must be unceasing, a life-long consecration. Such fulness and constancy in our piety renders it "most holy unto Him of all the offerings."

Vv. 10-16.—The Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the Name of the Lord, and cursed. An unwise marriage issued in an evil result. This youth of half blood, in a quarrel with "a man of Israel," vented his malignity in uttering some vile blasphemy against the Holy Name which the Israelite so solemnly revered. A special revelation of "the mind of the Lord" was sought, in order that this new sin in Israel's midst might be judged aright, and every one who heard the blasphemy was summoned to join in the administration of punishment (v. 14). Surely, "if he that despised Moses' law died without mercy," terrible must be the doom of those who insult the grace of God in Jesus, and slight His redemption! (Heb. x. 28, 29). If words of impiety were sufficient to bring death upon an offender, what shall be the consequence of a life of disobedience and of persistent ungodliness! See Rom. ii. 8, 9. Let us guard against anger; it impels to outbursts of wickedness. And let our souls guard jealously the majesty of the Divine Name.

Vv. 17-22.—Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. This was the Mosaic rule of equity: a wrong was punished by demanding its equivalent. Our Lord gave a more gracious law to His followers, whose mission in the world was to expound and foster the spirit—not of revenge, nor even of exact justice, but of forgiveness and love. "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil" (Matt. v. 38, 39). "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves."

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: CONTINUOUS LUSTRE OF A GODLY LIFE (Vv. 1-4).

Darkness might brood over the outer world, but light must continuously glow within the sanctuary. Outside of the Church of Christ there may spread the gloom of error, the night dreariness of delusion; but *within the sanctuary* "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" must shine undimmed. Even so, though men in sin dwell in darkness and love darkness rather than light, *within the Christian soul* there must always shine the marvellous light of the Spirit's illumination and of the Gospel truth.

I. A BEAUTIFUL LIGHT-BEARER: what an ideal picture of the Christian!

"He shall order *the lamps upon the pure candlestick*" (v. 4). A golden candlestick hung with burning lamps! [See Addenda to chapter, *Light-bearers.*] Here note —

1. *A Christian's intrinsic worth.* The candlestick was of "pure" gold. God thus images the preciousness of a redeemed and sanctified life. Worth of character, individual nobleness, must be the basis of a beneficent ministry for others.

2. *A lustrous mission.* On every branch was hung a lamp. Christians live not for themselves, not even to exhibit their own graces. A candlestick, however precious its metal and exquisite its workmanship, is intended to—not hold attention to itself, but to hold up the light, to show light.

3. *Ceaseless luminosity.* There are lights, set up for mariners, which gleam and wane; their stream of lustre is not perennial. But the lamps in the sanctuary burned on with ceaseless glow, with unvarying radiance. Piety should maintain its steadiness, not flicker, not burst into splendour at favoured seasons and then wane. "Your light burning."

4. *Every grace aglow.* In some Christians only one beautiful quality is conspicuous, while all other graces are obscure. But every branch of the candlestick should bear a lamp, and each lamp should be alight.

II. SANCTITY REQUISITE FOR A CLEAR LIGHT.

"They shall bring pure oil olive, beaten for the light."

1. *Christian grace is divinely "pure."* It is the work of the *Holy Spirit*. "Oil" is the Scripture symbol of the Spirit, and "pure oil" marks the essential sanctity of each endowment of the Spirit of God. No other source exists whence man can derive what is unalloyed. This is the only "pure" spring of good; all others are unclean. How "pure" is every bestowment which God's Spirit imparts: *knowledge, feeling, energy, enjoyment, aspiration, hope*—all unalloyed, un-mixed with ingredients of evil!

2. *Christian life emits clear lustre.* As we are, so we produce. A clean fountain yields clean waters. Pure oil produces clear burning lamps. If our minds are spiritually illumined there will be no emission of error: error indicates a human admixture with the Divine enlightenment. So with emotion; "the fruit of the Spirit is love." If we shed forth an unlovely and unloving spirit it intimates the presence of deleterious intermixtures. We need to close the lamps, into which the Spirit's "pure oil" is poured, against all impurities, or our light will not be clear.

III. THE STEADY LIGHT OF TESTIMONY.

"From the evening unto the morning, before the Lord continually." The golden lamp diffused its light without intermission, clear and constant.

1. *The High Priest's responsibility.* "Aaron shall order it, etc." No secondary hands had charge of the light. It was not left to inferior priests. Ministers of the sanctuary may wish and endeavour to keep Christian life alive and Christian lustre radiant in the Church, in the souls of believers; but they fail. Man's work is full of peradventures and frustrations. And there must be no risk in the maintenance of the Sanctuary light. If left to one of the minor priests, or assigned as a trust to many, neglect might ensue. Aaron himself, therefore, was charged with this office of keeping the light continually burning. He typified Christ; and our Lord "*walketh amid the golden candlesticks,*" ever nourishing the life and lustre of His Church.

2. *The continuous testimony of the Church.* Every age has seen the "True Light" shining amid the darkness of error and the delusions of the world. Though virgins slumber who should watch, though indifference to Truth mark the guardians of the sacred light, yet on, age after age, the light has shone, increasingly clear; for Christ keeps the lamps nourished, and will not let the lustre expire. "He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord continually."

(a) Here is the *guarantee of the Church fulfilling her Lord's design.* "Ye are the light of the world;" "holding forth the word of life."

(b) In this lies the *hope of the constancy of the Christian life.* Christ nourishes the flame.

Topic: THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE (Vv. 5—9).

In the Tabernacle we have a type of the "more perfect Tabernacle," in which Deity sojourned during the Incarnation—"God manifested in the flesh." For the physical form of Christ was what the Mosaic Tabernacle was, a shrine of the Divine indwelling, in which He came in nearness and grace to men, holding communion with us.

The table on which the loaves of shewbread were laid was made of acacia wood overlaid with plates of pure gold, symbolic of those sacred and divine qualities of Christ's person and character, which form the basis of all accepted offerings. Only as ourselves or our gifts are *laid upon Christ* can they be allowed a place "before the Lord." Here, then, we have the key to the meaning and suggestiveness of the shewbread: *a consecrated people resting on the perfections of Christ.*

I. CONSECRATION MUST DEPEND FOR ITS ACCEPTANCE UPON THE PERFECTIONS OF CHRIST.

These loaves represented the twelve tribes of Israel, all *dedicated to the Lord*; laid "before the Lord"; surrendered entirely to Him. Every one should be *devoted* to Him, fully and absolutely His.

Is consecration *sufficient of itself* to ensure Jehovah's acceptance? Far from it. It is "the altar that sanctifieth the gift"; and it was the golden *Table*, Christ's pure and glorious perfections, which—becoming the basis on which the consecrated offerings rested—rendered these loaves an accepted presentation.

No acceptance apart from Christ. Full acceptance for all who *place themselves upon Christ.*

II. CONSECRATED OFFERINGS MUST BE ALWAYS OUR CHOICEST AND BEST.

On the Golden Table no common bread might be placed. The profanity that presumes on Christ's perfections, and presents before the Lord faulty things, will ensure rebuke. Christ's grace adds all the element of acceptableness to what we bring; but God will not accept aught that we bring which is not the purest and noblest we can present. "Thou shalt take *fine flour.*" These loaves represented, therefore,

1. *The dedication of what was choicest.* Are any powers too noble, any attainments too exalted, any affections too pure to be yielded to Him?

2. *A generous largeness* in the act of consecration. The loaves were of *double* size: "Two-tenth deals shall be in one cake" (v. 5). Ananias and Sapphira offered "*part of the price,*" and were rejected for their cupidity and grudging. Lay lavishly on God's altar of your best.

III. CONSECRATION REQUIRES TO BE PERPETUALLY RENEWED.

Every Sabbath fresh loaves were to be substituted.

1. There is *no finality* in our devotion. It must be repeated, continued; *perennially fresh.*

2. *Sabbath obligations are as imperious* as Sabbath privileges are precious. We may not greet the holy day for what bliss we can gain or enjoy, without greeting the day by attempting the re-consecration of ourselves and our services to the Lord. Leave "the things which are behind"; come with renewed zeal and love and devotion before the Lord.

3. Each renewal must be *sanctified by our prayers*, and the *merits of Christ Jesus.* That burning of incense symbolises *prayer rising from the offerer*—for prayer hallows our gifts: but it also betokens "*the sweet savour of Christ,*" without which nothing rises as a fragrant offering to the Lord.

Topic: THE LAMPS OF THE TABERNACLE (Vv. 1-4).

Israel had to constantly appear in the Tabernacle to present sacrifices and observe ceremonies; it was essential, therefore, that light should be supplied by

which divine service might be conducted. The golden candlestick was hung with its seven lamps.

I. THEY WERE SYMBOLICAL OF THE POSITION AND PRIVILEGES OF THE HEBREW NATION.

(a) *The light shone in the midst of darkness.* However dense the night might be around the Tabernacle, light was within shining upon the altar, lighting up the holy place. So, where the darkness of moral night enwrapped surrounding nations, Israel had the light of the knowledge of God.

(b) *The light was derived from a divine source.* The lamps were lighted from the sacred fire upon the altar. Israel did not obtain knowledge of divine things from surrounding nations, but direct from Jehovah. Their light was supernatural divine revelation, a lamp unto the feet, light unto the path in the probation and pilgrimage of life.

(c) *The light of the best and purest kind.* Candlestick was of pure gold. Oil was the finest, even good for food. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God incomparable, inestimable.

II. THEY WERE TYPICAL OF THE CHARACTER AND WORK OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

(a) In their *Purity*, (b) *Preciousness*, (c) *Manifoldness*, (d) *Unity*. The Priests had to keep their lamps supplied, for churches need constantly the unction of the Holy One supplied by the Great Head of the Church. Churches are to give light, and save life. Christians are to be lights in the world.

The lamps were *outside the veil* that enclosed the Holy of holies; so the Church is outside the veil of Heaven, but near and preparatory for it.

No nobler ambition of position than this to live and walk in the light of God. Those who refuse the light, and walk in darkness, secure for themselves despair and death. For the righteous there is reserved light for the eventide, in eternity they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.—F.W.B.

Topic: THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD (Vv. 5-9).

Directions, for the construction of the table upon which the shewbread was to be placed, are recorded in the xxv. of Exodus. In this chapter we have directions given for making the shewbread, which was to be placed before the Lord continually. The shewbread, being the "Bread of the presence of the Lord," was a memorial—

I. OF THE NEARNESS OF ISRAEL TO THE LORD.

The twelve loaves, made of fine flour, and placed in two rows upon the *pure table, outside the veil* of the testimony in the Tabernacle, corresponded with the twelve stones in the breastplate of the High Priest, which contained the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; and showed, when he went into the most holy place, not only how near the people were to his own heart, but also how near they were to the presence and power of Jehovah. The bread, brought by the people, represented the staff of their life, their strength, and stay; and the Lord, by admitting and adopting those representations, showed how near He allowed Israel to draw to Him. Bread, representing their life, was perpetually in the Divine presence, and the weekly renewal of the loaves denoted that God permitted the perpetual enjoyment of His presence.

II. OF THE UNITY OF ISRAEL BEFORE THE LORD.

The bread was of one kind and size, and placed on one table, though divided into twelve cakes. So, though Israel was divided into twelve tribes, they were one in the presence of the Lord; and not one of them would ever be despised, so long as they obeyed His commandments, and drew near to Him at His

appointed meeting-place. The Lord had set apart the nation for Himself; they were, therefore, one great family, a special religious community, of which He was sole and supreme Head.

III. OF THE DEPENDENCE OF ISRAEL UPON THE LORD.

Some have suggested that the constantly replenished bread upon the table was a memorial of the manna, to remind Israel how mercifully and miraculously they were fed in the wilderness. Doubtless, the loaves would tend to remind them of that great fact; but they would also remind them how, in Canaan, they were constantly dependent upon the Lord, who crowned the year with His goodness, and gave them the finest of the wheat. The loaves were a slight return and acknowledgment of their constant obligation to the Divine bounty. The shew-bread may be regarded as an emblem of the *pure, sufficient, and satisfying* bread of heaven, which, if a man eat, he shall live for ever.

IV. OF THE DEDICATION OF ISRAEL TO THE LORD.

Pure frankincense was put upon each row of loaves; two vessels of wine were also placed beside them, as an accessory to the service, to be poured out withal, when the incense was offered. Under the old dispensation, bread and wine are always spoken of as means and emblems of bodily strength and cheerful service; and those elements on the table before the Lord denoted the complete dedication of the tribes to His service, while the ascending incense would represent the prayers of the people, the rising of their grateful and gladsome hearts to Heaven. The perpetual presence of the bread symbolized perpetual consecration to the Theocratic King.

V. OF THE ACCESSIBILITY OF ISRAEL TO THE LORD.

The Tabernacle was the Divine dwelling-place, and the acceptance of twelve loaves from the people to lie before the Lord, and to be called "*the Bread of His presence*," showed that He took the people into His friendship and favour. Sabbath after Sabbath, as the incense ascended, the people would rejoice, that through mediation and intercession their offerings were accepted. God is not only pleased with the faith and love, the praises and prayers of His people, but also with their almsdeeds. Let us present an offering to the Lord, *pure, wholesome, valuable, and constant, perfumed* with the merits of the sacrifice of our Great High Priest; thus shall we enjoy the presence of the Lord, and pass the days of our pilgrimage in His favour and fear.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: BLASPHEMY AGAINST GOD'S HOLY NAME (Vv. 10—16).

This is the earliest Scripture record of blasphemy; and, as a newly-developed form of sin, it is treated with rigour for its complete suppression. Yet notwithstanding the swift judgment which overtook this first blasphemer, this is *not the last* Scripture instance of blasphemy.

The provocation or motive to this act of "the Israelitish woman's son" seems to have been mere malignity of thought against God and His people, a wish to wound reverent minds by reviling the Name they revered.

"Swearing is a sin that hath more malignancy in it against God, by how much the less is the temptation to it," says *Burroughs*; and adds, "I verily believe that if God had never made the Third Commandment, there could never have been so many oaths in the world; but it springs from a mere *malignancy of spirit in man against God* because He has forbidden, for no profit can arise from the practice."

Yet, while "no profit" comes to the blasphemer, *great ill and grief are thereby caused to others*. Dr. Scudder was returning from India with his son, and the lad was shocked to hear from an English passenger on the steamboat God's name used in dreadful blasphemy. Accosting him, the doctor said, "This boy has been born

and reared in a heathen country and a land of idolatry; but, in all his life, he never heard a man blaspheme his Maker until now." (See Addenda to Chapter, *Profanity*).

I. THE HISTORIC INTEREST OF THIS INCIDENT.

This act of blasphemy, and the judgment which it called forth on the sinner, I. Brought out clearly that the *Name of the Lord* was *Israel's most solemn trust*. The people evidently felt this, by the horror which the reviler's conduct awakened throughout the whole camp; and by their anxiety to learn how Jehovah regarded the indignity. And this was emphasized by God's sentence of doom upon the blasphemer. A crime must be great which evokes such condign punishment. That Holy Name was to be guarded with jealous awe. The event showed, therefore, how emphatically God will "not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."

2. Introduced the significant custom of *avoiding the very use of the Name of the Lord*. The Jews interpreted this command (v. 16) as prohibiting the utterance of the divine Name under any circumstances, and consequently they never after pronounced the word JEHOVAH. When blasphemy was uttered, the person hearing it laid his hand on the head of the transgressor, to indicate his sole responsibility for the guilty act; and then tore his own robe as a symbol of his shame and alarm. Certainly this may admonish us against an undue freeness in the use of the august Name either in pious speech or effusive prayer.

II. THE HEINOUS QUALITY OF THE CRIME.

1. *The crime defined*. Blasphemy is calumny and insult against the holy God, uttered with the *intention* to defame Him. It not only expresses the hatred of Him in the speaker's own heart, but *aims* at awakening in his hearer's mind an equal loathing of Jehovah and all His claims. It is held up in Scripture as an assault upon the dignity and sanctity of God's name: *Psa. lxxiv. 18; Isa. lii. 5; Rom. ii. 24.*

Ideal blasphemy consists in *intended and direct insult* upon God's honour and holiness. But *relative* blasphemy consists in the *unconscious and indirect effect* of a man's words or acts, as, *e.g.* the uttering opinions or sentiments which dishonour God's name and discredit His word. To allow one's lips to utter with irreverence and familiarity the august Name is near akin to the sin of wilfully maligning Him.

2. *The root of the sin*. This must be traced to the vileness of the human heart, and its natural enmity to God (*Comp. Matt. xv. 19*). It should be noticed also as being the outgrowth of folly and pride (see *2 Kings xix. 22; Psa. lxxiv. 18*). Of all sins, blasphemy is an indication of a mind mad with impiety.

3. Its *great offensiveness* to God and man. How *hateful to God* is evident from the penalties inflicted—[see v. 16 and *comp. Isa. lxxv. 7; Ezek. xx. 27-32., xxxv. 11, 12; Matt. xii. 31, 32*]—how *hurtful to man* is manifest from *Psa. xlv. 15, 16; lxxiv. 10, 18, 22*. They who revere "*this glorious and fearful Name, THE LORD THY GOD*" (*Deut. xxviii. 58*) are distressed at its profanation.

Louis IX. of France branded swearers' lips with a hot iron for this offence, and when some complained that the punishment was too severe, he replied, "I could wish that by searing my own lips I could banish all profanity from my realm."

III. FACTS EXPLANATORY OF SUCH BLASPHEMOUS SPEECH.

The sin of profanity points to:—

1. *An ungoverned tongue*. Speech should be held under control. The tongue may be "set on fire of hell." Allow unbridled speech, and profanity easily grows. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth."

2. *Passionate contention and strife*. Little do men anticipate to what extremes passion will carry them when they enter upon controversy or strife (*Prov. xvii. 14*).

3. *An un sanctified heart*. This man was not a true Israelite: not by birth, not by sentiment. He did not share in the nation's solemn fear of God. Unless a "clean heart and right spirit" is in us, evil may easily get dominion over us.

a. How beautiful the assurance of Solomon—"He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips, the king shall be his friend"! If such purity of heart and grace of speech win an earthly monarch's favour, certainly the King divine will seal with favour now and eternally such qualities of character and conduct.

b. How winning is that Name which in our Christian dispensation we are called to cherish! It is the name of Jesus. And the Father gave it His Son to be "a Name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil. ii. 9, 10); and it is "given under heaven among men" (Acts iv. 12) to be loved as the "sweetest sound on mortal tongue," and the pledge of grace and bliss.

