

Hints on the Sacrifices in Leviticus

1-3

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores the significance of the burnt-offering, sin-offering, trespass-offering, meat-offering, and peace-offering in the context of Christ's sacrifice and glorification of God.

Scripture: Leviticus 1:3

Topics: "Atonement", "Sacrifice"

Description

John Nelson Darby explores the significance of the sacrifices outlined in Leviticus 1-3, emphasizing the importance of the tabernacle as the place of divine presence and the means of approaching God. He categorizes the sacrifices into those that are a sweet savor to God, such as the burnt-offering, meat-offering, and peace-offering, and those for sin and trespass. Darby highlights that the burnt-offering represents Christ's perfect obedience and glorification of God, while the meat-offering illustrates His sinless humanity. He also discusses the communal aspect of the peace-offering, which signifies fellowship with God. Ultimately, Darby underscores that these sacrifices foreshadow the ultimate sacrifice of Christ, who reconciles humanity to God.

Transcript

Notice in the first place that the tabernacle has been set up. It is out of the tabernacle of the congregation that this instruction is given. It supposes God is there, and it is a question of approach to Him.

There are two classes of sacrifices: those made by fire for a sweet savour; and the sin and trespass offerings (pretty much the same thing), which were not for a sweet savour, though the fat of them was burnt on the altar. The three sacrifices of sweet savour are - the burnt-offering, the meat (or meal) offering, and the peace-offering. "Peace-offering" is a bad name: "sacrifices de prosperite" they are called in French.

As to the offerings, they are here given as from Jehovah in their order; they are for men, but still from the Lord, just as Christ was; whereas, when men came to offer, they came, not with the burnt-offering, but with the sin-offering first. Here the divine statement of them is made, and the sin-offering is last because this is what Christ became when He had offered up Himself. It is first when persons come by them, and the order in a measure shews the character.

We first come in Leviticus 1 to the burnt-offering. "If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd," and so on. Sometimes a bullock, and sometimes a goat, or a sheep, but a "male without blemish," representing Christ in His perfection.

"Of his own voluntary will" should rather be, "for his acceptance." There is one passage made me question it rather, but I believe that is what it should be. In chapter 22 you may make a difference; in verse 19 it means "free-will," but in verse 29 it should be "for his acceptance."

The offerer puts his hand on the head of the victim. "And it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him, and he shall kill the bullock before the Lord." Then the priest was to bring the blood, and deal with that; this is the priest's first act - to bring the blood.

The special character of the burnt-offering is, that it was not for a committed sin; on the contrary, what is to me a most wonderful thing is, that not only the question of our sins is elsewhere met, but in the burnt-offering it is the question of glorifying God in the place of sin itself - Christ "made sin." And He who knew no sin was made sin, and stood in the place of sin (at the cross) before God, so as to glorify God there; "made sin," which, except in a divine way of wisdom, is impossible. But Christ was made sin of His own voluntary will, and yet it was in obedience: these are combined; the two things are together. God "hath made him to be sin." God put Him in the place of sin, and He offered Himself for sin (and He is our passover), freely and entirely for it.

198 This is what we may see in John 18, "if ye seek me, let these go their way." Christ put Himself forward, "offered himself without spot to God"; but at the same time He is "made sin" - it is obedience too. The thing was, to unite this fact of sin being under God's eye, and so to have it there as that God should be perfectly glorified about it. And only in a victim could this be. And there was perfectness in bringing it, for it was the giving up of Himself. Besides the fact of our sins put away there, you get nothing like the atonement. It is all for us all the while; yet Christ is there "made sin," in absolute obedience and self-sacrifice, but making good the righteousness, and love, and majesty, and honour, and truth of God, and everything else that is in God. Now it is by this we come; and therefore it is not only that the sin-offering has been there, but in coming by this I come in all the value of that which has glorified God in the very place where I was; I come to God in all the value of this, and get the acceptance of it before God, like Abel. Nowhere else at all is anything seen like this.

Until the man lays his hand upon the victim, it is not a sacrifice properly. Christ, "through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God"; but now when I lay my hand upon the victim, that is the application of it, more than part of it.

