

Leviticus Sermon Illustrations 2

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Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17

A sweet savour unto the Lord.

How sweet the offering up of the Son was to the Father! "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Ephesians 5:2). The burnt-offering was an imperfect type of his entire devotion to his Father's will. When Jesus saw the inability of man to keep the holy law, and volunteered to magnify it, and make it honorable; when He laid aside his glory, and stepped down from his throne, saying, "I delight to do thy will, O my God"; when He became obedient even to the death of the cross — it was as sweet to God as the fragrance of a garden of flowers to us.

Let us never forget the God-ward aspect of the cross. The sacrificial fire fed on every part of the sacrifice, on the inwards as well as the carcase; so did the Holy God delight to witness the spotless and entire devotion of the Son to the great work in which the entire Godhead was most deeply interested. The fragrant graces of Christ were made manifest on the cross, and are perpetuated in his intercession.

There is a sense also in which our consecration to God is fragrant and precious. When we see his claims, and yield to them; when we submit to his will, and commit our lives wholly to his direction; when we offer and present ourselves to Him, a living sacrifice, keeping nothing back — his heart is gladdened, and his fire of complacency feeds on our act. Always count on this; you may feel no thrill, and see no light, but reckon on God, believe that He accepts what you give, and will crown your sacrifice with the fire of Pentecost. Who today will surrender to God, and become an offering of a sweet savor?

Lev. 1:3

G Campbell Morgan

Without blemish.—Lev. 1.3.

Leviticus was the hand-book of the priests. It contains the laws governing the whole system of worship. In Exodus we have the record of the words God spake to Moses from the Mount. They are the fundamental words of moral order. In Leviticus we have words God spake to Moses from the midst of the Tabernacle. They are the words of His administration of the affairs of His people in holiness and in grace. Throughout, God is seen as the God of all perfection, making it possible for imperfect man to draw nigh to Himself through sacrifice. The sacrifices and offerings were all to be provided by the worshippers, but they were to be the symbols of an Offering and Sacrifice which the worshippers could not provide, but which would be provided by God. Because they were thus to symbolize perfection, they must be, so far as man could make sure of it, perfect in themselves. That is the significance of this phrase "without blemish." Nothing offered to God must be imperfect. The principle abides, even though we are looking back to the one perfect Offering, rather than onward in expectation of its coming. Our only right to offer anything to God, in any form, is created by the one Offering through which we are sanctified. Every offering is a symbol still of the One. Therefore only of the best we have, have we any right to offer to Him. He is worthy to receive the most precious, and we do wrong to the perfection of His Sacrifice when we give to Him in kind, or in effort, that which is second-rate or imperfect. Our best is but poor, but that which we do give, must be our best.

Leviticus 2:1

Fine flour, and He shall pour oil upon it and put frankincense thereon.

This type is only true in its fullest extent of the blessed Master; but as we are to be conformed to his image, we may humbly take the ingredients of the meat offering as indicating various qualities in our personal character and behavior.

Fine flour. — There should be nothing coarse-grained or rough to the touch; but all even and tender. So that however great the pressure brought to bear on us, we should meet it with perfect grace and gentleness. Jesus reviled not again, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter. David Livingstone said that the promise of Christ was the word of a perfect gentleman. This should be our character.

Oil upon it. — We must be mingled with oil — that is, the Holy Spirit must have access into the secret places of the inner life, and we must have the anointing of the Holy Ghost for service. In Christian work nothing is of any value or permanence, useful to man or pleasing to God, in which the Holy Spirit is not first.

Frankincense. — Every act of our life should emit sweet fragrance towards God. Always moving forward in Christ's triumphant procession, bearing aloft the incense-bowls of thought, action, word, filled with love and praise.

Salt. — "Let your conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt." The words of Jesus were full of grace, and also of truth. There was a pungency and purity and uncorruptness in his speech, which have in every age arrested the progress of the world's evil. Let us give Him our lips.

No leaven — the symbol of the rising of pride and self.

No honey — that which is merely attractive and sensuous.

Lev. 2:11

G Campbell Morgan

No meal offering which ye shall offer unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven.—Lev. 2.11.

As the burnt offering was to be "without blemish" so the meal offering was to be without leaven. This meal offering was the work of men's hands, of the fruits of the ground, the result of cultivation, manufacture, and preparation; and it was the symbol of service offered. Therefore it was not to be mixed with leaven. Why not? Because leaven in its very nature is corruption, and its influence is corrupting. Whenever it is introduced, it sets up the work of disintegration and break-up. Nothing of that kind must be permitted in the symbol of service, because God demands a perfect service as well as a perfect offering. Not only the gift, but also the deed must be without corruption. The application of the principle to our-selves is found when we turn to the New Testament, and find what leaven symbolizes for us. Our Lord warned His disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 16.6). The leaven of the Pharisees was hypocrisy; that is, of ritualism without spiritual and moral content. The leaven of the Sadducees was rationalism; that is, Herodianism or wordliness; the elimination of the super-natural. Paul speaks of the leaven of "malice and wickedness," as the opposite of "sincerity and truth." These then are the corrupting influences which are not to be mixed with our service. In all the work we do for God, there is to be an absence of hypocrisy, of materialism, of the spirit which is contrary to love and truth.

Leviticus 3:1

A sacrifice of Peace-offering.

In the burnt-offering the priest burnt all; but in the peace-offering a part only was burnt, "the fat, kidneys, and caul." The inner parts were consumed as God's portion, whilst Aaron and his sons fed on the breast and the shoulder. In that feast God and the priests participated; and it is an emblem of our participation in the joy of God, over the person and work of Jesus.

Think of this blessed feast with God. We who were once far off in the wicked and hostile imaginings, are now made nigh; we sit at God's table as his children, and hear Him say, Let us make merry and be glad; this my son was dead, and is alive again.

We have Peace with God. — We are justified by faith in Jesus. In Him we stand before God, accepted and beloved. The curse is exchanged for blessing; distance for presence; the husks of the swine for the fatted calf. The past is for ever under the blood; above us is the clear heaven of God's love.

We have the Peace of God. — The very peace that fills our Father's heart, undisturbed by the storms of care and strife which sweeps this lower world, is ours also. We sit in heavenly places; his peace, like a sentry, keeps our hearts and minds against molestation; the peace of God rules in us, bringing every thought into subjection to itself. We have perfect peace because our mind is stayed on Him.

We have the God of Peace. — According to the Apostle's fervent hope and prayer, He is with us. Not the gift, but the Giver; not I, but He; not the river only, but the source. We may well open our doors to admit such a guest, in having whom we receive the Author and Giver of concord, unity, and unbroken rest.

Lev. 3:5

G Campbell Morgan

An offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.—Lev. 3.5.

These words, "of a sweet savour," are used with reference to the first three offerings, the Burnt Offering, the Meal Offering, the Peace Offering. They are not used of the Sin Offering or of the Trespass Offering. Every one of these offerings was made by fire. In the case of the first three the fire brings out the savour; in that of the last two it destroys. The suggestiveness of all this, it is impossible to escape. Fire is pre-eminently a symbol of God, and of certain facts about His character and activities. Invariably it speaks of some aspect or activity of His holiness. It is a symbol of what He is as the Holy One, in that only things which are in conformity with that nature can live in His presence. It is therefore a symbol of His wrath as He consumes that which is contrary to His nature. It is also a symbol of cleansing in that He purifies from all alloy those things which do conform to His character. Therefore, the offerings which represented sin and trespass, the fire destroyed; but those which represented devotion, service, fellowship, it affected so as to bring out the savour pleasing to God. The God of holiness is a God of fire, and He is to man what man is in regard to Himself. If man be in rebellion, a sinner persisting in his sin, the fire destroys him. If he be yielded, the fire brings out the beauty of character. Christ knew the fire bringing out sweet savour in His absolute perfections; He knew it as consuming, as He represented the sinner, and was made sin.

Leviticus 4:2

If a soul shall sin through ignorance.

Sin is something more than that of which our conscience convicts us. Our conscience may excuse or palliate our sins, or may fail to detect them for want of proper enlightenment, or may be misled by the practices and sentiments of those around. Therefore we may do things which are grievously wrong in God's sight without realizing their evil or bemoaning it.

All such sin must be met and atoned for ere God can admit us into his holy presence. Sin must be dealt with and put away, not only as it appears to us, but as it is in itself and in the sight of the All-Holy. So, in the types of Leviticus, provision was made for sins of ignorance; and the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin, whether known to us or not.

There is more sin in us than any of us know. If we think we have passed a day without conscious sin, we have only to wait till an intenser light is flashed on our motives and intentions — for firelight to be exchanged for electric light — and we shall see specks and flaws. If we do not actually violate known commands, there may be a grievous coming short of the infinite standard of the Divine perfection. Who shall dare to say that he has loved God with all his heart, and soul, and strength? Besides, there is always the liability to sinfulness; and this needs to be perpetually met and atoned for.

It is very needful, then, for us to be perpetually cleansed in the precious blood of Christ. We must ask to be forgiven for the many sins which we know not, as well as for those we know. The work of confession and forgiveness must therefore go on to life's end, applied to each heart and conscience by the Holy Spirit.

Lev. 4:2

G Campbell Morgan

If anyone shall sin unwittingly.--Lev. 4.2

These words recognize an aspect of sin which we are at least in danger of thinking of lightly. There is a great tendency to imagine that sin is only in the will. There is a sense in which this is true. Guilt never attaches to sin until it is an act of the will. But imperfection and pollution exclude from God, even though there be no responsibility for them. God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil." This aspect of sin demands cleansing, while wilful sin needs forgiveness. I need not ask the forgiveness of God for sins which I have committed unwittingly, for pollution for which I have no responsibility. But I do need cleansing from them also. I need that "sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." This is what was suggested by the sin-offering, the dealing with sin which sets the soul free from its pollution and paralysis. The trespass-offering suggested the dealing with sin which makes it possible for God to forgive the soul the wrong of wilful disobedience. Nothing is more clearly stamped upon these pages of Leviticus than the fact that sin must not be lightly treated. Jehovah is the God of holiness, and can make no terms with sin. But He is also the God of grace, Who provides a plenteous and perfect redemption for the sinner. All this is most perfectly emphasized in the fact that this great system was done away because it made nothing perfect. It revealed a need and promised deliverance, but nothing more. In

Christ the promise was fulfilled and the need met.

Leviticus 5:5-6

He shall confess that wherein he hath sinned, and bring his Guilt-offering. (r.v.)

It is said that sometimes a soldier will come from the battle bleeding from a hidden wound which he has received without knowing it. So in the rush of life we may contract defilement by touching uncleanness, or speaking rashly, which in the sight of God will leave a foul stain upon the white robe of the soul.

The presence of unconscious sin with us is the reason why we are often unable to pray or read the Word of God at night. We are aware of a certain distance, a veil, a cloud, which has settled down between us and the beatific vision. At such times we do well to examine ourselves and the past more critically; for probably we shall be able to detect the hidden cause, which, when we know it, must be confessed and placed on the head of our guilt-offering, whilst we yield ourselves to God as a whole burnt-offering, in a new act of self-surrender.

But confession is all important. We must confess our sins, if the faithful Lord is to forgive them. Confession is taking God's side against ourselves. It is the act of judging evil in the light of the Throne. It is like the unpacking of a box, in which one begins with the lighter things at the top, and works steadily down to the heavy articles underneath. It is the repetition in the heart of Joshua's calling the roll of Israel until Achan, the son of Carmi, was taken.

When the atonement has been made as touching sin "in any of these things," there is forgiveness. Dare to believe that this is so, O penitent soul, who hast made Christ's soul an offering for thy sin. He says: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins." Go thy way, and sin no more.

Lev. 5:7

G Campbell Morgan

If his means suffice not for a lamb. Lev. 5:7.

A great principle of the method of God with man in grace is revealed in these words. The appointed offering was "a lamb or a goat." But it might be that some man would not be able to provide one —his means might not suffice for it. Then was he to be excluded from the benefit of the priest and the altar? By no means. Let him bring "two turtle doves or two young pigeons." Or if he could not provide these, then let him bring "the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour." The right of access was not created by the intrinsic value of the guilt-offering, but by a gift of such relation to a man's means, as should show his appreciation of the principle upon which it was possible for him to be received and forgiven. This negative word necessarily has a positive value. If a man's means sufficed for the appointed lamb or a goat, and he brought two turtle doves or pigeons, or a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour, such action would show that he had no adequate sense, either of his own sin, or of the Divine grace. Is there not some light here on the whole question of "the means of grace"? The supreme thing is grace. The means may vary. Nevertheless, in every case they must be an adequate representation of the soul's apprehension of grace. Where they are so, grace comes through them, whether ornate or simple. Where they are not so, they are never its channels.

Leviticus 6:13

Fire shall be kept burning upon the altar continually; it shall not go out. (r.v.)

This is an emblem of the perpetual work of God for man.

The Love of God. — There never was a time when God did not love. The bush that Moses saw gave no fuel to maintain the holy flame that trembled around it, because the love of God to Israel and to the human race demands no sustenance. Through the ages it burns and will burn; however much indifference and neglect and rejection are heaped upon it, or poured over it, like barrels of water over Elijah's sacrifice, it never goes out. It is as fresh and vigorous today as ever, and waits to consume your sin and mine; for God is a consuming fire.

The Intercession of Christ. — As the ages pass, this sacrifice retains its merit. What He did as Priest on the cross, He does as Priest on the throne. It is always "this same Jesus." What He was, He is, and will be; and as generations of saints bring their gifts to the altar, He takes them, and lifts them up to God, as the fire bears up the substances which are submitted to it. He ever liveth to make intercession; and the fire that burnt through the long night in the Tabernacle bore witness to the undimming, unwaning virtue of our Savior's work.

The Ministry of the Holy Ghost. — The fire that was lit on the Day of Pentecost burns still in the Church. There has been no intermission to its presence from the first day till now. Multitudes of unknown sects and persecuted saints have kept that fire burning

in the world. On the perpetuity of its existence in our midst depends the constancy of our own love and purity and prayer. If the fire shall never go out in our hearts; if the life in our spirits is indeed everlasting — it is because He lives and loves always.

Lev. 6:13

G Campbell Morgan

Fire shall be kept burning upon the altar continually; it shall not go out. Lev. 6.13.

A reference ahead to the account of the consecration of Aaron and his first exercise of the priestly office will show that this fire was originally supernatural (Lev 9.24). It came out from before Jehovah. This was the fire which was to be kept burning, by being constantly provided with fuel. Thus, the fire was from God, but it was maintained by man. The responsibility for the carrying out of this instruction rested upon the priests. A glance back at a previous note (Lev 3.5) will remind us that fire was the symbol of the holiness of God in different activities, making possible life in His presence, consuming all contrary to Him-self in nature, and so purifying all like Himself from alloy. Here then we are re-minded of the necessity for the perpetual maintenance of the action of that holiness. It comes from God. Man has no holiness other than the holiness he receives from Him. But in order that its flame may burn continually, and its heat accomplish the Divine purpose, the fire must be fed. That demands ceaseless vigilance. The unworthy things must be handed over for destruction. The things of worth in service and fellowship must be yielded up to the fire for purification. Neither day nor hour nor minute passes which has no need of this cleansing fire. We may be comforted by the certainty that, as we bring the fuel, the fire will continue to burn, accomplishing all its purposes, whether of destruction or purifying.

Leviticus 7:19

Every one that is clean shall eat thereof. (r.v.)

In Leviticus 7:13, it is admitted that leaven must be present in this holy feast, inasmuch as it stands for the essential principle of evil, which intrudes into our holiest worship. The self-life is an all-pervasive leaven. We may not be conscious of it; there may be no sufficient recognition of its distastefulness to the holy God: but it follows us even into the Holy place.

The worshipper was not allowed, however, to be knowingly unclean. There must be no stain on the conscience, which he might remove by confession and repentance. If there were, he must be cut off; that is, he must be debarred from all participation in holy rites, and suspended from entering the sacred enclosure of the Tabernacle.

This cutting off answers to the suspension of a believers communion with God, because of unconfessed sin. The presence of the leaven of the self-life is no barrier to the enjoyment of the Divine fellowship, for we meet God in Jesus. But permitted sin makes such fellowship impossible, because we have not availed ourselves of the gracious arrangements made by God for the perpetual cleansing of the soul in the precious blood of Jesus Christ. For "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

How many excommunicate Christians there are! You can easily see that they have been cut off; their joyless faces and powerless prayers, their inability to bear testimony for God — all tell the sad story. If you have been cut off, search your past history to discover the cause. Put away your sin, and seek the blessed cleansing of John 13; then come to feast with God, in holy communion, as at a common table.

Lev. 7:13

G Campbell Morgan

With cakes of leavened bread. Lev. 7.13.

We noted that no leaven was to be mixed in the Meal Offering, because leaven is in itself corrupting, and is perpetually the symbol of corruption. This makes us pause when we find that leaven was now commanded to be mixed with the Peace Offering. In order to understand it, let the reader note carefully that in the previous verse (Lev 7:12) the worshipper is commanded to offer with the Peace Offering unleavened cakes, and unleavened wafers. Then also leavened cakes. Surely the suggestion is quite patent. The Peace Offering is supremely the symbol of communion based on reconciliation. It is the offering which symbolizes two sides to a great trans-action; one of those is that of God, the other is that of man. God and man are at peace. The Godward side can only be symbolized by that which is unleavened, free from all evil, separated from every-thing that tends to corruption. On the other hand, there remains in man much of imperfection. This is symbolized by the leavened cakes. Our unworthiness in and of ourselves abides. In our thanksgiving and our praise there is no room for boastfulness. Of this we need to be constantly reminded. The truth is brought out in the lines of a great hymn of worship: Unworthy is thanksgiving, A service stained with sin, Except as He is living, Our Priest, to bear it in.

Leviticus 8:33

Ye shall not go out.

For seven days Aaron and his sons, newly consecrated by the blood and oil, waited together in the Holy Place. They were prohibited from going beyond the door, but fed on the consecrated food till the eighth day summoned them to begin their priestly duties. Similarly we are shut in with our Great Aaron, the High Priest of our profession. We are in Christ in the purposes of God, for we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. We are in Him, as Noah was in the ark, and as the child is in the home; as the member is in the body, and the branch in the vine; as the sponge in the ocean, or the jewel in the sunbeam. We are in Him as a strong enclosure, through which the malice and strength of our foes cannot break — a fortress, a strong tower, a castle keep. We are in Him, as a banqueting-hall, a Tabernacle with its spew-bread, an upper room with its descending fire.