Topic: BLASPHEMY OF SHELOMITH'S SON (Vv. 10-15).

This incident in the career of Israel is similar in character to that of the two sons of Aaron, who offered strange fire upon the altar, thereby insulting the name of the Lord, degrading His sanctuary, and meeting with sore retribution. When Israel left Egypt, a mixed multitude of camp followers proceeded with them into the wilderness. They encamped outside the tents of Israel, and only occasionally entered the sacred enclosure. A son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, had an altercation with a man of Israel, and when striving with him in the camp blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed. Moses at once sought to learn the mind of the Lord concerning such an offence; and the offender was stoned. The sentence was strictly and solemnly carried out, for "the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses." From this incident we learn—

I. THAT THE NAME OF JEHOVAH COULD NOT BE BLASPHEMED WITH IMPUNITY.

In all the oldest MSS. "the Name" stands alone, without the words "of Jehovah." The Hebrew name of God was peculiarly solemn; the Jews, afraid to pronounce it, employed the word "Lord" instead. "Jehovah" meant the undivided, infinite, and eternal existence of deity, and was the incommunicable name by which He made His august might and majesty known. It was enthroned above all the names of heathen deities, and enshrined the Divine Glory. Around it was set a sacred fence. To blaspheme it was a sin of the deepest dye. The Jews have always been marked, even in their most degenerate days, by reverence for the great name of Jehovah. Alas! how the name of the Lord is profaned and blasphemed to-day. Because of swearing the land mourneth. Though blasphemers are not now stoned, yet over their heads hangs the sword of His righteous retribution, threatening them with everlasting shame and contempt.

II. THAT THE SANCTITY OF THE CAMP COULD NOT REMAIN DEGRADED BY THE PRESENCE OF A BLASPHEMER.

It is evident that blaspheming in the camp was a very rare thing, for no sooner had the son of Shelomith uttered his oaths than the people arrested him, and demanded that he might be appropriately punished. This shows their jealousy for the honour of the divine name, and for the moral safety and purity of society. Let us beware, lest the name of the Lord Jesus be profaned, lest He be crucified afresh and put to an open shame. The camp of Israel and the Church of the living God, cannot be profaned without incurring the divine displeasure.

III. THAT THE SIGNAL AND SEVERE PUNISHMENT COULD NOT BE INFLICTED UPON THE BLASPHEMER WITHOUT ACCOMPANYING APPROPRIATE SOLEMNITY.

The sentence was to be executed outside the camp, in the presence of witnesses who heard the words spoken; they were to lay their hands upon the head of the doomed man, to show that he bore his own guilt, and was devoted to expiate it. As we see him publicly and solemnly stoned, we learn how fearful a thing sin is, and how fearful it is to fall into the hands of the living God, except we do so in penitence and prayer. We also learn—(a) *The danger of anger.* (b) *How one sin leads to another.*—F. W. B.

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER XXIV.

V. 2.—*Theme*: THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

That part of the temple exclusively claimed by Jehovah was lighted by a candlestick with seven lamps, which were kept continually burning. This candlestick might possibly be intended to represent Christ as "the light of the world," but certainly shadowed forth *His church* in—

I. ITS PRIVILEGES.

1. Christ declared that the candlestick represented *His church* (Rev. i. 20). Consider—

(1) *Of what it was composed.* Pure gold (Exod. xxv. 31-38). Symbol of the "divine nature" of which saints are made partakers (2 Pet. i. 4).

(2) *How it was supplied.* With purest oil; symbol of the "unction of the Holy One which we have received" (1 John ii. 20, 27), for the enlightenment of our minds and sanctifying of our souls.

(3) *For what purpose it was used.* To shine in darkness, that all who were engaged in God's service might fulfil their duties aright, and that God might be glorified in them (Rev. i. 12, 13).

2. *The priestly attendant prefigured Christ.*

This is affirmed on Christ's own authority (Heb. iv. 14, 15).

(1) He is *constantly employed* in inspecting and trimming the lamps.

(2) *Not a saint escapes His watchfulness*; He sees all our declensions and needs.

(3) He *interposes to correct their dulness*, and to restore them to their wonted splendour (John xv. 2).

II. ITS DUTIES.

The duties of the saints are—

1. To *shine*; that God's power and grace may be magnified among men, and that their fellow-creatures may be benefitted by their instructions, example, and influence (Matt. v. 14-16).

2. To be *receiving more grace from Christ*, in order to their *shining with yet brighter lustre*.

He has "the residue of the Spirit" (Mal. ii. 15); and "of that fulness we must all receive even grace for grace" (John i. 16). Comp. Zech. iv. 2-4, 11-14.

(a) *An important inquiry.* Are you as lights shining in a dark place? Judge yourselves.

(b) *A solemn admonition.* If we would not have "our candlestick removed" we must repent every known defect and seek to be pure as He is pure.

(c) *An encouraging reflection.* He "will not quench the smoking flax" (Matt. xii. 20). "Thou wilt light my candle, etc." (Psa. xviii. 28.)—C. Simeon.

V. 4.—*Theme*: THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH.

"He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord continually."

The high priest caring for the golden candlestick, a type of Christ in His care for the churches (Zech. iv. 2-6; Rev. i. 12-20). God is Light. Light, the firstborn of creation. Light, the beginning of work of grace in soul of man. Christ the Light of the world, a light to lighten the Gentiles, glory of Israel. The lamps before the Lord continually, so churches ever under His eye and care. Consider—(a) *how the light of the lamps was derived*; (b) *it was cheering*; (c) *it was revealing*; (d) *it was beautiful*; (e) *it was constant*; (f) *it was precious*; (g) *it was essential*. Trace analogy in light vouchsafed to Christian church and Christly souls.—F.W.B.

V. 5.—*Theme*: THE SHEWBREAD.

The mystery of the shewbread is applied by some to Christ, who called Himself "the true bread." But the circumstance of the flour "being taken from all the children of Israel," and made into "twelve cakes," denotes that those loaves represented the twelve tribes, *i.e.*, the Church of God.

I. THEIR SOLEMN DEDICATION TO GOD.

"For a memorial, as an offering made by fire unto the Lord." As such, His eyes are upon them continually; and as the frankincense was to God an odour of a sweet smell, so they are accepted by Him.

II. THEIR PERIODICAL RENEWAL.

While one generation is passing away another comes in to supply their place. Never shall God's people be removed but others shall be ready to succeed them. There are always souls prepared to be "baptised from the dead."

III. THEIR ULTIMATE DESTINATION.

The saints, when *their appointed period here is fulfilled*, pass into the possession of Christ, the Great High Priest. "The Lord's portion is His people" (Deut. xxxiii. 9). Christ will claim His people as His "peculiar treasure."

It is the duty of God's people, therefore:—

1. To *consecrate themselves entirely to God*, as being made and "set apart" absolutely for Him (Isa. xliii. 21).

2. To *occupy themselves in prayer and intercession*.

As the loaves represented "before the Lord" all Israel, so Christians should regard themselves as required to "make supplications, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving for all men."

3. To *wait patiently their removal hence*.

"All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my charge come."—C. Simeon.

V. 8.—*Theme*: SPECIAL TIME FOR SERVICE.

"Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord."

Forms may exist without formality. Continual worship does not preclude special

seasons for service. The Sabbath a peculiarly holy and consecrated day. The house of God a specially consecrated place. Special seasons for attention to divine things, (a) *prevent forgetfulness*, (b) *arrest attention*, (c) *secure freshness*, (d) *awaken inquiry*. The bread was never allowed to get mouldy or stale. The frankincense upon each row upon the golden table symbolic of prayer, purity, and praise. In Christian service and worship renewal of strength, refreshment in service, replenishment of sacrifice essential to acceptable worship and spiritual profit. At all times, especially on the Lord's day, there must be renewed consecration to Him before whose presence we bow.—*F. W. B.*

Vv. 13-15.—*Theme: EVIL CONNEXIONS.*

I THE DANGER OF UNGODLY CONNEXIONS.

As a caution against intimacy with the ungodly we are told that "evil communications corrupt good manners," and "the companion of fools shall be destroyed." Whereas in the marriage union such connexion is peculiarly dangerous, because its influence is incessant.

1. *Injurious to the person himself.* It cannot be productive of happiness, or piety. Comp. 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

2. *Injurious to their offspring.* It sorrowfully happens that when parents are divided in relation to religion the children yield most to the influence of the ungodly parent.

II. THE DANGER OF UNGODLY HABITS.

1. *The habits of this young man were bad, a son of wrathful nature and reviling habits.*

2. *The consequences proved fatal to him.* Little did he anticipate the issues of his evil habits. "Sin bringeth forth death."

(a) *Cheek strife and anger in ourselves.*

(b) *Arrest blasphemy in others.*

—*C. Simeon, M. A.*

Vv. 10-16.—*Theme: SLAYING THE BLASPHEMER.*

The narrative shows

I THE EVIL RESULTING FROM CONNEXION WITH THE UNGODLY, "whose father was an Egyptian"—said by the Rabbins to be the man whom Moses killed.

II. *The danger arising from indulgence in passionate anger:* "strove"; the blasphemy was uttered in a quarrelsome passion.

III. THE BLASPHEMY *which, in this case, resulted from such indulgence.*

"Curs'd" the Holy Name of Jehovah; which, the Israelite claimed, belonged to none but Israelites.

IV. THE PUNISHMENT WHICH ALL LIKE SIN MERITS.—*W. Wayland, B. A.*

V. 16.—*Theme: BLASPHEMY.*

"And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death."

A flaming sword here guards the sacred name of Jehovah. Not only were holy services to be rendered to Him, but reverent thoughts entertained of Him, whether uttered or unexpressed. Why were contemptuous or irreverent words uttered impiously against God's name considered as heinous?

I. *Because God's Name reveals and represents Him.* As the Eternal, Infinite, Self-existent, Almighty, Only God.

II. *Because to blaspheme God's Name, indicates the lowest depths of human sinfulness.* The blasphemer is capable of doing every other kind of evil without compunction.

III. *Because such wickedness exerts a most baneful influence upon others.* When contempt is thrown upon the divine name, obedience to divine laws is discouraged, the seeds of rebellion to divine authority are sown.

IV. *Because the Divine Name is worthy of all honour and blessing.*

V. *Because God has justly branled the sin with intensest hatred; and attached to it hopeless doom.*

No sin had denounced upon it a severer judgment by the Son of God. How needful that we constantly offer the prayer, "Hallowed be thy name."—*F. W. B.*

V. 22.—*Theme: THE INEXORABLENESS OF THE LAW.*

"Ye shall have one manner of Law."

To maintain order in the wilderness among the tribes of Israel, it was essential that punishment should not be tardy in its movements, but summary in its infliction. The people needed to be held with a tight rein, chastised with a strong hand. The law of retaliation was,

I. *Strictly just.* Only fair that punishment should be of the kind and extent of the crime, for crime is an offence against man and society, the sin of . . . crime is taken cognizance of by God, He only can forgive it.

II. *Highly salutary.* It would check tendencies to oppression, robbery, and cruelty. Self-love and fear, where principle was absent, would deter from wrong doing for which severe retaliating punishment would ensue.

The law anticipated and foreshadowed the golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should" etc., for the people would seek to do only such things as they would, should retaliation be done to them.

Under the Gospel, magnanimity supplants retaliation. The beau-ideal of Christian manhood is, lamblike innocence, and dove-like gentleness, patience, love.—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XXIV.

LIGHT BEARERS.—The ancient Insignia of the Waldensian Church was a candlestick, with a light radiating its rays across the sur-

rounding darkness, and encircled with seven stars; with the motto, "*Lux lucet in tenebris.*" Anything more appropriately descrip-

tive of the position and history of the Church, it would be impossible to conceive.

PROFANITY. A good old man was once in company with a gentleman, who occasionally introduced into conversation the words,

“devil, dence,” etc., and who, at last, took the name of God in vain, “Stop, sir,” said the old man, “I said nothing while you only used freedoms with the name of your own master, but I insist upon it that you shall use no freedoms with the Name of mine.”

CHAPTER XXV.

The Year of Jubilee.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

Vv. 1-7.—Then shall the land keep a Sabbath unto the Lord. For a whole year the land ceased to be the property of the owner; he might not till the soil, neither gather its spontaneous produce; God asserted *His* ownership by this enactment, and manifested His providential sufficiency for His people by the guarantee of plenty in the harvest preceding. The fallow land acquired new productive powers by this year of rest, as man and beast gather fresh energy by the weekly sabbath. The sabbatic law is a boon to the whole world. They who would secularise the holy day are “madmen, casting firebrands, arrows, and death.” The Heavengiven day’s rest is a solace to man’s fretting life: a quiet interval amid earth’s clamour for thought of his sacred interests; and a gentle admonition of his need of that spiritual rest which burdened souls should seek in Christ Jesus.

Vv. 8-22.—Thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years. On the great day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, the sound of trumpets proclaimed the dawn of a Jubilee year of universal restitution and redemption. Prisoners were liberated, slaves were set free, debtors were absolved, ancestral heritages were restored, the land enjoyed rest from tillage, and its produce was the common lot of all. Beautiful symbolism: of the *joyous proclamation of the gospel liberty* and salvation following upon the sacrifice of the Redeemer; and of man’s emancipation by Christ from the tyranny of sin and Satan, and restoration to the glad liberty of a spiritual life. The restoration of inheritances effected the sharp distinction of the tribes, keeping the families intact. It also neutralised over-reaching and land greed. God’s *promise of abundance* (Vv. 22, 23) to compensate for the Jubilee year’s cessation of agricultural processes carries with it still the lesson that none are losers who serve God even in the face of seeming sacrifice: for “the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich” “’Tis mine to obey, ’tis His to provide.” The *questioning spirit of distrust* (v. 20) is arrested by God’s assurance of prosperity following upon obedience. We may dismiss fear if intent on duty. The path of righteousness is always safe to tread, and none that trust in the Lord shall be desolate.

Let *this supernatural fact in history* be pondered. A miraculous year of superabundance was guaranteed every fiftieth year, as a provision for the Jubilee Sabbath. If it had failed, what would have ensued? Moses would have been proved a deceiver. Pretending to divine inspiration as Israel’s legislator, the Jewish religion would have received utter refutation. The pledge of verses 22 and 23 were a supernatural attestation every fifty years—easily verified or refuted—of the reality of the true religion, and of Jehovah’s personal superintendence over the order of nature and the experiences of man.

A whole nation, age after age, acted on the command to keep Jubilee because satisfied by the preceding sign that the ordinance was indeed divine.

Vv. 23-34.—The land shall not be sold for ever, &c. The twelve tribes held the land of Canaan of Jehovah as His tenants at will, having no right or permission to barter with the soil, which was not their's but *His*. It were well if all dwellers on the earth would consider that no sure or extended tenancy can be maintained by man in this transient abode. Though it is true "that the earth hath He given to the children of men," yet "the earth is the Lord's": even as He gave Canaan by lots to the tribes, yet declared "the land is Mine" (v. 23). Here we have no continuing city; men can call nothing their own; the day of restitution will reverse our possessions; the hour of relinquishment hastens for us all. Death will end all occupancy here. But there is "a better and more enduring substance" for us to inherit, by faith in Christ: and he only is truly rich in heritages who "lays up for himself treasures in Heaven."

Vv. 35-38.—If thy brother be waxen poor. The poor always ye have with you: and the near of kin who have been unfortunate, "fallen in decay," claim special commiseration and leniency. What have we that we have not received? Should we not, therefore, show generosity and kindness?

Vv. 39-55.—Not compel him to serve as a bondman. An Israelite must be treated as became his dignity, however penurious and helpless he might be, for he was God's ransomed and chosen child, a "son of Abraham." Full redemption came with the Jubilee, from every contract and claim. And the day of our redemption draweth nigh: when "the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 21).

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: A SABBATH OF REST UNTO THE LAND (Vv. 1-7).

Agriculturists still recognize the value of this law of one year's rest in seven for the land. Violation of this regulation will exhaust the richest soil, and bring sterility. [See Addenda to chapter, *Sabbath*.] This law proclaimed,

I. DIVINE OWNERSHIP IN THE SOIL.

Just as the reservation of the "seventh day" as a Sabbath asserted God's claim upon man's *time*, so this law affirmed His right to the *soil* man occupies and utilizes.

II. MAN'S HIGHEST INTERESTS ARE NOT MATERIAL AND EARTHLY.

He is here for nobler pursuits and more solemn concerns than to dig and toil, to buy and sell and get gain. For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

III. NEIGHBOURLINESS AND BENEVOLENCE SHOULD BE CULTIVATED.

A common interest in all relationships of life (Vv. 6-7), and a helpful regard one for another would be promoted. Release from the stern occupancies of life would also awaken those social instincts and foster those healthy friendships which render intercourse cheering and elevating. Men were designed for fellowship and affection; not for exacting from each other what each can be forced to produce. Cultivate brotherliness. [See Addenda to chapter, *Benevolence*.]

IV. RELIANCE ON GOD, IN IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE TO HIS WILL.

To desist from effort to provide for their own maintenance would

1. *Elicit their faith in the fatherly care of God.*
2. Summon them to a *religious use of the time* which God had set free from secular toils.
3. Incite them to *grateful thoughts* of God's dealings with them as His people,

and win them to a renewed recognition that they were "not their own," but His, who had redeemed and still cared for them.

V. SABBATIC REST: HEAVEN'S GRACIOUS LAW FOR EARTHLY TOILERS.

Human life becomes a toilsome drudgery, unless God interposes restraints. He would save men from grinding degradation, from absorbing labours; and give them respite and rest. Man needs the Sabbath pause, in order to realise—

1. That higher *possibilities* are opened to him by God's grace than to be a servant of the soil on which he dwells. He may live for a "better country, even a heavenly."

2. That God desires of men the *devotion of fixed seasons*, and leisurely hours for sacred meditation and fellowship with the skies.

Topic: THE JUBILEE YEAR: ITS FOURFOLD SIGNIFICANCE (Vv. 8-13).

To the Hebrew the blessings of the jubilee year were local and literal; it was a year of *rest* and of *restitution* for the land; a year of *release* and *rejoicing* to every inhabitant. Liberty was regained by the slave; possessions in the soil reverted to their owners; agricultural toils were suspended that a whole year of relaxation and repose might be enjoyed. Every home was in enjoyment of plenty, every hand ceased from weary labours, and both man and beast dwelt in quietude and peace.

Glad, indeed, was the hour when the silver trumpet tones announced the arrival of the year of rest. It was like the prelude to a joyous anthem, and that anthem was the angels' song over Bethlehem fields—"Peace on earth, goodwill among men."