We hardly get the "made sin" in the verses here. A man's bringing a burnt-offering is as good as coming to the Lord and saying, "I have no devotedness to bring; but all is due to the Lord, and I bring it in the person of my sacrifice," which in principle would be Christ. This is our coming by it: but one must come as having undevotedness, and not only everything wanting, but enmity against God - all that is bad. And then I am accepted in all the value of what Christ has done. Christ has been perfect in obedience and devotedness unto death, and He glorifies God, giving Himself up to God altogether, for this is the character offering Himself has, and He is made sin, and dealt with as such, and in this shews His absolute devotedness to God. He is sinless too of course, for He is without blemish. You will get the perfectness of Christ looked at in all His thoughts and will, as attested in the meat-offering; but here more, He is given up as a victim, made sin: there is the blood and atonement here. In the meat-offering you get what Christ was Himself

here it is His offering Himself in the place of sin, that is, made sin." If I say "instead of," I must say "sins," here not "instead of," but "made sin." We have sin brought in, which is more than saying we have sinned.

199 Just look round about, and always, and see what has come of God! He created everything good, and what state is it in? It is all corruption and defilement, and, if you could have the devil gay, it is here. Where was God's glory, and all that He had made blessed? and where was His power? It was all utter dishonour done to God. Therefore there was Jehovah's lot on the day of atonement. The whole thing was God's character. Suppose God cut all off: it would have set aside wickedness, but there could be no love in that, though it would have shewn how man had failed. It would have looked like, "I have not made the thing well, and I am obliged to smash it up." But the moment Christ comes in, you get perfect love, complete righteousness against sin, all that God is, looked at as against sin in itself; you get in the cross perfect love to the sinner, God's majesty maintained. "It became him, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." You get the truth of God carried out even against His own Son; that everything God is, the most opposite things, righteousness and love (which would have been so without sin, but) all brought out here in the person of Him who offered Himself in obedience and love; "that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." Every moral element, even that which seemed incompatible, all that God is, was displayed. And this is the place where God has been dishonoured. Thus, where all evil was, everything that was base and degrading, there the opposite was brought out when Christ was made sin.

200 The burnt-offering has more to do, then, with the nature, the sin and trespass-offering with acts, of sin. The one, the burnt-offering, is where the moral nature of God was in question; and the other, the sin-offering, where ordinances were. The burnt-offering has to do with the perfect nature of God. The great thing is that it meets God really, and in the place of sin. You might say, perhaps, it deals with our state rather than nature on our side.

It is the "Where art thou?" not "What hast thou done?" "Where art thou?" and Christ was the forsaken of God; there is grace for us. Thus the burnt-offering goes wider than the state of the world, and this is why I say in the place where sin was. But I am not speaking of Satan to include him at all.

The expression in verse 4, "to make atonement," is the Piel (intensive active) form of the Hebrew verb Kaphar. It is all a question what Kaphar means. What led me to that was, it is the same word which is usually translated "to make atonement for," which means "to cover." If I am putting away sin I cover it, but then I find the Hebrew word which means "upon" (or with), and if you cover upon, you put out of sight. Thus I find this word Kaphar used about the scapegoat, Kaphar with the altar, the incense altar, as well as with the scapegoat. I get into some abstract way of thinking about it, and, if you look in a dictionary, you find no great help.

The scapegoat is an instance of the perfect nonsense of speculation. Some make the scapegoat a demon, and then sent away; some that it was sent away to appease the demon, lest he should do mischief to Israel; and one makes out that, while Azazel was a demon, they sent the sins all back to him.

Well, it is as to sin in the sin and trespass-offering, but here it is sin. It is the same Hebrew form in Leviticus 1:4; 16:10, "to make atonement for him," and "with him," in our Bibles.

There is "atonement about," and another case. two or three times of "cover over," and "from."

The entire burnt-offering was wholly burnt to God; it was Jehovah's lot, in a way, on that one point - sin. The skin - as in the case of Adam and Eve - was given to the priest, but the whole carcass went up burnt to God. It was Christ's offering God-ward, so to speak, but as a man, and made sin.

201 The wrath of God against sin was here, yet there came up a sweet savour. Such is the very fact. Instead of His being disobedient unto death, death was there, and sin was there, and He was obedient unto it; it was the perfection of the opposite of sin. Here Christ does God's will perfectly, and that is the mystery. In the very place and condition of sin you find this; when He offers Himself, and says, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me; but that the world may know that I love the Father," that is perfectness on one side; "and as the Father gave me commandment," that is the other side: and, being made sin, He has to drink the cup, and He says, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Is the priest's having the skin the satisfaction of Christ in His own work? Perhaps so. Christ is covered with the glory of it anyway, only He had nothing like nakedness to cover. Abel's offering had this character in its nature. There is no sin-offering until the law, though sins were there. The law brought out the definite transgressions, and therefore the sin-offering then got its place in an intelligent way. Abel had no sin actually named. It was the "where," and not the "what," in his case.