It is highly necessary that we should maintain our walk and experience on this blessed elevation. The great enemy of our souls is perpetually tempting us to leave our abiding-place, and to try issues with him in the plains beneath. What is temptation but his subtle solicitation to come out from the secret place of the Most High. Beware! the bait may be very attractive, but the end is death. Keep the charge of the Lord, and abide day and night in the company of the Great High Priest. "He shall dwell among them."

On what viands do such happy souls feast with Christ! A table is provided before them by the Lord Himself, and they feast on all that pertains to Him in blessed partnership. "Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine."

Lev. 8:36

G Campbell Morgan

Aaron and his sons did all the things which the Lord commanded.—Lev. 8.36.

These concluding words of a chapter make us look back over it. It is the account of the consecration of Aaron and his sons; that is, of the High Priest and the priests. Let us remind ourselves of the sequence of ceremonies. First Aaron and his sons were washed. Then the High Priest was robed in his garments of beauty and glory. This was followed by his anointing with the holy oil. After that his sons were robed. Before there could be exercise of their priestly function, two offerings were sacrificed to Jehovah; first, the sin offering for pollution; and then, the burnt offering as a sign of complete dedication. Then on the right ear and right thumb, and great toe of right foot, of Aaron and each of his sons, blood was put; the symbol of cleansing of sin, in order to the fulfilment of priestly functions. Next the wave-offering signified the rights and privileges of the priests, all offered to God. Again they were anointed with blood and oil. Their sustenance was provided, and they were completely separated to God and His service. Every detail was suggestive. Into the spiritual significance the reader will enter. We desire only to stress the teaching that the way of entrance to service in holy things is the way of obedience to the Divine ordinance. Nothing must be omitted which Jehovah commands. His priests must be washed, robed, anointed, sustained, separated, and all in His way, or they cannot exercise their functions in His service. To neglect any-thing, is to invalidate ministry.

Leviticus 9:22

Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them.

The eighth day is evidently the type of the bright millennial morning. During the present age we are hidden with Christ in God; the world knoweth us not, as it knew Him not; our hopes, and joys, and aims, are largely secret. But the day is not far distant when He shall be manifested, and then we shall be manifested with Him in glory. That group of priests, following the high priest out from the recesses of the Holy Place, is a picture of the Second Advent, when Christ and his own shall come forth to bless the world. When Jesus was parted in the Ascension from his disciples, He was in the act of blessing them; and in that attitude He will return. Who can doubt that all through the intervening ages those blessed hands have still been outstretched, that heart ever going forth, in blessing.

What a Savior is ours! In Him are combined meekness that bears all insult and hatred, and mercy that retaliates on wrong-doing in ministries of love. He fulfils his own idea of blessing those that hate, and praying for those that spitefully use. How truly can it be said of Him, as of Archbishop Ussher, that to do him a wrong is to make him your friend for ever!

Let us imitate Him in this, and let the going forth of our lives be one incessant stream of benediction to men, until they shall fall on their faces and acknowledge the overwhelming power of love. But in order to this we must be much in company with our blessed Lord; gazing on his face we shall reflect his likeness; the lineaments of the Divine beauty shall pass into our life, and light it up with a loveliness which is not of earth. Thus shall we bring glory to our God.

Lev. 9:23

G Campbell Morgan

Moses and Aaron went into the Tent of Meeting, and came out, and blessed the people.—Lev. 9.23.

Thus when all things were done in accordance with the Divine plan, Moses and Aaron had access to the Tent of Meeting, and by that access were enabled to pass out and bless the people. In the Chaldee Version of the Pentateuch the words of the blessing are thus reported: "May the Word of Jehovah accept your sacrifice with favour, and remit and pardon your sins." Whether these were the actual words or no, the truth remains that these men pronounced a blessing upon the people which was of Divine authority. The principle is abiding. The servants of God, whether prophets or priests, have no power to bless men save as they receive it in direct communion with God. Before we can go out and bless the people, we must go in to the Place of Meeting with God. This is so self-evident that it seems hardly necessary to state it. Yet we are perpetually in danger of allowing our very eagerness to serve men, to interfere with our communion with God. To do so, is to fail disastrously. It is only as we serve in the Holy Place, in worship, in silence, in reception from God, that we are able to serve in the camp in work, in speech, in giving to men. Forgetfulness of this is the secret of much futility in Christian work, of much fussiness, of much feverishness. It is the souls who are strengthened, en-lightened, quieted in the Tent of Meeting, that pass out to the places and ways of men, carrying blessings with them.

Leviticus 10:3

Aaron held his peace.

His heart must have been rent with paroxysms of grief, as he beheld the bodies of his beloved sons on the floor of the Tabernacle, stretched out in death. He repressed the cry, choked back the sob, staunched the flowing tear, and continued to perform the holy duties with which he was charged. He was no stoic, and tears are not wrong for our dead; but his relationship to God was so overmastering as to still the expressions of nature.

He saw the wrong from God's standpoint. — It was of great importance that the Divine regulations and enactments should be maintained, and that the ministering priests should always prefer God's work and service above their own ideas. Aaron was able to appreciate that position, and saw the sin of which his children were guilty. They had forgotten the voice which said, Sanctify thou Me. Obedience is the foundation of reverence, honor, and service; and if it were relaxed with the priests, how for the people! How careful they should be who bear the vessels of the Lord! With what fear and trembling must they work, who work with God!

He acquiesced in the Divine dealings. — To take the yoke, and meekly bear it; to put the hand on the mouth, and bow in the dust — this is rest and peace. In this way we drink Christ's cup and become partakers of his sufferings.

He felt that his work as priest must take precedence. — It was a solemn and awful thing to be God's anointed priest, and the office must come first, even to the denial of the dues of nature, if that were necessary: so always with us, there must be the subordination of everything to our service and work for God.

Lev. 10:1

G Campbell Morgan

Strange fire.—Lev 10.1

This was, quite simply, fire which Nadab and Abihu kindled themselves. Everything else seems to have been in order. They were duly appointed priests, being sons of Aaron. They employed the proper censers. They put incense on them. And finally they offered before Jehovah. The one failure was that they touched that incense with fire they had kindled rather than with the fire from the altar which had been kindled directly by the Lord (see Lev 9. 24). Apparently it was an unimportant matter; at least, the fact that they did it, proves that they considered it to be so. That it was not unimportant, is proved by the further fact that "there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them." That sacred fire, kept perpetually burning, was the one central symbol of the holiness of God, and any offering unsanctified thereby was polluted. The lesson is evident. The fire in which all our service must be rendered is that of the Spirit of God, Who is the Spirit of Holiness. To seek to make our work effectual and acceptable by any agent other than the Holy Spirit, is to burn "strange fire." The energy of the flesh, and the cleverness of the mind, unbaptized in the Holy Spirit, are polluted; and however pleasing the results may be to human minds and hearts, such forces are ineffectual in the service of God, and unacceptable to Him. To offer "strange fire"—is a deadly business. We may be in true orders, doing God-appointed work, but if we attempt these things in any energy other than that of the Holy Spirit, we are in danger of being cast away.

Leviticus 11:3

Whatsoever parteth the hoof and cheweth the cud. (r.v.)

The animals, in which these two characteristics met, were reckoned clean, and therefore fit for food. It is certain that the minute particularity of these words has some further reference than to the diet of Israel, important though that was, or to accentuate with every meal the necessity of their being a separate people. We, at least, may gather this lesson, that in our daily experience we must combine meditation and separation.

Meditation. — The cattle do not simply browse on the pastures, but they lie down to chew the cud. It is not enough to peruse our allotted Scripture portion; we must ruminate upon it, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and scripture with scripture. The Holy Ghost will take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, and He will bring all things to our remembrance.

Separation. — “Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God.” “The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” We have not meditated to good purpose unless we have felt its keen edge. Detachment from the world must follow on true attachment to Christ. Love to Naomi will draw Ruth from Moab across the Jordan.

The two must be combined. — The swine divideth the hoof, but cheweth not the cud, and was therefore unclean. A man may profess to love his Bible, but the supreme test is his daily separation from evil. On the other hand, our daily life ought to emanate, not from without, which is Pharisaism, but from within, where we chew the cud of holy meditation.

Lev. 11:47

G Campbell Morgan

To make a difference between the unclean and the clean.—Lev 11.47.

These words refer to the food of the people of God. Here we come to the laws which touch the ordinary and everyday life of the people. Those Already enunciated have had to do with worship, the whole subject of the people's approach to God. The people for whom such rights and privileges are created are never away, either from God's thought and will for them, or from their obligations to Him. He is interested in every detail of their lives. He issues His commands as to what they may eat, and what they may not eat. They are not permitted to choose for themselves in the matter of that food which is to sustain their physical strength. There is no doubt at all that these regulations were all fundamentally sanitary. They were by no means capricious. We may not be able to discover the scientific reasons for the classification. Moreover, they may have been regulated largely by the climate, and the particular period in which men were then living. Possibly, therefore, some of them may not apply to those living in other lands and in other times. All that being granted, the permanent value of these enactments consists in their revelation of the fact of the Divine interest in, and care for, all these details. If to-day we are not to be governed by the actual rules of this Hebrew law, the principle involved in it finds expression for us in the words of Paul: “Whether there-fore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (i Cor. to. 31). To eat or drink anything which harms the body, which is the instrument of the spirit, is not to glorify God. Therefore into this whole question of food, the fact of our relationship with God enters, and each is called upon to act for himself or herself accordingly.

Leviticus 12:8

Two young pigeons.

These were the offerings of the poor, of those whose means did not suffice to buy a lamb. All these offerings pointed to the one great Sacrifice which was to be offered on Calvary.

The blood of Christ is within the reach of the poorest and feeblest. — None can say that it is beyond them, that they cannot afford to procure it, that they are too poor. To the poor the Gospel is preached. The Divine call is to those who have no money. Salvation is to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly. “It is nigh thee.”

The faith that apprehends but a part of the Savior's work saves. — The pigeon may stand for the meager apprehension of Christ that is the portion of the faltering and timid; but it saves equally with that fuller conception of his saving work, which might be compared to the bullock of the priest. The question is not as to the quantity but the object of faith. Is it fixed on Jesus? All faith directed to Him cannot but be genuine. It may but touch his garment's hem, yet it saves.

The beneficence of God's law. — What tender touches there are through this strong ancient code! There is such a one here, framed partly in anticipation of the mother of our Lord, who gladly availed herself of its provision. What a glimpse into our Masters humiliation! He owned the cattle on a thousand hills, yet He so emptied Himself that his parents were compelled to bring the poorest offering the law allowed. He stooped that we might rise; emptied Himself that we might be full; became poor that we might be made rich; was made human that we might be made Divine.

Lev. 12:8

G Campbell Morgan

The priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.—Lev 12.8

This is a brief chapter in our Bibles, as it was a brief section in the Hebrew laws. It is none the less one full of suggestiveness. It is

the law of Motherhood, and it fences it round in the most sacred way, physically and spiritually. On the purely physical side it will bear close and reverent consideration, providing as it did for the perfect repose of the new mother; and it has been suggested that in the difference of time in the case of male and female children, it had an important bearing on the regulation of the sexes. On the spiritual side, its requirements are very full of importance. Motherhood is one of the most sacred and beautiful things in the whole realm of human experience. This needs no argument. But motherhood is exercised in a race which is defiled. When the great singer of Israel, in his penitential psalm, said: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51.5), he was casting no reflection upon his own mother, but rather stating a racial fact, from which no human being escapes. Here then is the value of this law. God provided that Motherhood should be sanctified by sacrifice. To us, Motherhood has been for ever made holy by the Seed of the woman, through Whom woman is saved in child-bearing. It is always a sad thing, to say nothing stronger, when mothers forget to remember this, and to recognize it in the sacred service of the sanctuary.

Leviticus 13:13

Behold if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean.

At first sight this seems a very extraordinary provision. When the leprosy was beginning to show itself, and whilst the marks were hardly distinguishable, the poor patient was treated as unclean; but, when it was fully developed, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, the priest pronounced the leper clean.

As long as we palliate and excuse our sins, and dream that there is much in us which is noble and lovely, we are not fit subjects for God's saving grace. But when we take our place as helpless and undone, without one plea or one redeeming trait, we are in the position in which the free grace of God can have its blessed way with us.

We must come to an end of ourselves, and fall prostrate, in the very helplessness of our despair, in the very dust at our Saviors feet; we must confess that from the crown of our head to the sole of our foot we are full of need and sin — then we are nearest Christ, and in a fit condition to be richly blest, and made the channel of blessing to others.

Would you rise? then you must humble yourself before God. God's thrones are approached, not by steps up to them, but by steps down to them. It is the publican who beats his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me the sinner," that goes down justified to his house. It is when sin abounds, that grace much more abounds. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15).

Lev. 13:10

G Campbell Morgan

The priest shall look.--Lev. 13.10

Even until to-day leprosy is so dire a disease that it completely baffles the skill of the physician. Much may be done to alleviate the distress which it causes, but there is no cure for it. In countries where sanitary laws obtain, it is almost eliminated, but that is done by removing causes, not by curing those suffering from it. In Eastern countries, and under the conditions obtaining in many of them, it is still prevalent. In these laws it is dealt with at great length comparatively, and that undoubtedly because of its dire nature. We cannot wonder that it became, and still continues to be, the very symbol of sin. It is a disease in the blood itself, which is the life; its manifestations are most terrible and loathsome; and—as we have said—it is incurable. In these two chapters we have the laws for dealing with it; and in the brief words, "The priest shall look," we have revealed the utmost that could be done for those suffering from it. The whole fact may thus be stated, that the only thing that the priest could do, was to discover whether or no the disease was actual leprosy. If it were not, then there might be a period of separation, and presently a restoration to the community. If it were leprosy, nothing could be done other than to separate the sufferer completely from others. In the light of these considerations, we remember that there came in the fulness of time One Who could not only look at, but touch the leper—One Who could cure. That is also the story of His dealing with sin.

Leviticus 14:7

Shall let go the living bird into the open field. (r.v.)

That is thou, O trembling soul. Thine iniquities have come between thee and freedom, like the bars of a cage to a bird caught from its native woods and imprisoned. See the quickly-palpitating breast, beaten against the bars, pining for the open field — is not that an apt symbol of thy deep yearning for deliverance from the tyranny and thrall of besetting sin?

We are made free from the penalty of sin through the blood of Him who died. — One of the birds was killed in an earthen vessel over running water — here is symbolized the precious death of thy Savior, in the earthen vessel of his human nature, and in

connection with the living power of the Holy Spirit, which bore forth the tidings into all the world. We have been dipped into the crimson tide and are freed — as the leper was — from the taint of our disease. He might go freely among men, and join the congregation of worshippers: and we may mingle with the saints, and enter the very presence-chamber of God.

We are made free from the power of sin through the grace of Him who rose. — He has passed into the resurrection life, and we in Him. When He rose through all the heavens to his native home, we ascended too. We are made free from the thralldom of evil by identification with the risen Lord; and the Holy Spirit, entering our hearts from our exalted Head, makes us possessors of all the privileges which are ours in the Divine purpose (Romans 8:3–4). Fly away, happy soul, to thy nest in the heart of God! Seek those things which are above! It is your privilege to live in the heavenlies with Christ. Sursum Corda!

Lev. 14:45

G Campbell Morgan

He shall break down the house.—Lev. 14.45.

That is, the house affected by leprosy. There was a time when it was suggested that this law was due to superstition. Modern science has proved its beneficence. A house may be infected with many forms of disease. This now needs no argument. All our present methods of dealing with disease from the standpoint of the welfare of the community are based upon it. It is made a criminal offence to-day not to notify cases of certain diseases. This attitude is entirely warranted by this law. A house which is likely to communicate disease must either be cleansed completely or destroyed. No man has any property rights which are superior to the rights of the health of the community. What we really need to-day, is a more drastic application of the principle. When we turn to the spiritual suggestiveness, we at once realize its importance. In the letter of Jude, the principle suddenly flames out in his words: "Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (verse 23). Whatever in our life has been associated with and contaminated by the leprosy of past sin, it is good to destroy without compromise or pity. How often where this is not done, even those who have known personal deliverance have been infected anew! Old haunts, old associations, should be left, abandoned, without compromise, or else the last state may be worse than the first.

Leviticus 15:7

He that toucheth ... shall be unclean.

There were doubtless great sanitary reasons for many of these enactments. This book is one of the greatest sanitary codes in existence. God made religious duty enforce regulations essential to the physical health and well-being of his people. But there were deeper reasons yet. The whole of these arrangements were contrived to teach profound lessons to us all of the nature and evil of sin, and of the need of being continually cleansed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

The unclean soul spreads uncleanness. — Whatever the ceremonially unclean touched, used, or sat on, was polluted. Even those who came into contact with him were defiled. How wary all true Israelites must have been of their associates, lest they should contract pollution! Let us adopt similar precautions, and not voluntarily associate with the unholy or unclean. And if our business calls us into their daily company, let us seek cleansing for ourselves as we return to our homes, that any adhering germs of evil may be removed.

The urgent demand for holiness. — The ordinary processes of life are not necessarily clean because they are natural. The foul heart may vitiate the most natural functions. We must bring the thought of God into the simplest, the commonest, and the most secret acts. Nothing is outside his jurisdiction. Though hid from sight, yet He is ever near the child of God. His grace, and blood, and cleansing, are always requisite, and ever ready. Amidst and after every act, incident, and episode of life, we should be quiet before God, considering if we have aught to confess, and asking to be ever kept from staining our white robes.

Lev. 15:31

G Campbell Morgan

Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness.—Lev. 15.31.

This chapter contains the laws governing the whole experience of issues from the flesh as they are involved in uncleanness. It is a strange and solemn chapter in which, once again, as in the one dealing with the subject of motherhood and childhood (12), there is brought before the mind, with dread and forceful solemnity, the fact of the defilement of the race. A simple and yet careful consideration of these requirements will serve to remind us that the procreative powers of humanity are all under the curse, as the result of race-pollution. Whether the exercise of such powers be natural or unnatural, within the restraint of law or beyond such restraint, they are tainted with the same virus of sin in the sight of a God of absolute holiness. Therefore for these people of God who were to be preserved from all contamination physically with other races, in connection with the activity of these powers,

stringent laws were enacted for cleansing. The chapter, therefore, has a solemn message to all of us concerning the fact of the pollution of human nature at its fountain-head, and the consequent perpetual necessity for cleansing. This view of human nature is not flattering, and the human mind is often in rebellion against it. To deny it, is to deny a fact which is constantly proven true in human experience. We should, therefore, sedulously observe the spiritual significance, and apply it resolutely in the physical realm. For us the way of perpetual cleansing is provided in Christ.