It was a richly symbolic institute, that Year of Jubilee, whose suggestiveness finds fulfilment in three distinct directions. It points to

I. THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION OF GOSPEL LIBERTY AND REST. [See Luke iv. 18-21].

II. THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGED LIFE OF SACRED RELEASE AND JOY. [Comp. Ephes. i. 13, 14; Heb. iv. 9; viii. 12].

III. THE MILLENNIAL AGE, OF ESTABLISHED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE. [See Isa. lxvi. 18-23; Rev. xx. 2-4].

IV. THE HEAVENLY STATE OF ETERNAL SECURITY AND SERENITY. [See 2 Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xiv. 13; xxi. 4].

In the application of the Jubilee incidents to each of these grand fulfilments of its symbolism, the following facts stand out clearly:—

i. BOUNTY. God gave a supernatural abundance the year preceding the Jubilee, that in the enjoyment of vast supplies there should be *no necessity for toil, no occasion for care*—[See v. 21]. And assuredly there is

1. *Bounty in the provisions of the Gospel* (1 Tim. i. 14).
2. *Fulness of grace for the believer in Jesus* (2 Cor. iv. 15; Titus iii. 6).
3. *Abundance of good to be enjoyed in the Millennial Age* (Psa. lxxii. 7).
4. *Limitless bliss in the Heavenly land* (Psa. xvi. ii).

ii. REST. That Sabbatic year was to be consecrated to repose; the land was to be allowed to rest; the toiler was to cease from toil. Every want was supplied without the weariness of labour. Equally true of the

1. *Gospel rest* which Christianity announces (Matt. xi. 29).
2. *Believer's rest* which faith secures (Heb. iv. 3).
3. *Millennial rest* for a wearied Church (Rev. xx. 2, 3).
4. *Heavenly rest* for Christ's redeemed followers (Rev. xiv. 13). [See Addenda to chapter, *Rest*].

iii. LIBERTY. All bondservants were set free the moment the Jubilee trumpet sounded (Vv. 39-44). And assuredly, this finds verification in the

1. *Liberty which Christ proclaimed* to souls enslaved in sin and fear (Luke iv. 18 ; Heb. ii. 15).
 2. *Spiritual freedom realized by faith* (Rom. viii. 15 ; Jno. viii. 36).
 3. *Emancipation from thralldom* which shall distinguish the *Millennial* reign (Isa. xlix. 8, 9).
 4. *Glorious liberty of the children of God in Heaven* (Rom. viii. 21 ; Rev. xxi. 24, 25). [See Addenda to chapter, *Liberty*].
- iv. RESTITUTION. If the Israelite had parted with his inheritance, its possession was restored to him in the Year of Jubilee, and that without payment (Vv. 25-37). So

1. The redemption of Christ recovers for man all that sin had forfeited.
2. Believers in Jesus regain all the virtue, happiness, and hopes which the fall had ruined.
3. The weary and wronged world would enjoy paradisaical gladness through Christ's millennial sway.
4. Heaven will realize all which on earth had been desired, and restore all which death had desolated. [See Addenda to chapter, *Possessions*].

V. Let it be marked that *the Jubilee*, with all its blessings, was CONSEQUENT UPON ATONEMENT. Not till the blood of Expiation had been shed, and the living goat had borne into the land of oblivion the sins which (ceremonially) had been transferred to it, did the silver trumpets peal forth their exultant notes, proclaiming liberty and rest, restitution and rectitude for the people. And it is *because of Christ's atonement* that

1. *Christianity has come to sinful man*, with all its tidings of good and wealth of salvation (John i. 29 ; Ephes. i. 6).
2. *Spiritual blessings are inherited by the believer in Jesus* (Rom. v. 11).
3. *The Church will enjoy the Sabbatic millennial glory* (Rev. xix. 11-14).
4. *Heaven will be the eternal possession of the redeemed* (Rev. viii. 14-17).

The cross is the source of all human good. All things are ours, because Christ has died. As the blood on the doorposts freed Israel from the plague of death in Egypt, so it is to us now and for ever the *Blood of Christ* which ensures all sacred good (Rev. i. 5, 6 ; v. 9, 10).

Topic: GLAD FACTS OF THE JUBILEE.

I. GOD'S SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO THE EARTH. He determines when and whether its fields should be tilled and reaped. Man, in his pride, calls the lands his own ; thinks and acts as if he were Creation's lord. His fancy rears a throne and crowns himself the king. But this decree establishes God's rule. We are dependant tenants of His fields. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

II. GOD'S POWER TO PROVIDE. He wills, and crops abound. Thus through this year of rest no want is known. The marvel grows when it is considered that the Jubilee Year succeeds a Sabbath Year, in which no seeding or reaping had gone on. But God gave forth a treble harvest in each forty-eighth year. And, as the poor widow's meal and oil, it proved an unexhausted feast. As Joseph's well-replenished store, it fed the hungry and never failed.

None can succeed without the Lord, and none shall want who truly follow Him. Faith works when God says, Work ; it rests when God says, Rest ; and thrives in obedience.

III. UNIVERSAL REST ENJOINED AND ENJOYED. No hand should toil. Tillage and harvest sleeps. Repose is the one law—for man, beast, and soil. A Year-long Sabbath reigns.

Emblem of soul-rest in Christ.

IV. ATONEMENT USHERS IN THIS CONSECRATED YEAR. When the scapegoat has

borne sins out of sight, when the High Priest has sprinkled the mercy-seat, this holy season begins. A light here shines upon the path which leads to rest—through penitence for sin, and reliance on the Victim.

V. THE TRUMPET SOUNDS THROUGHOUT THE LAND. In every place, by every ear, the long-expected notes are heard. They tell no doubtful tale. "Glad tidings" are yours to proclaim, ye ministers of Christ. O, see that your lips publish rest in Christ. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God."

VI. CAUSES FOR ISRAEL'S DELIGHT. The downcast debtor was now free. The bondman cast away his yoke. All forfeited estates returned. The oppressor might no more oppress. No servant trembled at his stern lord's voice. The former owner claimed his father's fields. The ancient landmarks were rebuilt, and liberty resumed its sway. In every house and heart there was consciousness of relief. Sorrow and mourning fled away. So there is *all-deliverance in Christ*.

1. We are poor *debtors*. Our debts exceed the moments of our lives: But Justice must have reckoning. There is no trifling with God. But hark! the Jubilee is come! Christ avails to pay. His ransomed ones are all free. No debt remains.

2. The Jubilee relaxes the *ties of bondage*. Each soul, apart from Christ, is a poor slave. Tyrants are many, and their yoke is hard. But Christ liberates from fetters (Jno. viii. 36).

(a) *Satan enchains the soul*. But Jesus vanquishes this despot, and the Jubilee sets free from Satan's power.

(b) *Sin rules the captive race of men*. Till expelled by Christ, it must reign. But a new passion gains the throne when Christ comes in, and shews His dying love, His blood to atone.

(c) This *world* is a foul tyrant. Its smiles allure, its frowns deter, its fashions force compliance, its laws exact submission: it drives its millions to a slavish toil. But the grace of Christ emancipates from the world's enthralling snares.

(d) *Death*, too, is a fearful tyrant. Its chilly features terrify. The stoutest quails. None can relieve but Christ.

3. *The Jubilee restores inheritance*. Sin drove man from a fair abode; forced him to a wilderness of desolation. God's smile was lost; the blessing of communion ceased. But Christ re-instates with more than Eden heritage. He places us in a land of peace, where God is our joy for ever. More is found than was lost by sin.

Christ came, lived, died, reigns, *to grant this Jubilee to souls*. Hear His own words (Luke iv., 18, 19). He becomes His people's life, their liberty, their ransom, their peace, their joy, their hope, their glory. The trustful soul reposes in a jubilee of joy. (Arranged from Dean Law's "Christ is All").

✓ *Topic: THE YEAR OF JUBILEE (Vv. 8-14.)*

This was the last and most remarkable of the Hebrew festivals. It bears unmistakable marks of Divine origin, of wise and benevolent design. The trumpet of jubilee sounded on the tenth day of Tisri, immediately after the great atonement had been made by the High Priest, and the sound of it went forth throughout the whole land. Every valley and mountain resounded with the soul-stirring notes, and the people knew that the acceptable year of the Lord had come. The Jubilee taught—(a) *The dependence of Israel upon the bounty of Heaven*. (b) *The duty of mutual kindness, forbearance, and forgiveness*. (c) *The unique position Israel occupied among the nations*. (d) *The unity of their race*. By its advent was proclaimed—

I. REST FROM MANUAL LABOUR.

The ordinary law with respect to physical subsistence was, "In the sweat of

thy brow thou shalt eat bread," but in the eighth and fiftieth years the law was suspended, for no agricultural work of any kind was to be performed, the land was to lie fallow, and have perfect rest. Labour suspended for such a protracted period would restore the wasted energies of man, and secure renewed vitality to the soil. Such an arrest of the tide of busy life would suggest to the Hebrews the necessity of seeking the meat that endureth to everlasting life.

II. DELIVERANCE FROM CIVIL BONDAGE.

Liberty was to be proclaimed throughout the land, every slave was to be set free. In exceptional cases, where full freedom was not given, the condition of the most abject was ameliorated. Thus the common brotherhood of man was emphatically proclaimed, during the period of the jubilee all were on a level. This was an invaluable boon to men, and gave the dependant and downtrodden a fair and new start in secular life.

III. FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS.

Pecuniary liabilities that had been contracted in the transaction of business, and which debtors were unable to discharge, were remitted. No usury or increase was to be taken from the poor, the millstone of debt was to be removed from their necks. Thus the inequalities of social and secular life were readjusted, and society started afresh upon a reformed and revived basis.

IV. RESTITUTION OF LOST PROPERTY.

Of course, there would necessarily be inequalities in the social circumstances of the people; some would accumulate property that others would lose through misfortune or negligence, and wide gaps would be thus created between classes of the community. Those gaps would be filled up at the Jubilee, where all wicked or undue accumulation of possessions would be rectified, and a period put to boundless ambition and lawless aggression. Selfishness and greed would thus be cut up root and branch, and all men taught to be reasonable in their aims and claims.

V. REJOICING FOR THE PEOPLE.

The sounding of the trumpet, immediately upon the atonement being made, would inform the people that an acceptable offering had been presented for their sins; and that all the blessings promised in connection with the Jubilee might be enjoyed. A full tide of gladness would flow through the land, for the great national holiday had begun, and innumerable and inestimable blessings were available for all. The trumpet sound would set the joy bells in every devout Hebrew heart ringing with gladsome melody.

VI. EXEMPTION FROM CARE.

During the previous year the horn of plenty, with twofold richness, was poured into the nation's lap, and as the people beheld the super-abundant stores provided in anticipation of their manifold wants, they would be relieved from care and anxiety while the land had the long rest. They would not need to watch the clouds, their well-filled barns and overflowing presses would calm all their anxieties and fears. In these arrangements would be seen the kind thoughtfulness of Israel's gracious Father, the sovereignty of their eternal King.

VII. HOMECOMING OF FAMILIES.

However scattered through adverse circumstances from the old homestead, or exiled through debt, all could now return, domestic devotion and social love could now be completely restored. All this would tend to socialize and humanize the people, and foster home and national piety.

VIII. REGENERATION OF THE NATION.

Every Jubilee year the people started afresh with a renewed consciousness of the presence of the Lord in their midst, and of their intimate relationship to Him. He brought them out of Egypt, gave them the goodly fertile land; and every Jubilee they were reminded that the land was His, that it was not to be impoverished and exhausted, that the nation was not to decay or become disintegrated. The divinely appointed conditions upon which the people took

possession of the land were restored, and they looked up to Jehovah as their merciful and bountiful Benefactor.

Regarding the year of Jubilee as a type of the gospel age which Christ came to proclaim, and of the latter day glory such reflections as these are suggested:—The gospel brings *rest of heart* for all who hear and obey its joyful sound. *Deliverance from bondage* of Satan, sin, and self. *Recovery of our lost inheritance*. *Forgiveness* of the debt we owe to God. *Rejoicing* because of good news and glad tidings of reconciliation and peace. *Exemption from care* about guilt of past, events of present, revelations of the future. *Complete restoration to God*.

It is man's highest honour and joy to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. The day shall come when a weary world and longing Church shall be fully blest in enjoyment a Jubilee universal and perpetual.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES CONTAINED IN THE JUBILEE REGULATIONS (Vv. 8-28).

Not till God uttered His voice in Christ could men understand the Jewish institutions. We who have heard the voice of Christ and His apostles have come plainly to see that "the acceptable year of the Lord," and "the times for the restitution of all things"—by which terms, and others, the year of Jubilee was described—have their *fulfilment in the Gospel*.

(1). The Jubilee began on the Day of Atonement, announced by trumpet blasts. Following upon the expiatory services of the day, the *gladness occasioned* by the "joyful sound" was *in accord with the truths symbolized in those expiatory services*.

(2). The Jubilee was marked by a complete suspension of agricultural labour. Fear was quieted by God's promise (v. 21). *God's blessing upon the obedient is better than the sowing of the disobedient*.

(3). The spontaneous fruits that grew during the suspension of agricultural operations were open to all. No man had the right to appropriate them. Thus *the common dependence* of all classes upon God's bounty, and *His equal regard for all* was declared.

(4). The Jubilee restored to men their lost liberties (v. 10). Every Hebrew whom poverty, or misfortune, or misconduct had deprived of freedom, regained all the rights and privileges of a free man.

(5). It brought back to their original or hereditary owners the family estates which had been alienated from them (v. 10). Thus *the consolation of misfortune, or the joy of old age*, might be that one recovered at the Jubilee *the home of his childhood* from which he had been driven by sore stress of poverty.

Macaulay tells how Warren Hastings, "when under a tropical sun he ruled fifty millions of Asiatics," was haunted with the wish to recover the ancestral manor of Daylesford. "He would be Hastings of Daylesford." This purpose, formed in infancy and poverty, was steadfastly cherished. "And when his long public life, so chequered with good and evil, with glory and obloquy, had at length closed for ever, it was to Daylesford that he retired to die."

The Jubilee recalled to the remembrance of the nation the fact that *the land was God's*, and they but "strangers and sojourners" therein (v. 23); and that institution gave back, as with the hand of God, to every man from whom it had been alienated the inheritance of his fathers. By the two great blessings it gave him—the *recovery of his freedom* and of *his family inheritance*—every one was given *a new start in life*, and the nation as a whole made a fresh beginning on an equal footing, as if they entered anew the promised land, and experienced afresh in all their fulness the privilege of the original covenant of grace.

Important principles, in their germs, were contained in this institution:—

I. MAN'S NEED OF OCCASIONAL REST FROM TOIL.

By the emphasis given to rest, God hallowed it as being a duty and a privilege. Man was not to give himself to a ceaseless course of grinding toil, or to unreloading

endeavours to keep up riches. Such confinement to labour is deadening to the best faculties of the soul. It destroys the elasticity of the heart and the sweetness of the spirit.

Christianity repeats the old lesson. *Mary pausing from her work to listen to Jesus* is a better model than Martha ceaselessly toiling. "Come ye apart and rest awhile."

II. ALL MEN ARE ENTITLED TO A SHARE OF GOD'S BOUNTY.

What grew in the fields in the Jubilee year was God's harvest, free to all. It was to be distributed, like other pure bounties of His hand, the rain and sunshine, to all alike. This happened every Sabbatic year as well as in the Jubilee. It asserted that man's share in producing any harvests is very small, that God is its chief agent, and therefore that it rightly belongs in great part to Him, and ought to be *largely employed for the general weal*.

Christianity endorses it. The early believers "had all things common." Christian charity urges that we contribute to the happiness of the community.

III. THE WELFARE OF SOCIETY IS IMPERILLED BY THE ACQUISITION OF LANDED ESTATES.

The operation of the Jubilee was to prevent the accumulation of land in the hands of a few: The public good demanded its general division among the people. Great Britain may be said to be suffering because of the absence of such a rule. Ireland is rocking as with an earthquake because the land is held in the grasp of a few rich landowners, while the mass of the people, stripped of their ancestral fields, are sunken in extreme poverty. Because of a similar evil the French Revolution overturned the government of France.

The doctrines of Communism find no support in the reasonings of a wise statesmanship, or in the teachings of Christianity. But Christianity suggests a remedy for the evil. Let property be held and administered on Christian principles: "Be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

IV. THE DIGNITY OF MAN VIEWED AS A RANSOMED CHILD OF GOD.

The Jubilee proclaimed the *equality of men* in the sight of Jehovah, and forbade their tyrannizing over or holding another in slavery. The ground of the prohibition was the same as that which forbade the absolute sale of land—*God's ownership of them*. "They are My servants," etc. (v. 42). The Jubilee made the slave a freeman, and the poor man a property owner.

How Christianity emphasizes this truth! It forbids contempt or oppression of any man for whom Christ died. He may be poor, ignorant, or even wicked. But for him also the scheme of redemption was planned. For his sake Christ laid aside the regalia of heaven and came down to earth. For him He made atonement for sin. For his regeneration He shed forth His Holy Spirit. There is joy in heaven when he repents; and when he dies, if he dies in faith and submission to God, he is carried by angels to the realm of the blessed.

By these things the dignity of man as man is proclaimed. He is to be treated, therefore, with consideration and kindness, with love and forbearance; and in the judgment Christ will say, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."—ALBERT H. CURRIER.

Topic: CANAAN, THE LORD'S LAND FOR EVER (Vv. 23-24).

"The land is *mine!*" How decisive this claim by Jehovah on the soil, to the possessions which He secured for Israel and settled upon His people for ever! It is to be marked that the land is never called *theirs*; always called *His*; for though God gave it into their occupancy He claimed it as His peculiar possession. "He will be merciful unto *His* land" (Deut. xxxiii. 43); "I will pluck them (Israel) up by the roots out of *My* land" (2 Chron. vii. 20); "Lord, Thou hast been

favourable unto (*well pleased with*; margin) *Thy land*" (Psa. lxxxv. 1); "Then will the Lord be jealous for *His land*, and pity *His people*" (Joel ii. 18; Psa. iii. 2).