The Epistle to the Romans is the broad fact of the "what" to chapter 5:11: afterwards the "where" is followed out. What we call the nature is practically identified with the "where"; but in the burnt-offering we look more on God's side, at the fact rather than at the nature that is active. Now, in order to get rid of the nature, I die with Christ: this is another element brought in. For when I look at the condition, I say, there is Christ the victim that died between me and God because of sin.

Then you get details. They washed the parts of the animal, that they should be ostensibly clean, to keep the idea of absolute cleanness.

Being made sin is not the idea of imputation. With imputation I could not have a sweet savour. This sacrifice is not for remission, but for glorifying God. The end of 2 Corinthians 5 is not remission. That is where I take up the difference between God's righteousness and righteousness under law. Men make Christ's righteousness in life under law to be our righteousness. All that was necessary in Him first. But in my righteousness now I get all the perfection of what Christ is. It is not what He did as a living man, but God's own character was glorified in it, and my positive righteousness is according to what God's nature is. That is why I felt the importance of what was said about it. My objection was that it kept saints back from the infinite acceptance they have in Christ in this way. It was not the mere putting away of sins, as in Romans 3, 4, which is only forgiveness; but the burnt-offering has its own infinite value and character. The result shews it: Christ is now in the glory, and I am accepted in the Beloved.

202 It has been thought that the grades were to enable a poor man to bring an offering, which some have thought shewed the estimate of the offerer. It was not killed before the altar, that is, between the gate and the altar, but northward. It might shew a certain intelligence, at any rate it was not simply the man's coming up as he pleased. One entered the gate at the east of the court, and the north was to the right hand. He must do God's will.

In the meat-offering we get a picture of Christ's person fully tested by the righteousness of God.

Fire is testing judgment, not death at all. If there be only a little dross, fire purges it out: if there be only evil, it is consumed.

In the meat-offering the points are, the perfect humanity, and the Holy Ghost, which was the oil, but employed in different ways. The frankincense is the perfect grace that goes up to God. The burning on the altar is the thing that gives the sufferings of Christ. There are other variations: the oil kneaded in the flour gives Christ born by the Holy Ghost; the anointing with oil is what Christ was after His baptism. There is another character: it was broken to bits, and they were all anointed with oil to shew that every part of Christ was in the power of the Spirit of God.

Its simple existence as a cake was sinless humanity, and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is baked, but not baked meal by itself: when it was a meal-offering, "baked in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil, thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon." There it is a kind of cake common among the Hebrews, then "baken in the oven," or "in the frying-pan," that is, in every possible way. When it was offered, it was taken out. Parted in pieces means in every detail, words, works, everything. There were two things that could not be in it, honey and leaven, save in two exceptional cases. But there must always be salt. It is said, both of sin-offering and meat-offering, that they are "most holy."

203 Next they were eaten by the priests; it was a priestly thing, not to be eaten by the priests' daughters, as was allowed in some of the peace-offerings.

Leaven is corruption, or sin; and honey is not allowed either, for it represents the sweetness of nature, which may be a very pleasant thing sometimes, but cannot go into a sacrifice: salt must - "the salt of the covenant of thy God," which is the separative power of holiness. "Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." Everybody will get judgment; wicked and good will get fire, but it is only sacrifices offered to God that really have the power which separates from evil, and keeps evil away.

Honey is pleasant and good in its place sometimes. I was thinking of Jonathan. The Lord does refresh us with outward mercies, kind things, the friendship of brethren, but with caution as to the use of them. "Hast thou found honey? Eat as much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it," and too much even here does do so.

The Lord Jesus had no honey, not a bit - He had divine kindness. Honey would have taken Him up to Mary and Martha when Lazarus was sick, if I may use such a figure, but salt kept Him away. There could be no honey in a sacrifice, nor in a meat-offering, "for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire."

