

**NOTES**  
**ON**  
**THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS**

by

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*"Things new and old."*

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**Leviticus 13-14**

Of all the functions which, according to the Mosaic ritual, the priest had to discharge, none demanded more patient attention, or more strict adherence to the divine guide-book, than the discernment and proper treatment of leprosy. This fact must be obvious to every one who studies, with any measure of care, the very extensive and important section of our book at which we have now arrived.

There were two things which claimed the priest's vigilant care, namely, the purity of the assembly, and the grace which could not admit of the exclusion of any member, save on the most clearly-established grounds. Holiness could not permit any one to remain in who ought to be out; and, on the other hand, grace would not have any one out who ought to be in. Hence, therefore, there was the most urgent need, on the part of the priest, of watchfulness, calmness, wisdom, patience, tenderness, and enlarged experience. Things might seem trifling which, in reality, were serious; and things might look like leprosy which were not it at all. The greatest care and coolness were needed. Judgment rashly formed, a conclusion hastily arrived at, might involve the most serious consequences, either as regards the assembly or some individual member thereof.

This will account for the frequent occurrence of such expressions as the following, namely:

- **"The priest shall look;"**
- **"The priest shall shut up him that hath the plague seven days;"**

- "And the priest shall look on him the seventh day;"
- "Then the priest shall shut him up seven days more"
- "And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day;"
- "And the priest shall see him;"
- "Then the priest shall consider."

No case was to be hastily judged, or rashly decided. No opinion was to be formed from mere hearsay. Personal observation, priestly discernment, calm reflection, strict adherence to the written Word - the holy, infallible guide book - all these things were imperatively demanded of the priest, if he would form a sound judgment of each case. He was not to be guided by his own thoughts, his own feelings, his own wisdom, in any thing. He had ample guidance in the word, if only he was subject thereto. Every point, every feature, every movement, every variation, every shade and character, every peculiar symptom and affection - all was provided for, with divine fullness and forethought; so that the priest only needed to be acquainted with, and subject to, the word in all things, in order to be preserved from ten thousand mistakes.

Thus much as to the priest and his holy responsibilities.

We shall now consider the disease of leprosy, as developed in a person, in a garment, or in a house.

Looking at this disease in a physical point of view, nothing can possibly be more loathsome; and being, so far as man is concerned, totally incurable, it furnishes a most vivid and appalling picture of sin - sin in one's natures - in his circumstances - sin in an assembly. What a lesson for the soul in the fact that such a vile and humiliating disease should be used as a type of moral evil, whether in a member of GOD's assembly, in the circumstances of any member, or in the assembly itself!

**1. And first, then, as to leprosy in a person; or, in other words, the working of moral evil, or of that which might seem to be evil, in any member of the assembly.**

This is a matter of grave and solemn import - a matter demanding the utmost vigilance and care on the part of all who are concerned in the good of souls and in the glory of GOD, as involved in the well-being and purity of His assembly as a whole, or of each individual member thereof.

It is important to see that, while the broad principles of leprosy and its cleansing apply, in a secondary sense, to any sinner, yet, in the Scripture now before us, the matter is presented in connection with those who were GOD's recognized people. The person who is here seen as the subject of priestly examination, is a member of the assembly of GOD. It is well to apprehend this. GOD's assembly must be kept pure, because it is His dwelling-place. No leper can be allowed to remain within the hallowed precincts of the Lord's habitation.

But, then, mark the care, the vigilance, the perfect patience, inculcated upon the priest, lest ought that was not leprosy might be treated as such, or lest ought that really was leprosy might be suffered to escape. Many things might appear "**in the skin**" - the place of "**manifestation**" - like the plague of leprosy, which, upon patient, priestly investigation, would be found to be merely superficial. This was to be carefully attended to.

Some blemish might make its appearance, upon the surface, which, though demanding the jealous care of the one who had to act for GOD, was not, in reality, defiling. And, yet, that which seemed but a superficial blemish might prove to be something deeper than the skin, something below the surface, something affecting the hidden springs of the constitution. All this claimed the most intense care on the part of the priest (See ver. 2-11). Some slight neglect, some trifling oversight, might lead to disastrous consequences. It might lead to the defilement of the assembly, by the presence of a confirmed leper, or to the expulsion, for some superficial blemish, of a genuine member of the Israel of GOD.

*Now, there is a rich fund of instruction in all this for the people of GOD.*

There is a difference between personal infirmity and the positive energy of evil - between mere defects and blemishes in the outward character, and the activity of sin in the members. No doubt, it is important to watch against our infirmities; for, if not watched, judged, and guarded against, they may become the source of positive evil (See ver. 14-25). Everything of nature must be judged and kept down. We must not make any allowance for personal infirmity, in ourselves, though we should make ample allowance for it in others. Take, for example, the matter of an irritable temper. I should judge it in myself; I should make allowance for it in another.

It may, like "**the burning boil**," in the case of an Israelite, (ver. 19, 20), prove the source of real defilement - the ground of exclusion from the assembly.

Every form of weakness must be watched, lest it become an occasion of sin. "**A bald forehead**" was not leprosy, but it was that in which leprosy might appear, and, hence, it had to be watched. There may be a hundred things which are not, in themselves, sinful, but which may become the occasion of sin, if not diligently looked after. Nor is it merely a question of what, in our estimation, may be termed Blots, blemishes, and personal infirmities, but even of what our hearts might feel disposed to boast of. Wit, humour, vivacity of spirit and temper; all these may become the source and center of defilement. Each one has something to guard against - something to keep him ever upon the watch-tower. How happy it is that we have a Father's heart to come to and count on, with respect to all such things We have the precious privilege of coming, at all times, into the presence of unrebuking, unupbraiding love, there to tell out all, and obtain grace to help in all, and full victory over all. We need not be discouraged, so long as we see such a motto inscribed on the door of our Father's treasury, "**He giveth more grace.**" Precious motto! It has no limit. It is bottomless and boundless.

We shall now proceed to inquire what was done in every case in which the plague of leprosy was unquestionably and unmistakably defined. The GOD of Israel could bear with infirmity, blemish, and failure; but the moment it became a case of defilement, whether in the head, the beard, the forehead, or any other part, it could not be tolerated in the holy assembly.

