Leviticus - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 15

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

“The priest that offereth any man’s burnt offering, even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered”—Leviticus 7:8.

THE priest stood in the place of the Israelite who came to the altar with his burnt offering, all of which went up to God, being consumed in the fire of the altar. But the skin was given to the priest. He was to be dressed in the fleece of the offered victim. God, as it were, wrapped him up in the covering provided by the one who died. It is an Old Testament picture of the New Testament truth that all believers are made the righteousness of God in Christ.

—A. R. Wolfe.

The Levitical Offerings, Lecture 5: The Trespass Offering

Read Lev. 5: 14-6:7; Lev. 7:1-7; Psa. 69.

The offering which we are now to consider presents what we might call the primary aspect of the work of the cross. It meets the awakened sinner as the answer to his fears, when, troubled about his trespasses, anxiously inquiring, “How can I be saved from the legitimate consequences of my sins?” Every sin is an offence to the majesty of heaven. It is a trespass against the holy government of God, and righteousness demands that amends be made for it, or else that the trespasser be shut away from God’s presence forever. A trespass may also be against our fellow-men, but even in that case the sin is primarily against God. David trespassed most heinously against his soldier-friend, Uriah the Hittite, and against Bathsheba herself, and in a wider sense against all Israel. But in his prayer of confession, Psalm 51, he cried out from the depths of his anguished heart, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.” And so keen is his sense of the wickedness of it all that he realizes the blood of bulls and of goats can never wash out the stain, and so he cries, looking on in faith to the cross of Christ, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” It is this aspect of the cross that is brought before us in the trespass offering.

In the thirteen verses of Lev. 5:14—6:7 we have the reason for, and the character of, the trespass offering. First we read, “If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the Lord; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the Lord a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering: and he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.” This is the first aspect of the trespass. It is something done against the Lord Himself; but, as in the case of the sin offering, it is done through ignorance. So again we are reminded that God looks upon all sin as springing from the ignorance that is in man; unless in the final refusing of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Sin Offering. To do this is to be guilty of wilful and eternal sin. An Israelite might sin in the holy things of the Lord in various ways. For instance he might underestimate the size of his annual crop, and so ignorantly bring to the priest a lesser tithe than the law demanded. But, when the truth of the condition of things was brought to his attention, he was not to pass over the offence as a matter of no moment, but he was to bring a trespass offering, and with it the estimated amount, to which he added by direction of the priest the fifth part. The trespass offering was offered in accordance with the law, and the silver was given to the priest to be brought into the sanctuary of Jehovah. Thus, where sin abounded grace did much more abound. And if we may so say, God actually received more because of the man’s blunder than He would have received apart from it. How clearly this comes out in the work of the Cross! By it God has received far more glory than He ever lost by man’s sin. In Psalm 69 we hear the Holy Sufferer on Calvary saying, “Then I restored that which I took not away.” We had robbed God; He became our trespass offering, and He, thereby, made amends to God for all the wrong we had done, and added the fifth part thereto. For we are not to think for a moment of the sufferings of our Savior as though they barely sufficed to atone for our transgressions. There was in that work of Calvary such infinite value that it not only met all the actual sins of all who would ever believe in Him, but there was over and above that such value as will never be drawn upon by all the repentant sinners in the universe of God.

The unblemished ram for a trespass offering tells of the Holy One who was “led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” Here was the Prince of the flock, the tall stately ram, submitting to death in order to atone for our guilt. “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.”

In verses 17-19 we read, “And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist it not, and it shall be forgiven him. It is a trespass offering: he hath certainly trespassed against the Lord.” Here the important truth that is emphasized is that God’s Word is the standard of judgment, not my knowledge of it. The soul that committed any offence ignorantly, anything forbidden in the law of God, was guilty, even though he knew it not, and apart from the trespass offering he must bear his iniquity. It is not that God is going to hold men responsible for light they never had, but He does hold them responsible to avail themselves of the light He has given. He gave the law to Israel; they were guilty, therefore, if they ignored it and did not become acquainted with its commandments. Having Moses and the prophets, they were responsible to hear them, as Abraham declares to the rich man in Hades. And then today, what

shall we say of those who have the whole Word of God, and yet allow the Bible to lie neglected in their homes, and never even take the trouble to seek to know the mind of the Lord? How guilty will they be judged in the coming day who have deliberately ignored this divine revelation and so fail to learn the will of God!