The honeycomb in Luke 24, I suppose, was good in its place. It is not meant that honey in itself is bad naturally. The moment He became the cake after the baptism of John, there was no honey. There should be our answer to it, "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." Fire being the perfect testing of God's judgment, we have Christ here, not merely looked at as making atonement, but also as tested by the fire on the cross. This is true of everyone: everyone shall be salted with fire. The fire burns out dross, if there is any to burn. This is the testing of Him who was made sin, but there is no blood-shedding here. It answers to the Lord's death in Luke, and this character is in the garden there. John is the burnt-offering rather, in which He offers Himself. There were some meat-offerings in which leaven was bound to be put. On the day of Pentecost, when the church was offered, brought to God, leaven was put in; and in the offering of the firstfruits - not in the first of the firstfruits, there was leaven. The moment you bring us in, you have it, but not in anything for a sweet savour.

204 As to "green ears" of corn dried by the fire, Christ was a green tree, as a living one, and He says, as it were, If I come to this, what will come to Israel that is dead? Here, took green is full of life, and then dried by fire. So Christ, and He was a sweet savour. "Thou shalt offer for the meat-offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn, dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears." They were to be full, as Christ was. The rest was most holy, when the memorial and the frankincense had been burnt; this all went up to God. You have both meal-cakes and firstfruits as meat-offerings; and there was always oil upon it, except in the case of meal for a poor person's sin-offering. And also in the offering of anything with leaven there was a sin-offering with it which meets our leaven, so to speak.

There are beautiful details of Christ - what you see in His life: somewhat like a great picture full of people, where they give you a little outline of the heads of them all, to say who they are. For these sacrifices are very like that.

Then in the peace-offering we have the great facts of atonement for sin, no less than of His death, as well as the bread come down from heaven. It is not the same thought, but the two things; and the result. We have had Christ in perfectness as dying for us, and in the perfectness of His person, and then we come to talk of communion.

The force of the offering is communion, no doubt, because the people eat of it; but the name has nothing to do with that. It is a prosperity-offering, either a thanksgiving, or for vows. The man brought his animal, laid his hand upon its head, killed it at the door of the tabernacle, and the priest took the blood, and sprinkled it upon the altar. The fat went to Jehovah, to be burnt upon the altar for a sweet savour. You cannot separate that from Christ offering Himself as a burnt offering.

The word is merely to make a fire. I do not know of any distinct meaning. It may be mentioned like the unjust judge in the parable: God is not an unjust judge, but the judge is introduced to make the picture complete. In the meat-offering there is all Christ's life before He was offered. A peace-offering could not be offered by itself; it is not to be separated from the burnt-offering (chap. 3:5). In point of fact the meat-offering was offered with the burnt-offering; they are two aspects of the same Christ. "The priest" does not mean "the high priest." It is said, "the priests, Aaron's sons, shall do" so and so.

205 When we arrive at the law of the peace-offering, a portion is for Jehovah, for the priest that offers it, for the priests in general, and for the company. There is God's joy; Christ's own joy; the priests generally, as such, rejoice, and the company of the faithful.

Fowls were allowed for a burnt-offering, as a perfection of grace, if a man was poor; whereas, for a peace-offering, if he could not bring an animal, he might stay at home, and take it quietly. No matter how poor my thoughts are, I cannot do without a burnt-offering.

These were all the offerings of a sweet savour. The fat and the blood were not to be eaten; the spring of life - the fat was the expression of that; and all that was in Christ was offered to God. "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." Fat is used there for a certain energy of life, and so elsewhere.

The family ate the peace-offering, so, if a man asked a company to dinner, he had to make a peace-offering of it, and part was offered to Jehovah, and part to the priests, and the company made their feast of the rest. If a man killed an animal in the wilderness, and did not bring it for an offering to the Lord, that soul was to be cut off from his people (Lev. 17:3, 41:5; Deut. 12:21). And you notice, his own hand is to bring the offering made by fire (chap. 7:30). "The fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast

may be waved for a wave-offering before the Lord." "And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for a heave-offering of the sacrifices of your peace-offerings."

First is the offering in itself, and then the directions for all the circumstances connected with it.

In reality, when you come to the peace-offering, it was a festival. All that concerns sin comes first, and then other things afterwards.

Leviticus 4 - 6:1-7.