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

Here was the leper's condition - the leper's occupation - the leper's place. With rent garments, bare head, and covered lip; crying, Unclean, unclean; and dwelling outside, in the dreary solitude, the dismal desert waste. What could be more humiliating, what more depressing than this? **"He shall dwell alone."** He was unfit for communion or companionship. He was excluded from the only spot, in all the world, in which the Lord's presence was known or enjoyed.

Reader, behold, in the poor, solitary leper, a vivid type of one in whom sin is working. This is really what it means. It is not, as we shall see presently, a helpless, ruined, guilty, convicted sinner, whose guilt and misery have come thoroughly out, and who is, therefore, a fit subject for the love of GOD, and the Blood of CHRIST. No; we see in the excluded leper, one in whom sin is actually working - one in whom there is the positive energy of evil. This is what defiles and shuts out from the enjoyment of the divine presence and the communion of saints. So long as sin is working, there can be no fellowship with GOD, or with His people.

**"He shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be."** How long? **"All the days wherein the plague shall be in him."**

This is a great practical truth. The energy of evil is the death-blow to communion. There may be the outward appearance, the mere form, the hollow profession; but communion there can be none, so long as the energy of evil is there. It matters not what the character or amount of the evil may be, if it were but the weight of a feather, if it were but some foolish thought, so long as it continues to work, it must hinder communion, it must cause a suspension of fellowship. It is when it rises to a head, when it comes to the surface, when it is brought thoroughly out, that it can be perfectly met and put away by the grace of GOD and by the Blood of the Lamb.

This leads us to a deeply-interesting point in connection with the leper - a point which must prove a complete paradox to all save those who understand GOD's mode of dealing with sinners.

**"And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague, from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh; then the priest shall consider; and, behold, if the leprosy be covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean"** (Leviticus 13:12, 13).

The moment a sinner is in his true place before GOD, the whole question is settled. Directly his real character is fully brought out, there is no further difficulty. He may have to pass through much painful exercise, ere he reaches this point - exercise consequent upon his refusal to take his true place - to bring out **"all the truth,"** with respect to what he is; but the moment he is brought to say, from his heart, "just as I am," the free grace of GOD flows down to him.

**"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer"** (Psalm 32:3, 4). How long did this painful exercise continue? Until the whole truth was brought out - until all that which was working inwardly came fully to the surface. **"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin"** (Ver. 5).

*It is deeply interesting to mark the progress of the Lord's dealing with the leprous man, from the moment that the suspicion is raised, by certain features in the place of manifestation, until the disease covers the whole man, "from the crown of the head unto the sole of the foot."*

There was no haste, and no indifference. GOD ever enters the place of judgment with a slow and measured pace; but when He does enter, He must act according to the claims of His nature. He can patiently investigate. He can wait for "**seven days**;" and should there be the slightest variation in the symptoms, He can wait for "**seven days more**;" but, the moment it is found to be the positive working of leprosy, there can be no toleration. "**Without the camp shall his habitation be.**" How long? Until the disease comes fully to the surface. "**If the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean.**" This is a most precious and interesting point. The very smallest speck of leprosy was intolerable to GOD; and yet, when the whole man was covered, from head to foot, he was pronounced clean - that is, he was a proper subject for the grace of GOD and the blood of atonement.

Thus is it, in every case, with the sinner. GOD is "**of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity**;" (Habakkuk 1:13;) and yet, the moment a sinner takes his true place, as one thoroughly lost guilty, and undone - as one in whom there is not so much as a single point on which the eye of infinite Holiness can rest with complacency - as one who is so bad, that he cannot, possibly, be worse, there is an immediate, a perfect, a divine settlement of the entire matter.

The grace of GOD deals with sinners; and when I know myself to be a sinner, I know myself to be one whom CHRIST came to save. The more clearly any one can prove me to be a sinner, the more clearly he establishes my title to the love of GOD, and the work of CHRIST. "**For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God**" (I Peter 3:18).

Now, if I am "**unjust**;" I am one of those very people for whom CHRIST died, and I am entitled to all the benefits of His death.

"**There is not a just man upon earth**;" and, inasmuch as I am "**upon earth**," it is plain that I am "**unjust**;" and it is equally plain that CHRIST died for me - that he suffered for my sins. Since, therefore, CHRIST died for me, it is my happy privilege to enter into the immediate enjoyment of the fruits of His sacrifice. This is as plain as plainness itself. It demands no effort whatsoever. I am not called to be anything but just what I am. I am not called to feel, to experience, to realize anything. The Word of GOD assures me that CHRIST died for me just as I am; and if He died for me I am as safe as He is Himself. There is nothing against me. CHRIST met all. He not only suffered for my "**sins**," but He "**made an end of sin**." He abolished the entire system in which, as a child of the first Adam, I stood, and He has introduced me into a new position, in association with Himself, and there I stand, before GOD, free from all charge of sin, and all fear of judgment.

Just as I am - without one plea,  
But that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bidst me come to thee,  
O Lamb of GOD, I come!

How do I know that His blood was shed for me? By the Scriptures. Blessed, solid, eternal ground of knowledge! CHRIST suffered for sins. I have gotten sins. CHRIST died **"the just for the unjust."** I am unjust. Wherefore, the death of CHRIST appropriates itself to me, as fully, as immediately, and as divinely, as though I were the only sinner upon earth. It is not a question of my appropriation, realization, or experience. Many souls harass themselves about this. How often has one heard such language as the following, "Oh! I believe that CHRIST died for sinners, but I cannot realize that my sins are forgiven. I cannot apply, I cannot appropriate, I do not experience the benefit of CHRIST's death." All this is self and not CHRIST. It is feeling and not Scripture. If we search from cover to cover of the blessed volume, we shall not find a syllable about being saved by realization, experience, or appropriation.

The Gospel applies itself to all who are on the ground of being lost. CHRIST died for sinners. That is just what I am. Wherefore, He died for me. How do I know this? Is it because I feel it? By no means. How then? By the Word of GOD. **"Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; he was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures"** (I Corinthians 15:3, 4). Thus it is all **"according to the Scriptures."** If it were according to our feelings, we should be in a deplorable way, for our feelings are hardly the same for the length of a day; but the Scriptures are ever the same. **"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."** **"Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."**

No doubt, it is a very happy thing to realize, to feel, and to experience; but, if we put these things in the place of CHRIST, we shall neither have them nor the CHRIST that yields them. If I am occupied with CHRIST, I shall realize; but if I put my realization in place of CHRIST, I shall have neither the one nor the other. This is the sad condition of thousands.

