Leviticus - Commentaries by George Christopher Willis

The Seven Feasts of Jehovah: Leviticus 23, Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks

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“And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baleen with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord."(Lev. 23:15-17)

“When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." (Acts 2:1)

“Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28)

Fifty days after the wave sheaf had been reaped and presented to the Lord, and accepted by Him, the redeemed people again came together to the place which the Lord had chosen to put His name there.

This was to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, (or Feast of Weeks). Pentecost is the Greek for fiftieth. It is remarkable that this feast was held on "the morrow after the seventh Sabbath." That is, it was held on the first day of a new week. It tells of a new order of things being introduced, based on resurrection. This feast was to offer one of the strangest offerings of all offerings that Israel offered to the Lord. And what was this strange offering? It was two loaves of fine flour, made from the wheat of the same fields that fifty days before had yielded the sheaf of firstfruits. But these two loaves were baked with leaven. You remember how important it was that all the leaven should be put away at the Feast of Unleavened Bread. How strange that the fourth feast should have leaven in the offering! These two loaves baked with leaven, were waved by the priest before the Lord presented to Him and accepted by Him. They were accompanied by all the sweet savor sacrifices, and also by the sin offering. The sin offering made it possible for God to accept these loaves that were baked with leaven. The sin offering was present to speak of atonement for the sin that was typified by the leaven. There was no leaven in the Wave Sheaf and so no sin offering was required. But notice, the leaven in the Wave Loaves was baked, and so had lost its power.

There is a close connection between this feast and the feast of the firstfruits. They are linked together by being introduced in verse 9 by the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying." And the words do not occur again until verse 23 where the Feast of Trumpets is introduced. Thus we may see, as the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are linked together, so the Feast of the Firstfruits, the Feast of Pentecost and the Harvest in verse 22 are linked together.

We have seen that Christ died on the same day as the Feast of the Passover. We have seen that Christ rose on the exact day of the Feast of First Fruits. What happened on the day of the Feast of Pentecost? On that day in Acts 2:1, we see that the Holy Spirit came down from Heaven, and formed the individual Christians into one body, the Church.

Many years ago I was standing on the pier at Kobe, Japan, waiting to board a ship for Shanghai. A beloved Japanese brother had come to see me off. There was another great ship at the other side of the pier about to leave for San Francisco. High up on the very top deck of this liner was a gentleman, evidently a man of importance, who was leaving for America. A large number of persons had come to say farewell to him. They had a nice custom in Japan at that time, that every person saying farewell would bring a roll of colored paper ribbon. The friend on the ship would hold the end of each ribbon, and each person on the pier, saying farewell, would hold a roll of ribbon.

My friend and I watched this scene for some time. There might have been a hundred persons on the pier, each with a roll of ribbon, while the gentleman on the top deck, had the ends of the ribbons all in his hand. Suddenly, my friend turned to me, and remarked, "There is a picture of Christ and His church. He is the Head in Heaven: we are the members down here. The ribbons represent the Holy Spirit: and every member is linked to the Head by the Holy Spirit: and every member, through the Head in Heaven, is linked to every other member on earth." It was a sweet lesson that I have never forgotten. At the Feast of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given, Who links every believer to the Head, and to each other, making "one body," the Church.

The Church is composed of believing Jews and Gentiles. The Jews and Gentiles, perhaps, being the two loaves to make one offering. Before Pentecost, these two peoples were separated by a "middle wall." (Eph. 2:14). The Jews were chosen people, whereas the Gentiles were aliens and strangers, afar off, and without God. But both had shown themselves against Christ, both had joined together to crucify Him. In Rom. 3:22 and Rom. 10:12, God told us that there was "no difference." Now at the day of Pentecost these two, so far from each other, are united into one offering.

Then was fulfilled the word "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel." "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12:13).

This is the special place given to the saints of this age, to all the saints of every country, from the Day of Pentecost till the Lord comes to call His people away from the earth to Heaven. It is the special calling and portion of the church, the body of Christ, in contrast to all that had gone before, and to all that will follow. The Church is united with Christ, the Head in Heaven, and He is united to all His saints on earth, by the Holy Spirit.

Truly "this is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes." And please remember that this being the work of God, the Church formed in this way can never be destroyed, and is forever and forever one. Man cannot divide it or spoil it, God has made it one. Christ is its Head in Heaven. The Church is His body and who can mar or touch His body? Christ Himself said the gates of Hell should not prevail against it.

(Matt. 16:18).

This is the Church as God sees it. It began at Pentecost by the descent of the Holy Ghost. It has been formed from that day till now, by those "called out" of the world being added to it, and it will continue to increase until the day when the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, and call His Church whether sleeping or living to Himself. Then He will "present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:27). There will not be one missing from that Church. There will not be one member short in that mystic body. It will be perfect and complete, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

We have spoken of the Church as God sees it. Perhaps we should also speak of it a little as we see it down in this world. The Greek word is "ekklesia" and means "the called-out ones"; this tells me that the Church is called out of this world. It is no longer part of this world. It is in it but not of it. We read in the New Testament of three classes of people in the world today: "the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God." (1 Cor. 10:32). When a Jew or Gentile believes on the Lord Jesus he is then part of the Church. In the epistles of the New Testament, especially those of the Apostle Paul, God's order for the Church down here is clearly given us.

In the New Testament we do not read of many churches as we see about us now, formed and given names, by man. There is but one Church, and every assembly of saints in any place forms part of that one Church. Christ alone is the Head of the Church, and He has the right, by the Holy Spirit, to use whom He wishes, to speak and minister in the Church. He expressly forbids a woman to speak in the assemblies, and He teaches us that every child of God is a priest.

All these things are clearly taught in the New Testament, but generally denied in practice by men today. Happy had the Church been today, if the Lord's people had obeyed the Lord's Word and followed His order, instead of making certain men only to come between God and His saints, or to take a special place, above their brethren.

But let us look again at those two wave loaves. They may have another meaning. Two was the smallest number that the Scriptures accepted as a testimony. It may be that these two loaves have the meaning of a weak testimony. They are called in verse 16, "a new meat offering unto the Lord." This may tells us that this offering speaks of a new kind of testimony, something that no man had seen on earth before. We know that God gave "the firstfruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23), at Pentecost. The Spirit never dwelt in this world until that time. This tells us that the Church is an entirely new testimony, but a weak testimony, to the Lord, down here on this earth. And we have seen that it began on the first day of a new week. All telling us that the church is an entirely new order of things, and cannot be mixed up with that which has passed away. It is for this reason a Christian keeps the first day of the week, not the Jewish Sabbath.

The firstfruits pointed to the Risen Christ, accepted for His people within the Heavens. The loaves of Pentecost are also called "first fruits unto the Lord." (Lev. 23:17). This shows they are one with "the Sheaf of Firstfruits." It was "the first of the firstfruits," they are "the firstfruits." The loaves were made of flour from the wheat out of the same fields as the sheaf of firstfruits. But in all things the wave sheaf was pre-eminent. So it is with Christ and His people. He is "the Firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:20) and of His saints it is written, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." (James 1:18).

He is "the Firstborn," they His "brethren," (Rom. 8:29), "all of one," (Heb. 2:11), "the Church of the firstborn." (Heb. 12:23). What a glorious truth this is! "As He is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17). Let us receive it into our hearts with all its warm sunshine and blessing. It sounds too good to be true, and the heart of man is always seeking to find some way to turn aside its beauty and power. But let us believe it. Let us receive it. It is the truth of God. We are truly "one with Christ," we stand before God in Christ accepted in Him, "complete in Him." We are no more in fallen Adam of the earth, but we are in the Second Man, the last Adam Christ risen, and ascended to Heaven. This is the place of every believer.

God has given this blessing to all His people. How few believe it! And how little do most of us enjoy it! Yet it is the truth of God, given us by God to be believed and enjoyed every day. How are we to enjoy it? By the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us, given to every believer. When do believers receive the Holy Spirit? God answers, "In Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. 1:13). And "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. 8:9). Alas, many Christians do not believe these plain words of God, and pray and do many unscriptural things hoping to receive the Holy Spirit. They open their minds to spiritual things and often evil spirits enter in and make them behave in a shameful manner. Do not be deceived, dear brethren, by these things. When you believe in Christ, He gives you His Holy Spirit. You may grieve Him, but He will not leave you. David could pray, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me," but this is not a prayer for us to pray, for since David's day, the Holy Spirit has been sent into this world, and we are sealed by Him "until the redemption of the purchased possession." He has truly redeemed us now purchased us now the price has been paid, but our bodies as well as our souls have been bought, and they are still down here. We are sealed until that day that the Lord takes to Himself all that He has bought. But the Scripture also speaks of being "filled with the Spirit." To be filled with the Spirit is not the same as to be sealed with the Spirit. "The Scripture says, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18). When a man is drunk with wine he comes under the power of wine, and his own will is subject to the wine. This is bad; we believers must never let this happen, but on the contrary we are to let the Holy Spirit fill us, so that He has His way with us, and our wills are subject to Him. But whether we let Him fill us or not, remember He ever dwells in the believers.

Many believers are puzzled to know whether they have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, or not. Can we look up to God, and from our hearts say, "Father! Abba, Father!" If we can speak like this to God, then we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, for it is only by the Holy Spirit we can say to God, "Father!" See Rom. 8:15.

"The firstfruits of the Spirit," (Rom. 8:23), given to all believers is the seal of their oneness with Christ, the earnest and pledge of their resurrection and association with Christ in glory and the power for enjoying this great truth now. If Christ had not been glorified at God's right hand, the Spirit would not have come down to dwell in believers. (John 7:39). The presence of the Holy Spirit on earth is the witness that Christ is glorified at God's right hand. (John 15:26). The presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, and the union of the believers with the risen Christ at God's right hand by the Spirit, are the two great marks of the present age.

The two wave-loaves were baked "with leaven." We have already pointed out that leaven is everywhere and always a picture of evil. There was no leaven in the meat offering, (Lev. 2:11), because that offering is a type of Christ as the perfect man. He was Himself entirely pure and holy in all His character and ways.

But, alas, His people are not like this. Even after conversion, and with the Spirit dwelling in them, believers are not free from evil, either individually or as the Church. The flesh still dwells in them. The presence of the Holy Spirit does not drive it out, kill it, or change it, although by the grace of God, its power need no longer rule in our lives. The loaves and the leaven were baked. It is restrained but not "eradicated." Therefore the believer is not sinless. He is not as the Lord was, fit to be placed on the altar for acceptance by God. With the two wave-loaves, it was needful to offer a sin offering, and also the sweet savor offerings were offered.

Let us give an illustration. I have a house that is rented to a very bad tenant. Alas, I have no way to turn him out of my house, but I call a new tenant to live in my house. I clearly warn him of the old tenant and of his bad character. I exhort him to keep the old tenant always locked in a room in the house. All goes well for a time. The new tenant believes me, and the old tenant is kept in subjection. But after a time the old tenant seeks to make friends with the new one. The new one feels perhaps the old one is not so bad as I told him, and after a time gives the old one a bit of liberty. Soon, to his sorrow, he finds the old tenant is taking command of the house, and unless he turns to someone outside for help, he is in a bad way indeed.

The two loaves were thus presented to Jehovah, with leaven in them, but loaves and leaven baked, and under the shelter, and covered with the preciousness, of these offerings. So it is that believers individually, and the Church, stand before God, as a new meat offering, accepted in all the value of Christ's person and His atoning work.

As soon as any Christian, or company of Christians, think that personal devotion, or service, or obedience to the Word, or watching for Christ's coming, or any other work of their own, gives any title before God, they will find out sooner or later that they have been deceived by Satan. This is true whether it be a title to Heaven, or a title to be caught up when the Lord comes, or a title to some part in the Kingdom. All our title is through the peerless person and atoning work of Christ.

And again let me beseech you to notice that this Scripture clearly teaches that evil remains in the individual, and in the church, and is met not by my work, but by Christ's work. Although the early church was so fresh and beautiful, it soon became evident that there was leaven in it, even at Jerusalem (Acts 5:1), leaven in doctrine (Gal. 5:9), or morals (1 Cor. 5:9, 13). How much more in these days on every hand do we see the leaven appearing, when doctrines of demons may be heard, and when evil men and seducers wax worse and worse.

This appearance of leaven need not surprise us, though it surely should humble us, and it should cause us to turn again to seek our rest and strength on the only foundation on which either an individual Christian, or the Church of God, can rest -Christ Himself. He is the Rock on which His church is built, and in spite of all hatred of men and devils, let us remember that nothing can ever prevail against it.

There is one more remarkable expression in connection with the Feast of Weeks. We read in Deut. 16:10, (New Translation), "Thou shalt hold the feast of weeks to Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a voluntary-offering of thy hand, which thou shalt give, according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee.”

How strikingly this reminds us of 1 Cor. 16:2. "On the first of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.”