Leviticus 16:22

Unto a solitary land. (r.v.)

This chapter is full of Christ in his most precious death for men. Its various aspects are set forth under these diverse sacrifices, as light reflected from the many facets of a diamond. We think now only of the live goat which was led away into the wilderness. We see in it:—

Christ made sin. — With both hands Aaron, in symbol, transferred all the iniquities, sins, and transgressions of the people to the head of the goat, which became so identified with them that it was accounted an unclean thing; and even he who led it away must needs wash his clothes and bathe. This is what the apostle means when he says that Jesus was made sin for us. Our sins met in Him; were assumed by Him; He stood before God as though, in some mysterious sense, they were his own.

Christ bearing sin away. — As the goat went away, the eyes of the people followed it, and they were taught to believe that sin was no longer reckoned to them. Aaron put off his linen garments and arrayed himself in festal robes, and came forth to bless the congregation. What rejoicing must have broken from the crowds! So Jesus, in his matchless grace, has borne away the sin of the world into a land of forgetfulness. “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

Christ's loneliness. — He was alone in his mediatorial work. None could bear Him company. Loved ones might stand beside his cross, or in after ages suffer, as He did, deaths of martyrdom; but none could do what He did as the sacrifice for sin. Ah, how lonely He was! Even the Father seemed to have forsaken Him! Before the universe, in that dread hour, the Savior stood in awful, unapproachable solitude!

Lev. 16:34

G Campbell Morgan

To make atonement for the children of Israel because of all their sins once in the year.—Lev. 16.34.

This chapter contains the instructions which were given concerning the observance of the Day of Atonement. This was in many ways the greatest day in the religious year of the Hebrew people, for this was the most important religious rite in the whole economy. In this rite provision was made for dealing with the whole question of sin, known and unknown. We noticed in an earlier note, when dealing with the difference between the sin-offering and the trespass-offering (Lev 4), that the element of accountability was conditioned in knowledge, but that sin, in the sight of God, is sin, even though committed in ignorance. All sin, therefore, was dealt with on the day. Every arrangement was intended to impress upon the mind the solemnity of the approach of the soul to God, and to stress the truth that the sinner has no right of access save that which is provided for him through sacrifice. As these arrangements are pondered, one can easily realize that their necessary imperfection could not produce anything like perfect rest in the conscience. Indeed, the more sensitive the spirit, the more that imperfection would be realized. For us there is no waiting for an annual day of atonement. We need not wait, with sin undealt with for an hour. Our Priest abides in the holiest, and we have access there through Him at all times. This should not make us less reverent in our coming, but more so. The cleansed conscience is never rude, irreverent. It is ever subdued, chastened, sensitive. It rejoices in freedom, but never loses the sense of debt.

Leviticus 17:11

The life of the flesh is in the blood.

There is probably a deeper truth in these words than man has ever fathomed. The R. V. marg. translates “life,” soul. Why that reverence for blood; that horror when it is unrighteously shed and gurgles forth; that perpetual reference of Scripture to the blood of Christ? Probably the answer to such questions would be given, if we perfectly understood the affirmation of this remarkable verse.

When Jesus gave his blood, He gave his life, the life of his holy soul. — We are accustomed often to speak about the blood of Christ, by which we mean the life of Jesus, shed forth for us substitutionally and sacrificially. The sinner takes this blood, this life, in his hands, and presents it to God as his plea. Does the broken law require satisfaction, homage, acknowledgment? Here it is in this priceless, pure, and sinless blood, never infected by pollution, never heated by passion. Let this shed life atone for thee! “God be propitious (because of the sacrifice on the altar) to me the sinner.”

Five bleeding wounds He bears, Received on Calvary; They pour effectual prayers, They strongly plead for me “Forgive him, oh,

forgive," they cry, "Nor let that ransomed sinner die."

When we are bidden drink his blood, it is of his life that we partake. — At the table of our Lord we symbolically drink of his blood; in doing this we identify ourselves with his death, and give up our self-life to the cross. Yea, we do more; we testify our desire to receive into our natures more and more of the soul and life of our Blessed Lord, so that we may dwell in Him, and He in us.

Lev. 17:7

G Campbell Morgan

And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the he-goats.—Lev. 17.7.

This is a startling interpolation. It occurs in the midst of instructions concerning sacrifices. It is first provided that all sacrifices must be brought to the door of the Tent of Meeting. There must be no other place of worship through sacrifice. This provision recognized the fact of the unification of the nation around the Divine Presence; reminding the people that there could be no access to God on the part of any person in self-willed isolation; and so made difficult, if not impossible, the worship of false gods. It was in this connection that these words were uttered. The Authorized Version reads: "They shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils." Perhaps that was too strong a rendering. The Hebrew word literally is "hairy-ones." In Isa.13.21, Isa 13:34. 14 it is rendered "satyr" in the Authorized Version, and "wild-goats" in the American Standard Version. The satyr was an imaginary being, half-goat, half-man, of demon nature. In Egypt the goat-man, Pan, was worshipped. It would seem as though this word recognized the fact that these people had in Egypt probably worshipped that false god. It is but a reference, and we may not dogmatize as to the actual meaning. The one truth of value for us is that when man worships God in the right way, according to the Divine provision and law, all false worship becomes unnecessary and impossible. To be deflected from the true method, even of the worship of God, is ever to be in danger of turning to other gods.

Leviticus 18:30

Therefore shall ye keep My charge. (r.v.)

Literal obedience was God's perpetual demand of his chosen people. Why should we claim to be exonerated from an equally exact obedience to the commands of Jesus? And yet how few of us do exactly as He has bidden! Let us take some tests.

The Lord's Supper is a case in point. In the present day there are many who, from year's end to year's end, never go to the Table, though Jesus said that his disciples were to do it in remembrance of Him.

Baptism is another. Christians shelter themselves under the excuse that it is not essential, and therefore may be omitted. But what do they mean by essential? It is not essential to salvation, because that has been achieved by our Lord; but it may be essential to show that we love Him, that we have a genuine faith, that we are ready to take Him as King. Surely a soldier is not freed from obeying the command of his officer because he cannot see it to be essential!

Going to law is another. If there is one thing clearer than others, it is the reiterated charge of the New Testament that we should rather suffer wrong than avenge ourselves. Yet how many professing Christians will this day issue a County Court summons against defaulters!

Forgiveness is another. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Yet there are hundreds of Christ's professing followers who are at feud with their relatives or fellow-members.

Let us remember the imperative tone of these words, and ask God to work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Lev. 18:3

G Campbell Morgan

After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do.—Lev. 18.3.

The particular application of these words was to all the corrupt social tactics of Egypt and Canaan, those very practices which had resulted in a corrupt and degenerate race; so corrupt and degenerate that it was necessary, in the interest of the human race, that they should be swept out. All that promiscuous intercourse between the sexes which inevitably tends to disease and degeneracy, was contrary to the mind of God, because destructive of humanity. Therefore, His people were safeguarded against those things by this general command, and by detailed particularity of statement. In the interests of the health and strength of national life these enactments are still of force. To break them, is to bring about inevitable deterioration and ultimate destruction. The principle involved in the words has much wider application. The people of God are called upon to conform in all the ways and habits of life, not to the

customs of the world, but to the mind and will of God as made known in His law. The full force of the principle is found in Paul's injunction: "Be not fashioned according to this world; but be ye trans-formed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12. 2). It is a requirement of which we need to remind ourselves constantly. It is so easy to be lured from our loyalty by the customs of the men and women by whom we are surrounded. Such requirement is not capricious. It is based upon God's loving purpose for His own, and His determination to preserve them from all destructive practices.

Leviticus 19:2

I am the Lord your God.

This is the refrain of the entire chapter; count how many times it recurs. Evidently the thought of God should ring out in our lives, as a perpetual chime.

Sometimes as an inspiration to duty. We should seek to be holy because He is holy. "Imitators of God." Or as a remonstrance against yielding to temptation. Lo, God is in this place; his pure eye is upon me: how can I do this great wickedness! Or as an incentive to liberality. We can afford to be generous to the poor and hireling, because we are children of so great and rich a parent. Or as a reason for merry and gentle kindness. How can we act otherwise than lovingly, when his love encompasses us with its persuasive bands?

Thus the perpetual consciousness of God becomes the source of holy and happy living. But how may it become ours? We may make many resolutions, only to break them. We forget after our most definite purposing. There is no help but in the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance. He is able also to help our infirmity: "for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

In the morning let the thought of God's presence with you in your secret closet sink well into your heart. Wait till his presence is made real to you, and you cry, Lo, God is here. Then entrust yourself to the Holy Spirit, asking Him to keep you in the current of the love and thought of God. Reckon on Him to do so. Now and then in the course of daily duty stop and remember God. Thus you will live in his fear and love all the day long.

Lev. 19:9

G Campbell Morgan

Thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field.—Lev. 19.9.

This is a remarkable chapter. It consists largely of the repetition of laws already given, with one reiterated emphasis, namely, that of the fact that JEHOVAH was the God of His people. It opens with a general call to holiness, based upon its ultimate reason: "Ye shall be holy, for I Jehovah your God am holy." This is the ultimate reason for holiness. The holiness of Jehovah must be exemplified in His people. This formula, "I am Jehovah," is repeated in this one chapter no less than fourteen times. Every commandment here repeated is set in relation to this fact. In the words we are specially noting, there is a gleam of light, full of beauty. In the reaping of their harvests they were forbidden to reap the corners of the fields. These were to be left for the poor and the stranger, and this because "I am Jehovah your God." An essential quality of the holiness of God is His beneficence, His tender concern for the needy. The people who are called to exemplify His holiness, are to observe that fact. The exactitude and thoroughness in dealing with one's own harvests, which leaves no room for those who are in need, is strictly forbidden. Happy indeed are those who in all their business enterprises retain a consciousness of human need, and such consideration for it as will make them leave something which of strict justice belongs to themselves, that this need may be ministered to. This is holiness according to the Divine standard, which ever has this element of compassion.

Leviticus 19:9-18

August 29

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

OUR DUTY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." -- Matthew 22:39; Leviticus 19:9-18.

OUR NEIGHBOUR is the next person who needs our help, man, woman, or child. It is enough that your help is needed, and that you are near! As we read this paragraph from the old Jewish law we see who are our neighbours, and what we are to do for them.

We must give them a chance to live (Matt 22:9-10). We have no right to waste anything that may be of service to others, or to use

for ourselves all our possessions. There must always be a margin left which we can give to those who are in need. Well would it be if each reader of these fines would set apart a certain proportion of produce and increase, as well as money, for the cause of Christ and His poor.

We must not withhold payments which are due (Matt 22:13). How many tradesmen and others have been ruined by the long delays of customers in settling their accounts. If only all Christian people would insist on paying cash, especially to small shopkeepers, what a blessed revolution would ensue. It is neither honest nor just to withhold payment from those to whom it is due.

We must be very gentle and considerate to those who suffer from any infirmity (Matt 22:14). God's Love is always endeavoring to make up in some way to those who are handicapped. The blind Milton sings of Paradise, and Helen Keller has been enabled to triumph over insuperable obstacles. We are to become ears to the deaf and eyes to the blind.

We must not hesitate to rebuke sin (Matt 22:17). This needs deep humility, tact, the removal of the beam from one's own eye, the love of Christ for souls; but how much might be done if we would stay the little rift within the lute!

We must not bear a grudge (Matt 22:18). All, this is hard! To feel hurt, to take offence, to be cold and stiff, to stand at a distance, how many of us fail here! But we must act and speak to others in the power of God's Love, as we would do if there were no grudge within.

The lawyer asked Christ: "Who is my neighbour?" suggesting that some one should neighbour him. Our Lord reversed his inquiry, saying in effect: "Whom will you neighbour?" If you go through life seeking people to neighbour you, life will be full of disappointment; but blessed is he who seeks to neighbour others; he shall not lack those who, in the hour of trial, will neighbour him.

PRAYER

O Lord, soften our hard and steely hearts, warm our icy and frozen hearts, that we may wish well to one another, and may be the true disciples of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Leviticus 20:26

I have separated you from the peoples, that ye should be Mine. (r.v.)

"Separate me Barnabas and Saul," said the Holy Ghost. And in after days Paul spoke of himself as being separated unto the Gospel of God. It is a mistake to make the act of separation our own resolve and deed. We shall inevitably drop back unless God has come into the transaction, and has set us apart for Himself. We must be separated from sin and sinners unto a holy God.

We are needed for a specific purpose. — God can bless men only through men. As once He used the Jews to be the medium of communicating his truth to men, so now He is eager to use his Church; if only she will allow Him to deliver her from the taint of sin and the world, and separate her for a peculiar possession unto Himself. Let us individually yield ourselves to the blessed influences of the Holy Spirit, that He may realize in us the purpose for which He has called us.

We are required to satisfy God's heart. — He needs love for love. Throughout the world He seeks for those who can afford Him pleasure, as his enclosed gardens, his sealed fountains, his peculiar treasure.

This separation is effected by the Holy Ghost, and is referred to in the word "sealing." "He hath sealed us unto the day of redemption."

What an honor is this! To be for God Himself: to do his errands, to fulfil his behests and give Him pleasure! Rejoice greatly when God says, "Thou art mine." We also can take up his words, and answer back, "Thou also art mine." Let us be glad, if we know that the oil of separation has come on our needs, and let us walk worthily of our high calling, separated to the Holy Ghost, and counting it sacrilege to be used for any unholy purpose.

Lev. 20:22

G Campbell Morgan

That the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, vomit you not out.—Lev. 20:22.

This is an arresting word. The whole Biblical revelation insists upon the close relationship between the earth and man. At the beginning it is written, in view of man's sin: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. 3:17). In the Roman letter, Paul declares, again as the consequence of human sin, that: "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:22). The prophets repeatedly emphasized the truth that the earth becomes polluted by man's pollution. The measure in which the land is dealt with by corrupt man, is the measure in which it becomes barren, and at last refuses to support man. In that sense it vomits him out. The very land referred to in this word of the law of God, stands to-day at the centre of the earth, a standing witness to the truth.

There it has been for ages, fruit-less and barren, and yet naturally there is no land more fertile. Men corrupted it, and it vomited them out. When presently the people of God are finally restored to their land in faith and loyalty, it will become again the garden of the Lord, full of fruit and full of beauty. Again the principle is of the widest application. Whatever the territory man reigns over, it is affected by his character. If he be polluted and corrupt, then all that is under his sway becomes polluted and corrupt, and so fails to supply him with the very things he seeks therefrom; it vomits him out, and that by the desolation which he has himself produced. Thus has God conditioned His whole creation within laws which ever operate with Himself and His holiness and against evil.

Leviticus 21:8, 15, 23

I the Lord, which Sanctify you.

This chapter is full of restrictions and cautions against anything that might defile the priests, the sons of Aaron. The holiness of God was set in a clear light by the care that there should be no ceremonial pollution or personal defect in those who ministered before his presence. What Aaron and his sons were in the ancient typical worship, that Jesus and his people are in the spiritual dispensation which has taken its place. "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession."

How holy we should be "in all manner of living"! What may be innocent and natural for others would be wrong and inconsistent in us. Even the pointing of the beard after the fashion of the nations around, and for appearance' sake, was forbidden them; and contact with death in the home of domestic mourning. These, with many such like cautions, indicate that our spiritual separation for the service of God must enter into the minutest details. The clothes we wear, the books we read, the amusements we engage in, the details of the home-life — will all be affected by the thought, "I have been set apart for God; the anointing of the Spirit is on me; I am called to offer Him the bread of a holy life; I may not do as others, who have not realized the sacredness of life, as I do; and who may permit without compunction what I forego."

This is a high ideal; and it is only practicable to those who realize the thrice-made announcement of our text, that God will sanctify us: setting us apart for Himself — by the precious blood of Christ, by the anointing of the Spirit, and by the separation of our thoughts, and aims, and practices.

Lev. 21:21

G Campbell Morgan

No man of the seed of Aaron the priest, that hath a blemish, shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord. —Lev. 21:21.

In this chapter the subject is that of the behaviour and condition of life, necessary in the case of the priests. The absolute necessity for their strictest separation from all possibility of defilement is carefully set forth. They stood in a place of special nearness to God as the Divinely-appointed mediators of the people; therefore they must of all men manifest, in all the externals of life and conduct, the necessity for that holiness without which no man may see the Lord. They were strictly forbidden to defile themselves by contact with the dead in any form. The only exceptions permitted were in the cases of those who were their next of kin. Even these exceptions were not made for the High Priest. He must never touch a dead person, even though it were father or mother. Moreover, his family must be most strictly guarded. This was revealed in the one flaming declaration that if the daughter of a priest defiled herself, she profaned her father, and was to be burned with fire. Finally, in the words we have selected, it was provided that no cripple of any sort should exercise the priestly office. Approach to God necessitated perfection, and so far as it was possible to emphasize this by the external symbols, it was done in the case of the priests. There followed a recognition of the fact that blame may not attach to a man in the matter of physical defect. Therefore he was permitted to eat the bread of God, but not to offer it. All this should at least emphasize for us the truth that we ought to seek that those who minister in holy things should be of the strongest rather than the weakest.

Leviticus 22:4

He shall not eat of the holy things till he be clean.

The holy things referred to here are the offerings made by Israel to Jehovah, a part of which was presented to God in fire, and the rest partaken of by the priests and their families. None, however, might feed on them whilst ceremonially unclean. This suggests some useful precautions for ourselves, if we would fully enjoy the privileges and blessings attending the worship of the holy God.

We must be clean before we can enjoy the private reading of the Word of God. — We would wash our hands, soiled with the dust and grime of toil, before opening an exquisitely printed copy of the Scriptures; how much more should we seek cleansing at the hands of Christ before we feed on the holy things of Scripture!

We must be clean before entering the House of God. — It is a holy habit for each intending worshipper to be quiet before leaving the house on the Lord's day; or to use carefully the moment of the bent head at the commencement of the public service, in order

that the soul may be made clean from any contracted stain, and resolve henceforth to abstain from all evil.