There was no forgiveness for sins done with a high hand under the law. It is said distinctly, "if a soul shall sin through ignorance." Paul says mercy was shewn him "because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." So of old, if a man sinned haughtily, as in blasphemy, he was stoned. There is forgiveness for such sins now; but not if done after full knowledge of Christ so as to give Him up. "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

206 Nothing is excluded from forgiveness now except blaspheming the Holy Ghost in apostasy from Christ, that is, denying Him in nature. One may go to Christ as a wretched guilty man ("such were some of you"), and yet be forgiven.

In Israel there was a priest, by whom those who sinned had to approach; but the priest could not come within the veil except on the day of atonement. Suppose the people sinned, they were cut off from God; and if the priest sinned, the people were cut off, because they could only come to God by the priest.

The blood was not carried in for a single person, because this would have said that the whole thing was wrong, which was not the case; it was for the high priest or for all the people.

All is changed as to this now. It is what the apostle means by "the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image": which could not go on when Christ died and went to heaven. The priest, in chapter 4:2, is supposed to be the high priest. I do not think Aaron's sons would come under the expression in verse 3. They did not represent all the people: only the high priest did so. The "priest that is anointed" always means the high priest. He was not to defile himself for father or mother, or for dead body, and the reason given is, "upon whose head the anointing oil is poured." The high priest was anointed in a totally different way from the others, without blood; but the others had oil and blood mixed put upon them, and then, with Aaron, they were to put it upon them and their clothes, with him, not with them; they are brought in by the bye, as it were. He was first anointed without blood at all, and then they are brought with him and sprinkled with blood, and after that oil was taken with some blood and put on them. But there was no regular anointing for them; so that properly he was the anointed priest, and when they were in their way anointed, it was with him, their garments, and this and that., with him. So it is given in chapter 8:30: "and Moses took of the anointing oil and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him, and sanctified Aaron, and his garments and his sons' garments with him," not with them but with him. It is identifying them all with him; he had the anointing already. And the son is then with the priest that is anointed, which is very natural. This gives the place of the church with Christ. Looked at strictly, the sons of Aaron represent us. The remnant after we go, as regards the world, will be priests; but they are not partakers of the heavenly calling. I have no doubt the epistle to the Hebrews is like the reaching over the wall; in a way it is blessing in provision for a coming time as well as for the present. We do not see the saints, Christians, on the highest ground at all in Hebrews; but Christ is in heaven looked at as there instead of and for them. I

believe He preserves Israel at this moment by being inside, for He "died for that nation."

207 There was this peculiarity in the sacrifice for the people as a whole that the blood was brought inside, as the body was burnt outside the camp. The blood was carried in, as far as possible, into what was heavenly; on the great day of atonement it went right in, and Israel are reconciled on the ground of what is heavenly, though they do not get things heavenly; but they are reconciled on the ground of the blood being presented to God in heaven, and the day of atonement has this character in measure. The difference between that and the common person's offering is very important; for, if an individual sinned, the people were still in communion, and it is merely a restoring of the person himself; but if the priest or the congregation sinned, the breach was total, and all the people were upon the same ground as the sinner. Reconciliation in the main must be as regards God, and blood must go in to Him: we are wholly upon this ground.

I do not think you could say, to or of Israel, If we walk in the light as God is in the light. But the atonement for them had been presented to God in the light. The difference in our case is, that we are called into the place where the atonement has been offered. Israel will have to stand on the ground of mere fleshly religion being set aside. They cannot have their own blessing even without the blood having been offered to God, and therefore without their giving up all fleshly religion. Law was religion in flesh, or religion for a people in flesh, and it was to prove totally wanting. No provisional sacrifices would do. The whole system was to demonstrate the failure of such a ground. They were put there with appliances for occasional restoration, but it was evidently all of no use, and this from the very beginning itself. They made a golden calf at once. God went on to shew whether a people could go on, mixing grace with law, and grace as it were to help them out; but they could not. So the sacrifices took that ground of fleshly religion for a time.

208 In the millennium when it comes, the sacrifices will be figures in a measure as they used to be. The people will not go into heavenly places then; but the sacrifices had to go into the figures of the heavenly places, and the blood was carried in to the mercy-seat in the holiest of all and sprinkled there. The camp was fleshly religion, and the veil was there; but the blood must be in the holiest, and the body be burnt outside the camp even for Israel to get a blessing. It must be effectual with God; this is what is wanted. So the apostle reasons for us, that "the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." We have now got heavenly things, and we must go outside the camp. In the millennium neither have they heavenly things nor will they go outside the camp. The blessing depends on Christ having gone outside the camp originally, and He in virtue of His blood is gone into the heavenlies; but when He comes again, the blessing on earth will be made good. Meanwhile we must go outside the camp and have, too, the privilege of going into the holiest; but if I take this world, I say there is no camp now. There is a professing church, we know, but it is all an untrue thing. Whether for us or for the millennium, Christ must go in either case within the veil; but it is only we who go there now. There will be a veil in Ezekiel's temple in that way, but unrent. Israel will not go within. The difference is evident and great.