Long ago in Israel on the first day of the week, at that Feast which pointed most plainly to the Church, we have this wonderful sight, an Israelite comes before the Lord with those sacrifices, their blood shed, with those two loaves of bread and with a voluntary offering, according as Jehovah his God had blessed him. Could we get a more perfect picture of ourselves in this dispensation as we come together in the Lord's presence to remember His death? We have the bread and wine on the table, and the privilege of giving to the Lord our "voluntary offering" as "God hath prospered" us.

And, note further, the giving of that voluntary offering is immediately followed by this word, "And thou shalt rejoice." Read the whole verse yourself, Deut. 16:10-11. Joy was the mark of that feast and how suited, that joy and praise should mark our feast when we remember our Lord Jesus, God's "unspeakable gift," even though it is true that, "With joy and sorrow mingling we thus remember Thee.”

It is very striking the way the Spirit of God links our giving with our joy. Compare 2 Cor. 8:1-4, where we read of the bounty of the dear Macedonian brethren, who had sent so often to the Apostle: "once and again," to him in Thessalonica (Phil. 4:16); to him in Corinth (2 Cor. 11:9); and again to him in Rome (Phil. 4:10). The Apostle writes to the wealthy saints in Corinth, (from whom he would accept nothing: 2 Cor. 11), "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.”

But one word more about the "voluntary offering." Do we not, dear brethren, often fail just here? As we give to the Lord, on the Lord's Day at that "feast," is our gift always the overflow in gratitude of a thankful heart? Does our gift really represent the measure in which God has prospered us?

Do we give "according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee?" We have to confess with shame that very often we do not. Sometimes we give as little as we can and still be respectable. Sometimes it is merely a matter of habit. We always give a certain definite amount without a thought of how God has prospered us, or the Lord has blessed us. Does this not explain the lack of "prosperity" (true prosperity) in many of our lives? We pray for the Lord's blessing but when He blesses us, we quite forget to offer to Him in recognition, and in the measure, of that blessing.

Far be the thought that it is a matter of law now with us. Never in the New Testament as far as we are aware of, is there any suggestion that we must give one tenth of our income. No, it is essentially a "voluntary offering," given entirely of our own free will, given at the time when we are remembering how the Lord gave Himself, gave all, for us, and my gift is the mark of my appreciation of His gift, and is the overflow of my heart in thanksgiving to Him. Mr. J. G. Bellett remarks, "The world will give what it can spare, the Lord gives what cost Him everything. (John 14:27)." Our giving is in reality just as true worship as our hymns of praise or thanksgiving. Indeed we get them connected in Heb. 13:15-16, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise.... But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

Then the Scriptures connect our joy with our giving. Remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Our God is a giving God, and now He gives us the privilege and the joy of giving to Him. Though truly every one of us must say with David of old, "Of Thine Own have we given Thee." (1 Chron. 29:14). "Ye are not your own.... ye are bought with a price." (1 Cor. 6:19-20). All, all that we have to offer is really His already. His by creation, and His by redemption, but He delights to give us the joy of giving of it back to Himself. Is it possible that such matchless grace shall merely provide an excuse for these wretched hearts of ours to give less to the Lord than the law demanded, and to spend more on ourselves than Israel was permitted to do?

May we rather copy those dear Macedonian saints of whom Paul writes in 2 Cor. 8:5. They presented their "voluntary offering," but says Paul, "not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord." Let us give in the same way.

You will recall that even our very Chinese character of "joy" is an altar, a sacrifice on the altar, and beside it, (indicating of what the sacrifice consists), "one mouth," (myself); and "fields," (all I possess). This tells us that true joy is found as I present my body, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is my reasonable service. (Rom. 12:1). And with myself give, not one tenth, but all I possess to the LORD. Let us, dear reader, truly do this.

The Seven Feasts of Jehovah: Leviticus 23, Day of Atonement, The

“On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." (Lev. 16:30)

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."(Heb. 9:28)

Jehovah set apart the tenth day of the seventh month in each year, as the Day of Atonement. On that day the sins of the nation were atoned for or covered, for "atonement" means "covering." It was only in this way that Jehovah could dwell amongst Israel.

You will remember that when Israel came out of Egypt, the seventh month was changed to the first month. So on the tenth day of the first month a lamb was chosen, and on the fourteenth day it was killed and its blood put on the door posts. The death of this lamb saved the firstborn from death and judgment. Now on the tenth day of the seventh month a lamb is chosen again, and is slain. This lamb was not now to save Israel from judgment, but the blood of this lamb is carried inside the veil and put on the mercy seat.

The Passover lamb typifies Christ, the Lamb of God, Who bears our sins to save us poor sinners from the wrath of God. The blood of the lamb on the Day of Atonement tells also of the precious blood of Christ, that is presented to God, but shows how His throne is established in righteousness, so that He may dwell in the midst of His people. In the 16th of Leviticus, Jehovah tells us fully about the sacrifices on this day, but in the chapter we are considering, we see the feast from God's side.

Before we consider the verses in Lev. 23, we will look very briefly at Lev. 16. In verses 1 and 2 we read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died. And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat." (Lev. 16:1-2).

This plainly teaches us that the way into the holiest of all was not open, even for the high priest, to enter at all times. Nor was there any way by which they might remain there at all times. The veil shut God in from man, and shut man out from God. The blood of bulls and of goats could not open that way into the holiest. You remember that when the Lord Jesus died, then the veil was rent, rent from the top to the bottom, and now the way into the holiest of all is opened wide for all whose sins are cleansed by that precious blood. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." (Heb. 10:19-22).

But until the cross, this way was closed. Once only in the year, one man, alone, could pass that veil into the holiest of all. "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering." (Lev. 16:3). These two offerings typify the two great things which the work of Christ accomplished. The sin offering perfectly met man's need, and the burnt offering perfectly maintains God's glory. There is no mention on this day of the Peace Offering or the Meat Offering. The one great subject is atonement from God's side and from man's side.

Aaron was to wash his flesh in water and put on his holy linen garments. There was no need for Christ to cleanse Himself. He was absolutely pure in every way. What Aaron wore and what he did are but small shadows of what our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, truly is Himself.

Now we read, "He shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering, and Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself, and for his house." (Lev. 16:5-6). Aaron and his house represent the church, not as the "one body" as in Ephesians and Colossians, but as in 1 Peter we read, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5). Also in Heb. 3:6, "But Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

Jehovah commanded the high priest to "take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." (Lev. 16:7-10).

The two goats in these pictures tell of the two ways in which we may look at the atonement. The Lord's lot fell upon one goat, and the people's lot fell upon the other goat.

The goat on which the Lord's lot fell does not bear the special sins of any particular people. These sins are very important, but they are not considered in this goat. This goat typifies Christ dying to glorify God, with respect to sin, not special sins, but sin that entered into the world and brought a curse even on the ground.

God has a special portion in the death of Christ, so that apart from any sinner obtaining salvation, the death of Christ glorified God. He has atoned for sin. He was made a curse, and so redeemed this world from the curse. He conquered Satan, and "bound the Strong Man," and in a coming day will justly put Satan in the bottomless pit. On the ground of this sacrifice God may offer us mercy, instead of putting us all in the Lake of Fire. On the ground of this sacrifice God still bears with man. It is on the ground of this sacrifice that we have food, air, and sunshine; instead of being in the pains of hell. The air that an infidel breathes, the food that a blasphemer eats, all that they enjoy, they owe it to the sacrifice of Christ, to the very One they hate and mock. If it were not for the atonement of Christ, as we see it in "Jehovah's lot," these wicked men would be in the torments of hell, instead of blaspheming on the earth.

Please understand clearly that this sacrifice does not speak of the forgiveness or salvation of any person. This is quite another matter, and as we know is received when we confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead. (Rom. 10:9). This truly is because of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, but please understand clearly that there is a great difference between God forgiving a sinner, and God bearing in patience with wicked men, and giving them breath and food and clothing and sunshine. Both are on account of the work of Christ on the cross, but we see there are two different ways of looking at that wonderful work.

Some people think these differences are not important, but it is because people do not understand these differences that they make such terrible mistakes. There are people who teach that one of these goats is a picture of Satan, and they make Satan their savior, to bear away their sins. This is a terrible doctrine, and we hope that all our readers may be delivered from it.

If we look at a few verses in the Bible perhaps we will understand this matter better. For instance: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). Compare this with 1 John 2:2, in which the Lord Jesus is called "The propitiation.... for the whole world." In these verses we see that the sacrifice of Christ is for the sin of the whole world. This does not mean that everyone in the world will be saved, because we know from many other Scriptures that only those who truly believe will be saved, but in these Scriptures, we see the Lord Jesus as the One who fulfilled the type of the goat on which Jehovah's lot fell. It is in the very broadest way we can think, and brings mercy and blessing to the whole world. If we think of certain definite people, and the forgiveness of their sins in these Scriptures, we will certainly be in confusion. There are many other Scriptures which speak of the whole world, or of all men. These are on account of the sacrifice of Christ, as we see it in this special way, the goat on which "Jehovah's lot fell."

But before Aaron killed this goat of which we have been speaking, on which the Lord's lot fell, to be a sin-offering for the people, he must first kill the bullock which was to be a sin-offering for himself and for his house. "And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself; and he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not; and he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times." (Lev. 16:11-14).

As already pointed out, when the Scripture speaks of "Aaron and his house," it is a picture of the church, not as "the one body," but as a priestly house. The Lord Jesus Christ has no need of a sacrifice to make Him acceptable to God. God could always say of Him, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." But when we are identified with Christ, then we are accepted as He is accepted. That cloud of sweet incense that covered the Mercy Seat, tells us of the sweetness and preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The High Priest enters the Holy of Holies, completely covered with that cloud of sweet incense. The fire to burn that incense came from "the altar before the Lord," and tells us that the death of Christ is the foundation of our acceptance.

Then the priest sprinkled of the blood of the bullock that was for himself and his house, on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat seven times. In this way Aaron made an atonement for himself and for his house. Atonement means covering. The blood makes an atonement (a covering) for the soul. (Lev. 17:11). In the book of Leviticus we get the word atonement forty-nine times, seven times seven. This would tell us of absolutely complete divine perfection. The blood covered the mercy seat, as also the cloud of incense covered the mercy seat. Here we see the work of the Lord Jesus, and the worth, (or value or preciousness), of His Own Person. The believer is accepted in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself: we are "accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. 1:6).

What a wonderful thing to think that we are accepted in Christ! As He is accepted so are we accepted! We may say with joy, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17). Dear fellow-believer, stop and think of those words, "As He is, so are we in this world!" Is He accepted before God? So are we! May He enter the very presence of God? So may we!

Is He brought near to God? So are we! When I was a child we used to sing that beautiful hymn:

I used to sing the first two verses, but when we came to the third and fourth verses that said we were as near and as dear to God as Christ Himself, I stopped singing, because I did not believe it. It seemed too wonderful to be true, but later I found that it is true, even though it is so wonderful! For "as He is, so are we in this world."

Seven is the perfect number, and when we see the blood sprinkled seven times before the mercy seat, we learn that when the blood is sprinkled for the atonement, then in God's sight, all is perfect.

After the blood of the bullock is brought into the Holiest of All, "then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat; and he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." (Lev. 16:15-16).

So we see it is the blood that makes sure the salvation of the Church, the "house" of the true Aaron. It is the blood that makes sure the "congregation" of Israel. It is the blood that makes sure the blessing to the whole creation at the last day. All rest on the blood of His cross. It is the blood which speaks peace to our heart and to our conscience. That blood has been sprinkled on God's throne, and seven times before God's throne. The more near we get to God, the more we see the value and the preciousness of the blood of the Lord Jesus.

We see the blood on the brazen altar, on the veil; but in no place do we read so much about the blood as in the Holy of Holies, inside the veil, before and on the throne of God.

The holy God could not have remained one moment in the midst of the congregation except for the blood. It was the blood which made it possible for God to dwell and to work and to rule in the midst of an unclean and sinful people.

But now ponder for a moment the 17th verse of Lev. 16. "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the Holy Place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." We are truly on holy ground here. Let us bow our heads as we think of the depth of meaning of these words. Surely they tell us of those hours of darkness on the cross when the Lord Jesus alone, quite alone, was making atonement for our sins. We read that "all the disciples forsook Him and fled." (Matt. 26:56). We read in the Psalms, of the depth of His sufferings, and how He felt this loneliness, "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." (Psa. 69:20). But that most bitter cry of all was, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Psa. 22:1; Matt. 27:46). Never can any heart conceive of the depth of His sorrow and suffering during those awful hours of darkness, while He hung on the cross as the Sin-bearer, making atonement for your sins and mine, and bearing the judgment of a holy, holy, holy God against sin. And He bore it alone. "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement.”