We must be clean before partaking of the Lord's Supper. — There we feed upon the bread of God; and as we wash our hands before we sit at the table of a friend, so should our hearts be cleansed ere we partake of the emblems of the body and blood of Christ. Holiness becomes God's house. Those that ascend the hill of the Lord must have clean hands and a pure heart. The reason why religious exercises do not profit you, may lie in your failure to comply with this demand. "He shall not eat of the holy things until he be clean."

Lev. 22:2

G Campbell Morgan

Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel.—Lev. 22.2.

In this chapter we have the further enforcement and wider application of the necessity for the complete separation of the priests from all defilement. They were to abstain from the exercise of their office, to "separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel," under certain conditions which were described. If from natural cause, or from disease, or from contact with defiling things, the priest were for the time defiled, he was to abstain from his service, until such time as he had been actually and ceremonially cleansed. Not only must he himself be free from blemish and defilement, he was charged to see to it that all he offered was of the same character. And yet further, he was not to extend any hospitality to those who were unclean, or strangers to the covenant, of the things which appertained to the house of his God. These stringent instructions close with a reaffirmation of the reason which had been given in other connections : "I will be hallowed among the children of Israel" ... "I am Jehovah." These people were constantly reminded that the deepest purpose of their existence was that of their call to manifest the things of God. Thus, such requirements under the Hebrew economy, have a very direct bearing upon the Christian Church. All the degradation existing among the nations is due to the false ideas of God which characterize their life and worship. To know the true God, is life for the nations, as surely as for individuals.

Leviticus 23:27, 29, 32

Ye shall afflict your souls.

Whilst Aaron was making the solemn atonement for the people, confessing their sins on the victims and sending them away, the camp was pervaded with the atmosphere of the Sabbath rest. No servile work was done on penalty of death. Probably for the most part the people abode in their tents. No sound was heard save sighs, and groans, and cries of penitence. The people afflicted themselves for their sins.

Sin is forgiven by God, but it should not be forgotten by us. — We should remember it, in order to refresh our memory of God's great grace in putting it away; in order to deepen our sense of gratitude and to promote our self-humiliation; in order to make us watchful and careful in our daily walk and conversation. Holding the hand of our Savior, we need not dread to look down into the abyss from which He has redeemed us. We shall turn from it to Him with tenderer love and gratitude.

Repentance is once for all; penitence is perennial. — We repent when we turn from the kingdom of darkness to that of God's dear Son; it is the act of the will, the utter reversal of the course we had been pursuing. But we are penitent after we have seen the face of Jesus: it is the act of the emotions; the sense of Christ's love and of our unworthiness together makes us weep, as the forgiven sinner did at his feet.

Penitence does not purchase forgiveness, but accompanies and follows it. — Could our tears for ever flow, they could not bring God's pardon into our souls. That is secured by the offering of our Substitute on Calvary. But being forgiven, we wash his feet with our tears, we break our alabaster boxes on his head, and love much.

Lev. 23:2

G Campbell Morgan

The set feasts of the Lord. Lev. 23.2

This is a wonderful chapter, as it shows how the whole year, that is, the passing of time, was for this people marked by great religious festivals, which were at once national signs and symbols of the relation of the people to God, and means of keeping ever before them the real secrets of strength. Eight set feasts are named. The first was the Sabbath. It was to be a perpetually recurring feast every seventh day, thus persistently reminding them of these relationships between God and the national life. Then seven were established which created the calendar. First came Passover, which merged into Unleavened Bread. With these the year commenced, reminding them of their redemption from slavery and their separation to God. Then came the Feast of First-fruits, and seven weeks later the Feast of Pentecost, reminding them of their dependence upon God for sustenance, and of their responsibility

to Him for the culture of the land. The seventh month was most sacred of all, for therein three connected Feasts were observed, those of Trumpets, of Atonement, of Tabernacles. The Trumpets called them to cease from servile work in order to worship. Atonement reminded them of the way of access to God by sacrifices and the putting away of sin. Tabernacles was the feast of joy in which they remembered their deliverance, His guidance of them, and His law for them. Thus by these set feasts the year was made sacred, and their symbolism emphasized the sanctity of the secular in the Kingdom of God.

Leviticus 24:4-8

Before the Lord continually.

The light of the candlestick and the twelve cakes of fine flour were to be before the Lord continually, as symbols of the twofold office his people were to sustain, on the one hand to the world's darkness, on the other to God Himself.

We must shine as lights in the world. — As a candle in the hand of the housewife, who sweeps her house diligently; as a lamp in the hand of the virgin expecting the bridegroom; or as the lighthouse on a rocky coast. We must dispel the darkness, and guide wanderers through the murky night. Light is soft and still, and is thus a fitting emblem of the influence of a holy life, which burns steadily on before the Lord continually, and is unaffected by the heed or comment of man. If no one seems the better for our consistent testimony, aim to satisfy the Lord. The lamps of the pure candlestick of a holy life are not for man only, but for Him. But they can only be maintained through the constant supply of the pure oil of the Holy Ghost, ministered by Him who walks amid the seven golden candlesticks. "Ye are the light of the world."

We must be as bread to God. — In a blessed sense we feed on God, but God also feeds on us. He finds satisfaction in beholding his people's unity and love, in receiving their sacrifices of praise, and in watching their growing conformity to his will. The two rows of six cakes foreshadow the unity and order of the Church; the fine flour, its holy, equable character; the pure frankincense, the fragrance of Christian love. There is a testimony in all these to the world; but we do not always realize the satisfaction afforded to the great God, who has made such costly sacrifices on behalf of his Church.

Lev. 24:22

G Campbell Morgan

Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for the homeborn.—Lev. 24.22.

This is an interesting chapter, in that it seems to break in on the continuity of the Book. In the first section some laws are repeated. Then follows a fragment of history. It is the story of a blasphemer upon whom punishment fell. This man was the son of an Egyptian father and an Israelitish mother. Seeing that he was not of pure Hebrew blood, the people were not sure as to how to deal with him when he committed the heinous offence of blaspheming the Name. It was under these circumstances that the principle was laid down that there should be one manner of law for the stranger and for the home-born. It was a principle of justice and of mercy. Its first emphasis is upon the fact that those who enter the Kingdom of God, and enjoy its privileges, must be governed by its laws. No man within that Kingdom can claim the rights of other citizenship as giving him freedom to break its laws. To enter that Kingdom is to renounce all other lordships, and to accept its laws. The principle has another value, in that it protects the stranger from the possible in-justice of the home-born. Those, who for any reason have birth-rights in the Kingdom of God, are not permitted to impose upon the strangers who desire to enter any other obligations than such as are binding upon themselves. To-day there are no "home-born" members of that Kingdom. All are "strangers," who enter by a New Birth. Yet the principle needs remembering, for it is not always easy for those who have had the privileges of the Kingdom longest, to be just and impartial to those newly entering.

Leviticus 25:25

His kinsman that is next unto him. (r.v.)

In the case of Naomi this was Boaz; in our case it is Jesus Christ. Redemption, as described in this chapter, had to do with persons and lands; and each illustrates Christ's work on behalf of believers throughout all ages.

He has redeemed our Persons. — It often happened that a Hebrew waxed poor, and was compelled to sell himself to some wealthy Gentile who sojourned in the land. He who had owned his own patrimony now wrought as a bondservant for another. But after he had sold himself he might be redeemed by his next kinsman. So we had sold ourselves for nought; we wrought the will of the flesh; we were enslaved to the fashions of the world; we obeyed the promptings of the prince of the power of the air. Alas for us! But we have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ. We have been made free by right, and have only to claim and act upon the freedom with which the risen Christ has made us free.

He has redeemed our Inheritance. — What we lost in the first Adam we have more than regained in the second. For innocence, we have purity; for external fellowship with God, his indwelling; for the delights of an earthly paradise, the fulness of God's blessedness

and joy.

He is our nearest Kinsman. — “My brother, my sister,” He says of each who will do the will of his Father. He has made Himself one with us by taking on Himself our nature, and identifying Himself with our race. We know that Jesus, our Göel and Redeemer, liveth; and that He will come to redeem us from the power of the grave, and receive us to Himself.

Lev. 25:10

G Campbell Morgan

It shall be a jubilee unto you.—Lev. 25.10.

The provision for the year of jubilee was a method by which the people were perpetually reminded that all human inter-relations were dependent upon the deeper things of Divine authority and possession. The first part of this chapter gives the law of the land-sabbath. Every seventh year the land was to have rest from cultivation. Thus the Divine ownership was recognized, as men were forbidden to treat the land as their absolute property. There is no doubt that this requirement, in common with all others, was based upon the true method of dealing with the land. Every fiftieth year was one in which all sorts of human arrangements were interfered with. In that year, men dispossessed through adversity were restored to possession. In that year the slave was to be set free, and all men released from toil. The laws for this year were clearly set out, as they affected the land, dwelling-houses, and persons. They should be carefully pondered, for in them the foundations of the social order were firmly laid. By them we see how all human inter-relationships, both as to property and person, are conditioned by the fact that the fundamental ownership, both of property and persons, is that of God. The only right a man has in land is that of his own labour therein. The liberation of the slave proved that no one human being can have the right to possess, absolutely and finally, any other human being. The master has only a right in the work of his slave. The readjustment of the year of jubilee re-called men to the realization of the sovereignty of Jehovah, and of the limitations within which they lived.

Leviticus 26:6

None shall make you afraid.

But we are afraid, often very greatly so. How can we be secured from the dread of men and things which so easily besets us?

We must be absolutely right with God. — To walk in God's statutes, and keep his commandments, was the first condition of Israel's immunity from fear. When we know that there is no cause of controversy between us and God, we feel able to count confidently on his protection and deliverance. “Perfect love casteth out fear.”

We must count on God's faithfulness. — He has put us where we are, and we dare not think He will withdraw from us, as Joab did from Uriah. We are his partners, summoned to co-operate with Him: will He allow us to incur responsibilities in his name, and then leave the burden on our unassisted resources? Fear will yield before a clear sense of God's might; but it is still more likely to yield before a deep sense of God's perfect faithfulness.

We must rely on the environment of angel keepers. — When David, during his flight before Absalom, slept in the open, he believed that the Angel of the Lord encamped around him. More are they which are for us than those that be against us. The mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire. Lord, open our eyes that we may see!

We must believe that our enemies are less formidable than they seem. — They surround us with their bluster and threatenings, they come against us in embattled array; but if we dare to go forward and do the right thing in the sight of God, they will vanish like a puff of smoke. “For, lo, the kings assembled themselves... They were arrayed, they were dismayed, they hasted away.”

Lev. 26:40-41

G Campbell Morgan

Because they walked contrary unto Me, I also walked contrary unto them. —Lev. 26.40, 41.

In this chapter two gracious promises and solemn warnings are set forth. It opens with the reiteration of fundamental laws. There is to be no idolatry. There must be a constant observance of the Sabbath. The reverence of the Sanctuary must be maintained. Then follow the promises showing that conditions of well-being are entirely dependent upon obedience to the government of God. In like manner the warnings show that disobedience will always be followed by calamity. It is most suggestive to notice how, even in the giving of the Law, the declension and wandering of the people were known to the King, and yet, notwithstanding this fact, that these promises of final restoration were made. Thus human responsibility was solemnly enforced; and yet the whole chapter cannot be read without the conviction being created that the love of God will prove finally victorious over all failure. The words we stress reveal the law of the soul's relation to God perpetually. God is faithful and unchangeable. We may change our experience of His

government by a change of attitude toward it. If we walk with Him, He walks with us, and all His infinite resources of wisdom and power and love are at our disposal. If we change our course, and walk contrary to Him, He pursues His way of wisdom, love, and power, but His goings are against us, and we experience the contradiction of His opposition. He remaineth faithful. He cannot deny Himself. Therefore we know His government as strength, helping or opposing, according to whether we walk with Him or contrary to Him.

Leviticus 27:28

No devoted thing ... shall be sold or redeemed.

There is a great principle involved in these words. When once a person or possession had been solemnly dedicated to God, it was not permissible to withdraw from the obligations which had been assumed. Once given, the offering was regarded as God's property, and might not be resumed by the offerer, or placed to any inferior use.

This regulation is specially applicable to our conception and practice of consecration. We are Christ's: by the gift of the Father, by the purchase of the blood of Christ, by the sealing of the Spirit; but a moment often comes in the life of the earnest believer when the Lord appears to claim a more earnest recognition of his rightful claim. Then thoughtfully and earnestly, spirit, soul, and body, are laid upon the altar, and we solemnly declare, "I am thine, O Lord!"

When once this is done, we must reckon that God has accepted us, and that we cannot repeat the gift. We may perpetually refer to it, and acknowledge its abiding obligation, and apply its principle to all those new departments and functions which are perpetually increasing on us; but we can no more repeat it, than could the Israelite give God the firstling lamb, since it was already his (Leviticus 27:26).

If we go back from the attitude we have once taken up, we must confess our relapse with tears and deep contrition, asking to be restored, waiting to be put back again into the old place by our merciful and compassionate High Priest. We cannot undo that past; but we may ask Him to restore us to the place we occupied before we went astray. Oh that we might never withdraw from the altar of entire consecration!

Lev. 27:29

G Campbell Morgan

None devoted, which shall be de-voted of men, shall be ransomed.—Lev. 27. 29.

This last chapter has to do with vows. A vow is a promise made voluntarily to God. It is an undertaking to do something which is not commanded, that is, some-thing in some way beyond the requirements of the actual law. That is not to say that a vow is wrong. It is by no means so. It expresses devotion to the service of God, in a degree beyond that which is demanded in the terms of the Divine statutes. It is not necessary that such vows should be made; but if they are made, they must be religiously observed. The careful reader of this chapter will note a distinction between things "sanctified" and things "devoted." Throughout, the word sanctify is used in the simplest sense of setting apart; while the word devoted is used in reference to complete and final giving. The things sanctified by vow, that is, set apart to Divine uses, may be redeemed by the payment of their full value and some-thing beyond. The things devoted, that is, once completely given, cannot be re-deemed. All this has much to say to us. Our devotion to our Lord should be complete, because for that He asks. We need add no vow of extra devotion, because we have no extras to offer. Then let us ever remember that we cannot ransom our-selves from our bondage to Him. There is no sin more despicable than that of taking back anything given. Children in their play all recognize this. Let us live by the truth, in its application to our devotion to our Lord.

Leviticus 4:29

Laying the Hand on the Sacrifice

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A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 19TH, 1903,

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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"And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering." — Leviticus 4:29.

I MIGHT have take, as my text, several other verses in the same chapter, for they all express the same idea as the words I have just read to you. For the sake of emphasis, let me ask you to look at the 4th verse. When a priest had committed sin, and brought a sin offering unto the Lord, it is written, "He shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head." The 15th verse tells us that, when the whole congregation of Israel had sinned

through ignorance, the Lord said to Moses, "The elders of the congregation shall Lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the Lord." Then, in the 24th verse, we read that, when a ruler had sinned through ignorance, and brought his sin offering, "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the Lord." And, in the 33rd verse, you find that, if a common person had committed a sin through ignorance, or if his sin should come to his knowledge, he was to bring a sin offering, and then it was added, "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering."

Any one of those verses would, therefore, have sufficed for a text. It seems to have been a necessary part of the proceedings that, when a sin offering was presented to the Lord, to be offered up before him, the offerer should first of all lay his hand upon the head of the animal devoted to this sacred purpose.

I hope I am addressing many persons who wish to know more about the way and plan of salvation, and who are anxious to partake in, the benefits of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Possibly, they are saying, "We know that there is a Savior for sinners, but how can he be ours? We know that an atonement has been made for sin; but how can that "atonement really put away our sin so that we may be pardoned, and accepted by God?" This is a very natural question, and a very proper one; it would be well if it were most solemnly and seriously asked by all who, as yet, remain without being partakers of the blessings which are stored up for us in Christ Jesus.

Beloved friends! it will be all in vain, so far as we are personally concerned, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," unless he shall save us. It will be of no avail to us that Jesus shed his precious blood, unless that blood washes away our guilt. It will increase rather than diminish our misery if we hear that others are saved so long as we ourselves remain unsaved. If we are finally lost, it will not make our lot in hell any more tolerable if we discover that there was a propitiation for sin, although we never had a share in its expiatory effects. Of all questions in the world, it does seem to me that this is the most urgent and pressing one, and that we ought not to rest until we get it satisfactorily answered and put into practice, — "How can I be a partaker in the eternal life which Jesus Christ came into the world to procure for sinners by his death?" Some of you have hitherto totally neglected this question. If you had noticed, in The Times, an advertisement stating that somebody's next of kin was wanted, and you had suspicion that you were the person to whom the notice referred, I warrant you that you would not have let the grass grow under your feet, you would have been quick enough to secure the fortune which had been left by your relative. But now that Jesus Christ has died, and left a wondrous legacy of grace among the sons of men, you have allowed a good many years to roll over your head without making an eager and earnest search into the question whether there is anything for you. You have seen a great many persons saved all around you, yet you yourself remain unsaved. You have some of your dear one's who are in heaven, but you are not pursuing the path which will lead you thither, and, all this while you have not had the excuse, which many have had, of never having heard that there was great Savior and great salvation to be had without money and without price. If you could plead such an excuse as that, it would be better for you than it is now, when you are sinning against light and knowledge in neglecting that which would be most of all for your spiritual and eternal good. Be wise now therefore. You have been trifling far too long. Be serious now, and bend your whole mind to the earnest consideration at this all-important matter, "How can I obtain salvation? How can I get it here and now? How can sin be pardoned? How can my sins be pardoned now I have long heard of Christ; how can I come into vital connection with him? I know that —

"There is a fountain fill'd with blood,

Drawn from Immanuel's veins;

"but how can I be washed therein so that I, personally, may become whiter than snow?"

My text says that the guilty person, who brought the sin offering, laid his hand upon its head; and this act gives a pictorial and symbolical answer to your questions, and tells you how you can come into connection with Christ, and how his great sacrifice can become available for you. You have to do to Christ, spiritually, what these Hebrews did literally; you have to imitate their action, and so to carry out their words of Dr. Watts which we often sing, —

"My faith would lay her hand

On that dear head of thine,

While like a penitent I stand,

And there confess my sin."

I shall speak of only two things which we may learn from my text. The first is, the intent of this symbol; and the second is, the simplicity of the symbol, — this laying of the hand of the offerer upon the head of the victim presented by him to God as sin offering.

I. First, then, let me try to explain The Intent Of The Symbol. What did it mean?

For these things, of which I shall speak in explaining this symbol, are necessary in order that Christ should become yours. Follow me very carefully and prayerfully, dear friend, if you do indeed desire to be saved, for it may be that the Lord will lead you into everlasting life even while I am speaking. I pray that he may do so.