I. IN THE LAND OF CANAAN JEHOVAH'S MOST WONDROUS DEEDS ALL CENTRED.

"There He set up His throne and sanctuary; there His priests stood to minister continually before Him. There the voices of His prophets were heard testifying of present ruin and future restoration and glory; there the Baptist began, continued, and ended his career as the forerunner of the Messiah; there the Blessed One was born of a woman; there He was baptised; there He preached and taught; there He laboured and died; and thence He ascended in triumph to the right hand of God; thither God the Holy Ghost descended, in Pentecostal power; and thence the overflowing tide of gospel testimony emanated to the ends of the earth; thither the Lord of glory will descend, ere long, and plant His feet "on the Mount of Olives"; there "His throne will be re-established and His worship restored."—*C. II. M.*

II. OVER THE LAND OF CANAAN JEHOVAH'S MOST JEALOUS WATCHFULNESS IS EXTENDED.

There is no spot in all the earth like unto the land of Canaan in the divine estimation. His eyes and His heart are there continually; it's dust is precious in His sight; it is the centre of all His thoughts and operations, as touching the earth; and it is His purpose to make it an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations.

III. UPON THE LAND OF CANAAN JEHOVAH'S MOST EMPHATIC CLAIM IS SEALED.

"The land *is Mine*." It might not be sold for ever. It dwells in the keeping of the Omnipotent. It has been a coveted object through many ages, and by many earthly dynasties; and will yet be, if prophecy is rightly read, the scene of cruel war and sanguinary strife. But Jehovah maintains, and will perpetuate His claim. Inalienably, "the land is Mine."

For what purpose, and for whom, does God claim and keep that land? It is to be the inheritance of His covenant people; to be re-occupied by those to whom He entrusted it by an everlasting covenant; and when "the fulness of the Gentiles" ends, and its present era of downtrodden abuse, which symbolises also the oppressed and outlawed lot of "lost" Israel and "dispersed" Judah is closed, then He who hath "not cast away His people" will require the land for Israel's re-possession. [See Isa. lxi. 12-23.]

Topic: EXALTED PHILANTHROPY.

"Ye shall not oppress one another," etc.—(Vv. 14, 35-38).

In the Jubilee year the ambitious and affluent among the Israeliites were to surrender their possessions on terms that would lift up the unfortunate, and better the condition of the poor. All overreaching and oppression were to be abandoned. What faith in God, obedience to His commands, time for thoughtful meditations, incentives to human kindness, etc., the year of Jubilee would inspire! The spontaneous produce of the land became public property, the poorest Israelite, even the stranger and the slave, enjoyed liberty and fared liberally. The poor have always been the objects of divine concern, and attention has been called to the amelioration of their condition. Let us consider.

I. SOME OF THE CAUSES OF POVERTY. Hereditary or acquired weakness, obscure origin, ignorance, extravagance, idleness, incompetency, misfortune, calamity, or sometimes divine chastisement, as in case of Job.

II. SOME OF THE MISERIES OF POVERTY. Exacting, unremunerative labour; degrading surroundings; deficiencies in necessities of life; indisposition for physical, mental, and moral improvement. Poverty has a bitter cry, hunger a sharp thorn. Under such circumstances life scarcely seems worth living.

III. SOME OF THE AMELIORATIONS OF POVERTY. Industry ; economy ; cleanliness ; sobriety ; sympathy ; charity ; above all, the uplifting, cheering influences of the gospel, which are peculiarly adapted and specially intended for the poor. The gospel will fire men with a laudable ambition, which will lift them in the social scale, or will make them happy in their unavoidable, lowly circumstances. On the basis of common brotherhood, and the universal Fatherhood of God, the temporal as well as spiritual interests of the poor should be cared for and ministered unto, not by patronising indiscriminate charity which fosters idleness and begets hypocrisy, but under the guidance of sanctified intelligence and Christly charity.—*F. W. B.*

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER XXV.

V. 3.—*Theme*: THE SABBATICAL YEAR.

The institution of the sabbath of the seventh year taught that the Lord was the sovereign King of the people, and the sole Proprietor of the land ; very appropriate that the law concerning it should be pronounced amid all the solemn scenes and sanctions of Sinai. The Sabbath year inculcated the lessons :

I. THAT THE LORD WAS THE SOLE PROPRIETOR OF THE LAND.

In all the promises made respecting Canaan, it was constantly kept before the people that the land was the Lord's ; and that He would give it to the people—give it as He gives all His other gifts, to be used according to His good pleasure and revealed will. The people were tenants, and must obey the Lord of the land ; for, while "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," Canaan was to Him the most holy place. The land would be as His most gracious land, which He would open or shut as He saw fit ; and the people would see that they were in His land, and dependent upon Him, as the seasons rolled in their annual round.

II. THAT THE LAND HAD RESTING UPON IT, CONTINUALLY, THE FAVOUR OF THE LORD.

The land was to be ordinarily fertile every year ; but, the sixth year was to be *exceptionally fruitful*, yielding enough for the seventh ; so that, in it, the land, as well as the people, might repose. Each sixth year would exhibit in an extraordinary manner the un-failing and inexhaustible resources of God, and show how His smile and blessing rested on the soil. Canaan would look like a second Eden, as she appeared decked in her rich and beautiful garments. When the waters of the flood subsided, God said to Noah, "I will no more curse the ground for man's sake," and the fertile earth shows that the Almighty crowns the year with His goodness and that His paths drop fatness.

III. THAT THE DIVINE FAVOUR PROVIDES FOR THE WELL-BEING OF EVERY LIVING THING.

This is a general and world-wide truth ; but it was especially seen in the Sabbath year. During its months, every stranger in the land, and every beast, had abundant provision in the stores laid up, and the spontaneous growth of the soil. The great God of Nature pays respect to the wants of the minutest

creatures His hands have made ; and the directions given about brute creation would show that He was kind to them, and would suggest to men to treat them kindly. He "is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works."

IV. THAT OF EVERY LIVING THING, MAN IS THE NEAREST AND DEAREST TO THE GREAT CREATOR.

During the seventh year the poor were to be fed, and the bound set at liberty ; thus lessons of *kindness* and *forgiveness* were taught. The year was not to be passed in luxury and idleness, but time was to be spent in reading the whole Law ; it was a Sabbath to the Lord, when He could be pleased and glorified with the prayers and praises of His people. To man alone are directions given for worship—He is the offspring of God, made in His image, and capable of worshipping Him. Not only one day in seven, but one year in seven, was to be kept as a sabbath, showing how God looked for man's devoted service.

V. THAT THE GREAT CREATOR TEACHES MORAL TRUTHS TO MAN BY MEANS OF WORKS OF NATURE.

All the processes and phenomena of nature are intended to illustrate and enforce spiritual things. Hence the Bible is full of references to correspondences and analogies between the kingdoms of nature and grace. The extraordinary provision made for the Sabbath year would inculcate lessons of *faith*, obedience, reverence, love. In the fulness of time the great Teacher by His inimitable parables threw a flood of light upon similitudes between the outer and inner courts of divine revelation. To devoutly study and practice these lessons will ensure exquisite pleasure and eternal profit.—*F. W. B.*

V. 9.—*Theme*: LESSONS OF THE JUBILEE.

I. ITS PECULIAR FEATURES.

1. *It was a great boon to all sorrowing ones.*

- (1.) Every captive was liberated.
- (2.) The exiled wanderer returned.
- (3.) The oppressed debtor was released from his debts.
- (4.) The unfortunate poor were restored to their ancestral heritage.

(5.) Families that had been separated were now re-united.

(6.) Every estate reverted to the families to whom they were originally allotted in the conquest of Canaan.

2. *All this was intimately connected with the DAY OF ATONEMENT.* It was on the day of atonement, every year, that the trumpet was sounded in every corner of the land, reminding the people of the year of Jubilee (v. 9).

3. *It was to be a year of perfect freedom from toil* (Vv. 11, 12).

4. *Every business transaction had reference to the year of jubilee* (v. 16). Prices were regulated by its nearness or distance.

II. ITS TYPICAL MEANING.

I. *It had special reference to the millennial glory of Israel* in the land which Jehovah keeps for them through all generations.

(1.) God *claims* Canaan as He does no other.

(2.) God has *honoured* Canaan as He has no other.

2. *It is a beautiful and correct type of heaven.*

(1.) Where every believer will enter upon his inheritance, and enter into his rest.

(2.) Where all exile, captivity, separation, poverty and oppression will for ever cease, and God will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

III. ITS PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. That which the Jubilee year restores, and the rest and joy and plenty it brings, *prove the graciousness of God.*

(1.) The sorrow, poverty, oppression, exile, etc., which occurred between two Jubilee years *show the workings of human selfishness and sin.*

(2.) That which the Jubilee restores *shows the workings of divine grace.*

2. The unspeakable blessedness of the *world's Jubilee in the millennial period* (Isa. xxv, 6-12; xxxiii. 23-24; xxxv, 1-10; lv. 13; Rom. xi. 25; viii. 18-22.).

3. *The more glorious and more enduring bliss of heaven* (Rev. xxi. 1-27; xxii. 1-15).

—D. C. Hughes.

Vv. 9, 10, 11.—*Theme: THE JUBILEE A TYPE OF THE GOSPEL.*

I. ITS PRIMARY PURPOSE.

1. *It was kind and benevolent:* showing that, by remedying the evils the Israelites entailed on themselves, God took an interest in their welfare.

2. *It was wise and politic.* A people thus regulated would be kept distinct as to their various tribes and families, while an affectionate and dependant spirit would be promoted.

3. *It was good and beneficial.* The insolvent debtor delivered, &c.

II ITS TYPICAL REFERENCE.

1. The Jubilee of *grace.* This finds us deeply in *arrears* to divine justice, and fully remits all our debt. It reverses our state of spiritual *bondage*, restoring to us the rights and blessings of freedom. And it invests us

with a new title to our forfeited *inheritance*, opening to us the kingdom of heaven (Acts x. 43; Rom. vi. 14; Jno. viii. 36; Ephe. ii. 12).

2. The Jubilee of *glory.*

III. ITS JOYFUL COMMENCEMENT.

This was announced by the *sound of trumpets* throughout the land *on the day of atonement.* Our jubilee also, which begins in the great atonement, is now proclaimed among us, and is the joyful season of God's grace, mercy, and salvation.

"Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound" (Psa. lxxxix. 15).—Wm. Sleight.

V. 18. *Theme: THE DUTY OF OBEDIENCE.*

"Wherefore ye shall do My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell on the land in safety."

Man not a machine, but a responsible, free agent; therefore conditioned on obedience. Herein, seen the dignity of man, the righteousness and holiness of God. God had right to command Israel under obligation to obey, for

I. *HE WAS THEIR SOVEREIGN RULER.* Lord, King, Almighty, Absolute, Eternal.

II. *THEY WERE HIS DEPENDENT CREATURES.* They derived all from Him, were defended, delivered, by Him.

III. *THE PATH OF OBEDIENCE WAS SAFE.* Whatever might befall them when doing the will of God would be overruled for their real good. No weapon formed against them could prosper, while they enjoyed the approving smile of the Lord.

IV. *THE ONLY CRITERION OF CHARACTER IS OBEDIENCE.* Faith, love, loyalty, sincerity, consecration, evinced and vindicated by unquestioning, cheerful, self-forgetful, constant obedience. The law of Christ confirms this test, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Revelation closes with declaration of same truth. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."—F. W. B.

V. 25.—*Theme: THE KINSMAN'S RIGHTS.*

The tale is simple. One of Israel's sons is destitute. His goods, his lands are torn away. The creditor demands, the claim is just, all must be yielded,

But is there some kinsman whose heart feels pity, and whose means abound? Then he has right to pay the price and buy back the forfeited estate. He may not be denied. Redeeming privilege is his.

Such is the statute of the Jewish realm. But it shows far more than *civil remedy for helpless debt.* It is a bright transcript of the work of Christ.

I. *NO ONE BUT A KINSMAN COULD REDEEM US.*

The needy ones are *offspring of earth;* dust is their origin, the worm their brother, the clod their home.

But to redeem requires a *kindred birth.*

Yet Jesus is God; an infinite distance di-

vides Him from men. One sits enthroned in highest glory, the other grovels in earth's lowest mire. Jesus may *love*, but, as God, He cannot *redeem*, cannot claim a kinsman's right. Are then the destitute beyond relief?

Since the *Redeemer must be Man*, Jesus connects Himself with human ties. A human form is marvellously framed; and the virgin mother bears the heavenly child. The *God-Man* becomes a *kinsman to redeem*.

II. THE KINSMAN ALSO NEEDS WEALTH BY WHICH TO PAY THE PRICE.

Family ties are not enough. Much is required for the redemption of souls. But His deity imparts sufficiency. The price is boundless; the payment far exceeds. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the *riches of His grace*" (Ephes. i. 7).

The sinner, appalled at his debts, may approach the Saviour, and *plead His near kindred*, may tell Him that He is one of our family, and remind Him that He alone has the redeeming *right* and redeeming *might*.

Then, being redeemed, let your life proclaim that you are no more your own but "bought with a price." The kinsman claims your heart, your love, your all.—*Dean Law.*

V. 55.—*Theme: ROYAL SERVICE.*

"For unto me the children of Israel are servants."

All things serve the Lord, but there are gradations of service. Man occupies a sphere only second to angels. Israel chosen to cooperate with Jehovah in communicating His will to the world, in winning back a prodigal race to Himself.

I. THE SERVICE HE EXPECTS. (a) *Intelligent*, higher than that rendered by inanimate and irrational things. Thoughtful, reasonable, conscientious. (b) *Spontaneous*. The outcome of free and deliberate choice, of preference for Him above all others. (c) *Grateful*. Remembering deliverances vouchsafed, benedictions bestowed. (d) *Lifelong*. Not spasmodic service, nor a course marked by withholdings, backslidings, shortcomings, or apostasy. He demands fidelity unto death.

II. THE REWARD HE BESTOWS. (a) *His gracious approval*; (b) *improvement in holiness*; (c) *promotion to higher service here*; (d) *admission to perfect blessed service hereafter*. In heaven His servants shall see and serve Him. Service there will be ineffable rapture and rest, because not beyond the strength, nor against the will, but in complete harmony with the renewed and immortal faculties.—*F. W. B.*

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XXV.

BENEVOLENCE.

"Then none was for a party;
Then all wore for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great.
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold;
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old."

—*Macaulay.*

"Beneficence is a duty. He who frequently practises it, and sees his benevolent intentions realised, at length comes to love him to whom he has done good. When, therefore, it is said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' it is not meant, Thou shalt *love him first* and do good in consequence of that love, but thou shalt do good to thy neighbour, and this thy beneficence will engender in thee that love to mankind which is the fullness and consummation of the inclination to do good."—*Kant.*

SABBATH. "Sin keeps no Sabbaths."—*Brooks.*

"Yes, child of suffering, thou might well be sure,
He who ordained the Sabbath loves the poor."

—*Holmes, Urania.*

"A world without a Sabbath would be like a man without a smile, like a summer without flowers, and like a homestead without a garden. It is the joyous day of the whole week."—*H. W. Beecher.*

"We never know a man work seven days in a week who did not kill himself or kill his mind."—*Anon.*

REST:

"No lamkin by its shepherd borne,
No dove its mate caressing,
No bondman freed, no pilgrim worn
The grateful shade possessing;
No child clasped to its mother's heart,
No sick man when his pains depart,
No warrior home returning;
No man can know such perfect rest
As that which ends our weary quest,
Our gracious Lord discerning."

—*Hilfier.*

LIBERTY.

"A man, till he be in Christ, is a slave; and the more free a man thinks himself to be and labours to be, the more slave he is. Why? Because the more he sins the more he is enthralled to sin."—*Sibbes.*

"The end of Christian liberty is, that being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear."—*Westminster Catechism.*

"He is the freeman, whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides."

—*Cowper.*

POSSESSIONS.

"How shocking must thy summons be, O
Death!

To him that is at ease in his possessions;
Who, counting on long years of pleasure
here,

Is quite unfurnished for that world to come."
—*Blair.*

CHAPTER XXVI.

Religion as Determining a Nation's Destiny.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

Vv. 1-13.—If ye walk in My statutes, etc. The Lord engaged to enrich them as a nation with temporal blessings and religious advantages, if, and so long as, Israel maintained allegiance to God's worship and statutes, His Sabbaths and sanctuary. He crowns the enumeration of favours relating to this life with higher assurance that He would dwell among them in all the spiritual nearness ensured by His "covenant." Our fidelity to God is the measure of our prosperity and happiness. They who fear the Lord shall not lack any good thing. Human life is so dependant, in nothing sufficient of itself, either to provide the necessities of physical being, or to ensure for the soul fitness for Divine acceptance and favour; that we may well prize the "exceeding great and precious promises," which are all ours in Christ, if we but maintain a true relationship with Him by obedience and faith. God does not ask a hard thing in what He requires: how gratefully we should yield Him our utmost in return for the riches of His grace!

Vv. 14-39.—But if ye will not hearken unto Me. A happy people, honoured and privileged so long as they were religious, could sink to lowest degradation and misery by revolt against the Lord their God. The picture of Israel's pitiable desolation and anguish delineates the awful spoliation which now sin inflicts on transgressors, and the dark terrors which will follow in the world beyond. These terrible denunciations show how aggrieved God is with human wrong doing, how He regards with abhorrence man's impious rebellion against His goodness and grace, and how heavily He will avenge it. Let sinners "fear before Him," and "kiss the Son, lest He be angry." A brilliant light casts the blackest shadows. God's great grace for unworthy men throws on those who maltreat it the darkest gloom of His indignation and wrath (Rom. ii. 8-9.)

Vv. 40-46.—If they shall confess their iniquity. Though having deeply sinned, yet, if by their miseries they return in contrition, infinite mercy would receive them again. Wondrous pity: grace abounding! "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?" It is the glory of the gospel to proclaim salvation "even unto the uttermost," and our comfort to know that "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jno. i. 9.)

PECULIARITIES OF CHAPTER XXVI.

1. Ceremonial institutions, social regulations, and moral injunctions, have hitherto constituted the substance of the book of Leviticus. Now they yield place to PROPHETIC PROMISES AND WARNINGS concerning the nation (which extend over all after ages of Israel's career, sketching the national apostacy and over-

throw, its disappearance through long centuries, and its ultimate repentance and restoration.

ii. The camp of Israel has hitherto been regarded as a sacred community surrounding the Shekinah within the Holy of Holies, with whom Jehovah was maintaining gracious relationship and hallowed fellowship, through priests and sacrifices. Now Israel is viewed as a NATION TO BE RULED BY DIVINE GOVERNMENT, with material rewards and secular blessings, affixed to loyal obedience to Jehovah's laws, and likewise secular punishment threatened in the event of revolt from the Divine sway.

iii. Although the aspect of Israel as a sacred community passes into that of a nation under Divine government, yet THE BOND OF SPECIAL AND SPIRITUAL UNION BETWEEN JEHOVAH AND ISRAEL is forcefully emphasized, and Israel's national security and prosperity are bound up with the maintenance of the Theocracy: Religion being the secret of her life and continuance.

iv. The predictions of this chapter form THE BASIS OF ALL AFTER PROPHECIES concerning the future of Israel, the very phraseology of these promises and threatenings reappearing almost literally in the messages of God's prophets in successive ages—*E.g.*,

V. 4.—“Then will I give you *rain in due season*, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit;” v. 5.—“And your *threshing shall reach unto the vintage*, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time; and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and *dwell in your land safely*;” v. 6.—“And I will give *peace in the land*, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid; and I will rid *evil beasts out of the land*, neither shall the sword go through your land.”