In another image Moses went and pitched the tabernacle outside the camp, and those who sought Jehovah came out to that tent of meeting outside; and Moses goes back, Joshua stays outside: that is, the Spirit of Christ graciously goes inside to see what He could do with them, while the heavenly Christ stays outside. It is beautiful in Moses again, where he says, when up in the mountain, 'If you do not forgive the people, blot me out! What will you do with your glory? You brought this people out of Egypt.' Thus he identifies the people with God's glory. When he is with God, he insists on their being spared at any cost,

for the reason that he did identify the people with the glory of God. And then he comes down, and, seeing the calf, he says "kill every man his brother, and companion, and neighbour," because to him the people were identified with God's glory. His faith says, "spare them" - his faithfulness says, "kill them," - on the same ground of God's glory.

209 Here, in the offering, it is the great principle of Christ laying the basis of it all. But there is in the mercy-seat and altar this difference (though grace is in both): the blood was put upon the altar for the individual; the altar - the measure of it all - was the place of man's responsibility according to the law; whereas when the blood was carried inside, this was where God sat, it was responsibility before Him, and so, except to give a figure of Christ, the priest never went in at all. Judaism could not bring there. I know it was not so ordained at first; but as soon as the priests failed, then He says even of Aaron the high priest, "Come not at all times unto the holy place within the veil," for really it was all a failed thing, and man could not have to say to God on that ground.

The gold shews righteousness according to God's nature. Righteousness is the girdle of Messiah's loins. So the high priest had a golden girdle, divine righteousness. The brazen altar was God's perfect judgment of the responsibility of man, which made a difference of measure. God requiring of me according to my responsibility is a different thing from requiring in His own character.

At the brazen altar the nature of God is not brought in. Every sin does touch God's nature, but that is not considered under the law. But on the great day of atonement the work had to be done according to God's nature, or they could not have had to say to God at all.

The blood on the great day of atonement answered for the people's sins for the whole year (and now for us for ever); and then it was begun again. The people never went in at all: the blood had to go in (or there could be no reconciliation as a whole) once a year, "the Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." There is never anything about the people going in; only when it was a reconciliation for the whole, the ground must be as Christ laid it, or it would be no reconciliation with God.

210 The sprinkling of the blood of the others - the ruler's and the common person's sin-offering - was upon the brazen altar. But the priest's was on the golden altar; for how could a priest go and offer incense if he had sinned? And if he could not do this, there was no intercourse with God. The people never went beyond the brazen altar at all, where the burnt and peace offerings were offered, the place of ordinary intercourse. They were all individual cases.

On the great day of atonement everything is done. The sins of the people are dealt with; the nature of God is met, before and on the mercy-seat: the defilement of the tabernacle removed (that is, of the heavens itself, and of the altar); and the people's sins are confessed on the head of the scapegoat.

Had there not been sin in the priests, Nadab and Abihu, etc., would have gone in and out as Moses did; but as it was, they were prohibited.

The veil is not rent for the Jew by-and-by, unless it be in the sense of the putting away of sin, but not for him to go in.

God could not bless definitely, without being glorified as to sin: but in the two first sin-offerings in Leviticus 4, the priest did not actually go in, but only where he was accustomed to go, to the altar of incense. But

when we come to the real thing done, the blood is upon the mercy-seat, it goes upon the pure gold. The sprinkling of the blood before the veil and sprinkling it upon the horns of the golden altar presents a similar aspect of things. With us the censer belongs inside, but the altar of incense was outside the veil; it is when its use is interrupted, as it were, by sin, that blood has to be put there. It was sprinkled seven times, this being the perfectness which we constantly find in scripture. The altar itself had been defiled by the sin, and therefore it had to be sprinkled. Then "outside the camp" is most important here, and on the day of atonement too; because, if we bring in the nature and character of God, the thing is a reproach to the world and it must go outside. There is plenty of religiousness inside the camp, but we cannot have death in the presence of God, nor bring together before God things that do not suit.