Instead of resting on the stable authority of **"the Scriptures,"** they are ever looking into their own hearts, and, hence, they are always uncertain and, as a consequence, always unhappy. A condition of doubt is a condition of torture. But how can I get rid of my doubt? Simply by relying on the divine authority of **"the Scriptures."**

Of what do the Scriptures testify? Of CHRIST (John 5). They declare that CHRIST died for our sins, and that He was raised again for our justification (Romans 4). This settles everything. The self-same authority that tells me I am unjust, tells me also that CHRIST died for me. Nothing can be plainer than this. If I were ought else than unjust, the death of CHRIST could not be for me at all, but being unjust, it is divinely fitted, divinely intended, and divinely applied to me. If I am occupied with anything in, of, or about myself, it is plain I have not entered into the full spiritual application of Leviticus 13:12, 13. I have not come to the Lamb of GOD, "just as I am."

It is when the leper is covered from head to foot that he is on the true ground. It is there and there alone that grace can meet him. **"Then the priest shall consider; and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean."** Precious truth! **"Where sin abounded grace did much more abound."** So long as I think there is a single spot which is not covered with the direful disease, I have not come to, the end of myself. It is when my true condition is fully disclosed to my view, that I really understand the meaning of salvation by grace.

The force of all this will be more fully apprehended when we come to consider the ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper, in Leviticus 14. We shall, now, briefly enter upon the question of leprosy in a garment, as presented in Leviticus 13:47-59.

## **2. The garment or skin suggests to the mind the ideas of a man's circumstances or habits.**

This is a deeply practical point. We are to watch against the working of evil in our ways just as carefully as against evil in ourselves. The same patient investigation is observable with respect to a garment as in the case of a person. There is no haste; neither is there any indifference. "**The priest shall look upon the plague, and shut up it that hath the plague seven days.**" There must be no indifference, no indolence, no carelessness. Evil may creep into our habits and circumstances, in numberless ways; and, hence, the moment we perceive ought of a suspicious nature, it must be submitted to a calm, patient process of priestly investigation. It must be "**shut up seven days,**" in order that it may have full time to develop itself perfectly.

**"And he shall look on the plague on the seventh day: if the plague be spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in a skin, or in any work that is made of skin, the plague is a fretting leprosy; it is unclean. He shall therefore burn that garment."**

The wrong habit must be given up, the moment I discover it. If I find myself in a thoroughly wrong position, I must abandon it. The burning of the garment expresses the act of judgment upon evil, whether in a man's habits or circumstances. There must be no trifling with evil. In certain cases the garment was to be "**washed,**" which expresses the action of the Word of GOD upon a man's habits.

**"Then the priest shall command that they wash the thing wherein the plague is, and he shall shut it up seven days more."**

There is to be patient waiting in order to ascertain the effect of the Word.

**"And the priest shall look on the plague, after that it is washed; and, behold, if the plague have not changed . . . thou shalt burn it in the fire."**

When there is any thing radically and irremediably bad in one's position or habits, the whole thing is to be given up.

**"And if the priest look, and, behold, the plague be somewhat dark: after the washing of it; then he shall rend it out of the garment."**

The Word may produce such an effect as that the wrong features in a man's character, or the wrong points in his position, shall be given up, and the evil be got rid of; but if the evil continue, after all, the whole thing must be condemned and set aside.

*There is a rich mine of practical instruction in all this.*

We must look well to the position which we occupy, the circumstances in which we stand, the habits we adopt, the character we wear. There is special need of watchfulness. Every suspicious

symptom and trait must be sedulously guarded, lest it should prove, in the sequel, to be "**a fretting**" or "**spreading leprosy**," whereby we ourselves and many others may be defiled. We may be placed in a position attached to which there are certain wrong things which can be given up, without entirely abandoning the position; and, on the other hand, we may find ourselves in a situation in which it is impossible to "**abide with God**." Where the eye is single, the path will be plain. Where the one desire of the heart is to enjoy the divine presence, we shall easily discover those things which tend to deprive us of that unspeakable blessing.

May our hearts be tender and sensitive. May we cultivate a deeper, closer walk with GOD; and may we carefully guard against every form of defilement, whether in person, in habit, or in association!

*We shall, now, proceed to consider the beautiful and significant ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper, in which we shall find some of the most precious truths of the Gospel presented to us.*

**"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: he shall be brought unto the priest: and the priest shall go forth out of the camp"** (Leviticus 14:1-3).

We have already seen the place which the leper occupied. He was outside the camp, in the place of moral distance from GOD - from His sanctuary and His assembly. Moreover, he dwelt in dreary solitude, in a condition of uncleanness. He was beyond the reach of human aid; and, as for himself, he could only communicate defilement to every one and every thing he touched. It was, therefore, obviously impossible that he could do ought to cleanse himself. If, indeed, he could only defile by his very touch, how could he possibly cleanse himself? How could he contribute towards, or co-operate in, his cleansing? Impossible. As an unclean leper, he could not do so much as a single thing for himself; all had to be done for him. He could not make his way to GOD, but GOD could make His way to him. He was shut up to GOD. There was no help for him, either in himself or in his fellow-man. It is clear that one leper could not cleanse another; and it is equally clear that if a leper touched a clean person he rendered him unclean. His only resource was in GOD. He was to be a debtor to grace for everything.

Hence we read, "**The priest shall go forth out of the camp.**" It is not said, "the leper shall go." This was wholly out of the question. It was of no use talking to the leper about going or doing. He was consigned to dreary solitude; whither could he go? He was involved in helpless defilement; what could he do? He might long for fellowship and long to be clean; but his longings were those of a lonely helpless leper. He might make efforts after cleansing; but his efforts could but prove him unclean, and tend to spread defilement. Before ever he could be pronounced "**clean**," a work; had to be wrought for him - a work which he could neither do nor help to do - a work which had to be wholly accomplished by another. The leper was called to "**stand still**," and behold the priest doing a work in virtue of which the leprosy could be perfectly cleansed. The priest accomplished all. The leper did nothing.