Not only, as we have said, did the Lord Jesus bear our sins on the cross, but then He fully met the whole question of sin as it had affected the whole universe. It is this aspect of the death of Christ that we see here.

Then Aaron "shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." (Lev. 16:21-22). Here we see the actual sins we have committed borne away, and so we see the whole question of sin entirely met forever.

If we turn now to the 23rd chapter of Leviticus, where we get the Day of Atonement brought before us from the Lord's point of view, we see first that it is on the tenth day of the seventh month. The number ten in Scripture speaks of responsibility towards man and towards God. There were Ten Commandments. All the failure to meet these responsibilities is now to be considered, and to be met, and all this failure is to be covered. It is called "a holy convocation." Three times do we read, they are to afflict their souls. (verses 27, 29, 32). Three times do we read, "ye shall do no work." (verses 28, 30, 31). Three times do we read the word "atonement," or "covering." And in verse 32 we read, "It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest.”

What a story this tells us! As Aaron with both his hands on the head of the scapegoat, confesses the sins of the congregation, how they must bow their heads in shame, as they think of all the awful failures and sins of the past year. Truly they might well afflict their souls as all passed in solemn review.

How was this long list of sins to be dealt with? "Whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, that same soul will I destroy from among his people." "Ye shall do no manner of work." What then is to be done with all the sin and defilement? All is covered by the blood! Atonement means covering. "There shall be a Day of Atonement," or "a Day of Covering." "It is a Day of Atonement," (or covering) "to make an atonement" (or covering) "for you before the Lord.” Thanks be to God that "He doth devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him." (2 Sam. 14:14).

And what does all this tell us of the future? We have seen that the Feast of Trumpets, when Israel is gathered back to their own land, has not yet been fulfilled, and the Day of Atonement follows closely after the Feast of Trumpets. It comes before the Feast of Tabernacles which tells forth the joys of the thousand years of peace, when Christ shall reign.

What, then, does the Day of Atonement picture? For the earthly people of Israel we believe it tells of the bitter sorrow when their eyes are opened to the fact that their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, has already come to them, and they have not received Him, but have murdered Him. Then they will receive Him, but they will ask, "What are these wounds in Thine hands?" Then shall He answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends!" (Zech. 13:6).

Then they will understand that they have killed the Prince of Life, and have desired a murderer in His place. Then the Lord says, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart.... all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." (Zech. 12:10-14).

This tells in the clearest possible language of the way the remnant of Israel will "afflict their soul." We get more of the same affliction of soul in Isa. 53. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Oh, the bitterness of soul! to think that the Messiah of Israel has come, and has been treated in this terrible manner! Well may the Spirit in John's Gospel exclaim, "He came unto His Own, and His Own received Him not.”

Not only will there be the affliction of soul and confession of sin that is so clearly pointed out in Leviticus, and these passages in Zech. 12 which we have quoted above, telling of the mourning of Israel as they "look upon Me whom they have pierced," but immediately, we read these blessed words, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. 13:1).

Although guilty of the awful crime of the murder of their own Messiah, the Son of God, yet the moment they own it in bitterness of soul, that moment they discover the fountain opened for sin, the precious blood of atonement to cover all their guilt, then they can continue in the language of Isa. 53, "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Can we not read in these precious words the depth of anguish with which the remnant of Israel will afflict their souls, when their eyes are opened at last to see their Messiah, the despised and rejected Jesus! But can we not also read at the same time, the wondrous truths of the Day of Atonement or the Day of Covering.

We see also that it is not by works. It is not the anguish of their soul that covers their guilt, but the precious blood of the Lamb of God slain by themselves that covers all their wickedness, even that crowning sin, the rejection and murder of their Messiah.

But there is one more event that takes place on the Day of Atonement. We read of this in Lev. 25:9. "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 to sound throughout all your land."

What was "the trumpet of the jubilee?" It was different to the Feast of Trumpets which had passed ten days before.

God says of it, "Thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound." (Lev. 25:8). Seven times seven years surely speaks of the fullness of God's time. Then the trumpet of the jubilee is blown and what happens? The captive slave is set free. The lost land is returned. They were to "proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." (Lev. 25:10).

The trumpet had sounded on the first day of the seventh month to call them back to their land, but it was not till the Day of Atonement was completed, all their sins judged and covered, not till then could the trumpet of the jubilee sound, and liberty be proclaimed throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

And how sweet is the ending of that day! Rest! It began with affliction of soul, it continued with every sin covered and gone forever, not by works; then came liberty, and finally rest! What a prospect for poor, down-trodden Israel. And it will surely come to pass.

This, we believe, is to what the Day of Atonement points forward, as regards its primary application to the earthly people of God, Israel. But, we believe there is perhaps also an application to the heavenly people, the church. It would seem to us that this tells something of the judgment seat of Christ.

In 2 Cor. 5:10, we read, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Dear fellow-believer, let us ponder this scripture. First, let us be clear that this is an entirely different time and place to "the great white throne," that we read of in Rev. 20:11. The judgment seat of Christ is before the thousand years when Christ shall reign. The great white throne is after that time. (Rev. 20:7). At the judgment seat of Christ, "we" all must stand. Who are the "we" in this verse? "We" are the Christians. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians is addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." (2 Cor. 1:1). Paul wrote the epistle, and he included Timothy in the greeting to the church at Corinth. Paul and Timothy and all the church at Corinth and all the saints in all Achaia are included in the word "we" who must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. There are no unbelievers in this word "we," only true Christians, and it also means you and me, if we are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But at the great white throne there are no believers. In John 5:24, the Lord says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death into life." (The word "condemnation" in our English Bible should be "judgment." See the New Translation, etc.). No true Christian comes into the judgment before the great white throne. Every true Christian has been raised from among the dead a thousand years before "and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (Rev. 20:4). But the rest of the dead (those whose names were not written in the book of life and whose sins have never been washed away by the precious blood of Christ), lived not again until the thousand years were finished. (Rev. 20:5).

At the great white throne they were judged according to their works (Rev. 20:13), and the result with everyone who stands for judgment according to his works must be the lake of fire. There are no blood stains on the great white throne, as there were on and before the throne of God inside the veil, on the Day of Atonement. But all is dazzling whiteness and purity every work of man will appear vile and filthy in that dazzling whiteness. At the judgment seat of Christ, it is not a question whether we go to heaven or to hell, but it a question of rewards or suffering loss.

Many people think that at the end of the world, there is to be a great judgment day when everybody will appear before God, and their good works will be put in one side of a weighing scale and their bad works will be put in the other side, and whichever is heavier will decide where we are to go for eternity, whether to heaven or to hell. The Bible never, in any place, teaches any such doctrine as this. This is only the opinion of men, and not the Word of God. Clearly does the Bible teach two resurrections. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28-29). And as we have seen, these two resurrections are a thousand years apart.

Let us then consider that time when we Christians must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. It is at a time after we have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and we know we are to "ever be with the Lord." It is before the time of Christ's reign on earth. When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, "then every one will receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10). Be clear, it is not a question of being saved or lost. All of us who stand there are the children of God, and now we come there in order that our life as children our path as servants may be reviewed. There will be that in each of us which the Lord can praise and alas, there will be that in each which the Lord must blame. It is like prize-day in a school, when the children's work of the past year will all pass in review. Some will win prizes, others will be ashamed. The work of one is acceptable, another's is not acceptable, so the Apostle Paul

says, "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." (2 Cor. 5:9-10).

In 1 Cor. 4:5, we read that the Lord, "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." Dear fellow-Christian, can you or I review all our pathway down here? Can we have every thought and counsel of our hearts manifested? I ask, "Can we have the searching light of heaven turned on all these secret things, and not afflict our souls?" What a sad story for most of us it will be! Pride, selfishness, foolish and even impure thoughts, idle words oh how much we now like to keep these things hidden from our fellow-Christians. Then all will come out to the eye of Christ and myself. All will be made manifest. It will not, thank God, be manifested to condemn me to hell forever, as surely it must if works are to be considered. No, all will be weighed in the balances of the Sanctuary, and we will truly "afflict our souls." Then we will see clearly the opportunities for bearing shame for Christ's sake that we have lost. Then we will see how He would have had us serve Him, but we turned aside from it. Every failure will be brought to light. But every desire of our hearts after Christ will also be remembered, and wonder of wonders, when the Lord brings to light the hidden things of darkness, when He makes manifest the counsels of the hearts, then listen to the words "then shall every man have praise of God." Yes, dear fellow-believer, the grace of God will find that, in you and me, which He knows has been done for His sake, and “every man" "shall have praise of God." (1 Cor. 4:5).

Although every man shall have praise of God, yet we know from 1 Cor. 3:11-15, that "the fire shall try every man's work. If any man build.... gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

The gold, silver, precious stones, do not make nearly as great a show as wood, or hay, or stubble. What a great pile of hay we may perhaps gather, and boast of the amount we have done but what anguish of heart when the fire tries it and it is all burnt up.

But, thank God, the Day of Atonement was a day of covering, and after we have reviewed all the sorrowful past, then it will all be covered, carried away to a land not inhabited. (Lev. 16:22). Never again will these things be raised against us. They are covered by that precious blood. They are blotted out, they are gone forever.

But do not let us think that it is on account of our own good works that all this past failure is blotted out. The same precious blood by which we were redeemed and brought near to God, that alone is what blots out all the past failure in our walk down here. "Whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people." This tells us God's estimate of our work in this connection. All is of grace, and all must be of grace. Perhaps never before in all our lives will we have known the riches of His grace, as we will know it when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

And as the Day of Atonement for Israel closed with rest, will this not be the same for us? Everything out, all made manifest, rest will follow. Even here and now we know something of the rest that follows confession. How much more full will that rest be when all is manifested, all is covered, all is gone forever!

And would we like to miss the judgment seat of Christ? I think not. How glad we will be to see the problems of this sad pathway all cleared up in the light of heaven. How good to have the roots of bitterness that perhaps we have allowed to grow up for years, all shriveled up and gone. And what grace! Every man shall have praise of God!

Then that cup of cold water given in His Name, but long since forgotten by us, will receive its reward. Then we will find that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." (Heb. 6:10).

May the Lord give us grace to live now more in the light of "That Day!”

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 14:10-11: Chapter 13 - The Present Application

Leviticus 14:10-11

Psalm 119:96 says, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." And we believe that this wonderful history has another interpretation, with another lesson for us in it. We believe that many passages of Scripture have a double meaning: one, perhaps, for the present time, and one for a coming day. We have been looking at that meaning that tells us of our "home-coming" when we reach the glory above. But we know from such passages as Eph. 2:6 that God looks at us even now as raised up from the dead and seated in the heavenlies. "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:4-7. Note, these are not what He will do in the future, but what He has already done.

So we may see that in one sense we have no need to wait till we reach our home in the glory to enjoy the blessings of the "eighth day." Even now, God has made all things new for us, even now we are accepted in the Beloved. Even now we are presented holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight. It is surely now that He is able to keep us from stumbling, and even now He delights to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24.) The fullness of the type, we believe, will only be fulfilled when we actually reach our home above, but how blessed to know that, in one sense, even now we may prove and enjoy all these blessings.

Even now we enjoy the blessings from the acceptance of that trespass offering, and even now we bear the blood of that offering on our right ear and thumb and toe. Oh, dear fellow-believer, may the Lord give us grace in this defiled scene to walk worthy of that badge, that mark, that we wear even now, down here. May we be careful that nothing shall pass that blood-marked ear that would be dishonoring to that One who shed His blood for us. May all we hear and say and think be conformable to His death—for surely the blood on the ear is representative for the whole head.

But not only has it a negative side, so to speak, but there is the positive side as well. May that head of mine, with my intellect, my ears, my mouth, my eyes, my all, be His, and His alone, and His forever. May they be used for Him! May we hear and think and speak for Him. They are stamped and sealed with the mark of death, the price that has been paid to purchase them for His own. May God grant that not one of our faculties may ever be used for another.

That hand of mine, that once was used to serve His enemy, now is bought with that same precious blood, and gladly will it work and war for the One who has purchased it for His own. He can say of it, "Let him that stole steal no more:" (that was what I used it for once) "but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Eph. 4:28. Once that hand of mine took my neighbor's things. Now it labors to give to the one from whom I once stole, or to any in need. Such is the effect of that blood on my right hand.

That foot of mine once delighted to go its own way, but anointed with that precious blood it becomes beautiful, as it goes to preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things. (Rom. 10:15.)