211 Suppose you have a number of worldly people round you, you can ask God to bless them; but you cannot go on with a priestly prayer, less so than you could even with the animals around you. But if the individual sinned, there was failure in his individual responsibility, but no interruption between God and the people. The person had got astray, and it was a question of his responsibility, and one that he could so far estimate, so that there is no taking the body outside the camp. Every man knows that sin cannot do for God. So it was then in a worldly religion, the brazen altar being the estimate of the evil according to man's responsibility. But there it came within the limits of man and of the world. Go and say to a worldly-minded man, You must be partaker of God's holiness; or talk to him about a nature that cannot sin because born of God! He either hates it, or thinks you raving; but he would perfectly understand that he is not to steal, kill, and so on. Such was the case with the brazen altar for the Israelite, the law being only a shadow of good things to come. Now, we must walk in the light as God is in the light; for the veil is rent. It is not now merely that I must have the sins put away, of which I am guilty in the earth, so as to go on with God in ordinary intercourse, but the claims of God on me are according to the light in which He is revealed in Christ. So scripture shews distinctly that, though the Christian has a consciousness of failure, he has, when once purged, no more conscience of sins; as typically in Israel the great day of atonement, when the blood was put on the mercy-seat, was the basis of all that went on through the year. God's character must be met, even to go on with His material government in patience and mercy.

If all the people sinned, all were shut out, and so, if a priest sinned, in effect it was the same; but if one of the common people sinned, all the rest are not put out, and then the altar of incense needs not to be restored.

Thus, wherever the blood was carried in, the bullock had to be carried outside and burnt: but in other cases the priests ate the sin-offering. Christ enters into our sins and sorrows, identifying Himself with them in grace, all spotless as He was Himself.

The moment you get sin, it is dealt with before God. Man has no idea of the effect of the judgment of sin in the divine presence. If a man may take away your character, you might take him away if you could; but if he takes away God's character, nobody cares for that! In the world fleshly religion can take up man's responsibility, and say that he ought to do so and so, and there must be this and that, if he does not. But now ours is priestly intercourse, and such intercourse with God must be according to what God is: we must be in His presence to intercede after His mind.

212 The fat was burnt upon the altar, and the blood was sprinkled there; it was not brought in for the common person, for the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. The thing God was teaching was, in Israel, the impossibility of having man in His presence. He could not have Israel near Him. There was man's rule (under the law) just and perfect, with certain types of Christ; but God never came out, and man

never could go in. In Christianity God has come out in grace to man, and man is gone in to the glory of God: so we see and have it in the person of Christ.

The trespass-offering is in the main identical with the sin-offering, but it is not sin in some positive evil done against any of the commandments of Jehovah, but a thing that natural conscience can take cognizance of Achan's was positive disobedience: there was no atonement at all for that under the law.

The last three sin-offerings having "and it shall be forgiven him," but the first not, lead us to suppose that it is dropped purposely as pointing to Christ, the high priest. As any special application, it would be this, I suppose. In his standing as representing the people, there might be that in it. The difference is plain. The distinction between sin and sins as in Romans may be in the burnt-offering distinguished from the sin-offering to a certain extent; but here nature is hardly dealt with specifically. It is exceptional, if we have anything directly referring to sin in the nature. One of the things at times to be met is that some, like Wesley, define sin as the wilful transgression of a known law, while others have said that a lust is no sin until it comes into an open act. As 1 John 3 teaches, sin is lawlessness.

In the beginning of chapter 5 (v. 1), there is the kind of oath that is different from voluntary swearing: "And if a soul sin and hear the voice of an oath" (that is, administered by the magistrate), "and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it, if he do not utter it" (i.e., give his evidence), then he shall bear his iniquity."

213 The Lord Himself said, "Swear not at all" so we should not voluntarily take an oath, that is, of our own choice and will. But the Lord Himself when He stood before the high priest, the moment He was adjured, took the oath and answered when He had been silent before. It is not evil before a magistrate to swear, but good; it comes of evil otherwise. I should deny God in the magistrate if I did not answer when he adjured me. But to take an oath of my own will is to bring in God for nothing at all, that is, profanely. So the sin here in this verse is not uttering, that is, withholding evidence. In Exodus 21:6 (and twice in chapter 22:9, and once in chapter 22:8), "judges" is "elohim" - God, and this because the magistrate is for God: "the powers that be are ordained by God." We are to submit to them.