In Bunyan's immortal allegory, it was as the man Graceless read in the Book that he realized the weight of the burden upon his back. And it is as the truth of the Word of God is brought to bear upon the consciences of sinners that they feel their sins and cry out for deliverance; and, thank God, when the load of our sins is thus brought home to us, the trespass offering is nigh at hand. We have but to come to God pleading the merits of the atoning work of His beloved Son to find there full atonement for all our iniquities.

In Leviticus 6:1-7 we have the other side of things, sin against one's neighbor. But even that is a trespass against the Lord, and so we are told; "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbor; or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein : then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering." Here, too, the principle noted above is found. Man himself benefits by the provision of the trespass offering. The one who had been wronged was really better off than before, after the sin had been confessed and the fifth part had been added to that which was returned when the offerer brought his trespass offering to the Lord. For as in the previous case, if he had deceitfully robbed his neighbor, or had found something that was lost and had hidden it intending to keep it himself, or had in any other way wronged or defrauded another, his trespass offering was not acceptable to God unless he made full restitution by returning the thing that he had deceitfully gotten and then adding to it the fifth part. How wondrously does this bring out the matchless grace of God. Throughout the eternal ages it will be seen that, as Tennyson puts it, in "The Dreamer,"

For God maketh even the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He doth restrain. The skeptic may ask sneeringly, "Why did a righteous and omnipotent God ever permit sin to raise up its hideous head in the universe, thus defiling the heavens and the earth?" But the work of the cross is the answer to it all. Man's relationship to God as a redeemed sinner is far greater and more blessed than the mere relationship of creature to Creator. And the grace of God has been magnified in the great trespass offering of the cross in a way it never could have been known if sin had never come in at all.

How precious the words of verse 7, "And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord: and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein." Do these words come to any poor, anxious, troubled soul? Do you wonder sometimes if you have sinned beyond all hope of mercy? Oh, be persuaded, if you will but come to God bringing the trespass offering, that is, putting your heart's trust in the Lord Jesus, looking to Him alone for salvation, every sin will be forgiven; all that you have done will be blotted out forever, and be in God's sight as if it had never been.

Years ago at the close of a great meeting in Chicago where Gipsy Rodney Smith was the preacher, a strong man came weeping up the aisle at the close of the evangelist's address, sobbing out the story of his sin and shame. To the gipsy who sought to help him he exclaimed, "Oh, sir, my sin is too great ever to be forgiven." Quick as a flash, the preacher said, "But His grace is greater than all your sin." Dr. Towner, the beloved hymn-writer and musician, who was standing by, caught the words, and as he walked home that night they took form in his heart and mind, and he composed the chorus:

The melody of the verses was also given to him, and he jotted them down when he reached his home. The next day he gave them to Julia Johnston, who has written so many precious songs of praise, and she composed the verses of the well-known hymn bearing the title of the chorus. The first stanza of it reads:

Through the years since, the song has borne its story of grace greater than all our sins, to tens of thousands of anxious souls. This indeed is the message of the trespass offering.

In Leviticus 7:1-7 we have the law of the trespass offering. As in the case of the sin offering, we are twice told that "it is most holy." God would never have left the least room for the thought that the humanity of our blessed Savior was ever defiled by sin. We are told of Him, "He knew no sin," and, "He did no sin," and, "In Him is no sin." How carefully God guarded this! Even on the very morning of His trial and throughout the day of His execution it was manifest. Pilate's wife sent the message, "Have thou nothing to do with that just Man." Pilate himself declared, "I find no fault in Him;" the thief upon the cross exclaimed, "This Man hath done nothing amiss;" and the Roman centurion, awed by the marvelous events of that dreadful hour, declared, "Certainly this was a righteous Man." And yet we see the Just One suffering for us the unjust, that He might bring us to God!