Compare Ezekiel xxxiv., v. 26, “I will cause the *shower to come down in his season*, there shall be showers of blessing;” v. 27.—“And the *tree of the field shall yield her fruit*, and the earth shall *yield her increase*, and they shall be *safe in their land*;” v. 25.—“I will make with them a *covenant of peace*, and will cause the *evil beasts to cease out of the land*.”

Compare with v. 5, Amos ix. 13, “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the *ploughman shall overtake the reaper*, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed.”

Notably, let Joel ii. 19-27, be read with these verses under view. Thus v. 23, “He will cause to come down for you the *rain*, the former rain, and the latter *rain* in the first month;” and v. 24.—“And the floors shall be *full of wheat*, and the vats shall overflow with *wine and oil*.”

v. The *providential sway of Jehovah is claimed as ORIGINATING, AND ORDERING THESE MATERIAL FAVOURS or DISTRESSES*, making them consequent upon the religion or irreligion of Israel, although they may be naturally accounted for as results ensuing from certain physical conditions in the land or in the nation's social development. But behind natural incidents lies the supernatural hand of God, physical laws have an invisible legislator administering them, and all the occurrences in Israel's career, bright or dark, are traced directly to Jehovah's personal dealings with His people. “If ye walk in my statutes, then *I will give you rain*” (Vv. 3-4). “*I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you*” (v. 9), etc.

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: THE ADVANTAGES OF RELIGION IN A NATION'S LIFE (Vv. 1-12).

“We know,” says Burke (in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*), “and, what is better, we feel inwardly, that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good, and of all comfort.”

To this may be added the famous testimony of Josiah Quincy (Boston, 1830) : " Human happiness has no perfect security but freedom ; freedom none but virtue ; virtue none but knowledge ; and neither freedom, nor virtue, nor knowledge has any vigour, or immortal hope, except in the principles of the Christian faith, and in the sanctities of the Christian religion " (see Addenda to chapter, *National Irreligion*).

I. WHEREIN A NATION'S RELIGIOUS LIFE CONSISTS.

The recognised presence of God in the midst of the people (Vv. 11, 12) : " I will set my tabernacle among you ; and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." This may be realized—

1. In sanctuaries consecrated to Divine worship throughout the land, and in assembled congregations gathering to adore Him (v. 2).

2. In sacred literature diffusing religious knowledge among the people.

3. In benevolent and elevating institutions diffusing Christianity in its practical forms.

4. In educational agencies for the training of children early in moral and religious truth.

5. In homes and family life sweetened by the influence of piety.

6. In a legislature ruled by the fear of God and observant of Scripture precepts.

7. In wealth, gathered righteously, being expended for evangelical and Christian ends.

8. In the happy relationship of all social classes, based upon goodwill and respect.

9. In the stores of harvest and gains of commerce being acknowledged as God's providential gifts and generous benefactions (Vv. 4, 5). All such public recognitions of the authority and the claims of religion, emphasize and declare that within this nation's life God dwells—known, revered, and served.

II. ADVANTAGES WHICH RESULT TO A NATION FROM RELIGION.

1. Religion impels to industry, intelligence, self-respect, and social improvement ; and these will affect every branch of labour and enterprise, resulting in material prosperity (Vv. 4, 5).

2. Religion leads to avoidance of agitation and conflict, checks greed, ambition, and vainglory, and thus promotes a wise content among the people, and peaceful relationships with surrounding nations (v. 6).

3. Religion fosters sobriety, energy, and courage, and these qualities will assert themselves on the fields of war when sad occasion arises, and will ensure the overthrow of tyranny and the defeat of invasion (v. 8).

4. Religion nurtures the wise oversight of homes and families, the preservation of domestic purity, the development of healthful and intelligent children, and these will work out in a strong and increasing population (v. 9).

5. Religion corrects the intrigues of self-destructive commerce, and teaches honesty, forethought, and justice in business arrangements ; thus checking waste, extravagance and insolence, and these issue in the enjoyment of plenty (v. 10).

6. Religion enjoins Sabbath observance and sanctuary services (v. 2) which nourish holiness in thought and life, sweeten character, purify the springs of action, incite to righteous and noble deeds, to social good will, to mutual regard, to sacred ministries, to reverence for Scripture, to recognition of the claims of the unseen world, and thus bring down upon all people the blessings of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Vv. 11, 12).

How can religion fail to convey benefits of every valuable order to society and the whole nation when it makes the individual a nobler, kinder, purer, Godlier man ? That land is enriched in which dwells a people whose individual character may be sketched thus :

I venerate a man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrines and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the Sacred Cause.—*Conper*.

III. WITHIN A RELIGIOUS NATION GOD PLEDGES HIMSELF TO DWELL.

And where He makes His tabernacle (v. 11) there—

1. *Happiness* will be realised, the joy of the Lord will be known, "His loving kindness, which is more than life," will be enjoyed.

2. *Security* will be assured. "None make you afraid" (v. 6), for He will be as a "defence to His people."

3. *Sanctity* will flourish. Intercourse with God (v. 12) will elevate, refine, and grace a people's character and life. "Happy the people in such a case, yea, happy the people whose God is the Lord."

Topic: THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE (Vv. 3-14).

Throughout Leviticus the voice of mercy sounds; for what is mercy but a remedy for woe? At Sinai's base grace sweetly smiles; for what is grace but safety for the lost? These final words from God have an awakening import. There is a seriousness in parting words. Last admonitions usually sink deep.

Ere the tribes advance to Canaan, God seeks to admonish and impress. Truly when sinners rush to ruin they *strive against a warning God*, they stop their ears, they set their faces like flint, they harden their necks. Here God adjoins paternal counsels to a Sovereign's command. He shows what blessings crown obedient paths, what miseries beset the rebel-way.

I. ALLURING PROMISES.

Unfold the roll (vv. 3-13). It is a picture in which plenteousness abounds:—

The earth in season yields luxuriant stores. Peace waves her gentle sceptre. No invading hosts scare the quiet vales. No ravening beasts watch for prey. If assailing armies dare make attack, they advance to sure defeat. A little band puts multitudes to flight. A happy progeny rejoices in each house. These are external gifts.

Spiritual delights are scattered with copious hand. God's presence is assured. His near abode is among His people. He claims them as His own (v. 12). He gives Himself to them.

Such are the blessings pledged if His statutes are observed. Could any hear, yet choose the rebel path?

II. TREMENDOUS THREATS.

The scene now changes. Peal follows peal of terrifying awe (vv. 14—39). The disobedient must prepare for appalling miseries:—

Health shall wither: pining malady, sore disease, and racking pain shall prey upon the tortured frame.

Famine shall raise its ghastly form: penury shall sit at every hearth.

Nature shall not yield increase: no crops shall spring from sown seed, the trees shall mock with fruitless boughs.

Savage life shall ravage: children and cattle shall be mangled in the roads, and the homesteads become solitary.

War shall rage: the hostile banner deride the fallen city.

The holy *sanctuary* should be no refuge: its offerings God would refuse.

Such is the heritage if God's covenant be not kept.

III. FORESHADOWED DOOM REALISED.

God's word is sure. Performance follows.

1. Israel madly scorned His sway. They rashly followed their own hearts desire.

2. Threatened vengeance fell. Witness the desolation of their bounteous land and the tribes scattered through the world's breadth. The sterile plains at home, the outcast wanderers abroad, bear witness that the doom predicted comes.

IV. A SPIRITUAL ALLEGORY.

1. A picture is given of the *fair land of grace*. The obedience of faith wins the full possession of that beautiful inheritance which Christ purchased for His redeemed. And faith finds *abundance* in the land of grace. Surely that life is blessed which gains all-sufficiency in Christ's perfect righteousness, renewing power, plenteous redemption, unspeakable peace. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's." Supplies of grace are lavishly given; the heavens come down in showers of goodness.

2. But a *fearful contrast* appears. Crowds upon crowds refuse to obey; slight the Saviour's charms. Therefore sinners remain. The world enslaves. Troubles abound. Misery steepens your life. If you look upward the heavens are barred; God frowns; each attribute condemns. Friends bring no peace; foes wound, and no balm heals. Life is a misery, death plunges into deeper woe, eternity is hell.

When God's grace is scorned, when His precious Son is crucified afresh, Mercy can show no mercy, pardon cannot release. The heritage of unbelief is one unmitigated curse.

The blessing and the curse are set side by side. So sweetly *point the blessing* that eager souls will grasp it. So awfully *pronounce the curse* that alarmed sinners may dread it. Happy souls are they, who, yielding obedience to the persuasions of Almighty goodness, inherit the blessing.

Partly evolved from Dean Law's "Christ is All."

Topic: NATIONAL TRANSGRESSION AND DISASTER (Vv. 14-19).

For 770 years before they were literally fulfilled in their bitter experience, these appalling warnings, graphic and minute in their details, were in the hands of the Hebrew nation, were continuously read in their hearing as a voice of entreaty that they would cleave to the Lord their God. But "because sentence is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccles. viii. 12).

Yet *deferred sentence*, both

1. *Manifests the Divine patience* and His unwillingness to smite; and
2. *Prolongs man's opportunity* to forsake evil and find mercy.

Nevertheless: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise"; He does not relax because He delays. The storm only gathers greater violence when long pent up. Here is vividly delineated

I. A NATION'S PROGRESSIVE APOSTASY.

1. *Passive indifference* to divine teachings and appeals (v. 14). Mental obliquity or wilful inattention to the known will of God. This mere listlessness is commonly the first downward step: "Ye will not hearken unto Me." To this non-attention next succeeds,

2. *Non-compliance* with divine calls and claims (v. 14). "Will not do all these commandments." Practical resistance of God's authority: "We will not have this man to reign over us." Not as yet profane rebellion, but settled unconcern and neglect. This leads forward to,

3. *Contemptuous rejection* of God's statutes. "Ye shall despise My statutes" (v. 15). Pride lifts the heart into dislike and derision of sacred regulations and requirements. "Who is the Lord that I should serve Him?" "It is vain to serve God," etc. (Malachi iii. 14, 15).

4. *Spiritual revolt* from all sacred demands. "Your soul abhor my judgments" (v. 15). "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light," etc. (Jno. iii. 20). "These are they that rebel against the light" (Job xxiv. 13). It is the soul's loathing of all holy rule and heavenly allurements. It argues a fearful departure from God. How great a fall was that!

5. *Violation of all covenant relationship.* "Ye break my covenant" (v. 15). It severs all bonds between the soul and God; denies His right to command; rejects Him utterly—in atheistic scorn, in wilful rebellion. The "thing made" disowns Him who made it.

Notes: (a) Such decline from God, whether by communities or individuals, only occurs by *progressive stages*. The wreck is not instantaneous. The castle falls not a ruin by one stroke; it wastes by the process of dilapidation—stone from stone; crumbles to decay.

(b) This decline from God is not allowed to proceed without *gracious efforts* made to arrest its course. God sent His prophets to plead and warn, His judgments to awaken, His providential mercies to win, His sanctuary privileges to allure. A sinner goes from God amid pathetic pleadings and arresting importunities: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"

II. AN APOSTATE NATION'S CALAMITIES.

1. Sin brings *disease and physical suffering* in its train (v. 16): "Terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart." Impiety inevitably drifts into *impurity*. When God is rejected, the "lusts of the flesh and the eyes and the mind" dominate. And in physical degradation, defilement, and decay the fruits of sin are reaped. "Destruction and misery are in their way." These are the *natural* consequences of sin; but God smote Israel with *supernatural* afflictions.

2. *Failure and penury* follow quickly upon habits of indulgence and impurity. "Sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it" (v. 16). Nothing succeeds in the hands of a dissipated and dissolute man; and he becomes a prey to his hated scorners and rivals. There was a peculiar fulfilment to Israel of this threat; for God laid their land open to the incursions of predatory tribes and despotic spoilers, by which the people were continually wasted.

3. A godless life invites the *ravages of the enemy* (v. 17). God withdrew His protection, and adversaries swept down upon Israel. They who repudiate Divine government are "taken captive by the devil at his will," and serve their enemies. *Sin is very cruel*. It "*slays*" its victims; slaughters their virtue, peace, happiness, hopes; destroys precious souls.

4. Sin also *jills the life of wrong-doers with terrors*: they "flee when none pursueth." Even in *nations* there is "strong confidence" and "a sound mind" only when conscious of rectitude and the enjoyment of God's approval. It paralyses a people's heart to feel that Heaven is alienated and Divine favour lost. *Armies*, too, have gone with assurance into battles when convinced that God is with them; as Cromwell's "Ironsides": while enemies have *fled with panic*, as did the Spanish Armada, when possessed with alarm that God was against them.

5. There are the yet darker calamities of *abject overthrow and Divine desertion*: "I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass" (v. 19)—a picture of *prostration and helplessness* which finds verification in

(a) *Babylon's fall*: now lying buried amid bleaching sands, emblem of rebuked pride.

(b) *The desolation of Jerusalem*: now a waste scene, and her children the "tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast."

(c) *The buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum*: interred beneath volcanic ashes, a monument of sudden wrath on a voluptuous people.

Such historic admonitions—*Warn against National Impiety, and Call mankind to seriousness and prayer*. For even in the solemn threatenings of God, there lies an overt assurance of mercy, that "if a nation or individual will cease from apostacy and sin and *hearken unto Him*" (v. 18), He will turn aside the "seven times more" punishment for sins, and show the forgiveness in which He delights, and the salvation which the glorious gospel of His grace proclaims. (See Addenda to chapter, *National Irreligion*).

Topic: DESOLATION UPON ISRAEL (Vv. 29-39).

Though chosen in grace, and pledged in covenant, as God's people; though being led miraculously to Canaan, to be settled in the goodly land; yet an alarming picture of woe and ruin is outspread whose realisation seemed incredible.

I. HOW HORRIFYING THE MISERIES WHICH MAY BEFALL A PRIVILEGED PEOPLE.

The miseries of *penury and siege* (v. 29); of *captivity and slaughter* (v. 33); of *anguish and derision* (v. 36); of *pitiless misery and disaster* (v. 39).

1. None are so *secure* in grace and privilege that they can disregard the possibility of a fall.

2. None are so *rich* in sacred favours as to be beyond danger of their total loss.

3. None are so *honoured* by God's selecting and distinguishing grace but they may lapse into alienation and desolation.

II. HOW AMAZING THE DISASTERS WHICH MAY DEVASTATE A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY.

Canaan was a wealthy land, a scene of loveliness, abundance and delight. Yet on it came the disasters of *depopulation* (v. 31); *sterility* (v. 32); *desertion* (v. 35)—even enemies abandoning it.

1. National *plenty and prosperity* are conditional upon national righteousness and piety.

2. National *greatness and glory* have been withered by the anger of an insulted God.

3. National *strength and safety* are only guaranteed as religion is fostered by the laws of a country, and in the habits and lives of its people.

III. HOW PITEOUS THE PROFANATION WHICH MAY DESPOIL A NATION'S SANCTITIES!

Canaan was the scene of Jehovah's sanctuary: the Temple rose on Zion; and the land sent up her tribes to the celebration of sacred feasts and to the holy worship of God. Yet all her "*sanctuaries*" were brought "*unto desolation*" (v. 31), all the fragrance of her *sacrifices* became loathsome to Jehovah (v. 31), and her *deseccated Sabbaths* were avenged in the bleak silence and loneliness which fell on hallowed scenes (v. 34).

1. Religious favours, if abused, may be utterly withdrawn from us.

2. God loathes the offerings once delightful to Him: when the offerer's love is estranged.

3. Holy scenes and holy days become a barren mockery if a trifling spirit alienate the sacred Presence:—"Ichabod!"

Topic: THE LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL (Vv. 38-39).

"Ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' land; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them."

Does this threat import the *complete extermination* of the outcast Israel? Are the exiles from Palestine literally "*eaten up*" in the land of their enemies? What are the rival theories?

I. THAT THE OUTCAST TRIBES OF ISRAEL ABSOLUTELY PERISHED IN THE LANDS OF THEIR CAPTIVITY: that they have ceased to be a distinct people; that they or their descendants are not to be discovered in any portion of the globe; and that, therefore, there is no possibility or hope of their recovery.

Against this theory it is to be urged that,

1. This threat applies equally to Judah and Israel; and that as certainly *Judah* is *not exterminated*, so equally it is probable that *Israel*, though not discovered, is *still existing*.

2. That as *nineteen centuries have not sufficed to extinguish the Jewish part of the original Hebrew nation*, so neither can it be thought that the *preceding eight centuries*, from the Assyrian captivity till the Christian age, would effect the obliteration of the Israelitish tribes.

3. That as it was predicted of the Israelitish tribes that they should be "*lost from sight*" (2 Kings xviii. 18), whereas the Jewish tribes were to be preserved as a *visible witness* among the nations, the *non-discovery of the lost ten tribes* is as literal a part of God's plan as the distinctive preservation of the Jew.

4. That there are promises of God which *absolutely affirm Israel's ultimate discovery and restoration* equally with Judah's.

Therefore this threat must be *equally applied to all the twelve tribes*, and can only mean their *destruction as a distinct nation*.

ii. That the LONG AND MOURNFUL OBLITERATION OF THE HEBREW NATION, AS A JUDGMENT, WILL ISSUE IN ITS FINAL MIRACULOUS RE-GATHERING. For,

1. The *covenant of God with the whole nation ensures their imperishableness*.

2. The threat of obliteration is qualified by the *promise of recovery and restoration, if they should repent* (Vv. 41, 42). [Compare Deut. iv. 27, 31].

3. It is *pledged here absolutely* that, though driven away in exile, *God would not Himself "cast them away," "nor utterly destroy them"* (v. 44); because His "*covenant*" with them must stand (Rom. xi. 2).

Topic: FUNDAMENTALS IN TRUE RELIGION (Vv. 1, 2).