**"Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds, alive and clean, and cedarwood, and scarlet, and hyssop, and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water."**

In the priest going forth from the camp - forth from GOD's dwelling place - we behold the blessed Lord JESUS coming down from the bosom of the Father, His eternal dwelling-place, into this polluted world of ours, where He beheld us sunk in the polluting leprosy of sin. He, like the good Samaritan, "**came where we were.**" He did not come half-way, merely. He did not come nine-tenths of the way. He came all the way. This was indispensable. He could not, consistently with the holy claims of the throne of GOD, have bidden our leprosy to depart had He remained in the bosom. He could call worlds into existence by the word of His mouth; but when leprous sinners had to be cleansed, something more was needed. "**God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.**" When worlds were to be framed, GOD had but to speak, When sinners had to be saved, He had to give His Son. "**In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins**" (I John 4:9, 10).

But there was far more to be accomplished than the mission and incarnation of the Son. It would have availed the leper but little indeed, had the priest merely gone forth from the camp and looked upon his low and forlorn condition. Blood shedding was essentially necessary ere leprosy could be removed. The death of a spotless victim was needed. "**Without shedding of blood is no remission**" (Hebrews 9:22).

And, be it observed, that the shedding of blood was the real basis of the leper's cleansing. It was not a mere circumstance which, in conjunction with others, contributed to the leper's cleansing. By no means. The giving up of the life was the grand and all-important fact. when this was accomplished the way was open; every barrier was removed; GOD could deal in perfect grace with the leper. This point should be distinctly laid hold of, if my reader would fully enter into the glorious doctrine of the blood.

**"And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water."**

Here we have the acknowledged type of the death of CHRIST, "**who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God.**" "**He was crucified in weakness**" (Hebrews 9; II Corinthians 13).

The greatest, the mightiest, the most glorious, the most momentous work that ever was accomplished, throughout the wide universe of GOD, was wrought "**in weakness.**"

Oh! my reader, how terrible a thing must sin be, in the judgment of GOD, when His own beloved Son had to come down from Heaven, and hang upon yonder cursed tree, a spectacle to men, to angels, and to devils, in order that you and I might be forgiven! And what a type of sin have we in leprosy! Who would have thought that that little "**bright spot**" appearing on the person of some member of the congregation was a matter of such grave consequence? But, ah! that little "**bright spot**" was nothing less than the energy of evil, in the place of manifestation. It was the index of the dreadful working of sin in the nature; and ere that person could be fitted for a place in the assembly, or for the enjoyment of communion with a holy GOD, the Son of GOD had to leave those bright heavens, and descend into the lowest parts of the earth, in order to make a full

atonement for that which exhibited itself merely in the form of a little "**bright spot.**"

Let us remember this. Sin is a dreadful thing in the estimation of GOD. He cannot tolerate so much as a single sinful thought. Before one such thought could be forgiven, CHRIST had to die upon the Cross. The most trifling sin, if any sin can be called trifling, demanded nothing less than the death of GOD's Eternal and Co-equal Son. But, eternal praise be to GOD, what sin demanded, redeeming love freely gave; and now GOD is infinitely more glorified in the forgiveness of sins than He could have been had Adam maintained his original innocence.

GOD is more glorified in the salvation, the pardon, the justification, the preservation, and final glorification of guilty man, than He could have been in maintaining an innocent man in the enjoyment of creation blessings. Such is the precious mystery of redemption. May our hearts enter, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into the living and profound depths of this wondrous mystery!

**"As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field."**

The blood being shed, the priest can enter directly and fully upon his work.

Up to this, we read, "**the priest shall command;**" but now he acts immediately himself. The death of CHRIST is the basis of His priestly ministrations. Having entered with His own blood into the holy place, He acts as our Great High Priest, applying to our souls all the precious results of His atoning work, and maintaining us in the full and divine integrity of the position into which His sacrifice has introduced us. "**For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth he should not be a priest**" (Hebrews 8:3, 4).

*We could hardly have a more perfect type of the resurrection of CHRIST than that presented in "the living bird let loose into the open field."*

It was not let go until after the death of its companion; for the two birds typify one CHRIST, in two stages of His blessed work, namely, death and resurrection. Ten thousand birds let loose would not have availed for the leper. It was that living bird, mounting upward into the open heavens, bearing upon his wing that significant token of accomplished atonement - it was that which told out the great fact that the work was done - the ground cleared, the foundation laid.

Thus is it in reference to our blessed Lord JESUS CHRIST. His resurrection declares the glorious triumph of redemption. "**He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.**" "**He was raised again for our justification.**" It is this that sets the burdened heart free, and liberates the struggling conscience.

The Scripture assures me that JESUS was nailed to the Cross under the weight of my sins; but the same Scriptures assure me that He rose from the grave without one of those sins upon Him.

Nor is this all. The same Scriptures assure me that all who put their trust in JESUS are as free from all charge of guilt as He is; that there is no more wrath or condemnation for them than for Him; that they are in Him, one with Him, accepted in Him; co-quickenened, co-raised, co-seated with Him. Such is the peace giving testimony of the Scriptures of truth - such, the record of GOD who cannot lie (See Romans 6:6-11; Romans 8:1-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:5, 6; Colossians 2:10-15, I John 4:17).

But we have another most important truth set before us in verse 6 of our chapter.

We not only see our full deliverance from guilt and condemnation, as beautifully exhibited in the living bird let loose, but we see also our entire deliverance from all the attractions of earth and all the influences of nature. "**The scarlet**" would be the apt expression of the former, while "**the cedar wood and hyssop**" would set forth the latter.

The Cross is the end of all this world's glory. GOD presents it as such, and the believer recognizes it as such. "**God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world**" (Galatians 6:14).

Then, as to the "**cedar wood and hyssop**," they present to us, as it were, the two extremes of nature's wide range. Solomon "**spoke of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall**" (I Kings 4:33). From the lofty cedar which crowns the sides of Lebanon, down to the lowly hyssop - the wide extremes and all that lies between - nature, in all its departments, is brought under the power of the Cross; so that the believer sees, in the death of CHRIST, the end of all his guilt, the end of all earth's glory, and the end of the whole system of nature - the entire old creation. And with what is he to be occupied? With Him who is the antitype of that living bird, with blood-stained feathers, ascending into the open heavens. Precious, glorious, soul-satisfying object! A risen, ascended, triumphant, glorified CHRIST, who has passed into the heavens, bearing in His sacred Person the marks of an accomplished atonement.