The trespass offering was to be killed at the altar and the blood sprinkled round about the altar. Certain parts of the victim were burned upon the altar, thus going up to God as an expression of divine judgment against our sins, while other parts were eaten by the priests in the holy place, as in the case of the sin offering, for we are told, "As the sin offering is, so is the trespass offering: there is one law for them: the priest that maketh atonement therewith shall have it." Every believer is a priest today, and it is the hallowed privilege of every one of us to feed upon the trespass offering. We do this as we read the Word of God and meditate upon what it reveals as to the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to put away all our sins and trespasses and fit us for the presence of a holy God.

Psalm 69 most fittingly links with these Levitical instructions. It is the psalm of the trespass offering; it gives us our blessed Lord going to the cross, rejected of men, bearing the judgment due to our sins. It is there, as already mentioned, we hear Him saying, "I restored that which I took not away." He confessed our sins as His own, and He can say, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me." It is in Psalm 69:20-21 of this psalm that we read, "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. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." How plainly this shows that it was on the cross that His soul passed through the anguish here depicted, and as we contemplate Him as the great Trespass Offering we exclaim with the psalmist, "This also shall please Jehovah better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs" (Psa. 69:31). What the sacrifices of old could not accomplish, namely, the actual putting away of sin, has been accomplished through the finished work of our Lord Jesus, that one offering, never to be repeated, which He made on our behalf upon the accursed tree. We cannot add to this finished work, and, thank God, we cannot take from it. It stands alone in its marvelous

completeness. In it God has found infinite satisfaction, and in it the believing sinner finds satisfaction too. The answer of the old monk to the young man who came to the monastery gate inquiring what he should do to put away his sins, is in full accord with the truth of the trespass offering. The aged man replied, “There is nothing left that you can do.” And he then endeavored to show his inquirer how fully Christ had met every claim of God against the sinner there upon the Cross. To attempt to put away our own sins is but folly and ignorance combined.

And so we come to the end for the present of our meditation upon these five offerings and their typical import. I have not attempted to go into them exhaustively; others have done that, and their writings are easily available and well worth careful and thoughtful consideration. I have simply sought to emphasize the great outstanding truths in regard to the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ suggested by the sacrifices of old, and I trust not without profit to every one of us. Oh, to know more of Him and to appreciate in a fuller way His wondrous work which has meant so much to God and which is the basis of our eternal blessing!

So sang Sir Edward Denny, and so may each penitent believer sing, as he stands by faith by the sacrifice of the trespass offering.

—H. A. Ironside

Daily Sacrifice, January 24

“And when any will offer a meat (or meal) offering... his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it and put frankincense thereon.”

“No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire”— Leviticus 2:1, 11.

THE meal offering spoke of the perfection of Christ as Man here on earth. The fine flour typified His flawless humanity. In Him was no leaven of corruption—no sin of any kind. Nor was there in Him the honey of mere natural sweetness. All was divinely perfect. His whole Being was devoted to the will of the Father. The mingling of oil with the fine flour speaks of His Divinity and Humanity commingled in the Incarnation. The anointing with oil prefigured His anointing by the Spirit as He began His ministry. The salt in every meal offering speaks of the preservative power of righteousness.

—Hawkes

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 18

“After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him... or if he be able, he may redeem himself”— Leviticus 25:48, 49.

TO redeem ourselves was impossible. We were poor bankrupt sinners, sold under judgment. But One came from heaven to be a Kinsman-Redeemer, One who, though Lord of all, is not ashamed to call us brethren. He has redeemed us to God by His own most precious blood, having satisfied every claim that was against us and not only paid all our debt but provided for all our future.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 17

“The seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein; it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings”— Leviticus 23:3.

THE Sabbath of old and the Lord’s Day now speak of rest; the one of rest after labor, the other of rest before service. People often ask, “Who changed the Sabbath?” Properly speaking, the Sabbath has never been changed. The Sabbath belongs to the old covenant, and is Israel’s Memorial Day. But Scripture tells us that after the death and resurrection of Christ “the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law” (Heb. 7:12). Under the new dispensation we see the first day of the week taking the place of the seventh-day Sabbath, and the Church has recognized this change from the beginning of the Christian era. We may safely say that the guidance of the Holy Spirit led believers to give special recognition to the memorial day of Christ’s resurrection, This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psa. 118:24). This is the day of verse 22 and 23, when the rejected stone was made “head of the corner,” when God raised Christ from the dead.