Israel was ever prone to depart from the living God, to forget His commandments. Hence the need of frequent reiteration of the divine precepts. The inculcation of statutes respecting fundamentals in religion comes very suitably here, enforcing Jehovah's claim to sole and supreme worship. Thus Israel was solemnly reminded —

I. OF THE PERSON *to whom alone religious worship should be presented*.

The light of nature and our inner consciousness suggest that the author of all things, our Creator and King, ought to be reverently worshipped; but they do not teach us whether or not He will accept our worship, nor what kind of worship He requires. In Levitical ritual the needed information was given, not only as to what He would accept, but what He righteously demanded. No idol of any kind was to be set up in Canaan. No material object could fairly represent the invisible and eternal Lord. Idolatry degrades and brutalises men; men never rise above their ideals. Idolatry is an insult to the only true and living God. The only image of the invisible God ever presented to the world was the Man Christ Jesus. "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh," etc. Nothing short of the living God can satisfy the longing of the human heart. All his needs are fully met in the person and work of Christ.

II. OF THE TIME *most favourable for the presentation of religious worship*.

Worship is the *duty, privilege, and prerogative* of man at all times. His very work should be done in such a fervent and devout spirit that it may be worship, and all worldly service so performed that it may partake of the character of sacrament. But there are times when worship may be more full and devout: such are the divinely-appointed and weekly-occurring Sabbaths. They arrest the rush and roar of secular life. The hallowed associations of the day, the opportunity for public communion and fellowship suggest and foster reverence. The Sabbath reminds man that he has a soul to care for; and divine life in the individual and nation is generally concurrent with the extent to which the day of holy convocation is observed. Let the Sabbath be neglected and desecrated and at once the way is open for all kinds of irreligion and iniquity. The people were also reminded,

III. OF THE PLACE *where religious worship is the most acceptable to the Lord.*

Under the old dispensation God appointed certain spots and localities, where He would meet His people, and consecrated certain buildings as His audience chambers; among such places were the Tabernacle and Temple. "He loved the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob," and spake glorious things of his own favourite city. The devout heart, nevertheless, could find any place a "house of God" and "gate of heaven" when God saw fit to make Himself known, as he did to the Patriarchs, especially to Jacob at Bethel. It aided men in worship, and gave them courage and confidence in seeking the Lord to know that He was to be found "*always at home*," as it were, in some places, and ready to manifest Himself, as He did, not *to the world or out in the world*. Reverence for special sacred places among the Jews was not superstition; Christ paid respect to the Temple, and twice showed His indignation at its profanation by expelling the unholy traders. Though under the new dispensation we have no Tabernacle or Temple, as of old, yet our meeting-places for prayer and praise are sanctuaries of the Lord, for He has promised to meet with those who gather together in His name, even though there be but two or three. The Divine presence consecrates the house where believers meet, and earthly worship may become preparatory to the worship of heaven, where "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it."—*F. W. B.*

Topic: INCENTIVES TO TRUE RELIGION (Vv. 3, 42).

The injunctions of this chapter are contemporaneous with, and confirmatory of, the laws contained in the Book of Exodus, especially of the Ten Commandments given on the tables of stone. The people were evidently not elected to unconditional favours and salvation; they are addressed as free and accountable agents, in a state of trial, and passing through a period of probation. It was merciful and just to acquaint Israel of the conditions of service and stewardship, to warn them from evil doing, to excite them to holy living. Notice,

I. THE BLESSINGS PROMISED TO OBEDIENCE.

To those who would walk in the statutes of the Lord and keep His commandments, there would be vouchsafed,

1. *Temporal blessings.* (a) *Seasons of plenty*; (b) *Times of tranquility*; (c) *Joys of society*. Thus their physical and social wants would be met, their minds kept in peace, their hearts and homes filled with joy.

2. *Spiritual blessings.* (a) *The Lord would own them*; be their Friend and King; (b) *The Lord would dwell among them*. These were blessings and honours enjoyed by no other nations, and which laid upon Israel commensurate responsibility. The Lord would be with them, and bless them abundantly, if only they would walk in His statutes. The Gospel does not destroy the moral teaching of the law; Antinomianism is not taught in the New Testament. Christ comes to and blesses those who love His commandments and do them, and will pronounce His final approval upon those who have in this life, not simply believed, but "*well done*."

II. THE PUNISHMENT THREATENED TO DISOBEDIENCE.

Here we have held out the red danger-light, the warning beacon, that the people might be deterred from breaking the divine laws. When the Lord entered into judgment with His people, they could plead no excuse, they had His mind and will made known repeatedly. In this chapter to the disobedient are threatened—(a) *Physical and mental sufferings*; (b) *Useless labour*; (c) *Ignominious defeat*; (d) *Aggravated sorrows*; (e) *Degradation*; (f) *Desolation*; (g) *Destruction*. Thus they would be chastised, and almost exterminated, if they turned from God and gave themselves up to iniquity.

We are here taught the doctrine of a *righteous retributive Providence*. The world is under, not only the natural, but the moral government of God. In this world God visits the sins of nations, and sometimes the sins of individuals—this is a place, though it is not *the* place of punishment. The covenants of the Lord with men have always been *conditional*; to obey has been to live; to disobey has been to die. While Israel obeyed, as in the days of Solomon, the blessing of this chapter came upon them; but when they forsook the Lord and gave themselves up to every kind of iniquity, the judgments denounced here were literally fulfilled: To-day the land of Canaan lies waste; and the Jews are scattered to the four winds of heaven. Blessing and curse are set before us in the gospel. Life or death depend on our choice. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift," etc.—*F. W. B.*

Topic: THE BOW IN THE CLOUD (Vv. 42-45).

In the hope held out to the rebellious, and the mercy promised to the penitent at the end of this chapter, we see how the Lord delighteth in mercy, how slow He is to anger, and plenteous in goodness and truth. For though the people should rebel and bring upon themselves all the threatened punishments; yet if they would repent and confess humbly their sins, the blessings promised to obedience should come upon them to replace the punishments, as they again took delight in the commandments of the Lord. On the black cloud that hung threateningly over the land, there fell rays of hope, a bow of promise arched the darkest sky. "The Lord was not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." These verses show,

I. THAT THE WAY WAS LEFT OPEN FOR THE REBELLIOUS TO RETURN.

1. *It was the way of reflection.* They were to look back upon the wrong doing of their lives, and see how far they had deflected from the good old way, how they had been guilty of dereliction of duty.

2. *It was the way of confession.* They were to feel sorry for their sins, and confess and acknowledge their iniquity.

3. *It was the way of humiliation.* They were not to return proudly, feeling they had not been rewarded according to their iniquities. The way is still open for the vilest to return; for, the New Testament teaches that these are the steps in the ladder of life, out of sin to holiness, from earth to heaven, from self to God, viz.: *Repentance, conversion, consecration.*

II. THAT IF THE REBELLIOUS RETURNED TO THE LORD IN HIS OWN APPOINTED WAY, HE WOULD GRACIOUSLY RECEIVE THEM.

1. *He would do so for the sake of their fathers.* He would remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

2. *He would do so for the sake of His name.* "For I am the Lord." He had purposed, as well as promised, to deal mercifully with them.

3. *He would do so for the sake of the land.* He had selected Canaan as the arena where He would specially display His glory to men, and He would not allow it to lie waste for ever.

4. *He would do it for the sake of His covenant.* "I will remember my covenant." The Lord does not make a covenant and then tear it rashly to pieces; if broken by man He will speedily renew, nor allow the irregularities and irreligion of men to thwart His beneficent arrangements. Here, indeed, was a resplendent bow of many colours, beaming with the beautiful light of the mild and merciful countenance of the Most High.

What encouragement for sinful men to return to the Lord, "for He will have mercy upon them, and abundantly pardon." The Levitical Law closes with offers of mercy, the last words of the Law are words of entreaty and promise.

Glad tidings reached the ears of Israel in the desert. The object of the Law was to restrain from sin and restore from its practice and power. Design of Law and Gospel identical; the tree of life has its roots deep down in the soil of the old economy. God's written word is *natural religion vocalised*, and Christianity is Judaism fulfilled, in the final declaration of how sins may be forgiven. This truth could not be learned from Nature, and was only symbolically and typically taught by Moses. Whosoever will, may come now and take of the water of life freely.—*F. W. B.*

OUTLINES ON VERSES OF CHAPTER XXVI.

V. 1.—*Theme*: IDOLATRY INTERDICTED.

The Israelites, having been surrounded by idolaters during their sojourn in Egypt, would be in danger of yielding to the influence such surroundings would exert upon them, even when in the presence of circumstances calculated to keep alive constant recognition of the only true and living God. Hence the repetition needed of injunctions against all idol worship; indeed, the whole system of Judaism rests upon the sublime truth, there is but one God. Let us inquire—

I. WHAT THE PRONENESS OF HUMAN NATURE TO IDOLATRY SUGGESTS.

It shows both the dignity and depravity of man; that—

(a) *He is endowed with religious instincts.* Capable of worship, of exercising faith, hope, love, reverence, fear, etc.

(b) *He is conscious of amenability to some supreme power.* Seeks to propitiate, secure favour, and aid.

(c) *He is apprehensive of a future state of existence.* Ideas vague, indefinite, absurd, yet the outcome of inward presentiment, etc.

(d) *He is unable by light of nature to discover God.* His knowledge is so faded, light so dim. How low the soul must have fallen to substitute "nothings—" for the Eternal One! *Heathenism has never of itself emerged into the light of the knowledge of the glory of God,* as seen in the voice that has spoken from heaven, and has been recorded by holy men moved by the Holy Ghost.

II. WHAT INDULGENCE IN IDOLATRY ENTAILS.

(a) *Degradation.* Worship of heathen deities demoralising. In their temples, at their services, the rites observed are grovelling, and, in some instances, *demoniacal*.

(b) *Superstition.* Devotees are duped by priests, enslaved by torturing ritualism, subject and victims of absurd delusions.

(c) *Misery.* Fear the ruling passion, not love. Nothing ennobling, inspiring, quickening, comforting. Idol worship mocks the longings of the human soul, cannot appease its hunger, satisfy its thirst.

III. HOW IDOLATRY MAY BE ABOLISHED.

Darkness can only be dispersed by the letting in of light. The folly of idolatry must be shown, its helplessness, misery, sin by the spread of the written revelation of heaven,

the preaching of the glorious Gospel. Israel, by its worship of Jehovah, was a living protest against all idolatry; and the Christian Church is commissioned to proclaim the gospel among all nations, that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. *No person, place, or thing* must come between our souls and God, or have the faith, hope, love, trust that are due only to Him. We are guilty of idolatry if we regard anything as a *representative of, or substitute for Him.* What we supremely love and live for is *our God.* Christ is God, we ought, therefore, to live to Him.—*F. W. B.*

V. 3, 14.—*Theme*: THE EQUITY OF GOD'S WAYS. "*If ye walk in my statutes then,*" etc. (v. 3). "*But if ye will not I will,*" etc. (v. 14).

Natural religion teaches us that the government of the author of nature is retributive. Revealed religion teaches analogous truth in other realms of the divine procedure. Penal consequences of wrong-doing act as warnings against sin, and awaken regret for transgression. Retribution is—

I. UNIVERSAL. Everywhere, and in all time, the transgression of God's laws entails, in some way, penalty.

II. REMEDIAL.

Intended to prevent defiance of heaven, usurpation of divine sovereignty. Pain has a merciful ministry. The peace and satisfaction virtue and obedience bring are a proof that God is holy and on the side of goodness. Israel was shown not only that God demanded worship and loyalty on account of what He is in Himself, but because of what they would secure for all who lived in harmony with His revealed will. Hence the *positive commands* in connection with the Levitical ritual were supplemented by *persuasives* to a holy life. Inducements were held out to win obedience, threatenings pronounced to deter from transgression. Thus the people were taught that Jehovah was not arbitrary and despotic, but merciful as well as just, unconditionally excluding none from the blessing of the covenant made to their fathers.

Not only was the *sovereignty of God* revealed to Israel, but the *prerogative of choice in man,* by which he is distinguished from all inani-

mate things and irrational creatures. In the gospel these truths are republished with additional clearness and power. Christ invites to supreme blessedness; those who remain unblest are those who will not come unto Him that they may have life, who destroy themselves, reap what they sow. Thus the ways of God are just and right, and will so be acknowledged at last before an assembled universe.—*F. W. B.*

V. 8.—*Theme*: VALOUR AND VICTORY THROUGH GODLINESS.

"Five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword."

[See addenda to chapter, *Valour*].

I. *Religion begets a DAUNTLESS ARDOUR*

A fervent enthusiasm is awakened, which defies obstacles, perils, foes.

Proved by the heroes of faith (Heb. xi.); by the sufferings of Huguenots, Puritans, and Covenanters; by the records of martyrdom.

II. *Religion imparts an INTREPID CONFIDENCE.*

They who have God on their side, see armies of horses and chariots fighting with them (2 Kings vi. 17.); so as to realize that "they that be with us are more than they that be against us." And John Wesley's strong boast becomes their motto: "The best of all is, *God is for us.*"

III. *Religion animates with STRONG CONSOLATION.*

Foes may be many, and life may be beset with devices of evil; yet this is the stay of the believer, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Is. liv. 17).

IV. *Religion ensures a GLORIOUS VICTORY.*

Adversaries, however numerous, shall see. Peace shall be realized, not by complicity with the world, nor compromise with enemies, but by their vanquishment. "We are more than conquerors through Him that loveth us;" and even *now* our noon shout is this, "Thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ"; while *beyond death* this shall be our record: "They overcome by the blood of the Lamb."

V. 10.—*Theme*: EMMANUEL AMID HIS PEOPLE.

"I will set my tabernacle among you."

I. AMID THE NATION ON ZION rested the SHEKINAH.

"In Salem is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion" (Psa. lxxvi. 2).

II. INCARNATE ON EARTH dwelt the Lord *Jesus*.

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John i. 14).

III. ENSHIRINED IN LOWLY HEAVENS abides the *Holy Spirit*.

"He shall abide with you for ever" (John xiv. 17).

IV. ETERNALLY AMID THE GLORIFIED IS manifested the glad presence of GOD.

"I heard a great voice out of heaven, say-

ing, Behold 'the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. xxi. 3).

V. 13.—*Theme*: EMANCIPATED AND ELEVATED.

"I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright."

I. FREED FROM OLD ENSLAVEMENTS: such is the initial act of redeeming grace, "Being made free from sin," "Christ hath made us free," "The Lord's free men."

II. DELIVERANCE THE PREPARATION FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The "yoke broken" is not the end; it sets the life free that it may "go upright": in rectitude of conduct, in elevation of desire and aim; in uplifted longings and affections; in righteousness and holiness of spirit.

III. DIVINE SOURCE OF MAN'S REDEMPTION.

"Old things have passed away; behold all things are become new: and all things are of God." He is the emancipator from old sins, He our sufficiency for an "upright" walk.

"I am the Lord *your God*, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen: and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright." (See 1 Cor. i. 30) "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus," etc.

V. 17.—*Theme*: THE COWARDICE OF GUILT.

"Ye shall flee when none pursue you."

I. GOODNESS DESPISES SUCH SERVILITY.

A righteous soul scorns cringing, and counts fear a degradation of soul and a dishonour to his avowed faith in God. It is weak and unmanly.

"There is," says Montaigne, "but one thing of which I am afraid, and that is fear."

And most truly.

"To fear the foe, since fear oppresseth strength

Gives, in your weakness, strength unto your foe,"—*Richard II.*, iii. 2.

II. GODLINESS RECTIFIES SUCH COWARDICE.

By showing what *resources* the soul has in God, and by embracing the *promises*, which assure him of all grace and strength equal to his day. "Who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

Fronde says, "Courage is, on all hands, considered as an essential of high character."

"The *righteous* are bold as a lion." In God's favour the soul dwells confident.

III. GUILT RENDERS SOULS CRAVEN.

Fear is the black spectre ever before the ungodly.

"Cowards die many times before their deaths."—*Julius Cæsar*, ii. 2.

Sinners "*flee*" from purity, salvation, Heaven; driven by their lusts, their folly, and their guilt to sin, to danger and to doom.

V. 17.—*Theme*: PRIDE CRUSHED.

"I will break the pride of your power."

I. *Carnal pride* BASES ITSELF ON FALSE TRENDS.

The "*power*" of these Hebrews, what was

it? They beguiled and deluded themselves by imagining themselves strong and secure.

So sinners rest elate on satisfaction with their health, their possessions, their self esteem.

II. *Carnal pride* OFFENDS AGAINST ALL DIVINE TEACHINGS.

Every dealing of Jehovah with this people taught that they were nought in themselves; all they were God had made them.

Pride is *despicable* in those who owe everything to Divine pity and grace. It is specially *offensive* to Him who has "wrought all our works in us"; for "what have we that we have not received?"

III. *Carnal pride* LEADS TO MOST RASH IMPIETY.

It led Israel to disregard Divine warnings, to indulge their own wayward inclinations, to disbelieve God and substitute idols after their own vain conceits; and thus to sever themselves from God's covenant of protection and peace.

Pride still rejects Christ; grieves the Holy Spirit; and "goeth before destruction."

IV. *Carnal pride* ASSUREDLY MUST BE CONTEMNED.

God will put it to shame. "I will break the pride of your power."

By sickness—laying us even with the dust.

By losses—desolating us of all our boasted gains.

By terrors—filling the soul with horror and forebodings.

By death—stripping us of earth's frivolous glory, and brings us face to face with two realities of righteousness and judgment.

[See Addenda to chapter, *Fride crushed*].

Vv. 23, 24.—*Theme*: OBSTINACY PUNISHED.

I. THE CHARACTER DESCRIBED.

One who persists obstinately in evil courses: "*will not be reformed.*" This may apply to

1. A nation; 2. An individual.

Such obstinacy may be the effect of

(1) A proud confidence in human wisdom and resources.

(2) A rooted love of sin.

It betrays

(1) Great blindness of mind.

(2) Great hardness of heart.

II. THE DIVINE PROCEDURE *in relation thereto*.

1. *Opposition*. "I will walk contrary," etc. Nature and Providence armed against the rebellious.

2. *Punishment*: which will be,

(1) Severe; (2) Proportionate; (3) Increasing.—*J. Comper Gray*.

* * * Compare also Outline on Vv. 27, 28 below.

Vv. 27-28.—*Theme*: GOD'S DETERMINATION TO PUNISH SINNERS.

"And if ye will not for all this hearken unto Me, but walk contrary unto Me, then will I walk contrary unto you also in fury."

I. AN AFFECTING SUPPOSITION STATED.

The Lord here supposes that His people may commit *three* grievous sins:

1. The sin of *disobedienc*e. "If ye will not hearken unto Me." Hence observe—

(a) That the Lord in His word *speaks to us* (Heb. viii. 12).