The first meaning of this laying of the hand upon the head of the sacrifice is this; it was a confession of sin. The offering was a sin offering; but for sin, it would not have been needed. The man who came, and laid his hand on the head of the sin offering, acknowledged, by that act and deed, that he was a sinner. If there had been anyone who was not sinner, he would have had no right to be there. A sin offering, for person who had no connection with sin, would have been a superfluity; why should he bring a sin offering to the Lord! So, dear friends, if you have no sin, you are not fit subjects for Christ's saving power and grace. If you are not guilty, you do not need forgiveness. If you have never transgressed the law of God, you need not come before him with a sin offering. Only remember that, if you do think so, you are under one of the most sorrowful delusions that ever entered the brain of a madman. You are deceiving yourself, depend upon it. If you say that you have no sin, the truth is not in you. But he who brought a sin offering before the Lord said, in effect, "This is what I need, for I am a sinner. I need to have my sin taken away for I am guilty in the sight of God. So I put my hand upon this lamb, or goat, or bullock, which is about to die, thereby confessing that I need a sacrifice in order that the sin, which I confess that I have committed, may be put away."

Are you reluctant to confess that you are a sinner? If so, I pray very earnestly that you may speedily get rid of that reluctance. God does not ask you to confess your sins to any man. It would be a shame for you to do so, for you would pollute that man, whoever he might be, if you poured into his ear the sad tale of your filthiness and sin. God does not ask you to do any man the serious wrong of whispering into his ear the foul story of your transgressions. It is not to your fellow-creature, but to your God, that you are to confess your sin. Go straight to him, and say, as the prodigal said to his father, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." What makes you so slow to do that? Do you imagine that he does not know about your sin, and think that you can hide anything from him? That is impossible, for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Is it your pride that keeps you from confessing your sin? How can you hope that God will forgive you if you will not acknowledge that you have sinned against him? Think how you act towards your own children. How ready you are again to clasp them to your bosom when they have offended against you! Yet you watch to see in them signs of relenting and repenting. So does the Lord your God watch for tokens of contrition and godly sorrow in you. Wherefore, "take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." Are you not willing to do this? Then, alas! you lack the first requisite for obtaining acceptance through Christ. How can you, who will not own that you have sinned, lay your hand upon the head of the sin offering?

He who thus confessed his sin confessed also that he deserved to die, just as that victim was about to be slain. There stood the priest, with his sacrificial knife, ready to slay the innocent beast and the basin in which to catch the blood of the bullock, or goat, or lamb, whichever it might be that was being offered; and he, who laid his hand upon its head, thereby said, "This poor animal is about to die, and to pour out its blood, and this reminds me that I deserve condign punishment from God. If he were to destroy me, he would be perfectly justified in so doing." Soul, wilt thou say that? Art thou willing to humble thyself in the dust, and to say that? Wilt thou put the halter about thy neck, and confess that thou deservest the extreme penalty that the great Judge can inflict? If so, thou hast begun well; for he, who will confess his guilt, and will own that he deserves the punishment of death for it, has begun to put his hand upon the head of the great Sacrifice for sin.

Follow me a step further, and I trust that we may rejoice together that thou, poor, guilty, self-condemned soul, hast found deliverance through the one Sacrifice which God has provided for the putting away of sin. In the second place, the laying of the hand upon the head of the sin offering was a consent to the plan of substitution. He who had brought the victim laid his hand upon its head; and, though he did not say so, yet his action, being interpreted, meant, God has ordained that this animal should be put into my place, and I accept the divine appointment right heartily. I agree with him that I should be pardoned through the offering of a sacrifice, and that I should be accepted by God by reason of the shedding of the blood of a sacrificial victim. "Now, what sayest thou to this plan, O man? If the Jew was willing to let the death of the bullock, or the goat, or the lamb, typically stand for his own death, art thou willing, with all thy heart, to accept God's plan of salvation by the substitution of his only-begotten Son suffering and dying in thy stead? Surely, thou wilt not quarrel with this method of saving thee if God sees it to be the right one. Whenever my conscience has raised any question about the justice of this arrangement, it has always been quite a sufficient answer for me to say that, if the thrice-holy Jehovah feels that the sacrifice of Christ, in the stead of sinners, is enough to vindicate his justice, I may well be satisfied with what satisfies him. Indeed, to question the righteousness of that method of saving the lot is to assail God upon a matter which lies very near his heart, and to attack that wondrous plan of redemption which is the last and highest display of all his divine attributes, for the system of substitution is the apex of the pyramid of God's revelation, the very highest point of the great mountain chain in which he has manifested his wisdom, power, love, mercy, and even his justice to the sons of men, "that he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." O soul, if the Lord, who is offended, is satisfied with the expiation offered, thou, certainly, needest not be so foolish as to raise questions concerning it or to cavil at it!

Besides, if thou wilt but think seriously about this matter thou wilt see that the justice of God is abundantly honored by Christ's

standing in thy stead. There is a well-known story of a school-master who had one boy in his school whom he could not keep in order by any ordinary discipline. He had threatened to punish him, and, indeed, he had done so again and again; but still he remained incorrigible. At last, he threatened that, if a certain form of disobedience should be repeated, he should be publicly beaten. The time soon came for the fulfillment of the threat, but the master could not bear that the boy should be punished, yet, at the same time, he felt that the honor of the school, and the maintenance of his own authority in it, required that it should be so. He told the lads that he was willing to spare the erring one; "yet," he said, "discipline will be at an end, my word will be broken, you will never believe in me again, and, moreover, the school will be dishonored by this boy being allowed to act as he does without punishment." Musing for a minute, he took down the ruler, put it into the hand of the disobedient boy, and then held out his own hand, bade the boy strike, and himself received the punishment that was due to the culprit. The effect produced upon the boy was not a matter of surprise to those who know what fervent love will do. He offended no more, and the school was maintained in the highest possible condition of discipline. This is a faint picture of what God has done. In the person of his well-beloved Son, he says, "I will suffer because you are guilty. Somebody must be punished for your sin and if you suffer the just penalty for your evil deeds, it will crush you to the lowest hell. You cannot endure it, but I myself will bare my shoulders to receive the stripes which are your due. I will take upon myself your sins; my law shall have a terrible yet complete vindication; I shall be just, and yet I shall be able fully and freely to forgive you, and to accept you." Nothing ever did display all the attributes of God so gloriously and especially his immutable justice, as the atoning death of his well-beloved and only-begotten Son; so, beloved let there be no question about your assenting to the plan of substitution. God is content with it. You yourself can see how it honors him, so be you satisfied with it. Do not be a skeptic, doubting and questioning. There is an old proverb, which says, "Don't quarrel with your bread and butter;" but I may with even greater emphasis say, "Do not quarrel with your own salvation." If I must cavil at anything, surely I will not cavil against my own soul, and try to prove that I cannot be saved, putting my wits to work to show the absurdity of God's way of saving me. Oh, never, never, let this be the case with you; but, the rather, cheerfully accept what infinite wisdom has arranged!

Thus, you see, that the laying of the hand of the offerer on the head of the sacrifice meant the confession of sin, and consent to the way of salvation by substitution. It also meant a great deal more than that.

In the third place, it meant the acceptance of that particular victim in the sinner's stead. By laying his hand upon it, he practically said, "This animal is to stand instead of me." Here is the main point, the essential point of the whole matter. Will you accept Christ as standing in your stead, — the Divine yet human Savior, perfect in his humanity, yet perfect also in his Deity? He has lived; he has suffered; he has died; he has risen again, he has gone back into the glory at his Father's right hand. God has honored him with full acceptance; wilt thou also accept him? The root of the matter lies there. Oh, may his blessed Spirit sweetly guide thy will so that thou shalt say as I do, "Accept him? Ah, blessed be his holy name that he permits me to accept him! Surely I will do so, I will trust him; he shall be mine." If you have done so, then he is yours, for that is all he asks of you, to receive him, to lay your hand upon him, and to say, "There! Jesus Christ shall be the Sacrifice for me; I will rest in him, and in him alone." I hope that I do not need to multiply words in urging this demon upon you; I trust that the softening influence of the Holy Spirit is already at work among you, leading some of you, who have delayed until now, to say, "We will accept Jesus as our Substitute and accept him now." Why should you any longer delay to stretch forth your hand, and lay it upon Jesus, by faith, even as the offerer laid his hand upon the head of the sacrifice?

But this laying on of the hand meant even more than that, though that was the very essence of it all. It also meant a belief in the transference of the sin. He who laid his hand upon the sin offering did, as it were, as far as he could, put his sin from himself on to that bullock, or goat, or lamb, which was about to die, because it had become the sinner's substitute. That laying on of his hand was a token of the transference of his guilt to the appointed victim and if thou wilt have Christ to be thy Savior, thou must believe that he, "his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Believest thou this? Then, see what follows from it. Sin cannot be in two places at one time; if it is laid upon Jesus, it is taken off from thee. If thou dost, in thy very soul, accept Christ as thy Substitute, then it is clear that the Lord hath laid upon him thine iniquity; and, therefore, thine iniquity hath passed away from thee, and thy sin is gone for ever. Christ has taken all thine iniquities, and carried them away where they shall never be mentioned against thee any more for ever. Oh, what a blessed truth is this! If a man, who has been blind for fifty years, could have his eyes opened, and could be taken out to see the stars, or to look up to the sun, how he would clap his hands, and cry, "What a wondrous sight it is!" And I know that, when I first perceived that Christ stood in my place, and that I stood in his place, — that I was accepted because he was rejected, that I was beloved because he endured his Father's wrath on my account, — my soul felt as if it had never lived before, and had never known anything that was worth knowing till it perceived that wondrous truth. The Lord give thee, dear heart, to perceive that it is even so in thy case, for then thou also wilt be truly glad.

That laying of the hand on the head of the sin offering also meant one thing more, — it was dependence, a leaning on the victim. According to the Rabbis, the offerer was to lean with great pressure upon the bullock or the goat. If it was so, there is great significance about that act, for it teaches that you should depend like that upon Jesus; lean hard upon him, lean with all your weight of sin, and all your load of iniquity, upon him whom God has appointed to stand in the sinner's stead. Accept him as your Substitute, lean upon him, rest upon him. Say in your soul, "If I perish," though that can never be, "I will perish leaning upon Christ. He shall be my soul's only Dependence."

The Puritans speak of faith as a recumbency, a leaning. It needs no power to lean; it is a cessation from our own strength, and allowing our weakness to depend upon another's power. Let no man say, "I cannot lean;" it is not a question of what you can do, but a confession of what you cannot do, and a leaving of the whole matter with Jesus. No woman could say, "I cannot swoon:" it is not a matter of power. Die into the life of Christ; let him be All-in-all while you are nothing at all.

"Well," says one, "but I can hardly think that I shall be saved simply by depending upon Christ." Then, let me tell thee that this was all that any of the saints of old ever had to depend upon, and this is all that any of the children of God, who are now alive, have to depend upon. I bear my own personal testimony that my only hope for everlasting life lies in the death of him who suffered in my stead. I have trusted in him, I have accepted him as standing in my place; gladly have I seen my sin transferred to him, and his righteousness transferred to me. I have no other hope, nor even the shadow of another hope. Prayers, tears, repentances, preachings, almsgiving, ay, and faith itself, — all these put together are just nothing at all as a ground of dependence for the soul. It is the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, the one great Substitute for sinners, upon which we all must rely. There, soul, if thou hast nothing else to depend upon, thou haste as much as I have; and if thou dost accept Jesus Christ to be thy Savior, thou hast the same hope that I have. I will even dare to be bondsman for thee, and to perish with thee, if thou canst perish, trusting in Christ; but that can never be. A this blessed Book is true, and as Christ ever liveth, there is not a soul, that shall rely upon him, whom he will not assuredly bless and pardon here below, and take to himself to dwell in his bosom for ever and ever in glory.

There you see what is the intent of the laying of the hand upon the head of the sin offering. If you have been helped to follow me thus far, if you have really laid your hand upon Christ, I bless and praise the name of the Lord.

II. Now I have only a few minutes left for speaking, in the second place, upon The Simplicity Of This Symbol. What was required was just the laying of the hand of the offerer upon the victim's head; that and nothing more.

Notice that there was no preparatory ceremony. There was the animal provided for a sacrifice, just as God has provided our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be the Lamb of God; and the one thing to be done was for the sinner to lay his hand upon the head of the sacrifice. In like manner, there is no preliminary ceremony needed before coming to Christ. This is the first thing, sinner, that thou hast to do, to come, and lay thy hand upon him, and to say, "He is mine." "But must I not be prepared in a certain way, so that I may come to him right? Must I not do, or feel, or be something?" No, the cross is at the head of the way of life; it is the true wicket gate which leadeth unto everlasting life. Believing in Jesus is the first thing thou hast to do; thou livest not until thou believest in him. Come, then, to Jesus; come now; the first thing for thee to do is to accept him as thy Substitute, and to rely wholly upon him.

You also perceive, dear friends, that the hand that was to be laid upon the head of the sacrifice had nothing in it. The man, who came thus to confess his guilt, did not bring a silver shekel or talent of gold in his hand. That was not at all necessary. All he had to do was to lay his hand upon the sin offering; and, in like manner, you must say, with Toplady, —

"Nothing in my hand I bring:

Simply to thy cross I cling."

And, as there was to be nothing in the hand of the sinner, so there was to be nothing on his hand. If he had a dozen diamond rings on his fingers, he could not lay his hand on the bullock's head any the better. He who had no ornament at all could do it just as well; and if thou hast no virtues, and no excellences, — if thou art poor, if thou art illiterate, if thou hast even lost thy character, if thy hand is a foul hand, a black hand, yet if thou dost lay it, by faith, upon the head of Jesus Christ, if thou dost take him to be thy Savior, thou haste made the all-important decision.

"'Tis done, the great transaction's done."

Thou art thy Lord's, and he is thine, for "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." He has it already in present possession, so let him go in peace, rejoicing in the blessing that he has received from the Substitute and Savior.

Observe, too, that there was nothing to be done with that hand, except to lay it on the head of the sacrifice. There were to be no mystic crossings or movings to and fro, no cunning legerdemain; but the sinner was just to lay his hand upon the head of the animal that was to die as his substitute. You know that, in the Revelation, the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, that is, the Church of Rome, has upon her forehead the name Mystery, and you probably recollect what follows, "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots." But the chaste bride of Christ, the Church which he has redeemed by his blood, is not a partaker of that mystery; and Christ, in the gospel, gives us nothing but simplicities. As the laying of the hand upon the head of the sacrifice was all that was needed for the forgiveness of the sinner under the law, so all that thou needest now is to take Christ to be thy Substitute and Savior. Therefore, by the eternity of bliss or woe which depends upon thy decision, in the name of God, who has sent me to proclaim his gospel, I demand of thee, man or woman, that thou shouldst come to the right decision upon this all-important matter. Let there be no putting off, and

no offering to do something else; what is required is that thou shouldst lay thy hand by faith, up the head of the sin-atoning Lamb of God. Hast thou done so? If not, thou hast neither part nor lot in him; and if thou dost remain in thy present condition, thou wilt perish in thy sin. But if thou wilt accept Christ as thy Substitute, thou needest no earthly priest or mediator. So, take him as thine.

“Take him now, and happy be.”

The symbol was one of extreme simplicity; for, finally, there was nothing to be done to the man's hand. The priest was not to wash it, or to read the lined upon it by the aid of palmistry, or to tattoo it with some sacred sign. No; the man came, recollect, because he was a sinner; and he laid his hand on the sacrifice because he was a sinner. The hand that he laid there was a sinner's hand, and I believe in Jesus Christ with a sinner's faith. I say to him, at this moment, as I said when first I trusted him, —

“Just I am — without one plea

But that thy blood was shed for me,

And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,

O Lamb of God, I come.”

Do not come to Christ as saints; come as sinners. Come just at you are, sinful, vile, and polluted, and lay the hand of simple yet trembling confidence upon the head of Jesus, and say, “He shall be mine.” If you come to him thus, he will not refuse or reject you, for he has said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

There are some of you, who have been here a long time, and you are not yet converted. If you do go to hell, I am clear of your blood. Often have I wept over you when preaching here, and I have set Christ before you as the one only and open door of salvation, and I have entreated and besought you to enter; but, if you will not enter, I can do no more, there must lie with yourselves. You will melt the wax that seals your own death warrant. The responsibility reefs wholly upon you; lay it not upon God. If any man is saved, it is of God's grace, and God's grace alone; but if any man is lost, it is by his own free will, and his free will alone. The will of man is the source of damnation, and the will of God is the source of salvation. Both those statements are true; therefore, if you reject the gospel of the grace of God, you bring upon yourselves the just punishment of your sin.

I do not know that I can say any more upon this theme, except just this. There may be someone who is saying, “This plan of salvation is too simple.” Surely, you will not quarrel with it on that account. I warrant you that, if a man were going to be hanged, and he could be delivered simply by accepting free pardon, he would not say that such a plan was too simple. After all, the best things in the world are very simple. If I want to go from here to Glasgow, it is a simple method that I have to follow. I have to get to the proper railway station, take my ticket, and enter the right carriage; then, if all goes well, I shall get there all right. If I want to go to heaven, it is just as simple. I go by faith to Christ, and trust myself wholly to him, and so I get there. It is really a matter of trust when you enter a railway carriage, and you reach your destination by a power above your own. If I want to communicate with a friend at the very ends of the earth, I have nothing to do but to step into a telegraph office, write down what I want to say, and pay the proper charge, and the message will go all right. Though I cannot trace the wire which connects the office with my distant friend, I know that he will get my cablegram in due course. There may be some mystery about the matter; yet, practically, it is a very simple thing; and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is just as simple as that. If a farmer wants a harvest, all the philosophers in the world cannot tell him how wheat grows, nor can they make it grow; but he has only to drop his seed into the earth at the right time, and it will grow by night and by day, though he knows not how. Therefore, act thou in the same simple, common-sense fashion. Leave off enquiring into mysteries which thou canst not understand, and puzzling over difficulties which thy poor brain cannot comprehend.

“Let artful doubts and reasonings be

Nailed with Jesus to the tree;” —

and do thou, as a little child, fully trust Jesus as thy Savior, and so thou shalt be saved. God help thee to do this now, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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Leviticus 4:29
Laying the Hand on the Sacrifice
Sermon Notes
C H Spurgeon

He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering. Leviticus 4:29

Here we have an emblem of the way in which a sacrifice becomes available for the offerer. The same ceremony is commanded in verses Leviticus 4:4, 15, 24, and 33, and in other places: it is therefore important and instructive.