It is with Him we have to do. We are shut up to Him. He is GOD's exclusive object. He is the center of Heaven's joy, the theme of angels' song. We want none of earth's glory, none of nature's attractions. We can behold them all, together with our sin and guilt, for ever set aside by the death of CHRIST. We can well afford to dispense with earth and nature, inasmuch as we have gotten, instead thereof "**the unsearchable riches of Christ**."

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

*The more deeply we ponder over the contents of Leviticus 13 the more clearly we shall see how utterly impossible it was for the leper to do ought towards his own cleansing.*

All he could do was to "**put a covering upon his upper lip**;" and all he could say was, "**Unclean, unclean**." It belonged to GOD, and to Him alone, to devise and accomplish a work whereby the leprosy could be perfectly cleansed; and, further, it belonged to GOD, and to Him alone, to pronounce the leper "**clean**."

Hence it is written, "**the priest shall sprinkle;**" and "**he shall pronounce him clean.**" It is not said, "the leper shall sprinkle, and pronounce, or imagine himself, clean." This would never do. GOD was the Judge - GOD was the Healer - GOD was the Cleanser. He alone knew what leprosy was, how it could be put away, and when to pronounce the leper clean. The leper might have gone on all his days covered with leprosy, and yet be wholly ignorant of what was wrong with him. It was the Word of GOD - the Scriptures of truth - the divine Record, that declared the full truth as to leprosy; and nothing short of the self-same authority could pronounce the leper clean, and that, moreover, only, on the solid and indisputable ground of death and resurrection.

There is the most precious connection between the three things in verse 7:

- the blood is sprinkled,
- the leper pronounced clean, and
- the living bird let loose.

There is not so much as a single syllable about what the leper was to do, to say, to think, or to feel. It was enough that he was a leper; a fully revealed, a thoroughly judged leper, covered from head to foot. This sufficed for him; all the rest pertained to GOD.

It is of all importance, for the anxious inquirer after peace, to enter into the truth unfolded in this branch of our subject. So many are tried by the question of feeling, realizing, and appropriating, instead of seeing, as in the leper's case, that the sprinkling of the blood was as independent and as divine as the shedding of it. It is not said, "The leper shall apply, appropriate, or realize, and then he shall be clean." By no means.

- the plan of deliverance was divine;
- the provision of the sacrifice was divine;
- the shedding of the blood was divine;
- the sprinkling of the blood was divine;
- the record as to the result was divine:

in short, it was all divine.

It is not that we should undervalue realization, or, to speak more correctly, communion, through the Holy Ghost, with all the precious results of CHRIST's work for us. Far from it: we shall see, presently, the place assigned thereto, in the divine economy. But then, we are no more saved by realization, than the leper was cleansed by it.

The Gospel, by which we are saved, is that "**Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.**" There is nothing about realization here. No doubt, it is happy to realize. It is a very happy thing for one, who was just on the point of being drowned, to realize himself in a life-boat; but, clearly, he is saved by the boat and not by his realization. So it is with the sinner that believes on the Lord JESUS CHRIST. He is saved by death and resurrection. Is it because he realizes it? No; but because GOD says it. It is "**according to the Scriptures.**"

CHRIST died and rose again; and, on that ground, GOD pronounces him clean.

"No condemnation, O, my soul!  
'Tis GOD that speaks the word . . .

This gives immense peace to the soul. I have to do with GOD's plain record, which nothing can ever shake. That record has reference to GOD's own work. It is He Himself, who has wrought all that was needful, in order to my being pronounced clean in His sight. My pardon no more depends upon my realization than upon any "**works of righteousness that I have done;**" and it no more depends upon my works of righteousness than it does upon my crimes.

In a word, it depends, exclusively, upon the death and resurrection of CHRIST. How do I know it? GOD tells me. It is "**according to the Scriptures.**"

There are, perhaps, few things which disclose the deep-seated legality of our hearts, more strikingly, than this oft-raised question of realization. We will have in something of self, and thus so sadly mar our peace and liberty in CHRIST. It is mainly because of this that I dwell, at such length, upon the beautiful ordinance of the cleansing of the leper, and especially on the truth unfolded in Leviticus 14:7. It was the priest that sprinkled the blood; and it was the priest that pronounced the leper clean. Thus it is in the case of the sinner.

The moment he is on his true ground, the Blood of CHRIST and the Word of GOD apply themselves without any further question or difficulty whatever. But the moment this harassing question of realization is raised, the peace is disturbed, the heart depressed, and the mind bewildered. The more thoroughly I get done with self, and become occupied with CHRIST, as presented in "**the Scriptures,**" the more settled my peace will be.

If the leper had looked at himself, when the priest pronounced him clean, would he have found any basis for the declaration? Surely not. The sprinkled blood was the basis of the divine record, and not anything in, or connected with, the leper. The leper was not asked how he felt, or what he thought. He was not questioned as to whether he had a deep sense of the vileness of his disease. He was an acknowledged leper; that was enough. It was for such an one the blood was shed; and that blood made him clean. How did he know this? Was it because he felt it? No; but because the priest, on GOD's behalf, and by His authority told him so.

The leper was pronounced clean on the very same ground that the living bird was let loose. The same blood which stained the feathers of that living bird was sprinkled upon the leper. This was a perfect settlement of the whole affair, and that, too, in a manner entirely independent of the leper, the leper's thoughts, his feelings, and his realization. Such is the type.

When we look from the type to the antitype, we see that our blessed Lord JESUS CHRIST entered Heaven, and laid on the throne of GOD the eternal record of an accomplished work, in virtue of which the believer enters also. This is a most glorious truth, divinely calculated to dispel from the heart of the anxious inquirer every doubt, every fear, every bewildering thought, and every harassing question. A risen CHRIST is GOD's exclusive object, and He sees every believer in Him. May every awakened soul find abiding repose in this emancipating truth.