(b) That whatever the Lord says in His Word it is our bounden duty to hear (Heb. iii. 7; 1 Thess. v. 20; James i. 19).

(c) That we are too apt to turn a deaf ear to Him (Exod. v. 2; Psa. xii. 4).

2. The sin of *incorrigibility*. "If for all this ye will not hearken." Note here—

(a) That afflictions sometimes have the nature of punishments (Jer. xiii. 21).

(b) That punishment is the natural and necessary consequence of transgression.

(c) That in the punishment which God inflicts He seeks our reformation (2 Chron. xviii. 22).

(d) That our depravity in too many cases frustrates His designs (Zeph. iii. 2).

3. The sin of *perverse*ness. "If ye walk contrary to Me." Observe again—

(a) That the Lord's pleasure is, we should walk with Him (Mic. vi. 8).

(b) That we walk with the Lord when we walk in His way (2 Kgs. xx. 3; Eccles. xii. 13).

(c) That walking otherwise than He has commanded is to show a perverse and untoward heart.

II. AN AWFUL CONSEQUENCE DECLARED.

"I will walk contrary also to you in fury."

Thus we see that

1. *Conformable to our character will be our end*.

If God should deal thus with us

(a) We shall lose the blessing which He imparts to His obedient followers (vv. 4-12).

(b) Our expectations will issue in disappointment and vexation (Hos. viii. 7); and

(c) Like chaff before the wind we shall speedily be carried to destruction (Psa. i. 4, 5).

2. Enforcement of these considerations: We see

(a) That a religion consisting of mere notions will never save a man.

(b) That men are not at liberty, as some suppose, to live as they please.

(c) That God takes notice of the ways of all.

(d) That if He displays His anger we should be anxious to find out the cause; and

(e) That if anyone perish he will have no one to blame for it but himself (Isa. iii. 11).—*Wm. Sleight*.

V. 34.—*Theme*: SABBATH BARRENNESS.

"Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her Sabbaths."

God had required that Sabbatical years should be observed, during which the land should rest; no tillage or harvest work being done. Owners of the soil would disregard this enactment, thinking they would benefit

by making the land yield its produce through these Sabbath years. For this sin against God's ordinance, the people would forfeit occupancy of the land, and pine in exile. "Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths."

I. SABBATH ABUSE.

This abuse consisted in turning God's sabbath into a time of selfish gain.

1. The interval of rest is not only genial but essential.

2. To invade that interval by exacting toils is to violate a benignant ordinance and to outrage God's right of control.

3. All infringement of Sabbath rest is both a folly and a profanation; for greed defeats itself in this undue exaction of return, whether from man or soil.

4. The Sabbath repose was designed to give leisure for sacred interests and the service of God. Man's spiritual life needs the pause.

5. The intrusion of selfish and covetous schemes into the holy period is the assertion of self-will to the rejection of God's will; the enthronement of self in the supremacy claimed by God; thus "serving the creature more than the Creator."

II. SABBATH DESOLATION.

God will refute such impious greed, such selfish offrontry. In the experience of these Israelites He cast off from the soil those who robbed it of the Sabbath rest, and He gave full requital to the land in the years of depopulation.

1. Desolate Sabbaths are still requited upon transgressors.

Men neglect the holy day, in scorn of Heaven's blest law; and do their own work and think their own thoughts through its sacred hours. As a fact in human experience now, God requites this wrong upon sinners in a restless life, a weary heart, a troubled conscience, a shadowed happiness.

2. Even God's children suffer exile from sacred scenes and Sabbath privileges.

In days of health they trilled with their Sabbaths; spent them in indulgence rather than in earnest zeal and hallowed communion; even desecrating in part the sacred hours by selfish enjoyments or worldly concerns. This sin lies at the door of professedly Christian people to-day; God's day is misused. There will come afflictions—the exile time, when the soul will cry out for the living God, to "appear before God;" and in Sabbaths spent in pain and banishment, in restless discomfort of soul, God will requite the wrong.

3. Unblest Sabbaths have their explanation in this law of requital. The sanctuary services bring to the bearer, when he went with eager longing, no relief or help. But it is the requital for those Sabbaths of indifference and undecourtness in which the sanctuary services have been contemned and marred. "Take heed how ye hear." "Call the Sabbath a delight; the holy of the Lord, honourable."

Vv. 40-42.—Theme: GOD'S PROMISES TO PENITENTS.

Though God foreknew and foretold that His people would bring upon themselves His heavy judgments, He yet assured them that, if even in their lowest misery they should return to Him with humiliation and contrition, He would restore them to His favour, and to the land from whence they had been expelled.

What consolation Nehemiah derived from these declarations (Nehem. i. 5-9.)!

I. WHAT IS THAT REPENTANCE WHICH GOD REQUIRES?

1. That we acknowledge our guilt. Our father's sins as well as our own are first grounds of national humiliation. Our own sins are the chief burden of personal contrition. But sin should be viewed in its true light, as "walking contrary to God" (Psa. li. 4).

2. That we justify God in His judgments. If we have dared to walk contrary to Him, is not He justified in "walking contrary to us"? Whatever inflictions He imposes we have reason to own it as less than our deserts (Ezra. ix. 13), and that His judgments are just (Rev. xvi. 7).

3. That we be thankful for His dealing, by which He has "humbled our uncircumcised hearts."

Only real contrition can produce this. It realises mercy in judgment, and love in affliction.

II. THE CONNEXION BETWEEN OUR REPENTANCE AND GOD'S MERCY.

Repentance is void of merit. Even obedience is destitute of merit; "when we have done all we could we are unprofitable servants." The acknowledgment of a debt is a very different thing from a discharge of that debt. A condemned criminal may be sorry for his offenses, but that sorrow does not obliterate his crime, still less entitle him to rewards. Yet there is connection between repentance and pardon, and meekness in the exercise of mercy towards the penitent—

1. On God's part. For repentance glorifies God. [See Joshua vii. 19].

2. On the part of the penitents. It incites to loathing of the sin, and to adoration of Divine grace.

So God insists on the condition, "If they be humbled, then will I pardon." For then God can do it consistently with His honour, and they will make a suitable improvement of the mercy vouchsafed them.

III. THE GROUND AND MEASURE OF THAT MERCY WHICH PENITENTS MAY EXPECT.

God's covenant with their ancestors was the basis and warrant for His mercy to Israel (Vv. 42, 44, and 45).

His covenant with us in Christ is our hope and guarantee.

1. Be thankful that you are yet within reach of mercy.

2. Have especial respect unto the covenant of grace. It is to that God looks, and to that should we look also. It is the only basis

in which mercy and redemption are now possible.—*C. Simeon, M.A.*

V. 45.—*Theme: GAINS OF A GOOD ANCESTRY.*

"I will for their sake remember the covenant of their ancestors."

I. THE VOWS AND PRAYERS OF A GOODLY PARENTAGE EXERCISE INFLUENCE UPON THE DIVINE PLANS.

That "covenant" is thrice referred to as determining God's arrangements (Vv. 42, 44, 45).

Note *Job's prayers* for his children (Job i. 5); comp. with v. 10, "Made a hedge about Job and about his house."

II. OVER LONG INTERVALS THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL COVENANTS EXTEND.

This "covenant" with Abraham was made 1900 years B.C. (Gen. xv. 13, 14). It is now

1900 years A.D., yet the word stands, "They are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 28, 29).

God is at work, though He seems to wait. "In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." *Praying soul, anxious heart*, clinging to the promises—

"Hope, and be undismayed;
God hears thy cries, and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head."

III. HOW GRAND THE LINK BETWEEN A PARENT'S PIETY AND THE CHILDREN'S DESTINY!

1. *Live and pray for your descendants.*
2. *Value the sacred benefits* even though as yet unrealised, *of a godly ancestry.*
3. *Rest in the unfailing pledge* of God to reward piety and prayer. [See Addenda to Chapter, *Ancestors.*]

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XXVI.

NATIONAL IRRELIGION.

"Men come to think that the guilt of sins committed in concert is distributed; and that, if there be a thousand men banded and handed together in wickedness, each shall have but one-thousandth part of guilt. If a firm succeeds, the gain is distributed to each partner; but, if it fails, each one may be held for the whole loss. Whoever commits a sin will bear the sins, whether alone or with a thousand; whoever commits or connives at public sin will bear the blame. *Public* guilt always has *private* endorsement; and each man is liable for the whole note."—*H. W. Beecher.*

"Sail on, O Ship of State!
Humanity, with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!"

—*Longfellow.*

"To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely."—*Burke.*

"Our heart, our hopes are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,

Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee, are all with thee."

—*Longfellow.*

VALOUR.

It was said by a nobleman at the grave of

John Knox: "Here lies one who never feared the face of men."

"The brave man is not he who feels no fear,
For that were stupid and irrational;
But he whose noble soul its fear subdues,
And bravely dares the danger nature shrinks from."

—*Joanna Bailie.*

PRIDE CRUSHED.

"Remember what thou wert before thy birth—*nothing*; what thou wert for many years after—*weakness*; what in all thy life—a *great sinner*; what in all thy excellencies—a *mere debtor* to God, to thy parents, to the earth, and to all creatures. Upon these or the like meditations, if we dwell, we shall see nothing more reasonable than to be humble, and nothing more foolish than to be proud."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"Pride thrust proud Nebuchadnezzar out of men's society, proud Saul out of his kingdom, proud Adam out of paradise, proud Haman out of court, and proud Lucifer out of heaven."—*Henry Smith.*

ANCESTORS.

"My chastity's the jewel of our house,
Bequeathed down from my ancestors."

—*Shakespeare.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

Votive Offerings to the Lord.

SUGGESTIVE READINGS.

V. 2.—**Shall make a singular vow.** The Rabbins interpreted the phrase as meaning to “pronounce a vow,” and the Chaldee version renders the words, “shall distinctly pronounce a vow.” From this followed the subtle and misleading theory that no vow, unless pronounced audibly, was binding: ignoring the solemn truth that “Our thoughts are heard in heaven”; that “there is not a word *in* our tongue but the Lord knoweth it altogether” (Psa. cxxxix. 4). Thus they made void the law by their traditions. Surely, if iniquity, which secretly is “regarded in our hearts” (Psa. lxxvi. 18), offends God, so that He will not hear our prayers, the formation of a solemn resolve in the privacy of thought is “regarded” by Him as equal to an uttered vow. He values a purpose when it is as yet only “in thy heart” (1 Kings viii. 18).

Vv. 1-13.—**The persons shall be for the Lord by thy estimation.** Gratitude impels to dedication; and it led individual Israelites to dedicate themselves or their children to God’s service in His house for life. Hannah thus devoted Samuel. But while this was right, and it is well for the zeal and love of the soul to find outlet in such acts of surrender, vows made rashly are harmful in themselves and displeasing to God, whereas hesitancy in fulfilling right vows, will equally wound our own conscience and dishonour the Lord (Eccles. v. 2-5).

Vv. 14-25.—**Sanctify his house to be holy to the Lord.** Just as “persons” (v. 2) might be devoted to Jehovah, so might possessions—houses, lands, cattle, and all worldly substance. Yet God, while valuing the piety which led to such consecration, gently arrested excess of zeal which might carry persons beyond prudence in their act of dedication. In verse 16 the words “some part of a field” hold the suggestion, which afterwards became a recognized regulation in Israel, that no man should vow the whole of his estates to sacred purposes, since that would reduce him and his family to penury. God values a zeal ruled by prudence. In this Christian age of spiritual obligations it rises into a privilege to be permitted to *use* all we possess for the glory of our Lord and His kingdom rather than to consign it by vows to any ecclesiastical order or priestly control. Each is a steward, and must “spend and be spent” for his Lord: the right fulfilment of our stewardship may not be entrusted to another. [See Rom. xvi. 6-8]. Every man must bear his own burden, and give account of himself to God, for all are now priests unto God” (Rev. i. 6), each having his ministry to fulfil and his sacrifices to present (1 Pet. ii. 4).

Vv. 26-27.—**The Lord’s firstling: no man should sanctify it.** Those firstlings belonged to Jehovah already; were His property by express enactment (Exod. xiii. 2), and therefore were not free for the possessor to dedicate. A vow implies something beyond defined duty. God has made some sacred demands upon His people so emphatic as to necessitate implicit obedience; but beyond these absolute duties there is a realm of liberty in which each may obey the incitements of gratitude and the spontaneity of love.

Vv. 28-29.—**Every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord.** It was

allowed to the Israelite to transfer to God complete and irrevocable possession of his living treasures as children or servants, and also his material substance, cattle and estates. Once so devoted, it could never be redeemed. So Hannah devoted Samuel, and Jephtha his daughter. And we, who have surrendered ourselves to Christ, and devoted our children in baptismal covenant to the faith, may not "draw back" under penalty of death. The Lord's possessions may not be recalled from their sacred purpose and aim. "Therefore glorify God in your body and spirit, which are His."

Vv. 30-34.—The tithe of the land. [See "*History of Tithes*," homily on this section of chapter.]

SECTIONAL HOMILIES.

Topic: LAWS CONCERNING VOWS.

Reasonable to suppose that pious Hebrews, anxious to obey the laws of the Lord, would resolve upon devoting themselves and their substance to His service. Some of them might make vows under sudden excitement or ecstatic feeling, which, upon calm reflection, they would devoutly wish commuted or remitted. Moses, and his successors, would need to know how to deal with such cases, with equity to worshippers, and the approval of Jehovah. Hence, necessity and blessing of such directions contained in this appendix to the book of Leviticus, which teach,

I. THAT VOLUNTARY AND SPECIAL VOWS WERE PERMITTED BY THE LORD.

The people were *commanded*, but never compelled to obey. In the strictest injunctions respecting ritual, a margin was left for voluntary service, free will offerings. Special vows were optional. "If thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin to thee" (Deut. xxiii. 22). Circumstances would be frequently occurring to prompt the formation and utterance of special dedication of persons or property to the Lord, *e.g.*, special blessing, signal deliverances, etc. Gratitude would suggest and duty demand exceptional service. Enthusiastic love, always inventive and ready to lavish, is ready to offer what unsympathetic spectators rashly denominate "*waste*" (Mark xiv. 4). Jehovah accepts unaccomplished purposes, if unavoidable circumstances or personal inability prevent their fulfilment. Vows should be made *cautiously, deliberately*, and in most instances, *conditionally*; because further enlightenment, or changed conditions may render their fulfilment *undesirable, unnecessary, or even impossible*.

II. THAT VOWS WERE ACCEPTABLE TO THE LORD ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT WHICH PROMPTED THEM, AND IN WHICH THEY WERE PAID.

When circumstances justified an Israelite repenting of his vow, it could be commuted or remitted, or some compensation offered in its stead. Jehovah would accept nothing that was recklessly or reluctantly presented. All adjustments and decisions were to be made according to the standards of the sanctuary, not according to human fallibility and caprice. Though a vow should not be *literally* performed, it must be *perfectly* fulfilled in respect to honourable intention, and sacred fidelity. The state of heart, in the presentation of sacrifice, determined the value of the gift. This law has never been repealed. Through the veil of the Levitical economy beam the rays of the Gospel, which do not destroy the law, but fulfil it.

III. THAT FREEDOM OF CHOICE GIVEN IN THE FULFILMENT OF VOWS DID NOT CONTRAVENE THE PURPOSES OF THE LORD CONCERNING HIS WORK AND WORSHIP.

The compensation paid in lieu of the original vow went to sustain the sanctuary services, and the Lord reserved to Himself some unalienable rights. Some things when devoted could not be withheld or withdrawn under any circumstances.

He demanded a tenth of the produce of the land, and enforced His claim with righteous and unrelaxing rigour. Thus the preservation and perpetuation of Jehovah's worship were secured, and not left contingent upon the fickleness and uncertainty of human devotedness. Righteousness lies at the foundation of the Levitical economy ; is the basis of natural and revealed religion.

Though in the gospel, Moses and Elias withdrew, and we see "Jesus only"; though under the new dispensation the yoke of service is easy, the burden of sacrifice light ; yet obedience is the divine test of love, and Christly works are the essential proofs of saving faith. Leviticus is a witness to Christ and His gospel. In Him we have combined all that the law embodied,—*Altar, Sacrifice, Priest.*

Simplicity, and purity of aims, loftiest motives, deepest meanings, and incomparable excellence, lift the law and the gospel infinitely above all other religions of the world. The superiority to Jewish narrowness and bigotry, to human sinfulness and shortsightedness, demonstrate *their divinity of origin, mutual dependence, absolute authority, undying rigour, and inestimable worth.*—*F. W. B.*

Topic : COMPARATIVE ABILITY (Vv. 1-8).

1. It is distinctly stated that *no obligation enforces individuals to make a vow to the Lord* (Deut. xxiii. 22).

2. But the stringency of *fulfilling a vow when once made* is emphatically laid down (Deut. xxiii. 21 ; Eccles. v. 4, 5).

3. The *practice of making vows largely prevailed* during the Mosaic dispensation (1 Chron. xxix. 9 ; Judges xi. 30 ; Num. xxx. 2, etc.).

4. *Voluntary vows* had recognition or place in the *Christian Economy* (Acts xviii. 18, etc.). Yet in the act of devoting ourselves or our possessions, it must be considered that

I. ABILITY IS NO STANDARD FOR OUR PERSONAL ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD.

It was obviously a question of capacity or resources, when a man was making his vow, *what that vow should be* ; but ability or resources had no place in God's acceptance of the individual himself. The rule of personal acceptance appears in Exod. xxx. 15.

1. Atonement and acceptance stand on the *common basis of guilt*. And there is no difference between rich and poor in this.

2. Redemption requires *an equal price for every human soul*. Christ's full merits are needed for and by each one.

3. No votive offering is accepted unless and until *the atonement price has been paid*.

Then we may come with our vows. But *Christ's preciousness* must proceed. Personal merits or possessions have no regard with God until Christ has atoned for our souls. Into the relationship of *acceptance with God* we can only enter—and "we have boldness to enter"—by "the blood of Jesus."

II. ABILITY WILL BE ESTIMATED AS REGULATING OUR OFFERINGS TO GOD.

When atonement is made for our souls, and which are accepted on that ground, then we may bring our offerings.

1. The *differences which separate us* are reckoned in the "estimation" of our gifts. It is thus : "According to that a man hath."

2. The righteousness of God requires that *we offer according to what He has bestowed on us*. If riches, then a large gift, etc.

3. Our *own judgment is not sufficient to decide our obligation*. "The shekel of the sanctuary is to weigh every offering. All this disposes of fitfulness and caprice in the performances of religion ; God looks to our *bringing our utmost* ; and He weighs what we bring.