The question with many souls is how to obtain an interest in Christ so as to be saved by him. Never could a weightier question be asked.

It is certain that this is absolutely needful; but alas, it has been fearfully neglected by many. In vain did Christ die if he is not believed in.

It ought to be attended to at once.

The text gives us a pictorial answer to the question, How can Christ's sacrifice become available for me?

Let us learn—

I. THE INTENT OF THE SYMBOL

1. It was a confession of sin: else no need of a sin offering.

To this was added a confession of the desert of punishment, or why should the victim be slain?

There was also an abandonment of all other methods of removing sin. The hands were empty, and laid alone upon the sin offering.

Do this at the cross; for there alone is sin put away.

2. It was a consent to the plan of substitution.

Some raise questions as to the justice and certainty of this method of salvation; but he who is to be saved does not so, for he sees that God himself is the best judge of its rightness, and if he is content we may assuredly be so.

Substitution exceedingly honours the law, and vindicates justice.

There is no other plan which meets the case, or even fairly looks at it. Man's sense of guilt is not met by other proposals.

But this brings rest to the most tender conscience.

"What if we trace the globe around,
And search from Britain to Japan,
There shall be no religion found
So just to God, so safe to man"

3. It was an acceptance of the victim.

Jesus is the most natural substitute, for he is the second Adam, The second head of the race; the true idea of man.

He is the only person able to offer satisfaction, having a perfect humanity united with his Godhead.

He alone is acceptable to God; he may well be acceptable to us.

4. It was a believing transference of sin.

By laying on of hands sin was typically laid on the victim.

It was laid there so as to be no longer on the offerer.

5. It was a dependence-leaning on the victim.

Is there not a most sure stay in Jesus for the leaning heart?

Consider the nature of the suffering and death by which the atonement was made, and you will rest in it.

Consider the dignity and worth of the sacrifice by whom the death was endured. The glory of Christ's person enhances the value of his atonement (Heb. 10:5-10).

Remember that none of the saints now in heaven have had any other atoning sacrifice. "Jesus only" has been the motto of all justified ones.

"He offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb. 10:12).

Those of us who are saved are resting there alone; why should; not you, and every anxious one?

II. SIMPLICITY OF THE SYMBOL.

1. There were no antecedent rites. The victim was there, and hands were laid on it: nothing more. We add neither preface nor appendix to Christ: he is Alpha and Omega.
2. The offerer came in all his sin. "Just as I am." It was to have his sin removed that the offerer brought the sacrifice: not because he had himself removed it.
3. There was nothing in his hand of merit, or price.
4. There was nothing on his hand. No gold ring to indicate wealth; no signet of power; no jewel of rank. The offerer came as a man, and not as learned, rich, or honorable.
5. He performed no cunning legerdemain with his hand. By leaning upon it he took the victim to be his representative; but he placed no reliance upon ceremonial performances.
6. Nothing was done to his hand. His ground of trust was the sacrifice, not his hands. He desired his hand to be clean, but upon that fact he did not rest for pardon.

Come then, dear hearer, whether saint or sinner, and lean hard upon Jesus. He taketh away the sin of the world. Trust him with your sin, and it is for ever put away. Put forth now your hand, and adopt the expiation of the redeeming Lord as your expiation.

Anecdotes and Illustrations

A poor blind woman in Liverpool, after her conversion, committed many hymns to memory. She was an occasional attendant upon the old Earl of Derby, the grandfather of the present Earl. She repeated one of her hymns to him. The old Earl liked it, and encouraged her to repeat more. But one day, when repeating the hymn of Charles Wesley "All ye that pass by" she came to the words —

"The Lord in the day of his anger did lay
Your sins on the Lamb, and he bore them away."

He said, "Stop, Mrs. Brass, don't you think it should be,—

"The Lord in the day of his mercy did lay"?"

She did not think his criticism valid; but it proved that she was not repeating her verses to inattentive ears, and other indications showed that the blind woman was made a blessing to the dying nobleman. — Paxton Hood's Life of Isaac Watts.

"When Christmas Evans was about to die, several ministers were standing round his bed. He said to them, 'Preach Christ to the people, brethren. Look at me: in myself I am nothing but ruin. But look at me in Christ; I am heaven and salvation.'"

It is not the quantity of thy faith that shall save thee. A drop of water is as true water as the whole ocean. So a little faith is as true faith as the greatest. A child eight days old is as really a man as one of sixty years; a spark of fire is as true fire as a great flame; a sickly man is as truly living as a healthy man. So it is not the measure of thy faith that saves thee — it is the blood that it grips to that saves thee. As the weak hand of a child, that leads the spoon to the mouth, will feed it as well as the strong arm of a man; for it is not the hand that feeds thee — albeit, it puts the meat into thy mouth, but it is the meat carried into thy stomach that feeds thee. So if thou canst grip Christ ever so weakly, he will not let thee perish —: The weakest hands take a gift as well as the strongest. Now, Christ is this gift, and weak faith may grip him as well as strong faith, and Christ is as truly thine when thou hast weak faith, as when thou hast come to those triumphant joys through the strength of faith. — Welsh.

The Puritans speak of faith as a recumbency, a leaning. It needs no power to lean; it is a cessation from our own strength, and allowing our weakness to depend upon another's power. Let no man say, "I cannot lean"; it is not a question of what you can do, but a confession of what you cannot do, and a leaving of the whole matter with Jesus. No woman could say, "I cannot swoon"; it is not a matter of power. Die into the life of Christ; let him be all in all while you are nothing at all.

Leviticus 16:34

The Day of Atonement

NO. 3400

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“And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children, of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.” — Leviticus 16:34.

WE have taken these words for our text; the whole chapter, however, will have our attention.

I must be allowed to say at this time, though I seldom say anything in the way of an apology, that this is not the place, nor would time serve us, to go into a full exposition of the very wonderful teaching of this chapter. If we may ever set any portion of Scripture before another, this is one of the most precious chapters in the whole compass of revelation, and in some respects the most remarkable of all. It is so full of wonderfully deep; teaching that, instead of a sermon, it might require a volume, and then, perhaps, we should scarcely have done more than skimmed the surface. And there are difficulties, I may also add, connected with the interpretation, very great difficulties, which have puzzled the most learned of the Reformed, and of the Puritanic divines, and I do not at all attempt to solve those difficulties, nor profess that all I say I might be able to support and carry out. I desire to give, instead of any attempt at criticism or deep explanation, a simple exposition of this chapter; bringing out of it, I hope, some truths which, if they do not belong to the chapter, are, nevertheless, exceedingly precious ones, and will, I hope, be useful to us all.

In a remarkable way God dealt with Israel in the wilderness. There were special tokens of his peculiar presence, as in the cloudy and fiery pillars which were the emblems of his presence, and in the bright light called the Shekinah, which shone between the wings of the cherubim which overshadowed the ark. But God cannot dwell where there is sin. He is a holy being. “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,” is the song which continually rises into his ears. In order, then, that he might dwell in the midst of Israel without compromising his character, he was pleased to appoint one day in the year which was called “the day of atonement,” which should be considered to purify the camp, and make it fit to be the dwelling-place of Jehovah.

Nor, God has promised that he will dwell among men, and he does dwell among his own people at this very time. He dwelleth with them in a remarkable way. “The Lord is my portion,” saith my soul. God is the heritage, the friend, the companion of all his people, but he cannot dwell with these believing men, because of their sin, unless an atonement be made. The annual atonement among the Jews was the picture of the great atonement the real atonement, the effectual expiation, which, not once a year, but once for all, the Lord Jesus Christ has offered, and which now renders it possible for God to walk with men, and dwell among them.

In the ceremonial of the atonement, in the chapter before us, there are four things that struck me. The first is: —

I. The Way In Which That Remarkable Ceremony Set Forth The Sacrifice Made To God's Honor.

My brethren, the offense of man against God was, so to speak, a stain upon God's honor. Man set himself up in rebellion against the Most High. He stood out, therefore, against the divine sovereignty: he impugned the divine love: his offense blasphemed the divine wisdom. Every one human sin is an attack upon the whole character and life of God, and sin itself is a dishonor done to the glorious attributes of Jehovah. Before God can be reconciled to man, and deal with him at all, except by way of retribution, there must be something done to restore the divine honor. Now, we have it declared, in this revelation, which comes to us from heaven, that Christ has restored the divine glory fully, and that since he suffered on the tree, the just for the unjust, God can be gracious without a violation of his justice, and he can dwell with us, with us poor fallen creatures, without the marring of the lustre of any single one of his attributes. The model man has honored God more fully than sinful man ever dishonored him, and if God was angry with the race for our sins, he is now towards the race full of tenderness and pity, because of the transcendent goodness of the new Head of the race, Christ Jesus our Lord, who has magnified God's law and made it honorable.

Now, this is the truth that was taught in the first part of the ceremony on the day of expiation. It was taught thus. Two goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle; lots were cast, and the first goat was selected to teach this lesson. The goat was brought by the people. It was their common property. It would not have sufficed; it would not have been of any use at all if it had not been so. Read the chapter, and you will see. Learn from this that the compensation to God's honor for man's sin must come from men. It was a man in the garden who dared to rebel: it must be a man, another man, who shall honor God's law, so as to set the race in a fresh relationship towards God.

The goat is given by all Israel: the atonement to God's honor must come out of our race, and hence it is that our Lord is the son of

Mary, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh: qualified, being a man, to perform the obedience required of man, and to right as a man for men, the wrongs which man had done to God. Note that first.

The goat which was brought was given up to the appointed priest. God will have everything done according to order. The sacrifice must not be left to the whims and fancies of men. So the man who shall offer up the sacrifice to the divine honor must be appointed of God, as Aaron was. And so our Lord Jesus Christ was God's chosen one, appointed by God to stand in the gap, and for us to vindicate the divine glory which we had tarnished by our iniquities.

This goat, being thus offered, must be presented to God, but there must be something with it. Sweet perfume must be cast upon the live coals, and the sweet smell must go up before the mercy-seat. So before ever God can be satisfied for the wrong done to him by the fall, and by our common sin, there must be an offering of sweet merits unto him, which, let me say, Jesus Christ has most abundantly offered. He took his hands full of the most blessed compound of all the graces and all the virtues beaten small, for there was an exact obedience to every jot and tittle of the divine law. Christ's obedience was perfect in its kind, in the most minute respects; and this merit has been brought before our God, who is a consuming fire, and burns up every evil work, but as he lays hold upon this work of Christ, he makes a sweet smell of it — which is poured out throughout heaven and earth — “the savor of a sweet odour” in the nostrils of the Most High.

Do not let me cover up, however, what I mean, under the cloke of allegory. I mean this, that if God is to accept our race of men, and deal with it on the footing of mercy, and all that we have done against him, somebody must be found who can be so, obedient, so delighting in God's will, that there shall be a sweet offering made, as morally and spiritually acceptable to God's Spirit as sweet perfume is to the nostril of man, and that has been done. When they talk in heaven of man's sin — if they ever there speak of it, and wonder how God can bear with man, some bright seraph speaks of man's perfect obedience, even unto death, and they say to one another, “What man, what man is this?” and they clap their hands with joy as they say, “Tis he that sat at the right hand of the Father, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of David.”

One man threw down the race, but another man has lifted it up. One man brought ruin by the fall: another man restored it, and made the race acceptable to God. If man dishonored God, yet man has more honored him than he dishonored him, now that Christ has become the great representative man.

All the glory of redemption is greater than ever there could have been of dishonor to God by sin. I believe that God is more honored by the world having sinned, and having been restored by Christ, than he could have been if there had never been sin upon this planet, and if a perfectly sinless race had tenanted its bounds.

After this burning of perfume, the goat must die. Nothing could permit the justice of God to look upon man at all until there had been something more than merit. There must be penalty. “Die he, or justice, must.” Man must die, or God's justice must die. There must be blood life poured out for sin. Now, when that goat was put to death, and the blood flowed forth into the golden bowl, then, brethren, you saw before your eye of faith Jesus Christ put to death upon Calvary. He who needed not to have died, the Perfect One, voluntarily offered himself up as the victim to justice, suffering in his own person, so as to compensate the justice of God. Do not imagine that Christ died to placate divine vengeance — not at all, but that it is sternly necessary, if God is to govern this universe at all, that sin must be punished. The very pillars and the foundations of moral government would, not to say, be shaken, but actually be torn up if sin should be permitted, to go unpunished. Now, to vindicate the justice of God, the sword is drawn, and who suffers?

Not the race. Behold, myriads of the race go streaming up to everlasting felicity. Who suffers then? Why, a man, so marvellously perfect, and withal so majestically glorious, that his sufferings are a recompense to God for all that sin had done, and so made an effectual expiation for all the transgressions that had dishonored God. You will observe that I am speaking in very popular, and comprehensive, and general terms; and designedly so, because I believe I am speaking the infallible truth of the mind of God; for so far as God is concerned, the atonement that Christ made was universal in its worth and efficacy.

So far as the vindication of the justice of God and all his other attributes are to be considered, that vindication was absolutely complete, and whether one man had been saved, or fifty men saved, or all saved, or none saved, it would have made no difference. The work was done; God's honor was clear; God's attributes were glorified, and this was perfectly done by the putting away of Christ.

Once more. The blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat seven times. That was typical of Christ, who goes up into heaven, in his own proper person, and there displays before God, and the holy angels, and elect spirits, the tokens of his passion, the ensigna of his suffering, taking the blood up to God that henceforth when the Eternal mind thinks of sin, and the dishonor done to God by sin, it might think of the sufferings of the blessed man, Christ Jesus, and see how all dishonor is for ever put away. You know when you are reading Scripture, dear friends, you find a great many passages which speak about Christ's dying for all men, and about God's having reconciled the world unto himself, and I know you are apt to say to me, “You teach us particular redemption that Christ only died as a Substitute for some men.” That I always say, and stand to, and believe to be a Biblical doctrine. But do I, therefore, clip

away other texts? No, not in any degree. I believe them as they stand. I count it treason to try and clip a text, or to make it say the contrary of what it does say. So far as God's honor was concerned, the death of Christ for men so obliterated human sin, as such, that God could, without dishonor to himself, deal with mankind. Hence it is that the wicked live. Hence it is that they enjoy innumerable mercies: hence it is that there is a good, strong, substantial ground for offering the gospel to every man, and a righteous reason for commanding every man to believe in Jesus Christ that he may be saved.

This was the first teaching of the day of atonement and every Jew, when he saw, ought to have understood the presentation of that blood within the veil, that now no longer God looked on the race as being a race that he must curse and must destroy, but looked upon it with mercy, and was prepared to treat with it on the footing of tenderness, and that now there was a gospel presented to the sons of men. Oh! I do so love this thought, that my sin, which did dishonor to God, which did as much as say that he was not a good God, that it was better for me to hate him than to love him, better for me to be his enemy than to be his friend, made out as though his commandments were grievous, and that it gave me pleasure to break them — all the mischief towards God that my sin could ever do is all put away by the holy life and the blessed death of Christ Jesus my Lord, and put away for ever, for ever, for ever, so that God can now deal with me on the terms of grace.

But my time flies, and, therefore, I come to the next point: —

II. Sin Is Now Utterly Driven Away.

There was another goat, and this goat was to live, and not to die; which set forth quite another truth. I do not think the common explanation of this is at all correct, and all the expositors I have met with are clear that it is not correct. Some have said that the scapegoat typifies our Lord Jesus bearing our sins away in his resurrection and ascending into heaven. The incongruity of the metaphor has always struck me, but there are reasons the Hebrew text which prevent our believing that that could have been the meaning of it. The living goat was taken by a fit man right away into the wilderness and there it was left. What became of it afterwards we do not know. Painters have depicted it as expiring in the midst of desolation, in the agonies of famine — a mere fancy picture. The scape-goat did not, very probably, die sooner than any other goat, and it is not at all necessary that it should. We never need enlarge a topic beyond what Scripture says. Indeed, there is often as much teaching in a type's stopping short as there is in its going on.

These two goats had each its name. One was said to be for Jehovah — that represents Christ, I say, as making recompense to God's honor. The other is said to be for Azazel, which, if I understand it at all, means "for evil." What, then was that other goat offered to the Devil? By no means. He is not evil, but one of the ministering spirits in the service of evil. Evil made Satan what he is. He is its slave, its chief plotter and schemer, but still not evil itself. Did you ever notice — you must have noticed — that the wrong of evil, the sinfulness of sin, even if it were forgiven, works nothing but evil, so that if God were to forgive us all, but leave the evil in us, we should be in hell for all that, because evil of itself holds hell, and works towards its being realised by us. Evil is in itself essentially misery, and it has only to work itself out, and it will be so.

Now, how am I to get rid of this sin that is in me as to the evil consequences inherent in the evil? Suppose God to be perfectly reconciled to me so far, yet still there is an evil that mischief brings upon me in itself, apart from God, and how do I get rid of that? Why, through the scape-goat. The sin of the people was, first of all, transferred to this scape-goat — all confessed and all laid on the scape-goat. Then, by divine appointment, the scape-goat being chosen by lot, and the lot being guided by God, it was accepted as being the substitute for the people. The scape-goat was then taken away, and what was done with it? Why, nothing was done with it, but this — it was relinquished — it was given up. Now, can I get out what I mean? I am very much afraid I cannot. Our Lord Jesus Christ took upon himself the sin of his people, and he was given up to evil, that is to say, to all the power that evil could put out against him — first in the wilderness, tempted from all quarters, tempted by the temptations of Satan; and then, in the garden, tempted in such a way as you and I never were — the powers of evil let loose upon him as they never were upon us. Did he not say, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness"? And so dreadful was the assault of evil upon him, the devil going forth as the type and incarnation of evil, that he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground whilst especially on the tree, where the conflict reached its climax, was he given up.

That cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" is like the cry of the goat when it is given up, quite given up, and led away. Evil was permitted to work out in him all its own dread hatefulness and havoc, to which it must bring our spirits, unless God interpose to stop evil from making the soul become unutterably wretched, even unto death.

I do not know how to get out the thought which seems to be in my soul, but I do rejoice to think that all the evil I have ever done shall not go on to plague and vex me, because it has vexed and plagued him: that all the essential misery that lies in my past sin, which must, even if God forgave it, still come back to sting and torment me throughout all my existence, was so laid on him, and so spent all its force and venom on him, who was given up to it, that it will never touch me again.