That blood tells me that I am not my own, that I am bought with a price, and it says to me, "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:19-20. That blood on ear and thumb and toe says to me, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Rom. 6:13. As I gaze on that blood, I cry,

As we ponder all this we are constrained to say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" 2 Cor. 2:16. And the better we know ourselves, the more fervently will we answer, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves... but our sufficiency is of God." 2 Cor. 3:5. And this brings us to the next scene, where the priest, after sprinkling the oil seven times before the Lord, puts it on our right ear and thumb and toe, upon the blood of the trespass offering. Never could we venture to walk through this defiled and defiling world with the blood of the trespass offering upon us, were it not that that blood is covered with the oil. This tells us of the power of the Holy Spirit to carry us through every circumstance, to keep us, not only from falling, but even from stumbling, all through this wilderness pathway. The Holy Spirit alone can keep us from bringing dishonor on that precious blood that marks us who are Christians. The Holy Spirit alone can give power to take these instruments and yield them to God, to use them in His service, and for Himself. How can we ever thank God enough for the oil upon the blood?

And we may thank God, too, that even now down here, we have the good of the sin offering. Even now down here we are dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God. (Rom. 6:11.) And even now down here we are brought into that wondrous place of royal priests. True, we share the rejection of our absent King, but it is to us now that the Holy Spirit writes, "Ye are a... royal priesthood." 1 Peter 2:9.

Yes, and it is even now down here that we are worshippers. In John 4:23 we find that the Father is seeking worshippers. (He does not say He is seeking worship, but worshippers.) Who would have thought that He would have found them in poor, defiled lepers, now cleansed and brought nigh? But so it is. Yes, even now, you and I, dear fellow-Christian, have the privilege, the infinite privilege, of bringing our Burnt Offering (from which we must not separate the Meat Offering). We bring them with overflowing heart, and offer them to the One who has done all for us. Truly even now we may exclaim with burning hearts,

And as we look onward to the future, we may sing with perfect assurance, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:5-6.

Then at home in the house of the Lord, the "Father's house," we will know in all their inconceivable fullness and glory, all these blessings we have sought to gaze upon and enjoy even now down here, and we will say: "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of Thy acts and of Thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me: Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are Thy men, happy are these Thy servants, which stand continually before Thee, and that hear Thy wisdom." 1 Kings 10:6-8.

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 14:15-20: Chapter 12 - The Log of Oil

Leviticus 14:15-20

“And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand: and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord." (vss. 15-16).

We have seen that the oil speaks of the Holy Spirit. Now the priest turns away from the leper, for the moment he is forgotten, and the oil is "sprinkled before the Lord." The leper, as we have seen, was presented before the Lord, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ. But now the oil is sprinkled before the Lord. I think this tells us of the perfect delight that God has in His Holy Spirit. Sometimes we are apt to forget that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead, and is not merely an "influence," but is the true and living God.

Seven speaks of perfection, and how wonderful it is to remember, when we look around this world, with all its sorrow and sin and suffering, that in spite of all these things, there is One who dwells down here now, who is altogether well-pleasing to God in heaven. You remember how God the Father delighted to look down from the open heavens when His Son dwelt upon this earth, and of Him, and Him alone, say, 'Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mark 1:11. In like manner can God look down now upon the Holy Spirit, and to all eternity He will be His delight in heaven. Although He dwells in every believer, and is their strength and power for all things of God, yet we need to remember that first of all He is down here for God, and for His glory.

“And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering" (vs. 17).

We believe that the oil put on top of the blood of the trespass offering tells of the power and energy of the Holy Spirit for the believer's life and song and service in those courts of glory. The Lord promised that the Comforter should abide with us forever, and surely all the activities

of heaven will be in His power.

“And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed" (vs. 18).

It is lovely to see the way that oil never fails. Although sprinkled before the Lord seven times, and put on the ear, thumb and toe of the leper, there is still more left. It reminds us of the word, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure." John 3:34. Whatever need we have for His power and energy, we may be sure that the Spirit of God is more than sufficient for our every need. And after every requirement of the oil towards God, and towards men, has been fully met, there is still more, and this is poured on the head of the man that is to be cleansed. Those in Israel who were anointed were the priests, the kings, and, in one case at least, a prophet—and the cleansed lepers! What a wondrous company into which he is brought! And does it not tell us of the place into which the Lord has brought us. In Rev. 1:6 we read, "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." In 1 Peter 2:9 we are called a "royal priesthood." The new song of Rev. 5:10 (J.N.D. Trans.) says, "And made them to our God kings and priests.”

It is all so far beyond our comprehension or our dreams. Who could have ever conceived the thought that one who was a poor, vile, despised, unclean outcast should be brought into a place which no other Israelite possessed, even that of a priest and a king! That thought was God's, and His alone. We can but bow in adoration and wonder, as we gaze upon this lovely scene.

“And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord" (vs. 18).

I think this verse completes the wonderful picture of the trespass offering and the oil, a scene which began in verse 12. It was not, I think, the oil that made the atonement, but the blood of the trespass offering. In Lev. 17:11 we read, "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Blood, not oil, makes atonement. Blood alone can cover sins. But this pronouncement, being placed as it is at the end of verse 18, at the close of the section which includes both the trespass offering and the oil, shows us clearly how intimately connected the Spirit of God is with the offering of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Heb. 9:14.) We see the "man that is to be made clean" not only cleansed by the blood, but also sheltered by the blood, and all his trespasses covered by it. Truly we may exclaim, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Psa. 32:1.

What more could be added to such a picture? We would think that one more stroke might spoil it, but we find that there still are needed two more scenes to complete its perfection.

“And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness; and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering" (vs. 19).

What a perfect and complete work our Savior accomplished at the cross. Not only are all the trespasses blotted out by the blood of the trespass offering: but even that old incurable root of sin, was judged. The sin offering told out that nothing but death could deliver us from this. That old nature is not forgiven, it is judged. Our Sin Offering has died, and we have died with Him, and with Him we are risen; and when in that home in the glory, never again will we be troubled with that old, sinful nature, that often causes us so much sorrow now.

There is but one scene more, and the picture is complete and perfect. "And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean" (vs. 20).

In the trespass offering, the offerer put his hand on the head of the offering, and all his sins and trespasses passed over from him to it; and he was left clear and free from guilt. In the burnt offering, the offerer again put his hand on the head of the offering, but now all the efficacy and virtue of the offering passes over to the offerer. The burnt offering is especially God's part in that mighty offering at the cross. The burnt offering was not brought because the man had sinned, but it was brought as the highest mark of worship that man could offer to God. The meat offering (or meal offering, as it might more correctly be termed) tells of the pure and holy life of our Lord Jesus Christ down here.

Now, the cleansing of the leper is completed. He looks back over the history of those days, the old life outside the camp, his cleansing, his presentation to the Lord, his marking by the blood that had blotted out his trespasses, that wondrous new place of the priest and the king into which he has been brought, that sin offering that had delivered him from his old self. What a story it has been! What can he offer now to the One who has done all this for him? His heart overflows in worship and praise and thanksgiving, and he brings that which gives the greatest joy to the heart of God. He offers the burnt offering and the meat offering. He offers to God the sacrifice of His own dear Son, in the way in which that sacrifice was specially God's part, and he brings to Him also that spotless undefiled life down here, so very, very different to his own. Not only has the cleansed leper come into the place of the priest and the king, but now he has become a worshipper, and we leave him bowed before that altar, with the burnt offering ascending to God as a sweet savor, and we hear him exclaim:

True worship is the overflow of the heart to God—a heart so full that it cannot be held back, and it overflows in praise and worship and adoration. This, we believe, is what the burnt offering and the meat offering, both going up as a sweet savor to God, tell us here.

We have sought in a feeble way to follow the leper from outside the camp to his place as a worshipper before that burnt offering, going up as a sweet savor to God. What a path it has been, and yet, dear fellow-Christian, it is your path and mine. What infinite grace! May it move our hearts to a more burning love to the One who has done so much for us!

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 14:12-14: Chapter 11 - The Lamb of the Trespass Offering

Leviticus 14:12-14

“And the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the Lord." Lev. 14:12.

What an unutterable joy to the Lord to have presented to Him, with the poor leper, that lamb of the trespass offering. It told of that Lamb, of God's own providing, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29.) It told of God's only begotten Son. And with it was

the log of oil, speaking of the Holy Spirit. The three Persons of the Trinity we find all engaged in welcoming the ransomed sinner to His home above.

“And he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the holy place: for as the sin offering is the priest's, so is the trespass offering: it is most holy" (vs. 13).

We see that not only was leprosy accounted unclean, but it was also counted an actual trespass against the Lord, calling for the trespass offering. So we need to realize, not only are we defiled by sin, but we have each one individually "sinned against the Lord." It is well when we are brought to cry, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." Psa. 51:4. The poor prodigal had to learn that lesson, as we see when he cried, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." Luke 15:21.

If you will recall the different cases of leprosy mentioned in the Old Testament amongst the people of Israel (Miriam, Num. 12; Gehazi, 2 Kings 5; Uzziah, 2 Chron. 26), you will note that in every case this terrible disease was sent as a punishment for a great sin each committed. In the case of Gehazi the leprosy was to cleave unto his seed forever. There is no suggestion of sin in the case of Naaman (2 Kings 5); but he was not of the people of Israel. If, as it would seem, God used leprosy as a punishment for His people, it may be that the trespass offering atoned for the sin that had caused the disease. But I have no doubt that in the type, the trespass offering tells us of the death of Christ that atones for the acts of sin that we commit.

But the trespass offering, like the sin offering, was the priest's, When the priest eats the trespass offering he makes the trespass of the man who offers it his own.

What unspeakable grace! And this is just what our great High Priest has done for us.

“And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot" (vs. 14).

The blood of the trespass offering that has blotted out all our trespasses, now marks the ear and thumb and toe of the cleansed leper. It is the badge, or insignia, that marks every one who enters those courts of glory. There is not one but must own that his head, with all his intellect and ability, has had need to be cleansed by that precious blood. His hands have many times been used to sin against the Lord, but now the blood on the right thumb is the mark, the sign, that all has been forgiven. How often have our feet carried us astray, to go our own way (Isa. 53:6), but now the blood on the right toe tells to all that the Lord has laid on Him all their iniquity.

How wonderful that the One who down here stooped to wash His people's feet, again stoops to mark those feet with His own precious blood.

His holy head was once crowned with thorns, and His visage was so marred more than any man's (Isa. 52:14), His precious blood once stained His head and brow, and now it marks my head as His, and His alone, forever. His hands and feet were pierced for me, and to all eternity He will bear the marks of those cruel nails: and now my hand and foot bear the mark of the blood that bought them.

A girl who called herself a Christian asked an old Christian friend if he thought it would be wrong for her to go to a dance. The old man replied, "It all depends whether there is blood on your toe or not." The girl was puzzled, but the old man then told her about the leper who was cleansed, and had his ear, his hand and his foot marked with blood, as a sign that all had been bought by his Savior. When the girl realized that her toe was marked with her Savior's own precious blood, she knew at once she could not use it for dancing with the world. The day is coming when we will have "music and dancing" (Luke 15:25), but it is not down here.

As we look around that countless throng in those courts above, we find every one bears the same marking; every one will delight to join in that new song: "Thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God, by Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." Rev. 5:9 J.N.D. Trans.

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 14:10-11: Chapter 10 - The Eighth Day

Leviticus 14:10-11

“And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil: And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." (vss. 10-11).

That long-looked-for day has dawned at last. The seven days are past and gone, and now the eighth day has come. Now he may return home to the happy family circle, where all is peace and joy and love. The reproach is a thing of the past. His days of witnessing are done; and home, sweet home, is before him.

“The eighth day" in Scripture seems to have a special significance. Seven days completed the week, ending with the Sabbath on the seventh day. The following day was "the morrow after the Sabbath" or the first day of a new week. But here it is not called the first day, or "the morrow after the Sabbath," but "the eighth day." If we turn on to Lev. 23 we may notice the difference. In verses 11, 15 and 16, we read of "the morrow after the Sabbath." These verses tell in type of the resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit. But when we go on to verses 36 and 39, we do not get "the morrow after the Sabbath," but "the eighth day." In these verses we have typically an entirely new beginning. Christ has reigned on this earth for a thousand years, all sin is put down, the devil is banished forever and an eternity of joy and peace begins. It is truly a new beginning for all: as the Lord says, "Behold, I make all things new." Rev. 21:5.

And surely that eighth day was a new beginning for that poor leper. The days of wandering alone outside the camp are gone forever. Now no more need for shaving and washing. No longer absent from home and loved ones, but a life of love, joy, peace and worship has begun. Now with every offering (but the peace offering) in his hand (telling out all the various aspects and excellencies of the mighty sacrifice of Christ Himself), that man who so recently was an outcast leper, comes to be presented before the Lord. The trespass offering, meat offering, sin

offering and burnt offering are all included, as well as the log of oil, telling of the Holy Spirit, through whom Christ offered Himself. (Heb. 9:14.) In virtue of these offerings the man once so far off, approaches so near, so very near to God. I do not recall any other Israelite (except the priests and Levites) who came so near the Lord, or who had this wondrous privilege of being presented before the Lord, in this way.