III. ABILITY, WHEN BELOW THE MEASURE OF OBLIGATION, IS DETERMINED BY THE PRIEST OF GOD.

There was a rigid rule by which the votive offerings were estimated: but to this standard some were *too poor* to attain (v. 8). "If he be poorer than thy estimation then shall he present himself to *the priest*." Note: he turns from *Moses* to the *priest*: from the embodiment of *righteous exaction* to the representative of *gracious mediation*.

1. *A sense of insufficiency for righteous requirements* is here provided for. "We have a High Priest over the house of God."

From the righteousness of the law we may turn to the graciousness of the Priest.

2. Our poverty only serves to unfold *the resources of divine compassion and grace*. God does not burden the weak; He meets our penury with gentleness. His grace is magnified by our inability to rise to the standard of righteousness.

3. Yet every sinner is certainly *found by the lawgiver* "*poorer than his estimation*." What then? "Where sin abounded grace doth much more abound." "It is of grace that it might not be of works." "To the *poor* the gospel is preached."

Topic: REDEMPTION OF VOTIVE OFFERINGS (Vv. 14-35).

(a) Vows were sometimes made *erroneously* and with faulty motives; for it is human to err. In God's pity, arrangements were sanctioned for releasing devotees from these solemn obligations and bonds.

(b) By the imposition of a ransom price, which was in the nature of a fine, *rashness* was punished, and thus checked.

(c) This insistence upon an *equivalent* for the withdrawal of votive offerings, enforced the fact that inconsiderate action or impetuosity could not be neutralised by the mere feeling of regret for what had been done: God exacted His dues, and bound them to a reverence for His righteous claims.

I. SPONTANEITY IN RELIGIOUS OFFERINGS.

Into every career come such manifest mercies or gracious deliverances as to constrain the thought, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?"

1. *A grateful recognition of God in our life* impels to acts of devotion: The glad heart would "bring an offering."

2. The *outgoing of our gratitude* is arrested by no strict imposts or demands. The offering may be a *person* or his *possessions*. God allows freedom where He can.

3. *Exceptional causes for gratitude* should find outlet in exceptional consecration. This "singular vow" was something in *excess* of the usual religious gifts and services; it was something besides the continual burnt offering.

Ask (a) Is there *one* of God's children to whom God, in providence or grace, has *not extended exceptional proofs of loving kindness* or deliverance? "What hath God wrought!" What abounding grace has He shown!

(b) Is there *one* of God's children from whom God has received *no return of dedication* or devotion for His wondrous goodness and love? Have our hearts been sepulchres in which to bury the records of His love?

(c) Is there *one* of God's children in whom awakes a sense of "how much he owes his Lord," ready *now* to lay self, heart, powers on the consecrating altar? "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presene of all His people." God values a willing offering, and waits to receive what we earnestly bring.

II. ENFORCEMENT OF ESPOUSED OBLIGATIONS.

It is our melancholy tendency to lapse from vows made in times of mercy.

1. *God holds us to our vows.* In some covenants and consecrations He allows no recall (Vv. 28, 29); while in every instance some substitution or commutation is required. This is an enforcement of the law of *fidelity*. Between God and man there must be the fulfilment of rights. Never does He violate an obligation to which He has pledged Himself. He *fulfils all* that He covenants to regard—precious promises, supplies of grace, riches, provisions of mercy, plenteous redemption. There is *no withdrawal from His word*, on “that which He has caused us to hope:” “*faithfulness is the girdle of His loins.*”

Neither may there be *fickleness in our obligations to Him*. Jacob might forget Bethel amid his successes in Padan-aran; but God did not: “Arise, go up to Bethel, and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee,” etc. (Gen. xxxv. 1).

2. *God concedes to our weaknesses.* “He is very pitiful and of tender mercy,” not a hard task-master. While maintaining the law of righteousness, and requiring our fidelity, He yet provides for our short-sightedness and variability. Vows made in an earnest moment might prove most burdensome and inexpedient to fulfil. We see only the moment; fuller reflexion may show us that the pledge we made was not wise, or that it would overtax us. Therefore, God allows commutation. Vows were redeemable on terms here defined.

a. A gracious principle of *considerateness* and *concession* runs through all God’s requirements of us. He looks for the *spirit* of fidelity, the *wish to act aright*; and then He relaxes the literal bond. For He sees our frailty. “Know thou that the Lord exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity requireth” (Job xi. 6).

b. The gentle law of *substitution* is here unveiled. God accepts *something else*, something *less*, in the place of that we owe Him. We owe Him perfect obedience. He accepts the *wish and effort* to obey. We owe Him all we are and have: He accepts a *portion* of our time, substance, and energies. We owe Him our complete ruin, for “the soul that sinneth shall die”; but He says, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him *return*,” etc., and He will accept this, and stay the doom.

In the Person and Sacrifice of Christ, *substitution reaches its climax*. But it was not something *less* when He stood for the human race: it was infinitely *more!* A *perfect Son* for rebellious children; a *spotless Sacrifice* for a sinful world. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” See *Addenda, Vows*.

Topic: THE HISTORY OF TITHES (Vv. 30-33).

I. THE SCRIPTURE RECORDS CONCERNING THE *law* of tithes.

1. *Antecedent to the Mosaic legislation.* The principle of dedicating a tenth to God was recognised in the act of *Abraham*, who paid tithes of his spoils to Melchizedek in his sacerdotal rather than his sovereign capacity (Gen. xiv. 20; Heb. vii. 6). Later, in *Jacob’s vow* (Gen. xxviii. 22), the dedication of a “tenth” presupposes a sacred enactment, or a custom in existence which fixed that proportion rather than any other proportion, such as a seventh, or twelfth.

2. *The Mosaic statutes.* These given in this section lay claim in God’s name to the tenth of produce and cattle. An after enactment fixed that these tithes were to be paid to the Levites for their services (Numb. xviii. 21-24), who were to give a tithe of what they received to the priests (Vv. 26-28). The sacred festivals were later made occasion for a further tithe (Deut. xii. 5, 6, 11, 17; xiv. 22, 23); which was allowed to come in money-value rather than in kind (Deut. xiv. 24-26).

3. *Hezekiah's reformation.* This was signalized by the eagerness with which the people came with their tithes (2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 6).

4. *After the Captivity.* Nehemiah made marked and emphatic arrangements concerning the tithing (Nehem. x. 37 ; xii. 44).

5. *Prophets' teachings.* Both Amos (iv. 4) and Malachi (iii. 10) enforce this as a duty, by severely rebuking the nation for its neglect—as robbing God.

6. *In Christ's day.* Our Lord exposed and denounced the ostentatious punctiliousness of the Pharisees over their tithing (Matt. xxiii. 23).

7. *Teaching of the New Testament.* The fact of the existence of ministers as a distinct class, assumes provision made for their maintenance. The necessity for such provision, and the right on which it is founded, are recognized in such texts as Matt. x. 10 ; Lk. x. 7 ; Rom. xv. 27 ; 1 Cor. ix. 7-14.

II. THE ECCLESIASTICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE *demand* FOR TITHES.

1. The *Fathers* urged the obligation of tithing on the earliest Christians. The "Apostolical Canons," the "Apostolical Constitutions," St. Cyprian on "*The Unity of the Church*," and the writings of Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, and other Fathers of both divisions of the early Church, abound with allusions to this as a duty ; and the response was made, not in enforced tithing, but by *voluntary offerings*.

2. The *legislation of the first Christian Emperors* recognised the obligation of maintaining the ministers of Christ. But while they assigned lands and other property to their support, they enacted no general payment of the tenth of the produce of the lands.

3. *Ancient Church councils* favoured tithings of land and produce, *e.g.*, the Councils of Tours, A.D., 567 ; the second Council of Macon, A.D., 585 ; the Council of Rouen, A.D., 650 ; of Nantes, A.D., 660 ; of Metz, 756.

4. Its *first imperial enactment.* Charlemagne (king of the Franks, A.D. 768-814 ; and Roman Emperor, A.D. 800-814) originated the enactment of tithes as a public law, and by his capitularies formally established the practice over the Roman Empire which his rule swayed. From this start it extended itself over Western Christendom ; and it became general for a tenth to be paid to the Church.

5. *Introduction of tithes into England.* Offa, king of Mercia, is credited with its assertion here, at the close of the eighth century. It spread over other divisions of Saxon England, until Ethelwulf made it a law for the whole English realm. It remained optional with those who were compelled to pay tithes to determine to what Church they should be devoted ; until Innocent III. addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 1200, a decretal requiring tithes to be paid to the clergy of the parish to which payees belonged. About this time also, tithes, which had originally been confined to those called *prædial*, or the fruits of the earth, was extended to every species of profit and to the wages of every kind of labour.

6. The *great* and *small* tithes. The *great* tithes were made upon the main products of the soil, corn, hay, wood, etc. ; the *small* on the less important growths. To the *rector* the great tithes of a parish are assigned, and to the *vicar* the small.

7. Tithes paid "*in kind*." These claim the tenth portion of the product itself (Vv. 30-33). This is varied by a payment of an annual valuation ; or an average taken over seven years ; or by a composition, which, in a bulk sum, redeems the land from all future impost, rendering it henceforth "tithe free."

III. THE ARGUMENTS FOR REJECTING THE MODERN *impost* OF TITHES.

1. The rule of *Equity* is infringed. When every man belonged to the one Church of the realm, all inhabitants might, with some show of rectitude, be called to support it. In Ireland the larger part of the nation was antagonistic to the Church, for which tithes were, through many generations, levied, and the impost was resented as an affront and injustice. In England a half of the

population dissents from the Established Church, and both rears and maintains its own sanctuaries, and also sustains Nonconformist worship; on these adherents of English Free Churches the tithe is an oppression made in unrighteousness. In Wales, where the tithe-sustained Church has a vastly smaller proportional attachment, the enforcement of the law is even a greater breach of equity. The *only law of equity* in such ecclesiastical questions is—they who use a Church should pay for its support.

2. The *genius and teaching of Christianity* is violated. Christianity enforces no demand by *law*, it makes appeal to *love*. It asks willinghood. It states this principle: "That as there was a *readiness to will*, so there may be a *performance*" (2 Cor. viii. 11). And it limits the *acceptableness* of what is offered by this law: "If there be *first a willing mind*, it is accepted according to that a man hath," etc. (2 Cor. viii. 12). If exaction and impost were to cease, there would be good hope that all sections of Christ's Church in our land would combine to maintain the historic sanctuaries of Episcopalianism, and prove that charity and willinghood have yet a deep root in the Christian heart of England.

3. The *sacred persuasives* to generosity in Church maintenance are:

(a) That as the gospel is superior to the law, and Christ to Moses, so should *Christian generosity surpass Jewish*.

(b) That as to Jews Zion was dear, and for her they lavished vast wealth, so should *Christians bring, with yet grander beautifulness*, of their substance to the *cause and Church* of their blessed Lord.

(c) That it is beyond question a *New Testament obligation on all believers* to support the ministry and maintain the ordinances of the gospel (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14).

(d) That while the *Gospel supplies motives to love and consecration and sacrifice*, it leaves Christians to apply these to themselves, and work out sacred principles in beautiful performances.

Note.—The *Jew* devoted nearly one-third of his income to religious purposes, by the command of the law; a tenth for the Levites, in *property* (Numb. xviii. 20, etc.); another tenth for the Sanctuary, chiefly in *cattle and grain* (Deut. xiv. 22, etc.); and every third year a tenth to the poor.

Christian: "How much *owest thou* unto my Lord? Take thy bill and write down quickly."

Topic: EPILOGUE.—THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

Leviticus, like the Tabernacle, may present to the cursory observer, a rough and uninviting exterior; but within are found priceless blessings for those who devoutly draw near, and reverently worship. The Law may *seem* cumbrously elaborate, needlessly exacting; but sanctified intelligence and patient investigation will discover mercy in its purposes, and evangelical doctrines in its statutes. The letter may sometimes kill, but the spirit invariably gives life. In their sublime ends, the old and the new dispensations are indissolubly linked together, thus suggesting—

I. THE POINTS UPON WHICH THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL ESSENTIALLY AGREE.

1. *Both proclaim the spotless holiness and inflexible justice of Jehovah*. The law allows no connivance at, or compromise with sin; so the gospel shows no weakness or flaw in the inflexibility of justice, for Christ fulfilled the law and satisfied the utmost claims of Divine justice. Perfect holiness is exhibited in His blameless life, enforced in His immaculate example.

2. *Both proclaim the extent and heinousness of sin*. For all sins, even those of ignorance, sacrifices were provided. The high priest, with the whole nation, needed forgiveness. Many and costly oblations taught how universal, inveterate,

and deep-dyed is sin. The Cross teaches that the sins of the world can only be washed away by the precious blood of Christ.

3. *Both proclaimed the necessity of mediation and vicarious sacrifice in order to reconciliation to God.* Priests introduced men to God, interceded for them. The sacrifices offered were in the offerer's stead. The gospel reveals one Mediator between God and man, one offering of the sins of the whole world.

4. *Both proclaimed the necessity of faith and obedience in order to salvation.* The offerer of Jewish sacrifices identified himself with the victim, and appropriated the promised blessing. Sanctification and consecration were to accompany the application for forgiveness. Sacrifices were only efficacious when associated with holiness, the adoption of a new life. So, in the gospel believers are saved *from*, not *in*, their sins. Without holiness no man can see the Lord. All who bear the name of Christ and believe on Him must depart from iniquity.

II. THE POINTS UPON WHICH THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL PROGRESSIVELY DIFFER.

1. *The Law enforced authoritative commands; the Gospel exhibits gracious constraints.* The former appealed to fear, the latter appeals to love. Thunders peal from Sinai, music rings from Calvary.

2. *The Law seemed to limit its legislation to time; the Gospel discloses immortality, and points to eternity.* The Israelites met with retribution at the hands of Moses, wrong-doers are now reminded of the final account, "the judgment seat of Christ."

3. *The Law revealed God as man's Sovereign King; the Gospel reveals Him as man's loving Father.* Revelations at Sinia were *august, awe-inspiring*; made God known as Sovereign and Governor. Christ revealed the Fatherhood of God; that man, though fallen and profligate, is His child; that for him there are many mansions and unfading joys.

4. *The Law took main cognizance of overt acts; the Gospel has primary respect to motives and intentions of the heart.* Thus, the morality of the New Testament is *exceedingly pure and absolutely perfect*; a transcript of the holiness of the Divine nature.

5. *The Law was to be supplanted by some better thing; the Gospel is final, conclusive, and complete.* We look back to the law and see the foregleaming of the gospel; we look forward through Apocalyptic visions to the glorious consummation, when the redeemed universe will echo with the song of Moses and the Lamb, "Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."—*F. W. B.*

Topic: "COMMANDMENTS WHICH THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES" (V. 34).

The Divine regulations and requirements of Leviticus are to be classified as—

1. *Ceremonial*: and consequently special to the Jewish nation; not binding upon or applicable to this Christian age.

2. *Moral*: for precepts and teachings intermingle with the ceremonies, whose relevancy and urgency are not to be restricted to any nation or period; there are Divine directions for us as for Israel.

3. *Spiritual*: A foreshadowing of gospel doctrines and of the better covenant of grace, and of the privileges of the Christian life, runs through the Levitical institutes. In these types and premonitions Christ and His work are prefigured; and, therefore, we read our inheritance in these Jewish signs.

I. SACRIFICE AND INCENSE. These have found their verification in the substitutionary death of Jesus.

II. TABERNACLE SANCTITIES AND SOLEMNITIES. These have become glorified in the incarnation of Christ which they predicted, and the indwelling of the Spirit in the believer which they portrayed.

III. CAMP DUTIES AND PURIFYINGS. These find their sacred realization in those obligations, responsibilities, and services, which now distinguish believers who form the community of Christ's living Church.

IV. HOLY FEASTS AND CONVOCATIONS. These proclaim the spiritual fulness and delights with which the redeemed in Christ are now enriched; and those "times of refreshing" with which the Spirit gladdens humble hearts in which Emmanuel dwells.

V. ALTAR OFFERINGS AND VOWS. These mark that consecration of life and love which all who know the Lord should yield to Him, and which both distinguish the Christian character and dignify the Christian name.

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

ILLUSTRATIVE ADDENDA TO CHAPTER XXVII.

VOWS UNPAID.

"Praise should always follow answered prayer. It was thus with one man; he was very ill; a great, strong man in his day; yet disease shrivelled him up, laid him upon a lowly bed, made him pray to the humblest creature in his house for favours hour by hour. As he lay there, in his lowliness and weakness, he said, "If God would raise me up I would be a new man. I would be a devout worshipper in the sanctuary. I would live to His glory." And God gathered him up again; didn't break the bruised reed; did not quench the smoking flax, but permitted the man to regain his faculties. And he was not well one month till he became as worldly as he was before his affliction. He prayed as if his heart loved God; and when he got his health back again he was a practical atheist, he was virtually the basest of blasphemers."

Joseph Parker, D.D.

"Call to thy God for grace to keep
Thy vows; and if thou break them weep;
Weep for thy broken vows and vow again;
Vows made with tears cannot be made in vain.
Then once again
I vow to mend my ways;
Lord, say Amen,
And Thine be all the praise."

G. Herbert.

"It is the purpose that makes strong the
vow;
But vows to every purpose must not hold."
Shakespeare.

"Unheedful vows may heedfully be broken."
Ibid.

TITHES.

"I know of two men who started business with this view: 'We will give to God one-tenth of our profits.' The first year the profits were considerable; the tithe was consequently considerable. The next year there was increase in the profits, and, of course, increase in the tithe. In a few years the profits became very, very large indeed, so that the partners said one to another: 'Is not a tenth of this rather too much to give away? Suppose we say now we will give a twentieth?' And they gave a twentieth; and the next year the profits had fallen down; the year after they fell down again, and the men said to one another as Christians should say in such a case, 'Have not we broken our vow? Have we not robbed God?' And in no spirit of selfish calculation, but with humility of soul, self-reproach and bitter contrition they went back to God and told Him how the matter stood, prayed His forgiveness, renewed their vow, and God opened the windows of heaven and came back to them and all the old prosperity."—*Joseph Parker, D.D.*

"Restore to God His due in tithe and tithing;
A tithe purloined cankers the whole estate."

G. Herbert.

"I cannot love Thee as I would,
Yet pardon me, O Highest God!
My life, and all I call my own,
I lay before Thy mercy throne:
And if a thousand lives were mine,
O sweetest Lord, they should be Thine,
And scanty would the offering be,
So richly hast Thou loved me."

From the German.

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