You know, brethren, there was no other man who could have borne all that power of evil but our Lord but it all fell on him, and yet it never stained his matchless purity and perfection of character. The misery of it came to him, but the guilt of it could never defile him. The misery of sin spent itself on the lonely One who was given up to its awful force, but it could do no more. The type says nothing about the scape-goat, whether it died or not, and Christ did not die because of the misery of his spirit; he died for quite another reason, and in another sense, laying down his life for his people.

There is something, I think, interesting in this if we can carry it out, but there is this to be said — by that scape-goat being thus given up the sin of the congregation was taken away, all taken away, and all gone. And so, through Jesus Christ having borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows, the whole force and power of evil to do damning mischief against a saint has been taken away for ever from everyone of us who have laid our hands by faith upon his dear and blessed head. It is gone; the sin is gone, gone into the wilderness, where it shall never be found against us any more for ever.

I must hasten on, however, for time flies. There was yet a third part of this expiation. Did you notice it? It is a grand thing when we can see God's honor clear, it is a grand thing, next, when we can see ourselves clear as to the effects of evil by Christ's taking evil quite away. The third grand thing is to see: —

III. Sin Itself Made The Subject Of Contempt.

God cannot dwell with us if sin is petted and loved; sin must be detested and loathed. Now, read on in the chapter, and you will find that the bullock and the goat which were there, and whose blood was taken into the holy place, were afterwards burned without the camp — see the 27th verse. They were burned, and burned with ignomy, burned outside the camp in the common sewer the kennel of the camp, and burned, too, under circumstances that imply disgust. "They shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung" — put in purposely to show what a contempt was to be put upon the beasts that had been for a while made to take and to typify sin.

That burning outside the camp looked to a stranger like the burning of a heap of rubbish. There was a foul smell of the burning flesh and refuse. Persons as they passed turned their heads away to avoid the ill-odour. They would say, "What is all this?" "Why, this was a sin-offering, and when the blood, which God accepted, had gone, this was what was left — the filth of sin, and the people were just being taught how they should hate, loathe, and destroy it. Every man that touched it washed himself, and no man could touch any of these things that day without bathing again and again, the thing was so detestable.

Now, in the person of our blessed Lord, sin is made most detestable. Did you ever hate sin really, until you learned to love Christ? I will ask you, when do you hate sin most? Why, when you love Christ best. I believe you shall always find that in proportion as you understand and see the work of Christ you will see in that work, as in a glass, that Christ has made sin to be the most loathsome and disgusting thing that was ever heard of, for what do the angels say — "Man sinned, did he? Oh! foolish man, to sin against his God and his Maker!" "Ah!" saith one of the angels, "but he did worse than that; he sinned against the God that loved him so, that he would sooner let his Only Begotten Son die, than poor man should perish." "Oh!" say they, "what a shameful thing to sin against so dear and kind a God!" If God were a tyrant, it might not seem atrocious to rebel against him, but when he becomes so dear and tender a Father as to give his Only Begotten Son, away with thee, sin! Talk of the Devil! He is not black compared with thee. O sin, thou art the Devil's tempter, the Devil's ruin! Thou makest him black. 'Tis sin, sin that is so foul a thing that I can liken it unto naught. There is naught on earth, there is naught anywhere in hell, that can be likened unto it. Sin is made to appear exceeding sinful and loathsome to the uttermost degree through the expiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Now, these are three grand things for God to have done in this world after man sinned, to have made his name as glorious as ever; after man's sin, to have set pardoned man straight, as straight as ever from his sin; and after that, to have made sin which came with the apple in its hand, and which comes every day now with painted face, and with the cup in its hand, filled to the brim with sweet wine, seem hateful, and to be really so! Oh! it is a grand work, that which Christ has done, and blessed be his name!

Now, the last point — and I shall want your earnest consideration for a minute or two — is this. I must call your attention to: —

IV. The Behavior Of The People During The Whole Of That Day in which this wonderful panorama was made to pass before them.

During that day they were to afflict their souls. Dost thou want to have thy sin forgiven? Put away thy jollity and thy mirth. A repenting sinner had need to be a mourner, and, brethren, when sin is put away, how the forgiven sinner afflicts his soul! He is happy: he never was more happy: never so happy, but how grieved he is to think he ever sinned!

"My sins, my sins my Savior!

How sad on thee they fall

Seen through thy gentle patience

I tenfold feel them all.

**"I know they are forgiven,
But still their pain to me,
Is all the grief and anguish
They laid, my Lord, on thee.**

**"My sins, my sins, my Savior!
Their guilt I never knew
Till, with thee, in the desert,
I near thy passion drew.**

**"Till with Thee, in the garden
I heard thy pleading prayer,
And saw the sweat-drops bloody,
That told thy sorrow there."**

Oh! there is never, never such affliction of soul for sin as when you see the great atonement. Let me invite you to hate sin to-night, you pardoned ones. Take care to do it. And you unpardoned ones, rend your hearts, but not your garments, and turn unto God with afflicted spirits, and say, "Lord, through the precious atonement of which I have heard so much to-night, blot out my sins!"

The next thing concerning the people that day was that they were to do no servile work that day. There was to be no hewing of wood, no drawing of water; nothing was to be done throughout all the camp by way of labor. So, when a soul comes to the atonement of Christ, it has done with all its works of righteousness, and all its deeds of human merit. You can never have the atonement of Christ whilst you are working out your own works, and trying to be saved by them. And the believer that has once come to take Christ to be his Savior will never try to get any merits of his own. Oh! he has thrown away for ever the fooleries of self-righteousness. He sees the absurdity of hoping that foul, black hands can ever present a fair, white sacrifice to God. He takes his lord, and he has done with his own doings.

Once more; it was to be to the people a Sabbath unto the Lord. That day was not the seventh day of the week, but still it was to be a kind of Sabbath. And what a glorious Sabbath the atonement always makes! Why, I feel a Sabbath to-night, apart from the Sabbath day. I have a Sabbath in my soul, to think that the sin of man has not, after all, done lasting damage to the throne of God. I feel so happy to think, next, that there is a special sacrifice made for the elect, by the scape-goat's having taken away their sin so that the evil of their sin will never come on them. I feel so thankful to-night to think that God has made sin to appear to be exceeding sinful. These three grand things ring a peal of bells in my soul, for now I feel content, for God is satisfied, to come to God, because I can see why he should let me come to him.

I can understand now how it is that he should let a fallen creature hold converse with his thrice holy self, after his great work is done, and it is better for me, and better for you, that we should come to God by so good, and reasonable, and proper, and glorious a way, rather than that we should have been permitted, had it been possible, to come by any breach of the law, or by any setting aside of the divine command.

I do not think I should have been happy had it been possible for me to go to heaven, and God's honor had thereby been sullied, for God's honor is the very happiness of a reconciled creature, and if that had suffered any loss through me, I should have been miserable. But it shall suffer no loss or stain. Christ has completely undone the mischief of the fall, glory be to his blessed name for this!

And now, beloved in the Lord, I wish that I could speak in the name of you all, and accept the man, Christ Jesus to-night as our representative. Remember, though he has done this much for us all, that God can dwell with us, yet he has not taken the sin of us all upon himself, but only of so many as stand and confess their sin, and trust it with him. Come, will you do it? Poor sinner, will you do it for the first time to-night? Backslider, will you do it again? You believers that have lost some of your evidences, will you do it anew to-night? Oh! I wish I could now say these words, and you could all say "Amen" from your hearts:

"My faith doth lay her hand

On that dear head of thine;

While, like a penitent I stand

And here confess my sin.”

Well, if you won't have Christ for your Savior, I will have him for mine, and there are thousands of you here who will say, "Yes, and he shall be mine, too." The longer I live the more I love to rest upon him. I did try to rest somewhere else once, but the dream is over, and now the more I think of my Lord, the more firm I feel to be the conviction that he is a rock that will bear the weight of my salvation. The more I think of what that glorious Man, that blessed Son of God, who is as much God as he is man, has done for me, the more do I feel that if I had fifty thousand times the sin I have, I would rest on him, and if I were as wicked as all men put together, I would rest on him still, believing that no amount of sin could outweigh his merit, and that no extent of iniquity could ever surpass the infinite bounds of his eternal grace. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him. Come to God by him, poor sinner, and may God the Holy Ghost lead you, and he shall have the glory. Amen, and Amen.

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Leviticus 22:21

A Plain Man's Sermon

NO. 1879

A SERMON. INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, JANUARY 17TH, 1886,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“It shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.” — Leviticus 22:21.

THE ceremonial law, as ordained by the hand of Moses and Aaron, called the worshippers of God to great carefulness before him. Before their minds that solemn truth was ever made visible, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." Nothing might be done thoughtlessly. Due heed was the first requisite in a man who would draw near unto the thrice-holy God, whose perfections demand lowly and considerate reverence from all those who are round about him. The spirit must be awake, and on the stretch, if it would please the great Father of spirits. There were little points — I may truthfully call them minute — Upon which everything would depend as to right worship, and its acceptance with the Lord. No Israelite could come to the tabernacle door aright without thinking of what he had to do, and thinking it over with an anxious fear lest he should, by omission or error, make his offering into a vain oblation. He must draw nigh unto the Lord with great carefulness, or else he might miss his aim, spend his money upon a sacrifice, cause labor to the priest, and go home unaccepted. He might duly perform a large portion of a ceremony, and yet no good might come to him through it, because he had omitted a point of detail; for the Lord would be sought according to the due order, or he would not be found of the worshipper. Of every ceremony; it might be said, "It must be perfect to be accepted." There was the rule, and the rule must be followed with the most careful exactness. God must have the minds and thoughts of men, or he counts that they are no worshippers.

This is no easy lesson to learn, dear friends; for I am afraid that in our usual worship we are not always as thoughtful as we ought to be. Mark well our singing. Do we join in it with the heartiness, the solemnity, and the correctness which are due to him who hears our psalms and hymns? I may not judge, but I have my suspicions. Look at the way we pray. Is it not to be feared that at times we rush into God's presence and utter the first words that come to hand? Are not liturgies repeated with minds half asleep? Are not extempore prayers uttered in the most formal manner? I refer both to public and private prayer. Moreover, see the style in which some will even preach. With facility of language they will deliver themselves of their own thoughts, without seeking the anointing from on high, and the power of the Spirit of God. I do not say that any of you ever go into your Sunday-school classes without thought; I do not say that any of you ever take your tract-district, and go from door to door without seeking a blessing; I will not say that any of you ever come to the communion table without examining yourselves, and discerning the Lord's body; but if I do not say it, I may think it, and possibly that thought may be true. O, my brethren, let conscience sit in judgment, and decide this matter! We need to think a great deal more about how we come before the Most High; and if we thought more, and prayed more, we should become more certain of our inability to do anything as we ought to do it, and we should be driven to a more entire dependence upon the Spirit of God in every act of worship. This in itself would be a great blessing.

I do not know, however, that the ceremonial law did make men thoughtful; since, for the most part, it failed of its designed effect through the hardness of men's hearts. Earnest heed was the design of it, but superstition and a spirit of bondage were the more usual results. Brethren, without a multitude of ceremonies, which might become a yoke to us, let us by other means arrive at the same, and even a better, thoughtfulness of heart! Let love to God so influence us that, in the least and most ordinary matters, we shall behave ourselves as in the immediate presence of the Lord, and so shall strive with the utmost watchfulness of holy care to

please the Lord our God.

The ceremonial law also engendered in men who did think a great respect for the holiness of God. They could not help seeing that God required everything in his service to be of the very best.

The priest who stood for them before God must be himself in bodily presence the perfection of manhood. When old age crept upon him, he must give place to one who showed no such sign of decay. His garments must be perfectly white and clean in his daily service; and when once in a year there was a joy day, then for glory and beauty he shone in all the radiance that the purest gold and the most precious stones could put upon him.

The victims that were offered must all be without blemish. You are constantly meeting with that demand, and it was carried out with rigid care. You meet with a stringent instance in the text, "It must be perfect to be accepted."

Under the law of Moses, the guilt of sin and the need of atonement were always most vividly brought before the mind of the worshipping Israelite. If you stepped within the holy place, everywhere you saw the marks of blood. Our very delicate-minded friends, who raise the silly objection that they cannot bear the sound of the word "blood" — what would they have done if they had gone into the Jewish tabernacle, and had seen the floor, and the curtain, and every article stained, like a shambles? How would they have endured to worship where the blood was poured in bowlfuls upon the floor, and sprinkled on almost every holy thing? How would they have borne with the continual bespattering of blood — all indicating that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin? Truly, there can be no approach to a thrice-holy God without the remission of sin, and that remission of sin must be obtained through the atoning blood. The Israelite, if he thought rightly, must have been deeply aware that he served a God who was terrible out of his holy places, a God who hated sin, and would by no means spare the guilty, or pardon man without atonement. All the more would this be sealed home upon the mind of the Israelite by the knowledge that in every case the sacrifice must be unblemished. As he looked on the blood of the victim, he would remember the sacred rule, "it shall be perfect to be accepted." He saw in the necessity for a perfect sacrifice a declaration of the holiness of God. He must have felt that sin was not a trifle — not a thing to be committed, winked at, and blotted out; but a thing for which there must be life given, and blood shed, before it could be removed; and that life and blood must be the life and blood of a perfect and unblemished offering.

Under the Jewish ceremonial law, one of the most prominent thoughts, next to a great respect for the holiness of God, would be a deep regard for the law of God. Everywhere that the Israelite went he was surrounded by law. He must not do this, and he must do that: the law was continually before him. Now, brethren, it is a blessed thing to declare the gospel, but I do not believe that any man can preach the gospel who does not preach the law. The book of Leviticus, and all the other typical books, are valuable as gospel-teaching to us, because there is always in them most clearly the law of God. The law is the needle, and you cannot draw the silken thread of the gospel through a man's heart, unless you first send the needle of the law through the center thereof, to make way for it. If men do not understand the law, they will not feel that they are sinners; and if they are not consciously sinners, they will never value the sin-offering. If the ten commandments are never read in their hearing, they will not know wherein they are guilty; and how shall they make confession? If they are not assured that the law is holy, and just, and good, and that God has never demanded of any man more than he has a right to demand, how shall they feel the filthiness of sin, or see the need of flying to Christ for cleansing? There is no healing a man till the law has wounded him, no making him alive till the law has slain him.

I do pray, dear friends, that God, the Holy Spirit, may lay the law, like an axe, at the root of all our self-righteousness, for nothing else will ever hew down that Upas-tree. I pray that he may take the law, and use it as a looking-glass, that we may see ourselves in it, and discover our spots, and blots, and all the foulness of our lives, for then we shall be driven to wash until we are clean in the sight of the Lord. The law is our pedagogue to bring us to Christ; and there is no coming to Christ unless the stern pedagogue shall lead us there, with many a stripe and many a tear.

In this text we have law and gospel too: there is the law which tells us that the sacrifice must be perfect to be accepted; and behind it there is the blessed hint that there is such an unblemished sacrifice which is accepted, which we may by faith bring to God without fear of being rejected. Oh, for grace to learn both law and gospel at this time!

This is the text for our present meditation, "It shall be perfect to be accepted." I want to preach this truth right home into every heart by the power of the Spirit of God. If I could be an orator, I would not be. The game of eloquence, with the souls of men for the counters, and eternity for the table, is the most wicked sport in the world. I have often wished that there were no such things as rhetoric and oratory left among ministers, but that we were all forced to speak in the pulpit as plainly as children do in their simplicity. Oh, that all would tell the gospel out with plain words! I long that all may understand what I have to say: I would be more simple if I knew how. The way of salvation is far too important a matter to be the theme of oratorical displays. The cross is far too sacred to be made a pole on which to hoist the flags of our fine language. I want just to tell you things that make for your peace, things which will save your souls. At least, I would declare truths which, if they do not save you, will leave you without excuse in that dread day when he, whose ambassador I am, shall come to judge both you and me.

I. First, then, The Rule Of Our Text, “It Shall Be Perfect To Be Accepted,” May Be Used To Shut Out All Those Faulty Offerings Whereon So Many Place Their Confidence

It most effectually judges, and casts forth as vile, all self-righteousness, although this is the great deceit wherewith thousands are buoyed up with false hopes. Alas! this is the destroyer of myriads; and, therefore, I must speak as with voice of thunder, and words of lightning. Harken unto me, ye that hope to be accepted of God by your own doings! Look to what will be demanded of you if you are to be accepted on your own merits! “It shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.” If you can come up to this rule you shall be saved by your righteousness; but if you cannot reach this mark, if you come short in any degree whatever, you must fail of acceptance. It is not said, “It shall be partially good to be accepted:” or “it shall be hopefully good.” No. “It shall be perfect to be accepted.” It is not written, “It shall have no great and grievous blemish;” but “There shall be no blemish therein.” See you not the height of the standard, the absolute completeness of the model set before you? Let the plummet hang straight, and see whether you can build to it; whether, after all, your building is not as a bowing wall, and as a tottering fence, altogether out of the perpendicular as tested by this uncompromising text — “It shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.”

Why, look ye, sirs, ye that hope to be saved by your own doings, your nature at the very first is tainted! God’s Word assures well that it is so. There is evil in your heart from the very beginning; so that you are not perfect, and are not without blemish. This sad fact spoils all at the very beginning. You are yourself blemished and imperfect. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. If the fountain be tainted, shall the streams be pure? Do you think it possible that you, who are a fallen man in your very parentage, in whom there is a bias towards evil, can possibly render perfect service unto God? Your hands are foul; how can your work be clean? How can it possibly be that you should produce sweet fruit when you as a tree are of sour stock, and of bitter nature? O my friend, it cannot be that darkness should produce light, nor death bring forth life! How can your thoughts, and words, and ways, be perfect? And yet all must be perfect to be accepted.

Look again; for I feel sure that there must have been a blemish somewhere as matter of fact. As yet you are not conscious of a blemish, or of a fault; and possibly there is some justification for this unconsciousness. Looking upon you, I feel inclined to love you, as Jesus loved that young man who could say of the commandments, “All these have I kept from my youth up.” But I must beg you to answer this question — Has there not been a blemish in your motives? What have you been doing all these good things for? “Why, that I might be saved!” Precisely so. Therefore, selfishness has been the motive which has ruled your life. Every self-righteous man is a selfish man. I am sure he is. At the bottom, that is the motive of the best life that is ever lived which is not actuated by faith in Jesus Christ. The law is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” But you have loved yourself, and lived for yourself: how then can you have kept the first precept of the law? What has been done by you has been done either out of a servile fear of hell, or else out of a proud and selfish hope that you would win heaven by your own merits. These are not love, nor even akin to it. The absence of love is a flaw, and a very serious one; it taints and spoils the whole of your life. “It shall be perfect to be accepted;” and, if the motive be imperfect, then the life is imperfect altogether.