—John of Damascus, Trans by J. M. Neale.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 14

“He shall offer it that he may be accepted” Lev. 1:3 (margin).

THE burnt offering typified Christ offering Himself without spot unto God for us, in ourselves so sinful and unworthy, but seen, by the Father, as complete in Him, “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” So in faith we identify ourselves with the Offering, placing the hand of faith upon the head of Him who took our place, and in holy confidence we dare to believe that “as He is, so are we in this world.” And so we bring to God our worship and thanksgiving all in the name of that worthy One who is the delight of the Father’s heart and in whom we stand faultless in the presence of His glory.

—Barbara E. Cornet.

Daily Sacrifice, January 27

“Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another... Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning”— Leviticus 19:11,13.

ABSOLUTE integrity as between man and man was inculcated by God’s holy law. No double-dealing, no deceitful practices of any kind were permitted. Under the law, employers were commanded to pay honest wages to their employees and to see that they received what was owing as soon as it was due. There was to be no overreaching or attempting to profit themselves by holding back what their workers had rightfully earned.

It is hard for some people to understand how the believer can be said to be “not under law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14), and yet that “the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” A simple illustration may help. The law of the land, as well as the law of God given at Sinai, forbids stealing. Here is an upright citizen who is philanthropically minded and who, therefore, finds pleasure in benefiting his fellows, He does not refrain from theft merely because the law forbids it, but because he delights in the very opposite. This is the proper Christian attitude. Though not under law, he is not lawless, but lives in glad subjection to the law of love.

Daily Sacrifice, January 26

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy”— Leviticus 19:1, 2.

To be holy is to be separated from all that is evil or unclean. Israel had been brought into relationship with the infinitely holy One. They were responsible then to be wholly separated to Himself. In 1 Peter 2:9 present-day believers are designated, as Israel was (Exod. 19: 6), “an holy nation.” And in the previous chapter we are exhorted to be holy in practice because He who hath called us is holy (1 Peter 1:15). While standards of holiness have differed in various dispensations, according to light given by God to His people, in every age the redeemed of the Lord have been called to walk as a people sanctified (set apart) to Him to whom they belonged and who had identified Himself with them. Observe, however, that our passage does not say (as often misquoted) “Be ye holy; as I am holy,” but, “for I am holy.” We will never be as holy as God is, or as Christ was as Man here on earth, until we are made fully like Him in the day of manifestation (1 John 3:1-3).

—P. P. Bliss.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 16

“The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul—Leviticus 17:11.

YEAR after year as the blood was shed at the altar and carried into the Holiest God was telling out the story of redeeming grace. It is the precious blood of Christ poured forth at Calvary which alone has settled the sin question to the Divine satisfaction. By that mighty sacrifice iniquity has been put away and in the value of that blood the believer stands before God justified—cleared of every charge. Blood shed is life poured out, and it is through the life He gave up in death for us that we now live eternally.

—E. C. K. Wesley.

Daily Sacrifice, January 25

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord”— Leviticus 10:1, 2.

THE priesthood in Israel failed from its very inception. In Leviticus 8 and 9 we have the induction of the family of Aaron into their sacred office, and in chapters 10 we learn that Nadab and Abihu sinned by offering strange fire before the Lord, thus ignoring the heaven-sent fire that burned upon the altar. It was but another evidence of the unreliability of man, no matter what his privileges. As the years went on, this was demonstrated over and over again. The house of Eli became a scandal to the whole nation, and in due time that branch of the priesthood had to give way to another, which in turn became utterly unworthy, until in Caiaphas that whole system came to an end before God, when he rent his garments (Matt. 26; 65), something the high priest was strictly forbidden to do (Lev. 21:10). Christ Himself is now our great High Priest ever living to make intercession for us.

—G. Ter Steegen.

clickbible.org