I love to stand and gaze on that scene. That man only eight days before had been a vile leper, outside the camp, his head bare, his clothes rent, his lip covered, while he himself cried, "Unclean! Unclean!" Now he is brought, not only inside the camp, but to the house of God, and there presented before the Lord. Happy, wondrous, blessed place! Yet that place is ours. "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight." Col. 1:21-22. "Alienated and enemies in your mind" just describes the leper outside the camp. "Yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death" tells of the leper cleansed and brought back into the camp by the death of that clean bird. And to what does it all lead? "To present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight."

You know how certain favored individuals are presented at court to the king—but you and I, dear fellow-Christian, have the wondrous and blessed prospect of being presented to the King of kings!

And I love that expression, "the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man." It is no Stranger who will take me, stranger I in courts above, stranger to all those glories and wonders of that bright home: No, it is the Priest who made me clean; the Priest whom I have known and loved so long down here, He Himself, and no other, it is He who takes me and presents me to the Lord. Will I fear as He takes my hand and leads me up those courts of glory to present me before the Lord? It is His hand, that same blessed, pierced hand, that has led me all these years through the wilderness, that now takes me, and presents me before the Lord.

We were reading in 1 Peter 2:11, and someone turned to a dear old Chinese saint, and asked, "Mr. Chang, how is it that Peter says, 'I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims,' and Paul says, 'Ye are no more strangers and foreigners'?" Eph. 2:19. Mr. Chang was puzzled for a moment, and the question was put, "Are you a stranger down here?" "Yes, even my own family hardly knows me." "When you meet the Lord Jesus, will He be a stranger?" A bright smile lit up his whole face, as he replied warmly, "Oh, no, He is my best Friend; I have known Him for over forty years." We may truly sing,

And the more we have been strangers down here, the more carefully we have kept ourselves shaved and washed, the less we have been conformed to the world, the less we will find ourselves strangers up there. Another could sing,

We think of the joy and honor and privilege of that moment, but, beloved friends, what is our joy to His? As He takes us and presents us before the Lord, does He not see of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied? Here is another poor sinner, cleansed by His own most precious blood, and now brought into the very presence of God. Nothing short of this would satisfy the heart of Christ, even though you and I would have been perfectly satisfied to be saved from the punishment of our sins, and get the least place inside the door of heaven. But this would not satisfy Him. Such is our Savior!

And what is our joy to His? Do we not get a little glimpse of His joy at this time in Jude 24? "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Once He could say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." Matt. 26:38. Now that "exceeding sorrow" is turned into "exceeding joy." When He had found the lost sheep, He laid it on His shoulders rejoicing: but now having brought it home, He presents it before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. All the journey to that home on high He has guided it with the skilfulness of His hands (Psa. 78:72), He has upheld it and kept it from stumbling, and now the end of the journey has come, and with exceeding joy He presents the trophy of His grace and power.

But how can He present "faultless" one so faulty as I? It is in virtue of those three lambs that the leper holds in his hand, as the priest presents him. You will note that as each of those lambs is offered the Word records, "the priest shall make an atonement for him" (vss. 18- 20). Atonement means "covering." Covered by the blood of the trespass offering; covered by the blood of the sin offering; and, covered by the blood of the burnt offering: not only not a fault or flaw or spot or stain can ever be found in that man so lately an outcast leper, unfit for the company of even his fellow-men, but God sees him in all the excellencies, beauty and righteousness of the One those lambs represented. That threefold covering tells of the one offering of the body of Jesus Christ in its threefold character, nor could those offerings be separated from the meat offering which told of His spotless life on earth, nor from the oil. If the man had tried to come into the presence of God to be presented before Him without those offerings, God never could have accepted him, but with them, the man who was unfit for company with his fellow-men, is fitted for the presence of God. It was not the washing and not the shaving that fitted him for that wondrous Presence, though those were right and needful, but the blood, and the blood alone. So we, too, who sometimes were far off, are brought nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13), and we, too, are "accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:6. In Him alone, and in virtue of His blood alone, can we ever be accepted.

In 1 John 3:2-3 we read, "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." We do not purify ourselves in order to see Him and be like Him, but we purify ourselves, because we have the sure and certain hope of seeing Him, and being like Him, by the sacrifice of Himself, and through His own most precious blood. We purify ourselves, not by blood, but by the water of the Word.

THE EIGHTH DAY

“And he sprinkled... seven times... and he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head" (Lev. 8:11-12).

“And the priest... shall sprinkle... seven times... and the remnant of the oil... he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed" (Lev. 14:16, 18).

(Author unknown)

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 14:9: Chapter 9 - More Washing and Shaving

Leviticus 14:9

“But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean." (vs. 9).

The days of witness pass, and now the last of those seven days draws nigh. What must he do? Does he need more blood to make him fit to enter that longed-for home? No, we have seen already that the blood was only shed once, and only offered once. "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:14. But he does need to shave and wash again. As long as we are down in this world, and not at home with the Lord, we will find the constant need for shaving and washing. And did you notice that the description of the shaving is more minute and careful than when he shaved the first time after the priest had pronounced him clean? This tells us that as we go on in our life as a Christian, and learn to know our Lord better, we will be more and more conformed to Him, and less and less conformed to the world.

Perhaps the hair of his head speaks of his natural intelligence; the beard, of experience; the eyebrows, of power of observation. Intellect, experience and observation all need to be conformed to Christ and His death.

But not only does he shave afresh, but he again washes his clothes and his own flesh. This tells us of the need for constant cleansing by water in thought and word and deed. May you and I, dear reader, be more careful about this needed washing and shaving, for we are in a world that is filled with defiling influences on every hand. Soon we will be home, then we will hear no more of washing in water. The "sea" before the throne in Rev. 4:6 was a sea of glass like unto crystal, telling us of fixed and settled purity that never could be defiled, and needed not to be used for cleansing.

But we have another lesson in this "seventh day." The seventh day in Scripture tells us of the Sabbath, the day of rest. We read, "Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest." Ex. 23:12. But the Sabbath rest of this seventh day is broken into by the defilements that need cleansing, and instead of rest we find work. Instead of enjoying the Sabbath of rest prescribed by the law, we find the man busy shaving, bathing and washing his clothes. Does this not tell, to the opened ear, that where sin and defilement have come in, the seventh day of rest has passed away, and a new order of things has been brought in?

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 14:8: Chapter 8 - Out of His Tent

Leviticus 14:8

“After that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days" (vs.8).

Cleansed, and shaved, and washed, the man may now return to the camp. What a happy day for him! Formerly he was far off, outside the camp, but now he is brought nigh by the blood of that clean bird. Does it not remind us of Eph. 2:13? "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Now, no man can say him nay, as he enters the precincts of that camp, from which all uncleanness must be expelled.

But he may not enter his own home. He must tarry abroad out of it for seven days. What does this teach us? Many of us, when we know our sins are all cleansed, would gladly go home at once to be with Christ, and escape all the troubles and trials and reproach that come to us in this world. But this must not be, even though it is true and deep affection to Christ Himself which would make us long to be with Him forever. You remember that the man, out of whom the Lord cast the legion of devils in Mark 5, prayed Him that he might be with Him. But what did the Lord say? "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (vs. 19). The Lord sent him back to be a witness for Himself, and I think that the cleansed leper, with clean clothes, and shaved head, was a mighty witness to the power and goodness of God. For seven days he must walk the streets and paths of the camp. He has nowhere to hide from the reproaches and sneers of those whom he meets; but without even speaking, he says to every one, "Here is a leper that has been cleansed and brought nigh." Seven in the Bible is a perfect number, and tells of the perfect length of time that the Lord chooses to leave each one of us "at home in the body .... absent from the Lord." 2 Cor. 5:6. For the dying thief the time was but a few hours but what a witness he gave! His witness has echoed down through the centuries, and many a poor defiled leper has found hope and cleansing through that clear, ringing testimony, when all the world was against the Savior, or afraid to bear witness to Him. For others those seven days have lengthened out into many, many years, covering a long life. But for each one the time is perfect, and is decided for us by our Priest.

Had the leper been allowed to do so, he would gladly have hidden in his own home from the reproach of men, until his hair and beard had grown again. But God had chosen him for a witness to Himself, and as the hair grew, it must be shaved again, as we will presently see. And God has chosen you, my reader, if you also are a cleansed leper, to be a witness for Himself. It is for this reason that He has left you down here. It is because He wants you to be a witness to Him in a world that has rejected Him and cast Him out, that He still leaves you down here, and does not take you home at once. The Lord Jesus Christ was the faithful and true witness. (Rev. 3:14.) Oh, beloved friends, let us search ourselves and see what sort of witnesses we are to Him.

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 14:8: Chapter 7 - Washed and Shaved

Leviticus 14:8

Verse 8: "And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days.”

Now, in the eyes of God, the poor leper is clean and spotless. The priest has pronounced him clean, and that pronouncement comes with all the authority and certainty of God Himself.

What follows? The man immediately seeks to cleanse everything about him, and to bring all into conformity to that wonderful standing, in which he now stands before God—even clean and spotless.

You may recall that we asked you to note particularly what the leper had to do to be cleansed. If you have followed the seven verses of this chapter in Leviticus that we have just been considering, you will have noticed that the man has not to do one single thing.

Everything was done for him. His part was to accept what others did for him, and to put his confidence in the shed blood, and believe the spoken word of the priest.

There was not the smallest thing else for him to do, except to stand by in wonder, amazement and thanksgiving for God's wondrous plan of cleansing. But now all is changed. Now the leper starts to work. Let us stand by and watch him.

First he washes his clothes. Before, perhaps, they were so vile and loathsome that nobody would touch them.

Some of us have seen lepers begging at the roadside, and we know how filthy their clothes are. They themselves are hopelessly unclean, why should they seek to keep their clothes clean? But now all is changed. The man is clean in the eyes of God, and by faith he is clean in his own eyes. Now he must appear clean in the eyes of other men.

Or, it might be, in the old days that he had succeeded in keeping his clothes cleaner than most lepers, so that they wondered that he should be able to keep his clothes so nice; and he himself was probably well satisfied with the condition of his clothing. But now, clean and spotless in the eyes of God, he finds that his clothes are far from what they should be. They must be washed.

The clothes tell us of that which touches us—our associations—that with which we have to do, that which the world around sees as connected with us. Perhaps men have been accustomed to see us in the gambling halls, or in other evil places. All these associations and ways must be "washed." How do we wash our ways and associations? We get that question answered for us in Psa. 119:9—"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" That is the question. Here is God's own answer: "By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word.”

Leviticus 13:47-59 tells us of leprosy in the garment. This speaks of sin in a person's surroundings, even when the person himself was free from the plague. It is not enough that we ourselves are cleansed from sin: we may not go on with those things around us which are sinful, no matter whether they are business affairs, religious associations, or any other matters with which we are connected.

What happens next? He shall "shave off all his hair." It was against the law for an Israelite to "make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard" (Lev. 21:5; 19:27). It was a mark of shame and reproach; see Isaiah 15:2 — "On all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off." (Also see Jer. 41:5; 48:37; 2 Sam. 10:4-5.) But now all this hair must come off. All his own natural beauty and glory must go. Everything that might shelter any uncleanness must be cut off, at any cost.

The one cleansed by the blood will find that he is called to share the Lord's reproach and shame, as he seeks to walk a path that is according to His Word. In China where we are accustomed to shaved heads and faces, it is hard for us to realize what shame and reproach and contempt this shaving would bring. We read of those who in the early days "were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions." Heb. 10:33. The Word tells us that Moses chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11:25-26). We, too, are exhorted to bear His reproach. (Heb. 13:13.) The Lord Himself knows what reproach means. It was He who could say, "Thou hast known My reproach, and My shame, and My dishonor: Mine adversaries are all before Thee. Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." Psa. 69:19-20. None have ever tasted reproach and shame as deeply as He has done; but you and I, dear fellow-believer, have the privilege of bearing in some measure His reproach. May He grant us to esteem it greater riches than this poor world can offer!

In a land where every man had a fine head of hair, and a big bushy beard, the cleansed leper without either hair or beard would indeed be a gazingstock. As he walked down the street many a finger would be pointed at him, many a joke would be cracked at his expense. But was it not worth while? Was it not infinitely better to be cleansed and in the congregation of the Lord's people without a beard, than to be wandering with a beard outside the camp, crying "Unclean! Unclean!" And he must tarry abroad out of his tent seven days, but soon, very soon, the seven days will pass, and he can retire to that loved home of his, away from the reproach and shame and dishonor, to enjoy the peace and joy and love of his own dear ones. Then let him boldly bear witness to all around, while he has the opportunity, of the grace and power that has cleansed him, and brought him back to the congregation of the Lord.