Moreover, it is not only your nature and your motive which are imperfect. My dear friend, you certainly must have erred somewhere or other, in some act of your life. If you can say that you have served God and man without fault throughout all your days, you can say much more than I would venture to do. The Scripture also is dead against you when it says, “there is none righteous; no, not one.” If you can say that in no one action of your life, select what you may, was there anything blameworthy, anything that fell short, anything that could be censured, you say very much more than the best of men have ever claimed for themselves. As for the poor faulty being who now addresses you, I dare not claim that the best deed I have ever done, or the most fervent prayer I have ever prayed, could have been accepted in and of itself before God. I know that I have no perfection in my best things, much less in my worst. Tell me, my friend, was there not something amiss in your spirit? Was there not a shortcoming in the humility with which you worshipped? or in the zeal with which you served? or in the faith with which you prayed? Was there not somewhat of omission, even if nothing of commission? Could not the work have been better done? If so, it is clear that it was not perfect, for had it been perfect it could have been no better. Might you not have lived better than you have lived? Might you not have been more pure, more generous, more upright, more loving, more gentle, more firm, more heavenly-minded, than you have been? Then this confession shows that, to some extent, you must have fallen short; and, remember, “it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.”

Ah! I am talking very smoothly now, for I am only touching the surface, and dealing with guess-work; but I fear there are greater evils underneath, could all be known. Methinks, if I could read all hearts, there is not one here, however self-righteous he may be, who would not have to confess distinct acts of sin. Still, I will keep to the smooth strain, and believe that you are as good as you seem to be, indeed, I have a high opinion of many of you. I know how some of you have lived. You were amiable girls and excellent young women, and have grown up to be careful, loving wives; and therefore you say, “I never did anybody any harm; surely I may be accepted.” Or, perhaps, you are quiet young men, blessed with excellent parents, and screened from temptation, and so you have never gone into open vice, but have gained a most respectable character. I wish that there were more like you. I am not condemning

you; far from it; but I know that your tendency is to think that, because of all this, you must in yourselves be accepted of God. Give me your hand, and let me say to you, with tears: "It is not so, my sister; it is not so, my brother. It must be perfect to be accepted; there must be no blemish in it." This is a death-blow for your self-confidence; for there was a time, some day or other in your life, in which you did wrong. What! have you no hasty temper? Have no quick words escaped you, which you would wish to recall? What! have you never murmured against God, or complained of his providence? Have you never been slothful when you ought to have been diligent? Have you never been careless when you ought to have been prayerful? Have you always spoken the truth? Has a falsehood never fallen from your lips? Can you say that your heart has never desired evil — never imagined impurity? Recollect, the thought of evil is sin; even a wanton desire is a blemish in the life, and an unchaste imagination is a stain upon the character in the sight of God, though not in the sight of man. "It shall be perfect to be accepted."

I verily used to think concerning myself that I was a quiet, good, hopeful lad, addicted much to reading, seldom in brawls, and doing nobody any hurt. Oh! it was the outside of the cup and the platter I had seen; and when I was led by grace to look inside, I was astonished to see what filthiness was there. When I heard in my heart that sentence of the law, "It shall be perfect to be accepted," I gave up all hope of self-righteousness; and now I hate myself for having doted upon such a falsehood as that I could be acceptable with God in myself.

Have you never gone to live in an old house which looked like new? You had fresh paint, and varnish, and paper in superabundance; and you thought yourself dwelling in one of the sweetest of places, till, one day, it happened that a board was taken up, and you saw under the floor. What a gathering of every foul thing! You could not have lived in that house at peace for a minute had you known what had been covered up. Rottness had been hidden, decay had been doctored, death had been decorated. That is just like our humanity. We put on fresh paper, and varnish, and paint, and we look very respectable; and yet from below an abomination of the sewer-gas of sin comes steaming up, enough to kill everything that is like goodness within us; while all manner of creeping lusts and venomous passions swarm in the secret corners of our nature. When lusts are quiet, they are all there. The best man in this place, who is not a believer in Christ, would go mad if he were to see himself as God sees him. No eye could bear the horrible sight of the hell within the human breast. Yes, I mean you good people — you very nice, amiable, lovable sort of people! You will have to be born again, and you will have to give up all trust in yourselves, as much as even the worst of men must do. As surely as the chief of sinners are unaccepted, so surely are you; for a righteousness must be perfect to be accepted, there must be no blemish in it; and that is not the case with your righteousness. You know it is not.

"Well," says one, "this is very hard doctrine." I mean it to be so; for I love you too well to deceive you. When a door has to be shut to save life, there is no use in half-shutting it. If a person may be killed by going through it, you had better board it up, or brick it up. I want to brick up the dangerous opening of self-confidence, for it leads to deception, disappointment, and despair. The way to heaven by works is only possible to a man who is absolutely perfect; and none of you are in that condition. Do not pretend to it, or you will be arrant liars. I put no fine face upon it — you are not perfect, no, not one of you; for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Thus, then, our text shuts out all self-righteousness. It also shuts out all priestly performances. There is a notion among some people that the priest is to save them, alias the minister, for men easily in these charitable days make even Dissenting ministers into priests. I have heard people say, "Just as I employ a lawyer to attend to my temporal business, and I do not bother my head any more about it; so I employ my priest or my clergyman to attend to my spiritual business, and there is an end of it." This is evil talk, and ruinous to the man who indulges in it. I will speak of this priestcraft very plainly. Recollect, "it shall be perfect to be accepted;" therefore all that this gentleman does for you must be perfect. I do not know what it is that he does, I am sure. I never could make out what a priest of the Roman or Anglican order can be supposed to do in his highest function of the mass. I have seen him walk this way, and I have seen him walk that way; and I have seen him turn his back, and it has been decorated with crosses and other embellishments; and I have seen him turn his face; and I have seen him bow; and I have seen him drink wine and water; and I have seen him munch wafers; and I have seen him perform many genuflections and prostrations; but what the performance meant I have not been able to gather. To me it seemed a meaningless display. I should not like to risk my soul on it; for suppose that during that service he should think of something that he ought not to think upon, and suppose he should have no intention whatever of performing the mass, what then becomes of those who trust in him and it? Everything, you know, depends upon the intention of the priest. If a good intention be not there, according to the dictates of his own church, it is all good for nothing, so that your souls all hang upon the intention of a poor mortal in a certain dress. Perhaps he has not after all been rightly anointed, and is not in the apostolical succession! Perhaps there is no apostolical succession! Perhaps the man himself is living in mortal sin! Ah, me! there are many dangers about your confidence. Are you going to hang your soul on that man's orders or disorders? Mine is too heavy to hang upon so slender a nail, driven into such rotten wood. If you have a soul big enough to think, you will feel, "No, no; there cannot be sufficient ground of dependence in the best pontiff that ever officiated at an altar. God requires of me, myself, that I bring to him a perfect sacrifice; and it is all a device of my folly that I should try and get a sponsor, and lay this burden on him. It cannot be done. I have to stand before the judgment-bar of God in my own person, to be tried for the sins that I have done in the body; and I must not deceive myself with the idea that another man's performance of ceremonies can clear me at the judgment-seat of Christ. This man

cannot bring a perfect sacrifice for me, and “it must be perfect to be accepted.” O sirs, do not be deluded by priestcraft and sacramentarianism, whether the priest be of the school of Rome, or of Oxford: you must believe in the Lord Jesus for yourselves, or you will be lost for ever!

This text makes a clean sweep of all other kinds of human confidences. Some are deceived in this sort: “Well,” they say, “I do not trust in my works; but I am a religious person, and I attend the sacrament, and I go to my place of worship pretty regularly. I feel that I must certainly be right. I have faith in Jesus Christ and in myself.” In various ways men thus compose an image whose feet are part of iron and part of clay. With that kind of mingle-mangle, many unconsciously are contenting themselves. But hear ye this word, “it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.” If we trust Christ and nothing else, that will be perfect; but if you are trusting Christ up to fifteen ounces in the pound, and yourself for the last ounce of the sixteen, you will be a lost man; for that last ounce is an ounce of imperfection, and therefore you cannot be accepted of God.

There are some others who say, “I have suffered a great deal, and that will make amends.” There is a current idea among men, that all will go well with poor people, and hard-working people, because they have had their bad times here. When a man has had a long illness, and suffered a great deal in the hospital, his friends say, “Poor soul, he has gone where he is better off!” They feel sure of it, because he has suffered so much. Ah, me! but “it shall be perfect to be accepted;” and what is there perfect in a human life, even if it be chequered with suffering, poverty, and want? Ah, no! poverty does not work perfection; sickness does not make perfection. My text stands like a cherub, waving a fiery sword before the gates of Paradise, shutting out all fancies and notions, of which I will not now speak particularly, by this dread sentence, “It shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.”

II. This brings me to note, with great delight of heart, that as this rule shuts out all other confidences, so This Rule Shuts Us Up To The Sacrifice Of Jesus Christ.

O beloved, if I had the tongues of men and of angels, I could never fitly tell you of him who offered himself without spot unto God, for he is absolutely perfect; there is no blemish in him!

He is perfect in his nature as God and man. No stain defiled his birth, no pollution touched his body or his soul. The prince of this world himself, with keenest eyes, came and searched the Savior, but he found nothing in him. “In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” There was not the possibility of sinning about the Savior, — no tendency that way, no desire that way. Nothing that could be construed into evil ever came upon his character. Our perfect sacrifice is without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

As he was perfect in his nature, so was he in his motive. What brought him from above but love to God and man? You can find no trace of ambition in Christ Jesus. In him there is no thought of self. No sinister or sordid motive ever lingered in his breast, or even crossed his mind. He was purity and holiness in the highest degree. Even his enemies have nothing to allege against the purity of the motive of Jesus of Nazareth.

As his nature was perfect, so was his spirit. He was never sinfully angry, nor harsh, nor untrue, nor idle. The air of his soul was the atmosphere of heaven rather than of earth.

Look at his life of obedience, and see how perfect that was. Which commandment did he ever break? Which duty of relationship did he ever forget? He honored the law of God, and loved the souls of men. He gave the character of God perfect reflection in his human life. You can see what God is as you see what Christ is. He is perfect, even as his Father who is in heaven is perfect. There is no redundancy, or excess, or superfluity in his character, even as there is no coming short in any point.

Look at the perfection of his sacrifice. He gave his body to be tortured, and his mind to be crushed and broken, even unto the death-agony. He gave himself for us a perfect sacrifice. All that the law could ask was in him. Stretch the measure to its utmost length, and still Christ goes beyond, rather than falls short of the measure of the requirements of justice. He has given to his Father double for all our sins. He has given him suffering for sin committed, and yet a perfect obedience to the law. The Lord God is well pleased with him; he rests in the Son of his love, and for his sake he smiles upon multitudes of sinners who are represented in him. My heart rejoices as I think of Gethsemane, and Calvary, and of him who by one offering hath perfectly sanctified all who put their trust in him. “It is finished,” said he, and finished it is for ever. Our Lord has presented a perfect sacrifice. “It shall be perfect to be accepted;” and it is perfect. “There shall be no blemish therein;” and there is no blemish in it. Glory be to God Most High!

Now, I want you just to let me stop preaching, as it were, while every man among you brings this sacrifice to God. By faith take it to be yours. You may. Christ belongs to every believer. If thou trustest him, he is thine. Poor guilty soul, as thou art, whether thou hast been a Christian fifty years or ten years, or whether thou art just now converted, if thou believest, thou mayest now come with Christ in thy hand, and say to the Father, “O my Lord, thou hast provided for me what thy law requires — a perfect sacrifice; there is no blemish in it. Behold, I bring it unto thee as mine!” God is satisfied. What joy! God is satisfied! The Father is well pleased! He has raised Christ from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places in token of that satisfaction. Let us be satisfied

too. That which contents God may well content me. My soul, when thy eyes are full of tears on account of thy sin, and thy heart is disquieted on account of thy infirmities and imperfections, look thou right away from thyself "to the full atonement made, to the utmost ransom paid." The offering of Jesus is perfect and accepted. The righteousness of thy Lord Jesus is without blemish; and thou art "accepted in the Beloved."

That delightful passage in Exodus came flashing up to my mind just now, where the Israelite sprinkled the blood on the lintel and the two side-posts. Then he shut the door. He was inside: he did not see the blood any more. The blood was outside upon the posts, and he could not see it himself; but was he safe? Yes, because it is written, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." It is God's sight of the blood of his dear Son that is the everlasting safeguard of all who are in Christ. Though it is most precious and sweet to me to look at that blood once shed for many for the remission of sins, and I do look at it; yet if ever there should come a dark night to me in which I cannot see it, still God will see it, and I am safe. I am saved, because it is written, not "when you see it," but "when I see the blood I will pass over you." It is the perfection of the sacrifice, not your perfection of sight, which is your safeguard. It is the absence of all blemish from the sacrifice — not the absence of blemish from your faith — that makes you to be "accepted in the Beloved."

Well, now, as is too often the case, I have run on so much upon the first points that I have not time enough for much more; but I was going to finish up by saying that I address myself for a minute or two to Christians only. Listen, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that know the Lord! You are saved. You have not, therefore, to bring any sacrifice by way of a sin-offering, but you have to bring sacrifices of thanksgiving. It is your reasonable service that you offer your bodies a living sacrifice unto God. If you do this you cannot bring an absolutely perfect sacrifice, but you must labor to let it be perfect in what is often the Biblical sense of perfection.

Beloved brethren, you must take care that what you bring is not blind, for the blind were not to be offered. You must serve God with a single eye to the glory of God. If you attend a prayer-meeting, or teach a class, or preach a sermon, you must not do it with a view to your own selves in any way, or it cannot be accepted. The sacrifice must see; it must be intelligent, reasonable service, having for its object the glory of God. It must in that sense be perfect to be accepted.

And as it must not be blind, so it must not be broken. Whenever we serve God, we must do it with the whole of our being, for if we try to serve God with a bit of our nature, and leave the rest unconsecrated, we shall not be accepted. Certain professors prefer one class of Christian duties, and they neglect others; this must not be. Christ gave "himself" for you, and you must give your whole self to him. To be acceptable the life must be entire; there must be complete consecration of every faculty. How is it with you? Have you brought to the Lord a divided sacrifice? If so, he claims the whole.

Next, they were not to bring a maimed sacrifice: that is, one without its limbs. Some people give grudgingly, that is to say, they come up to the collection-box with a limp. Many serve Christ with a broken arm. The holy work is done, but it is painfully and slowly done. Among the heathen, I believe, they never offered in sacrifice to the gods a calf that had to be carried. The reason was that they considered that the sacrifice ought to be willing to be offered, and so it must be able to walk up to the altar. Notice in the Old Testament, though there were many creatures both birds and beasts, that were offered to God, they never offered any fish on the holy altar. The reason probably is that a fish could not come there alive. Its life would be spent before it came to the altar, and therefore it could not render a life unto God. Take care that you bring your bodies a living sacrifice. I notice that many men are all alive when they are in the shop. The way they talk, the way they call out to the men, and the way they bustle everybody about, are conclusive evidence that their life is abundant. But when they get into the church of God, what a difference! There may be life somewhere or other, but nobody knows where it is. You have to look for it with a microscope. You see no activity, no energy. Oh, that these people would remember, "it shall be perfect to be accepted!" That is to say, there must be energy put into it, soul put into it, heart put into it, or God will not accept it. We must not bring him the mere chrysalis of a man, out of which the life has gone; but we must bring before him our living, unmaimed selves if we would be acceptable before him.

It is then added, "or having a wen." It does not look as though it would hurt the sacrifice much to have a wen; yet there must not be a wen, or spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Above all, avoid that big wen of pride. When we feel that we are doing a grand thing, and are acting in a most satisfactory manner, we may know that we are not accepted. A sermon wept over is more acceptable with God than one gloried over. That which is given to God with a sigh because you cannot do more, and with the humble hope that he may accept it for Christ's sake, is infinitely superior to that which is bestowed with the proud consciousness that you deserve well of your fellow-men, if not of your God.

The sacrifice was not to be scabbed, or to have the scurvy. That is to say, it was to be without any sort of outward fault. I have heard men say, "It is true I did not do that thing well, but my heart was right." That may be, my dear brother, but you must try and make the whole matter as good as it can be. What a deal of scabbed service our Lord gets! Men try to be benevolent to their fellow-creatures with an irritable temper. Certain people try to serve God, and write stinging letters to promote brotherly love, and dogmatical epistles in favor of largemindedness. Too many render to the Lord hurried, thoughtless worship; and many more give for offerings their smallest coins, and such things as they will never miss. God has many a scurvy sheep brought before him. Did you never bring any,

my brother? Did I never bring any? Ah, me! ah, me! But still, let us mend our ways; and since the Lord Jesus offered himself without spot, let us try to serve him with our utmost care. The best of the best should be given to the Best of the best. We sometimes sing,

“All that I am, and all I have,

Shall be for ever thine.”

Oh, that we practiced it as well as sang it! Would God that the best of our lives, the best hours of the morning, the best skill of our hands, the best thoughts of our minds, the very cream of our being, were given to our God! But, alas! Christ's cause is sent round to the back door to get the broken meat; and, “Mind you do not leave too much meat on the bone,” is the kind of instruction that is given to her who hands it out. Christ Jesus is sent to the dung-heap for the odds and ends. Cheese-parings, and candle-ends are given to the Missionary Society. Perhaps the statement is too liberal: it would be well if they were. Threepennies and fourpennies are gracious gifts from struggling tradesmen and poor work-people; but they are hardly decent when sent in by folk who spend hundreds of pounds upon their own pleasure. To God's altar we ought to bring the best bullock from the stall, and the best sheep from the fold. I leave you to yourselves to judge whether it be not so. If you are not over head and ears in debt to the mercy of God in Christ, then it is not so; but if you are debtors to divine mercy beyond all compute, you shall each one reckon up for himself, — “How much owest thou unto my Lord?” If it be a debt you can never calculate, then give the Lord from this day forth the fullness of your being. May God grant that you and your offerings may be accepted in Christ Jesus! Amen and amen.

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