**"And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash**

**himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days" (Ver. 8).**

The leper, being pronounced clean, can begin to do what he could not even have attempted to do before, namely, to cleanse himself, cleanse his habits, shave off all his hair; and, having done so, he is privileged to take his place in the camp - the place of ostensible, recognized, public relationship with the GOD of Israel, whose presence in that camp it was which rendered the expulsion of the leper needful. The blood having been applied in its expiating virtue, there is the washing of water, which expresses the action of the word on the character, the habits, the ways, so as to render the person, not only in GOD's view, but also in the view of the congregation, morally and practically fit for a place in the public assembly.

But, be it observed, the man, though sprinkled with blood and washed with water, and thus entitled to a position in the public assembly, was not permitted to enter his own tent. He was not permitted to enter upon the full enjoyment of those private, personal privileges, which belonged to his own peculiar place in the camp.

In other words, though knowing redemption through the shed and sprinkled blood, and owning the word as the rule, according to which his person and all his habits should be cleansed and regulated, he had yet to be brought, in the power of the Spirit, into full, intelligent communion with his own special place, portion, and privileges in CHRIST.

I speak according to the doctrine of the type; and I feel it to be of importance to apprehend the truth unfolded therein. It is too often overlooked. There are many, who own the Blood of CHRIST as the alone ground of pardon, and the Word of GOD as that whereby alone their habits, ways, and associations are to be cleansed and ordered, who, nevertheless, are far from entering, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into communion with the preciousness and excellency of that One Whose blood has put away their sins, and whose word is to cleanse their practical habits. They are in the place of ostensible and actual relationship; but not in the power of personal communion.

It is perfectly true, that all believers are in CHRIST, and, as such, entitled to communion with the very highest truths. Moreover, they have the Holy Ghost, as the power of communion. All this is divinely true; but, then, there is not that entire setting aside of all that pertains to nature, which is really essential to the power of communion with CHRIST, in all the aspects of His character and work.

In point of fact, this latter will not be fully known to any until "**the eighth day**" - the day of resurrection-glory, when we shall know even as we are known. Then, indeed, each one for himself, and all together, shall enter into the full, unhindered Power of communion with CHRIST, in all the precious phases of His Person, and features of His character, unfolded from verse 10 to 20 of our chapter. Such is the hope set before us; but, even now, in proportion as we enter, by faith, through the mighty energy of the indwelling Spirit, into the death of nature and all pertaining thereto, we can feed upon and rejoice in CHRIST as the portion of our souls, in the place of individual communion.

**"But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head, and his**

**beard, and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean" (Ver. 9).**

Now, it is clear, that the leper was just as clean, in GOD's judgment, on the first day, when the blood was sprinkled upon him, in its sevenfold or perfect efficacy, as he was on the seventh day. Wherein, then, was the difference? Not in his actual standing and condition, but in his personal intelligence and communion. On the seventh day, he was called to enter into the full and complete abolition of all that pertained to nature. He was called to apprehend that, not merely was nature's leprosy to be put away, but nature's ornaments - yea, all that was natural - all that belonged to the old condition.

*It is one thing to know, as a doctrine, that GOD sees my nature to be dead, and it is quite another thing for me to "**reckon**" myself as dead - to put off, practically, the old man and his deeds - to mortify my members which are on the earth.*

This, probably, is what many godly persons mean when they speak of progressive sanctification. They mean a right thing, though they do not put it exactly as the Scriptures do. The leper was pronounced clean, the moment the blood was sprinkled upon Him; and yet he had to cleanse himself. How was this? In the former case, he was clean, in the judgment of GOD; in the latter, he was to be clean practically, in his own personal intelligence, and in his manifested character.

Thus it is with the believer. He is, as one with CHRIST, "**washed, sanctified, and justified**" - "**accepted**" - "**complete**" (I Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 1:6; Colossians 2:10). Such is his unalterable standing and condition before GOD. He is as perfectly sanctified as he is justified, for CHRIST is the measure of both the one and the other, according to GOD's judgment and view of the case. But, then, the believer's apprehension of all this, in his own soul, and his exhibition thereof in his habits and ways, open up quite another line of things. Hence it is we read, "**Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God**" (II Corinthians 7:1).

It is because CHRIST has cleansed us by His precious blood that therefore we are called to "**cleanse ourselves**" by the application of the Word, through the Spirit.

**"This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness. because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one"** (I John 5:6-8).

Here we have atonement by the Blood, cleansing by the Word, and power by the Spirit, all founded upon the death of CHRIST, and all vividly foreshadowed in the ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper.

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

**trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the Lord"**  
(Ver. 10-12).

The entire range of offerings is here introduced; but it is the trespass offering which is first killed, inasmuch as the leper is viewed as an actual trespasser. This is true in every case. As those, who have trespassed against GOD, we need CHRIST as the one who atoned, on the Cross, for those trespasses. **"Himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree."**

*The first view which the sinner gets of CHRIST is as the antitype of the trespass offering.*

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

**"The ear"** - that guilty member which had so frequently proved a channel of communication for vanity, folly, and even uncleanness - that ear must be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering. Thus all the guilt, which I have ever contracted by that member, is forgiven according to GOD's estimate of the Blood of CHRIST.

**"The right hand,"** which had, so frequently, been stretched forth for the execution of deeds of vanity, folly, and even uncleanness, must be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering. Thus all the guilt, which I have ever contracted by that member, is forgiven, according to GOD's estimate of the Blood of CHRIST.

**"The foot,"** which had so often run in the way of vanity, folly, and even uncleanness, must now be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering, so that all the guilt, which I have ever contracted by that member, is forgiven, according to GOD's estimate of the Blood of CHRIST.

Yes; all, all, all is forgiven - all is cancelled - all forgotten - all sunk as lead in the mighty waters of eternal oblivion. Who shall bring it up again? Shall angel, man, or devil, be able to plunge into those unfathomed and unfathomable waters, to bring up from thence those trespasses of **"foot," "hand,"** or **"ear,"** which redeeming love has cast thereinto? Oh! no; blessed be GOD, they are gone, and gone for ever. I am better off, by far, than if Adam had never sinned. Precious truth! To be washed in the blood is better far than to be clothed in innocency.

But GOD could not rest satisfied with the mere blotting out of trespasses, by the atoning Blood of JESUS. This, in itself, is a great thing; but there is something greater still.