But there is still more. The leper is to "wash himself in water." "Wash himself." What does that mean? I think that is nearer home than washing his clothes: something more intimately connected with himself than cleansing his ways and associations. This touches every habit of my life. It cleanses even my thoughts, and the effect reaches out to my words, my deeds, and all my habits—"myself." For as a man thinketh, so is he. (Prov. 23:7.) All are to be cleansed now, not by blood, but by water.

The bird was slain only once. The blood was sprinkled only once, but the water may be applied many times. As we go on in our chapter, we will find that on the seventh day he must wash again, not be cleansed again in blood, but in water. You will recall that in the tabernacle, the laver with water in which the priests washed their hands and feet, stood between the altar and the tabernacle: and at that laver the priests continually washed, before entering the tabernacle for service. This showed the continual need for cleansing from the defilements of this world—not by blood—that has been done once, and once only— but by water—the water of the Word.

Do not these words, speaking of washing in water, remind us of many verses in the New Testament? For instance, in 2 Cor. 7:1, after giving us the beautiful promise that the Lord Almighty will be a Father unto us, the Word continues, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

Again, Eph. 5:2 tells us, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." Then after gazing at that wondrous offering that has cleansed us from our sins, immediately we read, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks" (vss. 3-4).

Does this not exactly correspond to washing our clothes, shaving our hair, and washing ourselves in water?

We will speedily find that a refusal to indulge in foolish talking and jesting will bring plenty of reproach, and make us a "gazingstock." What a natural ornament is a quick wit, or a clever reply! But harmless as it may seem to us, there is very grave danger of defilement lurking here. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." Prov. 10:19. And again, "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor." Eccl. 10:1.

So this mark of ability and beauty must come off. The Word exhorts us again and again to be sober and grave. See, for example, 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Tim. 2:15, 3:2, 4, 8, 11; Titus 1:8, 2:12.

There are multitudes of passages in the New Testament that stress the urgent need of what corresponds in the leper to this cleansing of clothes and self. One feels that this very important truth has not been stressed as it should have been. We have delighted to stand by and watch the grace of God that has cleansed that poor vile leper, without him so much as moving a finger, but we are often very slow in our washing and shaving. But if we realize what it cost our Lord and Master to cleanse us, how can we do less than seek to walk to His glory while He leaves us down here? From verse 1 to the end of verse 7, as we have seen, the leper does nothing. All he brings to the priest is his leprosy and uncleanness, everything is done for him. But the moment the priest has pronounced him clean and has let the bird loose-from that moment the leper begins to work, not in order to be cleansed before God—he is clean before God already—but to bring his outward condition into keeping with his standing before God.

We get these two sides beautifully brought out in Titus 3:4, 5, 8. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;... This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."

Again, please ponder Colossians 2:20 and 3:1-14—"If ye be dead with Christ" and "If ye then be risen with Christ." That spotless little bird had done nothing to merit death. It had no uncleanness nor defilement, yet it died instead of the defiled, unclean leper. In God's sight the leper deserved death—indeed, was dead while he lived. (Num. 12:12.) In God's sight the leper died with that bird-but in His sight the leper rose again with that living bird, which has told us so plainly of the resurrection of Christ. In God's sight the leper is a new man with a new life. So God sees us "dead with Christ," and "risen with Christ," new men with a new life, and He continues in Col. 3:3, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." When that living bird died, I, the poor vile leper, died with it. When it rose (in type), I rose with it, a new man with a new life, and as it flew back to the open heavens it took my life and hid it up there with Christ in God.

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 14:4-7: Chapter 6 - Two Birds, Alive and Clean

Leviticus 14:4-7

But let us follow the leper who is truly all covered with leprosy. The priest looks—not to see if the leper is cleansed, but to see if he is healed. And now he does not find a spot anywhere without the plague, and joy, oh joy, now he can be made clean.

Now, dear reader, please note particularly what the leper must do to be cleansed. Somebody else brought him to the priest. The priest goes out of the camp, he looks and decides if the leper is in a condition to be cleansed. Now, listen! The priest speaks; he commands to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop (vs. 4). The leper was far too poor and helpless to obtain those birds and other things for himself; nor does the priest tell him to get them. No, he tells somebody else to provide those two birds alive and clean. He tells somebody else, not the leper, to get the other things needed for his cleansing.

It reminds us of Isaac's question: "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And we think of Abraham's answer: "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Gen. 22:7-8. God must always provide the offering. We poor sinners must die in our sins, if we have to go in search of a suitable sacrifice, for we could never, never find one. But God's Word says, "The priest shall command to take for him."

God has provided those two birds alive and clean. Both together make one lovely picture of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running [or, living] water" (vs. 5). Again, the poor leper stands by while another not only provides the offering, but another kills it. Look, a moment, at that picture. An earthen vessel; inside that earthen vessel, a pure spotless bird. The heavens are the home of the bird—the heavens are its native air—but it comes down and enters into a vessel of earth. It leaves its native air, it leaves its home above, for this poor sad earth. And in that earthen vessel it is killed. What a picture of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He leaves His home in the heavens, He leaves His throne above, He comes down to this sad world and takes a body of earth. For truly our bodies are but "earthen vessels." You know "Adam" means "earthy" or "red earth." So our Lord took an earthy body. How we love to watch that heavenly Man walking this world in His body of earth! And in that same body He was killed. Wicked men nailed that body to the cross, and His precious blood was poured out.

But the bird was killed in an earthen vessel over running, or living, water. Running water has life and power in it. What amazing power there is in the running water at Niagara Falls! Water in the Bible very often speaks of the Word of God. (See Psa. 119:9; Eph. 5:26.) And the running, or living, water tells us of the living Word of God, applied by the Spirit of God to our hearts. That Word is "living and powerful." Heb. 4:12. (See also J.N.D. Trans.) It takes the death of Christ, and tells me in the living power of the Spirit that the Lord Jesus Christ died for me, that it was for my sins that He suffered. You have often heard the story of His death, perhaps. You have often seen that bird killed in the earthen vessel: but, dear reader, have you ever realized that it was for you? Have you ever seen Him killed over the running water? "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10:17. It is from the living Word that you get living faith.

From the pierced side of our Savior there flowed down "blood and water." John 19:34.

Verse 6: "As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water."

It has been remarked that the two birds make one picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen Him come down from heaven and take that body that was prepared for Him, and in that "earthen vessel" He died on the cross for us. He did not stay on the cross, but still bearing those marks of death in hands and feet and side, He was laid in the grave—but on the third day He rose again, still bearing those same marks of death. And so we see the living bird going down into the blood of the dead bird and coming up with its pure feathers all marked with death. What a wonderful picture of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! But still the bird is held in the hand of the priest. It is not yet free to ascend up to its native home in the heavens.

But not alone was the living bird dipped in the blood of the dead bird: cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop were also dipped in that blood. The cedar wood tells us of the greatest and highest things of nature: the hyssop tells us of the meanest and the lowest and the most bitter things of nature. Solomon spoke of "trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." 1 Kings 4:33. That which is greatest by nature must all go under that precious blood. The most clever, the most brilliant man or woman: the kindest, and most humane person on earth, the most honest and true-hearted man living—all alike can only get salvation through the blood. And again the poorest and most miserable coolie, whose life is bitter with hard labor—he also must go under the blood if he is to obtain salvation. Even "him that is simple" must have the blood for his only title. (Ezek. 45:20.) The scarlet speaks of royalty, and it tells us that those who occupy the highest place on earth must go down into the blood along with the lowest.

But these things tell us something more. They are things which belong to this world: and when Christ was crucified the world was crucified unto me, and I unto the world. (Gal. 6:14.) This world is stained with the blood of the Son of God, my Savior, and it and I can never be friends again. The cross stands between it and me. Indeed the Word tells me plainly that "whosoever... will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:4.

Verse 7: "And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.”

Lovely verse! Just gaze on that wonderful scene. The poor leper has been brought from outside the camp, the priest has gone out to him. Another has provided two birds alive and clean. Another has killed one of those birds, and now its blood is in the basin, the living bird's feathers, the cedar wood, the scarlet and the hyssop are all stained with the blood of the dead bird. The poor leper has gazed on all this scene, but there has been no change in him or his condition. But now the priest sprinkles the blood seven times on the leper himself—once, twice, three times... on, on six times, and still no change, but now the seventh time—and the man is clean! The blood has made him clean. Without the blood there was no way of cleansing for the poor leper. And without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. (Heb. 9:22.) But that blood had power to cleanse the leper from every bit of defilement. The clean bird can cleanse the unclean leper. It mattered not how vile and loathsome the poor leper was, provided the bird was clean. Seven times tells of the perfection of the cleansing. And now the precious blood of Christ has power to cleanse the vilest and most defiled and loathsome sinner from every trace of sin. Please be perfectly clear about this. It was the blood, and the blood alone, that cleansed the leper. It is the blood and the blood alone that cleanses any poor sinner today.

But how did the leper know that he was cleansed? Did his leprosy suddenly vanish when the blood was sprinkled on him the seventh time? I do not think so. I do not think that he felt one bit different after the blood was sprinkled to what he felt before. I do not think that he looked any different after the blood was sprinkled to what he looked before.

How, then, did he know that he was clean? The moment the blood is sprinkled the seventh time, the priest pronounced him clean. As you stand by and watch that wonderful scene, you may hear the priest make that blessed pronouncement, "Be thou clean." The blood of the bird made him clean, the word of the priest makes him know he is clean. It was the word of the priest that made him know once before that he was unclean, and so in exactly the same way, it is the word of the same priest that makes him know that he is clean.

But that is not all; the moment the priest pronounces the poor leper to be clean, then he takes that living bird, stained with the blood of the dead bird, and lets it free into the open fields. The work of the sacrifice was finished, the leper is cleansed and knows he is clean, and now there is nothing to keep that living bird down here.

In just the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, bearing the marks of death upon Him, and after a brief stay amongst men down here, He ascended up into the heavens, still bearing those same marks-proof that His work is completed; His victory won; our sins put away; and He Himself, and we with Him, are now accepted on high. In a coming day He will present His church to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. (Eph. 5:27.) The wounds and scars of her warfare down here will all be gone up there, but to all eternity our Lord Jesus Christ will bear those marks of death in His hands and feet and side.

If His work on the cross had not been complete—if He had not truly cleansed our sins—if one of our sins had remained upon Him—He never could have come up from the grave and ascended into heaven. But, praise be to God! His work is complete. It has been accepted on high, and He has returned to His home in the heavens, in positive proof that all is done.

Suppose, now, an old neighbor meets the cleansed leper, and says to him, "What are you doing around here? You are a leper! Get away from here!" The leper replies, "Yes, truly I was a leper, but now, thank God, I am cleansed!" "Cleansed!" replies the neighbor. "You are not cleansed! On the contrary you look worse than ever! You appear to be all covered with leprosy!”

“Just so, but the priest has sprinkled the blood of the bird upon me, and has pronounced me clean, and I know that I am clean, because he said so."

“Nonsense! You have misunderstood him. He probably told you that you were not clean! Anybody can see you are a leper!”

“Ah, no. There is no possibility that I misunderstood him. First I had the blood sprinkled on me, and then I myself heard the priest's own voice telling me that I was clean; but that is not all—with my own eyes, I myself have seen the living bird—with its feathers covered with blood—fly away into the open heaven. You know the law. You know the living bird cannot fly away until the priest has pronounced me clean.”

“But," continues the neighbor, "do you mean to tell me that you feel yourself to be clean, when you admit that you are all covered with leprosy?”

“Friend, that is not the point. The priest said I am clean, and that settles the matter. As you know, he, and he only, has authority to pronounce any man clean, and he has pronounced me clean, so now I know that I am clean, no matter how I feel.”

The neighbor is silenced, and the leper is filled with joy and peace and triumph, as he recalls that sight of the living bird, flying away free, back to its old home.

Even so is it with you and me, dear fellow-sinner, cleansed in the blood of Jesus? As we watch, by the eye of faith, our Lord and Savior returning back to His home in the heavens, we know that He is accepted, and we know that we also are accepted in Him. (Eph. 1:6.)

But that living Savior, gone back to heaven, tells us more than the fact that His work of cleansing is complete. His resurrection and ascension tell us that He is Conqueror, He is victorious over death and the grave. The mightiest battle of the universe has been fought and won, and now He can sing in triumph, and we with Him, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. 15:55.

J. Condor

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 14:1-3: Chapter 5 - God's Way of Cleansing

Leviticus 14:1-3

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself tells us that there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. See Luke 4:27.

Although none of these lepers in Israel in the days of Eliseus were cleansed, yet all this time there was a long chapter in the Old Testament giving minute instructions as to exactly the way, and the only way, that leprosy might be cleansed.

Surely it is the same in our day. There are hundreds of millions of sinners in our time, and any of them, or all of them, might be cleansed, if they were but willing to come and be cleansed in God's way.

