Leviticus - Commentaries by Algernon James Pollock

The Tabernacle's Typical Teaching, Trespass Offering, The

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(Read Lev. 5:1 to 19; 6:1 to 7)

We come now to the Trespass Offering, which is concerned mainly with specific and overt acts, some done in ignorance, some done knowingly. If a man was put upon his oath, and failed to give true evidence of what he had seen or heard of another's guilt, he was guilty, and a Trespass Offering was demanded. If a man touched an unclean thing, and though it was hidden from him, he was unclean and guilty. If one touched the uncleanness of man, and if it was hidden from him, when he knew of it, then he was guilty. If a man swore to do good or to do evil, and it was hid from him, when he knew of it, he was guilty in one of these.

A Trespass Offering was then needed. A female from the flock, or if the offender were too poor to furnish a sheep or a goat, he was allowed to offer two turtle doves or two young pigeons.

It is interesting to see that when two birds were offered, one was looked upon as a Sin Offering, the other as a Burnt Offering, thus showing that it is the death of Christ in all its aspects that is for the believer's blessing. In the case here the Sin Offering came first, and then the Burnt Offering, thus following the order in which the sinner realizes the value of the death of Christ. First the Sin Offering, typifying clearance; then the Burnt Offering, typifying acceptance.

And then follows a most touching and extraordinary provision. If a man was so poor that even a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons were beyond his power to provide, he was permitted to bring as a Trespass Offering the tenth part of an ephah of flour, a handful of which was burned on the Altar by the priest to make atonement for the specific sin committed, the remnant belonging to the priest as a Meat Offering.

Here is a Sin Offering without blood. What can it signify? One thing is certain. We know that from God's side everything for blessing for the sinner rests on the precious blood of Christ, and in no other way.

The explanation is simple and yet profound. It was a question of the offerer's extreme poverty, typical of one with a very feeble and vague sense of sin, and the way it can be met.

Many a soul is drawn, we believe, to the Lord with practically little or no knowledge of the real meaning of Christ's death, yet trusting Him in a vague and childlike manner for blessing and eternal happiness, and from such a type as this we are encouraged to believe that such a case is met by the death of Christ.

In the Old Testament times there were saints of God, who never knew of Christ, nor the full meaning of the death of Christ as dimly set forth in the Offerings, and yet, believing in God, they were blessed in view of the Sacrifice that was to be. We get the contrast between the Old Testament believers and those of this dispensation in the following, " God hath set forth [Christ] to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God," that is, the sins of Old Testament believers were passed over and forgiven in view of righteousness being met in due time by the atoning death of Christ. And now for the New Testament believers we read, " To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus " (Rom. 3:25, 26).

We repeat most emphatically the words of Scripture, " Without shedding of blood is no remission " (Heb. 9:22). Thank God, for this gracious provision that is made typically for those, who have vague and feeble apprehension, or who are ignorant of the Gospel as we know it, and yet whose souls are honestly stretching out to God and looking to Him for salvation, and finding it, even if unknown to themselves, in the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

The rest of the examples in this Chapter, viz. a sin in the holy things of the LORD, or against any of the commandments of the LORD, though in ignorance, bring in a new element, viz. restitution.

A Ram was to be brought as a Trespass Offering. The principal, that is the equivalent of the fraud committed, was demanded, but added to it was to be a fifth part in addition. Where fraud had taken place, restitution was a most wholesome test of repentance, and any attempt to evade it, would mean that the priest could not offer the Trespass Offering, for the Offering and the restitution had to go together.

In Lev. 6:1 to 7, where the sins were clearly breaches against a neighbor, the restitution comes first, and then the Offering. In the case of these breaches it was imperative to get right with the one sinned against, a right and urgent matter in the sight of God, before getting right with God Himself.