**"And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand: and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord. And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering; and the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand, he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord"** (Ver. 15-18).

*Thus, not only are our members cleansed by the Blood of CHRIST, but also consecrated to GOD, in the power of the Spirit.*

GOD's work is not only negative, but positive. The ear is no longer to be the vehicle for communicating defilement, but to be "**swift to hear**" the voice of the Good Shepherd. The hand is no longer to be used as the instrument of unrighteousness, but to be stretched forth in acts of righteousness, grace, and true holiness. The foot is no longer to tread in folly's paths, but to run in the way of GOD's holy commandments. And, finally, the whole man is to be dedicated to GOD in the energy of the Holy Ghost.

It is deeply interesting to see that "**the oil**" was put upon the blood of "**the trespass offering.**"

The Blood of CHRIST is the divine basis of the operations of the Holy Ghost. The blood and the oil go together. As sinners we could know nothing of the latter save on the ground of the former. The oil could not have been put upon the leper until the blood of the trespass offering had first been applied. "**In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise.**"

The divine accuracy of the type evokes the acclamation of the renewed mind. The more closely we scrutinize it - the more of the light of Scripture we concentrate upon it - the more its beauty, force, and precision, are perceived and enjoyed. All, as might justly be expected, is in the most lovely harmony with the entire analogy of the Word of GOD. There is no need for any effort of the mind. Take CHRIST as the key to unlock the rich treasury of the types; explore the precious contents by the light of inspiration's heavenly lamp; let the Holy Ghost be your interpreter; and you cannot fail to be edified, enlightened, and blessed.

**"And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness."**

Here we have a type of CHRIST, not only as the bearer of our trespasses, but also as the One, who made an end of sin, root and branch; the One, who destroyed the entire system of sin - "**The Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.**" "**The propitiation for the whole world.**"

- as the trespass offering, CHRIST put away all my trespasses.
- as the sin offering, He met the great root from whence those trespasses emanated.

He met all; but it is as the trespass offering I first know Him, because it is as such I first need Him. It is the "**conscience of sins**" that first troubles me. This is divinely met by my precious Trespass Offering. Then, as I get on, I find that all these sins had a root, a parent stem, and what root or stem I find within me. This, likewise, is divinely met by my precious Sin Offering. The order, as presented in the leper's case, is perfect. It is precisely the order which we can trace in the actual experience of every soul. The trespass offering comes first, and then the sin offering.

**"And afterward he shall kill the burnt offering."**

This offering presents the highest possible aspect of the death of CHRIST. It is CHRIST offering

Himself without spot to GOD, without special reference to either trespasses or sin. It is CHRIST in voluntary devotedness, walking to the Cross, and there offering Himself as a sweet savour to GOD.

**"And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean"** (ver. 20).

The meat offering typifies "**the man Christ Jesus**" in His perfect human life. It is intimately associated, in the case of the cleansed leper, with the burnt offering; and so it is in the experience of every saved sinner. It is when we know our trespasses are forgiven, and the root or principle of sin judged, that we can, according to our measure, by the power of the Spirit, enjoy communion with GOD about that blessed One, who lived a perfect human life, down here, and then offered Himself without spot to GOD on the Cross.

Thus, the four classes of offerings are brought before us in their divine order, in the cleansing of the leper - namely, the trespass offering, the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the meat offering, each exhibiting its own specific aspect of our blessed Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Here closes the record of the Lord's dealings with the leprous man; and, oh! what a marvellous record it is!

*What an unfolding of the exceeding hatefulness of sin, the grace and holiness of GOD, the preciousness of CHRIST's Person, and the efficacy of His work!*

Nothing can be more interesting than to mark the footprints of divine grace forth from the hallowed precincts of the sanctuary, to the defiled place where the leper stood, with bare head, covered lip, and rent garments. GOD visited the leper where he was; but He did not leave him there. He went forth prepared to accomplish a work, in virtue of which he could bring the leper into a higher place, and higher communion than ever he had known before. On the ground of this work, the leper was conducted from his Place of defilement and loneliness to the very door of the tabernacle of the congregation, the priestly place, to enjoy priestly privileges (Comp. Exodus 29:20, 21, 32).

How could he ever have climbed to such an elevation! Impossible! For ought he could do, he might have languished and died in his leprosy, had not the sovereign grace of the GOD of Israel stooped to lift him from the dunghill, to set him among the princes of His people. If ever there was a case in which the question of human effort, human merit, and human righteousness, could be fully tried and perfectly settled, the leper is, unquestionably, that case.

Indeed it were a sad loss of time to discuss such a question in the presence of such a case. It must be obvious, to the most cursory reader, that nought but free grace, reigning through righteousness, could meet the leper's condition and the leper's need. And how gloriously and triumphantly did that grace act! It travelled down into the deepest depths, that it might raise the leper to the loftiest heights.

See what the leper lost, and see what he gained!

He lost all that pertained to nature, and he gained the blood of atonement and the grace of the Spirit. I mean typically. Truly, he was a gainer, to an incalculable amount. He was infinitely better off than if he had never been thrust forth from the camp. Such is the grace of GOD! Such the power And value, the virtue and efficacy, of the Blood of JESUS!

*How forcibly does all this remind us of the prodigal, in Luke 15!*

In him, too, leprosy had wrought and risen to a head. He had been afar off in the defiled place, where his own sins and the intense selfishness of the far country had created a solitude around him. But, blessed for ever be a Father's deep and tender love, we know how it ended. The prodigal found a higher place, and tasted higher communion than ever he had known before. "**The fatted calf**" had never been slain for him before. "**The best robe**" had never been on him before. And how was this? Was it a question of the prodigal's merit? Oh! no; it was simply a question of the Father's love.

Dear reader, let me ask, can you ponder over the record of GOD's dealings with the leper, in Leviticus 14, or the Father's dealings with the prodigal, in Luke 15, and not have an enlarged sense of the love that dwells in the bosom of GOD, that flows through the Person and work of CHRIST, that is recorded in the Scriptures of truth, and brought home to the heart by the Holy Ghost? Lord grant us a deeper and more abiding fellowship with Himself!