God introduces the way of cleansing with almost the same words that He used about the way for a man to know he had leprosy. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying." Lev. 14:1. These words that tell of the way of cleansing are the very words of the living God, and are true and faithful. Let us listen to them with all our hearts.

“This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest." Lev. 14:2.

Do you remember the day when that swelling, rising or bright spot first appeared, and you were brought to the Priest? Do you remember how unwilling you were to go to Him? Do you remember His sad decision, "You are unclean?" Do you remember the time when first you found out you were a sinner? Perhaps you thought like many, "I am not as bad as a lot of others," but still you knew that the hidden plague that ends in death was there.

But now things have gotten worse. The disease has spread. In those old days you could cover it up with your clothes—but even so you had to go outside the camp, your clothes rent, your head bare, and cry, "Unclean! Unclean!" But still the disease spreads. It covers your face and head, your body, legs and feet—all, all is covered! All is turned white! You are in a sad way indeed! There is not a spot where you could put the point of a pin without leprosy. Truly you are "full of leprosy.”

What happens now? Perhaps a friend meets you outside the camp, sad and weary and discouraged, yes, hopeless. Your friend's eye looks you over: he says, "Come, I will take you to the priest. You are all covered with leprosy. You may be made clean." You reply, "No, there is no hope for me; I am worse than I have ever been. There is not a leper outside the camp as bad as I am. See, I am all covered." "Yes, I see," replies your friend, "and that is the very reason you are now ready to be cleansed. Come away to the priest at once.”

Perhaps you fear that piercing eye that once before has found your spot of leprosy, and banished you outside the camp. Perhaps this fear would keep you away from the priest, but your friend insists, and now he brings you to him. His heart is glad for he knows what is in store for you. Perhaps your heart is filled with shame and fear and dread, as you go along that road to meet the priest.

Have you, dear Christian reader, any unsaved friends or relatives? Have you brought them to the Priest? Have you brought them to Him in prayer? Or have you brought them to hear the gospel preached as you have had opportunity? These are blessed privileges of which you and I are all too slow to avail ourselves. May the Lord give us each one to be more faithful towards our unsaved friends, who in reality are just poor, unclean lepers, far off, outside the camp.

We have a lovely record in John 1:41-42 of a man who did this very thing. He found the Lord—or the Lord found him—and what does he do? "He first findeth his own brother Simon." I love that little word "first." It was already long past the "tenth hour:" the day was done: but Andrew did not stop for food or drink or rest, or anything else, but away to hunt for "his own brother." And he found him, and what did he do with him? "He brought him to Jesus." We never hear much of Andrew, but "his own brother" was Simon Peter, and what a blessing Andrew's brother has been to every one of us! What a debt we all owe to Andrew for that evening's work!

And though it is true we do not hear much about Andrew, what we do hear is very, very lovely. This seems to have been a special line of work with Andrew. The next time we see him is in John 6:8, and there he is bringing "a lad" to the Lord Jesus. Again we find him at the same work in John 12:22, where he is bringing the Greeks to Jesus. Happy work! May the Lord teach every one of us to bring others, one by one, to Himself. It was not until we drew the pictures of the leper that we even realized that the friend who brought the leper to the priest was of so much importance. May we be more like him, unnamed, almost unmentioned, and yet the link in the chain without which the leper could not have been cleansed.

We have seen the leper and his friend hurrying along the road to seek the priest. But, stop! The poor leper cannot enter the camp. He is defiled and unclean. How can he meet that priest? That priest's home is the house of God, the very center of the camp. But the Priest Himself

has devised a way, and so we read in verse 3, "The priest shall go forth out of the camp." The great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, went forth out of His glory more than 1900 years ago. He came down to this sad wicked world, and even down here, "He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull." John 19:17. Yes, the Priest has already gone forth without the gate. (Heb. 13:12.) He sees you, poor defiled sinner, and He has already gone where you are. (Luke 10:33.) He is waiting to cleanse you. "Wilt thou be made whole?" John 5:6. That is the question now. Oh, poor sinner, reply immediately, "With all my heart, I am willing to be made whole."

"And the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper." Lev. 14:3. Those eyes of flame search you once again. Before they searched you to find if there was one spot of leprosy, and the priest had to pronounce you unclean. Now they search you to see if there is one spot without leprosy, and if you truly are "all covered," the priest may pronounce you clean. Then he looked to see if you were entirely clean of this awful plague; now he looks to see if you are entirely covered by it. In the same way, our Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, searches the sinner who comes to Him. Is he truly coming as a poor, lost, ruined, guilty sinner? Has he no good word to say for himself? Is he full of sin? The Priest shall look, and if the sinner is in this condition, then he may be made clean. He is a "sinner that repenteth," and over him there is joy in the presence of the angels of God. (Luke 15:10.)

But if there is still a little whole flesh without the plague—if the leper can still turn to his other leper friends, and say, "I am better than you! I have not so much leprosy on me as you have!"; if he still has some goodness of his own in which he can glory—then back to his old place outside the camp he must go. He is not ready for cleansing. The apostle Paul could say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Gal. 6:14.

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 13:45-46: Chapter 4 - Unclean! Unclean!

Leviticus 13:45-46

"And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be" (vss. 45-46).

These sad verses give us a vivid picture of the sinner. It might be that formerly he was able to use his clothes to cover the spots of leprosy. But now his clothes must be rent. There is no way now to cover his defilement. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:13. Adam tried to cover himself with fig leaves, but he failed, and when God came down into the garden he had to own, "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Gen. 3:10.

Poor sinner, your clothes are rent to the eyes of God; He sees you naked. Every spot of sin and defilement is clear and plain to Him. You cannot cover it. Where Adam failed, you have no hope to succeed, and remember, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Prov. 28:13.

"And his head bare." There is nothing to cover your guilty head. Between you and high heaven there is nothing to shelter you. All the wrath of a sin-hating God rests on your bare, unsheltered head. "The wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36. The priest uncovers the head of the unfaithful wife in Num. 5:18. There is nothing under which she may hide.

We read of some who can say, "Thou hast covered my head" (Psa. 140:7), but the poor leper must take off any covering he may have had. "His head bare" tells forth one of the most awful and one of the most solemn truths about the defiled sinner that it is possible for the mind of man to comprehend.

Dear reader, is your head covered? Or does the eye of God see nothing but uncleanness and defilement—with nothing under which you can hide?

"And he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean." Though his head must be bare, his mouth must be covered. The very breath of the leper can only bring defilement. There is not a suggestion that by doing his best he may someday be fit for the presence of a holy God. No, he is not even fit for company with his fellow men who are not likewise defiled. His only cry is a sad wail of warning, "Unclean! Unclean!" What folly for any poor sinner to suggest that he can cleanse himself when he is in such an awful condition that every breath he takes is defiled and defiling.

The rest of the chapter speaks of leprosy in a garment or a skin. If the Lord will, we may look at these verses later on, but now we will follow the path of the poor defiled leper, and see God's way of cleansing—when man is hopeless and helpless, when he has no way to cleanse himself.

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 13:42-44: Chapter 3 - Utterly Unclean

Leviticus 42-44

We must now notice verses 42-44. These are most solemn, and should have a voice to many in our day. "And if there be in the bald head, or bald forehead, a white reddish sore; it is a leprosy sprung up in his bald head, or his bald forehead. Then the priest shall look upon it: and, behold, if the rising of the sore be white reddish in his bald head, or in his bald forehead, as the leprosy appeareth in the skin of the flesh; he is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague is in his head."

The forehead is a common place for leprosy to show itself. How many there are today who have the plague of leprosy in their heads, yet have not the least idea that they are "utterly unclean." They have their own ideas.

They reason things out with their own mind. They trust to their own heads, instead of to the Word of God. Pride, and especially pride of intellect, is the root of the trouble when the leprosy is in the head. How many "men of science," as they call themselves, are in reality men with leprosy in their heads. We may see a terrible example of this in Uzziah whose pride made him take the place that belonged alone to the priests. "His heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.... The leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead."
2 Chron. 26:16, 19-20.

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 13:12-15: Chapter 2 - All Covered

Leviticus 13:12-15

Let us now go down to verses 12 and 13. There we read a most extraordinary statement. "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."

Strange! Strange!! Strange!!! When a few months or years before he was brought to the priest with only one tiny rising, scab or bright spot, the priest pronounced him unclean, and he had to go outside the camp and dwell alone. Now he is all covered, and what says the priest? "You are clean!" Strange indeed! What can the meaning be of this?

It tells us of a poor sinner, who has not one word of good to say about himself. We may see many lepers who were all covered with leprosy in the Bible, and all were cleansed. Look at Peter in Luke 5. He finds out for the first time he is covered with leprosy. Hear him: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man" (or, "a man full of sin"). Luke 5:8. If you have a cup full of water, you have no room for anything else in it. If you have a man full of sin, you have no room for any good in him. Such was the apostle Peter. Look further in the same chapter, verse 12:

"It came to pass, when He was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy; who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And He put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean." Luke 5:12-13. Never was a man full of sin or full of leprosy who need wait longer to be cleansed. The Priest, our Savior, is just waiting for such men. Look at the thief on the cross: "We receive the due reward of our deeds." Luke 23:41. And that day he was in paradise with his Savior and Lord. See the prodigal son in Luke 15:21—"I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight," and instantly the father's arms were round his neck and he "covered him with kisses." Luke 15:20 J.N.D. Trans. Look at the publican in Luke 18:13—"God be merciful to me a sinner," and he went home justified. Look at Paul: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." Rom. 7:18. Look at Job: "I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." Job 40:4. And again: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:6. But, justified at once. See, again, Isaiah: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." Isa. 6:5. Instantly: "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Isa. 6:7.

Yes, friend, all these men got cleansing in the same way. They all found out that not only were they lepers, but that they were full of leprosy, from the top of their heads to the sole of their feet. Not one of these men will be in heaven by his own good works. They all stand up and witness that "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Rom. 3:12. Dear reader, where Peter and Paul and Job and Isaiah and every other saint in glory has failed, you cannot succeed. They were each one lost and ruined and on the way to hell, and they all owned it and took their place as poor lost ruined sinners, and in that place alone did they obtain pardon and cleansing. In that state alone can you also obtain pardon and cleansing.

We read in Job 33:27-28 (J.N.D. Trans.): "He will sing before men, and say, I have sinned, and perverted what was right, and it hath not been requited to me; He hath delivered my soul from going into the pit, and my life shall see the light." There will not be one person in heaven who will sing, "I have never sinned, and so I have gotten here myself." The song up there tells of our hopeless ruin—and of the grace of God.

Come then! Come now! Come just as you are to that gracious Priest. He is waiting. He says, "Come now, let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1:18 J.N.D. Trans. He knows you are full of leprosy—full of sin—but will you believe His testimony of yourself? Will you take that place of a lost sinner, full of sin? If so, cleansing, pardon, peace and blessing are yours.

But one word more before we turn from these verses. We read, "But when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean. And the priest shall see the raw flesh, and pronounce him to be unclean: for the raw flesh is unclean: it is a leprosy" (vss. 14-15). This tells us of the man who is willing to go on in sin, even though he owns himself to be a sinner. He is all covered with leprosy, but there is raw flesh, sin, actively working in him. It is very remarkable that although there are many men in Scripture who take the place of saying, "I have sinned," yet not all of them obtain cleansing. David (2 Sam. 12:13), Nehemiah (Neh. 9:33), Job (Job 40:4;42:6), Isaiah (Isa. 6:5;64:6), Jeremiah (Jer. 14:7, 20), Daniel (Dan. 9:5), Micah (Mic. 7:9), the prodigal son (Luke 15:21), and the thief on the cross (Luke 23:41): These all took the place of sinners and all got cleansing or blessing. But look at Pharoah (Ex. 9:27; 10:16), Balaam (Num. 22:34), Achan (Josh. 7:20), Saul (1 Sam. 15:24; 26:21), Shimei (2 Sam. 19:20), and Judas (Matt. 27:4): These all confess they have sinned, yet they perish. These all admit the leprosy, but they have the raw flesh appearing. There was no hatred of the sin. There was no desire to turn from it and give it up. There was no true repentance. But the active evil was still working in their flesh.

When we know the wonderful grace of God that takes me, a poor sinner full of sin, and in that terrible condition cleanses and pardons me, and brings me to God—this grace makes me long to be holy, and long that sin shall not have dominion over me. (See Rom. 6:14.) If I allow active sin to go on working in me unchecked, it is a proof that I do not know the grace of God that cleanses and pardons. John writes, "He that practices sin is of the devil." 1 John 3:8 J.N.D. Trans.

This does not mean that after we are saved we will never sin again. The apostle John plainly writes of people who say this, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." 1 John 1:8. Note that we do not deceive God, or other people, but only ourselves.