As for the manner of taking an oath, the king holds up his hand to take the oath: it is the commonest way of taking it. You are bound by that as much as by anything else. Whatever binds is enough. Only I am adjured by God, because the magistrate represents God. There are questions of swearing which present more difficulty; as for instance going into court and swearing to recover a debt for yourself. This is just a case of conscience; but I make no rules for anybody: people are not entitled to do so.

There is a double figure in these chapters, not only one of Christ's sacrifice, but also of failure in the assembly, that is, of the saints now. Our whole position is changed now. We have no more conscience of sins, but we see the way in which the value of what these prefigure is applied as in Numbers 19, where they are passing through the wilderness or world. There the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled seven times before the door of the tabernacle; it was (for us) settled there once for all. But when a man had touched a dead thing, he was not in a fit state to go into the camp and enjoy his place there, he was unclean and the water of purification must be applied to him. The water, the Holy Ghost by the word, was the witness of what Christ has done. This makes all the difference. Christianity asserts for believers the non-imputation of sins. What we see of old was a sacrifice that worked like a priest's absolution now.

214 In verses 2, 3 we see the person unclean without knowing it. Yet he is guilty, but he cannot act as guilty until he knows it. God cannot look at sin. If I have a spot on my back, God cannot have me with that

spot on. Some one may help me to get rid of it, but I am unclean with it. In Numbers 15 there is a difference; in verse 27 it is mercy, but in verse 30 the man is to be cut off. What is cutting off? He is put out from God's people altogether. Occasionally God did it; sometimes the people stoned the man themselves. It means death of course.

Leviticus 6:8 - 8.

In chapter 6:9, the point is (and a very important one it is) that the fire was to be burning always. As in Isaiah 6 all was from the brazen altar. There is no real prayer or praise, or anything of the kind, save in connection with the sacrifice of Christ; so in Revelation 8. He takes the fire from the brazen altar in verse 5. The altar in verse 3 seems to me to be the altar of incense. Take it as a rule: no fire is used save off the brazen altar.

Continuous burning gives no cessation of the judgment by God according to a holy nature. It is burning all night, and, in a certain sense, for Israel, who are kept by Christ now, kept through His sacrifice which is perpetual in value.

One other point: in the meat offering the frankincense went up to God entirely. The priests ate of the flour, but all the grace goes up to God. It was holy; and when the priests offered a meat-offering, it was all burnt. It is Christ Himself: there He is offerer and offering; and it was for no one save God Himself so to speak.

Israel really took up little of these things. Even the instructions of Deuteronomy are very different. All this is written for us. I doubt very much if any offerings, save the official offerings, were offered in the wilderness at all. Stephen in Acts 7 quotes Amos, and asks, "Have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, which ye made to worship them; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon."

Before the strange fire there was more freedom for access, but it was not made use of.

215 So in the peace-offering; they were iniquities if they went beyond the second or third day, because they were not connected with the sacrifice (chap. 7:15-18). If the sacrifice were a vow, it might be eaten on the next day as well as the first; if a thanksgiving, it must be eaten the first day. If there be more energy in the worship, you may carry it on longer (as here two days instead of one); but if it is practically separated from the victim burnt on the altar, it is unclean altogether and is rejected. You cannot separate praise or worship from the offering of Christ: without this it becomes a positive abomination. A man may be singing a sweet hymn with a thought of Christ in it; but being disconnected from Christ Himself, it is a mere piece of music and offensive to God. It is possible to make requests that the Holy Ghost gives to be asked, and to find that you are losing the sense of the Person to whom you are speaking. Worship must be in spirit and in truth. It is solemn to give out a hymn. Take Hymn 151: are you speaking truthfully in singing it? 'Each thought of Thee doth constant yield, Unchanging, fresh delight'? Perhaps you may be able to go up to it. Suppose I sing "Oh teach me more of Thy blest ways," this is very different: what are these "blest ways," and am I learning them? Then again take "O Lord, how blest our journey": I may ask, Is this true of myself? I do not say, Is it true? but, Is it true to me?

The waving is presenting before God; and the heaving is a little stronger. It is all owned as Jehovah's - all for the priests' eating, and then they eat it.

The drink-offering is universally the joy of God. It was thorough action between God and the people.

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