From verse 21 to 32 we have "**the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing.**"

This refers to the sacrifices of "**the eighth day,**" and not to the "**two birds alive and clean.**"

These latter could not be dispensed with in any case, because they set forth the death and resurrection of CHRIST as the alone ground on which GOD can receive a sinner back to Himself. On the other hand, the sacrifices of "**the eighth day,**" being connected with the soul's communion, must, in some degree, be affected by the measure of the soul's apprehension. But, whatever that measure may be, the grace of GOD can meet it with those peculiarly touching words, "**such as he is able to get.**"

And, not only so, but "**the two turtle doves**" conferred the same privileges on the "**poor,**" as the two lambs conferred upon the rich, inasmuch as both the one and the other pointed to "**the precious blood of Christ,**" which is of infinite, changeless, and eternal efficacy in the judgment of GOD. All stand before GOD on the ground of death and resurrection. All are brought into the same place of nearness; but all do not enjoy the same measure of communion - all have not the same measure of apprehension of the preciousness of CHRIST in all the aspects of His work.

They might, if they would; but they allow themselves to be hindered, in various ways. Earth and nature, with their respective influences, act prejudicially; The Spirit is grieved, and CHRIST is not enjoyed as He might be. It is utterly vain to expect that, if we are living in the region of nature, we can be feeding upon CHRIST. No; there must be self emptiness, self-denial, self-judgment, if we would habitually feed upon CHRIST. It is not a question of salvation. It is not a question of the leper introduced into the camp - the place of recognized relationship. By no means. It is only a question of the soul's communion, of its enjoyment of CHRIST.

As to this, the largest measure lies open to us. We may have communion with the very highest truths; but, if our measure be small, the unupbraiding grace of our Father's heart breathes in the sweet words, "**such as he is able to get.**" The title of all is the same, however our capacity may vary; and, blessed be GOD, when we get into His presence, all the desires of the new nature, in their utmost intensity, are satisfied; all the powers of the new nature, in their fullest range, are occupied. May we prove these things in our souls' happy experience, day by day!

We shall close this section with a brief reference to the subject of leprosy in a house.

**3. The reader will observe, that a case of leprosy, in a person, or in a garment, might occur in the wilderness; but, in the matter of a house, it was, of necessity, confined to the land of Canaan.**

**"When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession, . . . then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house. And he shall look on the plague; and, behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight are lower than the wall; then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days."**

*Looking at the house as the type of an assembly, we have some weighty principles presented to us as to the divine method of dealing with moral evil, or suspicion of evil, in a congregation.*

We observe the same holy calmness and perfect patience with respect to the house, as we have already seen, in reference to the person or the garment. There was no haste, and no indifference, either as regards the house, the garment, or the individual. The man who had an interest in the house was not to treat with indifference any suspicious symptoms appearing in the wall thereof; neither was he to pronounce judgment himself upon such symptoms. It belonged to the priest to investigate and to judge. The moment that ought of a questionable nature made its appearance, the priest assumed a judicial attitude with respect to the house. The house was under judgment, though not condemned. The perfect period was to be allowed to run its course, ere any decision could be arrived at. The symptoms might prove to be merely superficial, in which case there would be no demand for any action whatever.

**"And the priest shall come again The seventh day, and shall look: and, behold, if the plague be spread in the walls of the house, then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is, and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city."**

The whole house was not to be condemned. The removal of the leprous stones was first to be tried.

**"And if the plague come again, and break out in the house, after that he hath taken away the stones, and after that he hath scraped the house, and after that it is plastered; then the**

**priest shall come and look; and, behold, if the plague be spread in the house. it is a fretting leprosy in the house: it is unclean. And he shall break; down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place."**

The case was hopeless, the evil irremediable, the whole building was annihilated.

**"Moreover, he that goeth into the house all the while that it is shut up shall be unclean until the even. And he that lieth in the house shall wash his clothes; and he that eateth in the house shall wash his clothes."**

This is a solemn truth. Contact defiles! Let us remember this. It was a principle largely inculcated under the Levitical economy; and, surely, it is not less applicable now.

**"And if the priest shall come in, and look upon it, and, behold, the plague hath not spread in the house, after the house was plastered; then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed."**

The removal of the defiled stones, &c., had arrested the progress of the evil, and rendered all further judgment needless. The house was no longer to be viewed as in a judicial place; but, being cleansed by the application of the blood, it was again fit for occupation.

*And, now, as to the moral of all this. It is, at once, interesting, solemn, and practical.*

Look, for example, at the church at Corinth. It was a spiritual house, composed of spiritual stones; but, alas! the eagle eye of the apostle discerned upon its walls certain symptoms of a most suspicious nature. Was he indifferent? Surely not. He had imbibed far too much of the spirit of the Master of the house to admit, for one moment, of any such thing. But he was no more hasty than indifferent. He commanded the leprous stone to be removed, and gave the house a thorough scraping. Having acted thus faithfully, he patiently awaited the result. And what was that result? All that the heart could desire.

**"Nevertheless, God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more . . . In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (Comp. I Corinthians 5 with II Corinthians 7:11).**

This is a lovely instance. The zealous care of the apostle was amply rewarded; the plague was stayed, and the assembly delivered from the defiling influence of unjudged moral evil.

Take another solemn example.

**"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write: These things saith he that hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan**

**dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, Which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Revelation 2:12-16).**

Here the divine Priest stands in a judicial attitude with respect to His house at Pergamos. He could not be indifferent to symptoms so alarming; but He patiently and graciously gives time to repent. If reproof or warning, and discipline, prove unavailing, judgment must take its course.

*These things are full of practical teaching as to the doctrine of the assembly.*

The seven churches of Asia afford various striking illustrations of the house under priestly judgment. We should ponder them deeply and prayerfully. They are of immense value. We should never sit down, at ease, so long as ought of a suspicious nature is making its appearance in the assembly. We may be tempted to say, "It is none of my business;" but it is the business of every one who loves the Master of the house to have a jealous, godly care, for the purity of that house; and if we shrink; from the due exercise of this care, it will not be for our honour or profit, in the day of the Lord.

I shall not pursue this subject any further in these pages and shall merely remark, in closing this section, that I do not doubt, in the least, that this whole subject of leprosy has a great dispensational bearing, not only upon the house of Israel, but also upon the professing church.

~ end of chapter 13-14 ~

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