Nor does this verse in Leviticus mean that if we sin, it is a proof that we never were saved. How often the devil has tormented young Christians in this way. A sheep may fall into the ditch and get dirty, but that does not mean it is not a sheep, and it is unhappy till it gets out and is clean once more. A pig delights in the dirt and filth of the ditch. The one "practices" dirt, the other does not but hates it. A sow that is washed will always return to its wallowing in the mire. (See 2 Peter 2:22.)But it has always been a sow— it never became a sheep.

The one whom the Lord Jesus cleanses is changed, not only on the outside, but also on the inside, when he is born again. The Lord gives him a clean heart, a new nature that hates and loathes and abhors sin, and is never happy if the one in whom that nature dwells has fallen into sin, until he is restored.

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 13:1-11: Chapter 1 - The Plague of Leprosy

Leviticus 13:1-11

Most of our readers know that the Bible, especially the Old Testament, is full of most wonderful pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of those things which concern Him. In the New Testament these pictures are spoken of as "shadows." (Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5.) "The law having a shadow of good things to come." Heb. 10:1. Some of these shadows are so plain, and in such wonderful detail, that as we gaze upon them, we are amazed at their clearness and beauty.

Of all these beautiful shadows, few, if any, are more beautiful, or shown out in greater detail and fullness than the "Law of the Leper."

Leprosy is the most hateful and loathsome of all diseases. It is a disease which not only ends in death, but more than any other disease is a picture of death working in life, for the parts of the body affected really die, while the man lives on.

The beginning of leprosy is like the beginning of sin. It is small and insidious, and at first not alarming. We see in Lev. 13:2 That sometimes it even looks "bright"—just as sin at the beginning does not frighten us; and, instead, often appears bright and attractive—but in reality death is there. The wages of sin is death, just as the certain end of leprosy is also death.

Leprosy may affect almost any part of the body. It was not what the leper did that made him unclean, but what he was. We must each say, "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Psa. 51:5. We were born unclean. It is what we are, as well as what we do, that makes us unclean. Therefore the leper had to go to the priest (not to the doctor) to make him clean. Note, it was not only a question of being healed, but cleansed. So we may see leprosy is a most fitting picture of sin.

And as sin, and its cleansing, is the theme of the Bible from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, so in Lev. 13 and 14 we will find the same theme manifested with such power and skill that we are compelled to bow in worship, and confess that none but the hand of God could draw such a picture and none but the love of God could devise such a means of cleansing. Not only is leprosy a picture of sin, but we will find that these two chapters are full of other, most wonderful pictures, if only we have eyes to see them.

As we read these chapters together, we will seek, with God's help, to point out some of the beautiful details in this picture of sin and its cleansing.

First let us notice and always remember that GOD—not man—gave us this wonderful picture.

The introduction to the whole subject is in chapter 13, verse 1: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying." Let us, as we write, or read, remember we are considering the very words of the true and living God.

In chapter 13, verse 2, we read, "When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests." "A rising, a scab, or bright spot." How much these words express! "A rising." Does this not tell us of pride that puffs up every one of us? Pride that causes contention? Pride that is the root and core of so very many sins and evils? Probably not one of us is free from these hateful risings, and often those who believe themselves to be most humble are in reality proud of their humility.

The Word says, "Knowledge puffeth up" (1 Cor. 8:1), and how striking to see that the "knowledge" spoken of here is a knowledge of the Word and ways of God. It surely should make us stop and consider, when we realize that even a knowledge of the Bible may puff us up, and bring out one of those "risings" that hides leprosy. Someone has said that there is Pride of race, Pride of place, Pride of face, but the worst pride of all is Pride of grace. And so there may be many kinds of risings, but certainly one of the worst, and one of the commonest, is the rising that is puffed up through our knowledge of God's own Word. The Pharisee in Luke 18:11 had a very bad rising of this sort. Pharoah and Nebuchadnezzar are others who were afflicted with a "rising," but of another kind, and our readers can doubtless think of many others who are troubled with the same kind of leprosy, possibly themselves included.

“A scab." This covers up some old wound or sore. How many of us are troubled with scabs! Somebody has treated us badly in the past and it still sticks in our hearts. We have never really forgiven them, though we have tried to cover up the old sore. It is like the root of bitterness (Heb. 12:15), hidden away in the ground, covered up, but liable to spring up at any time and "defile many," just as the scab is liable to hide leprosy at any time, and also defile many. Oh, friends, do be careful about these scabs; they are most dangerous things. King Saul is an example of a man terribly ill with "scabs."

“A bright spot." We read in Heb. 11:25 of "the pleasures of sin." Sin does have its pleasures. Often sin looks very bright. We read in Heb. 3:13 of "the deceitfulness of sin," and that is always true. Sin is deceitful. Satan would turn our eyes from the danger of sin, and would tell us how very profitable, how very bright it is. Do you remember how the first sin entered this world? Satan presented it to the woman as a "bright spot." She saw the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She saw it was "good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." Gen. 3:6. It all looked so bright, that she took the fruit and did eat.

Satan has been busy preparing "bright spots" ever since that day, and they are intended by him to end up in leprosy. The brightest spots on the streets of Shanghai at night are generally the most sinful. They are dens of wickedness, saturated with leprosy. Oh, my friends, beware of the "bright spots" down here. There is a far brighter spot, the bright home of the Savior, awaiting His own at the end of the way, and they can well do without the bright spots down here. They will surely break out into leprosy.

Please notice especially those words, "He shall be brought unto Aaron the priest." These are very important words and we find almost the same words in Lev. 14:2 when it was a question of cleansing. No matter whether it is a question of deciding whether a man has leprosy or not, or whether a man is ready to be cleansed from his leprosy or not, the whole matter depended on the priest. The man and his friends had nothing to say about it. The man who had a rising, a scab or a bright spot might say, "I do not consider these things of any importance. In my opinion, and in the opinion of all the great scientists, these things do not matter." Friend, the first thing this man must learn is that his own opinion and the opinion of every other living man, except the priest, is of absolutely no value or importance, and is even of no interest whatever. The whole question is, "What does the priest say?"

Perhaps he was not willing to go to the priest. Perhaps he thought he could decide himself about the rising, the scab or the bright spot; perhaps he thought the small spot on his body would soon get better. But the Word of God stands sure, "He shall be brought unto the priest." The Word does not even say, He himself shall go to the priest—but, "He shall be brought unto the priest."

Therefore those words, "He shall be brought unto Aaron the priest," are most important words. Dear reader, have you ever been brought unto the Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest? Have you ever submitted your life to the gaze of His eyes, which are "as a flame of fire?" Rev. 1:14. There may be things in your life which you know are not quite right: What about them? Has the Priest "looked" at them? Considered them? You know He must pronounce them "unclean." Perhaps your friends have brought you by prayer many times to the Lord Jesus: but if you have never been brought to that Priest before, God grant that this little book will bring you to Him this day. Perhaps you say, "Oh, those things are of no consequence. It is only a rising, a swelling." But is it a swelling of pride? Is sin at the root of the trouble? The priest alone can decide this. Go to Him, friend, go quickly, while there is time and hope-far better for you to know the truth now, than to drop into hell without even knowing you are on your way there.

You will not find the Priest impatient or cruel. You will find One who is filled with love and sympathy. He will look on those risings or swellings—that scab which marks some old trouble, maybe some old quarrel, or bad feeling; those bright spots which you rather like, but which tell of something wrong within, perhaps some self-indulgence which you love. He will not look hurriedly. His eye will never mistake, and if there is any question He will shut up the one with these complaints for seven days—or even for still another seven days if need be. (See vs.4-7.)

But has not our Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, already shut up man, already given man every chance to clear himself of the charge of being a leper? Surely He has. He tried Adam in the garden of Eden, in innocency; but soon the leprosy appeared, sin came in. He tried man before the flood with conscience as his guide, and when God "looked" on him, He found such terrible leprosy that all were destroyed but eight persons. There was no other way for such a disease. He tried Noah and his sons, but again sin appeared. Then He took Abraham and his descendents, shut him up from other nations, but still out came the leprosy. Then He gave them the law, but that did not help.

Finally He sent His own dear Son, and man murdered Him. Now what does God say? The trial is over. No need to shut man up any longer. Read Rom. 3. Look at verse 10: "There is none righteous, no, not one." Verse 12: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." Verses 22 and 23: "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And see also Rom. 11:32 and Gal. 3:22. Every mouth has been stopped (Rom. 3:19), so that even you can have not one word to say. The Priest has already pronounced you, and every man, to be unclean.

The Priest is looking on you, friend, and that is what He says. He pronounces you a sinner. He says you are not righteous. He tells you that you do not do good. Your mouth is closed. The best thing you can do is to "cover" it, and cry "Unclean! Unclean!" You have been brought to the Priest now. He has looked on you. He sees that the plague in the skin of your flesh is leprosy. He sees the hair is turned white. What does that mean? It means there is the sign of decay and death. He tells you that already decay is in your blood; that to His eye there are already in you the marks of death, with judgment to follow, and then "the second death." Rev. 20:14.

Friend, the plague is deeper than the skin. (Lev. 13:3.) It is not only a surface trouble with you. No, the real trouble is far deeper. It is in our heart, and the Priest pronounces it "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jer. 17:9. And He adds, "Who can know it? I the Lord search the heart." Jer. 17:10. He knows well you do not know your own heart. Only the Lord knows how bad you really are. He knows well that you are not willing to believe that your case is so desperate! He knows well that you are not able to know that your leprosy is so terribly bad that it is "incurable." (See Jer. 17:9 J.N.D. Trans.) But this is the truth. This is your condition.

We read in the Bible that God looks on this world and the men in it. In Gen. 1:31, we read, "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." This described man before sin appeared, but soon, alas, sin came in, and we read, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.... And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt." Gen. 6:5, 12. And again we read, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Psa. 14:2-3. Plainly we may see our Priest has looked, and has seen that every man in this world has the disease of leprosy.

The priest has looked on you and pronounced you unclean. Reader, that Priest can never make a mistake. That Priest loves you far too well to say such terrible words if there was any way out of it. A few years ago I had dinner with a doctor. He was an authority on leprosy. He told me that a day or two before a young man came to his office, and showed him a sore on his hand that would not heal. The doctor questioned him, examined the hand, and found that the man had leprosy. He was young, and apparently in good health. He had a wife and young children. He had not the slightest suspicion that he had leprosy, and as the doctor told me the story, and of how he had to pronounce that young man unclean, the tears rolled down his cheeks with grief for that poor, unclean man. And our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, has wept over those who are unclean but unwilling to come to Him for cleansing.

Reader, the Priest must pronounce you unclean, because you are unclean. You may not have a suspicion that you are lost and ruined and unclean and on your way to hell, but this is truly your state and condition unless that same Priest has already cleansed you.

You say, perhaps, "But I do not feel unclean." That has nothing to do with it. There is a story that many years ago M. Damien went to labor among the lepers in Molokai, of the Hawaiian Islands. He worked there in good health for many years. Then one evening while he was washing his feet, some hot water dropped on his toes; it did not hurt at all, but the water was so hot that it blistered the skin. Instantly he knew that he had leprosy, for one of the early symptoms of leprosy is that the diseased part loses the sense of feeling. Just so, you, poor sinner, have lost your sense of feeling, or you, too, would immediately know that you undoubtedly have that awful disease. You can stick a needle in the part affected by leprosy, but the man does not feel it. So the man going on in sin no longer feels the pricks of conscience and does not know he is a sinner. The Priest, the Lord Jesus, has pronounced you unclean. He says of you, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10)—not even you. The leper might reply, "But I feel in excellent health; I never felt better in my life." "I am sorry," the priest replies, "but it is my sad duty to pronounce you unclean." The man's feelings and opinions had nothing to do with the case; all rested on the word of the priest. "The priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean" (vs. 3). That ended the matter. That settled the case. The man knew he was unclean, because the priest said so, not because he felt unclean, or thought he was unclean, or his friends had that opinion. All rested on the word of the priest.

When it was decided to isolate the lepers in the Hawaiian Islands to a rugged triangular piece of land known as Kalawao, on the Island of Molokai (where M. Damien labored), "then it was resolved to deport every person, young or old, rich or poor, prince or commoner in whom the slightest taint of leprosy could be found. The law was carried into effect with the utmost rigor. All over the islands lepers and those suspected of having leprosy were hunted out by the police, dragged away from their homes, and if certified by a doctor as touched by the disease, at once shipped off to the leper settlement as if to a state prison. Children were torn from their parents and parents from their children. Husbands and wives were separated forever. In no case was any respect of persons shown, and a near relative of the Hawaiian Queen was among the first to be seized and transported." (Missionary Heroes in Oceana.) This is just what SIN does to us. Husbands and wives, parents and children, nearest and dearest of friends, must part forever, if sin is not cleansed.

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