

NOTES
ON
THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

by

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"Things new and old."

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Leviticus 5:14 - Leviticus 6:7

These verses contain the doctrine of the trespass offering, of which there were two distinct kinds, namely, trespass against GOD, and trespass against man.

"If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the Lord, then shall he bring for his trespass unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering."

Here we have a case in which a positive wrong was done, in the holy things which pertained unto the Lord; and, albeit this was done "**through ignorance**," yet could it not be passed over. GOD can forgive all manner of trespass, but He cannot pass over a single jot or tittle. His grace is perfect, and therefore He can forgive all. His holiness is perfect, and therefore He cannot pass over anything. He cannot sanction iniquity, but He can blot it out, and that, moreover, according to the perfection of His grace, and according to the perfect claims of His holiness.

It is a very grave error to suppose that, provided a man acts up to the dictates of his conscience, he is all right and safe. The peace which rests upon such a foundation as this will be eternally destroyed when the light of the judgment-seat shines in upon the conscience. GOD could never lower His claim to such a level. The balances of the sanctuary are regulated by a very different scale from that afforded by the most sensitive conscience. We have had occasion to dwell upon this point before, in the notes on the sin offering. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon.

There are two things involved in it:

- first, a just perception of what the holiness of GOD really is; and,
- secondly, a clear sense of the ground of a believer's peace, in the divine presence.

Whether it be a question of my condition or my conduct, my nature or my acts, GOD alone can be the Judge of what suits Himself, and of what befits His holy presence. Can human ignorance furnish a plea, when divine requirements are in question? GOD forbid.

A wrong has been done "**in the holy things of the Lord**;" but man's conscience has not taken cognizance of it. What then? Is there to be nothing more about it? Are the claims of GOD to be thus lightly disposed of? Assuredly not. This would be subversive of every thing like divine relationship.

The righteous are called to give thanks at the remembrance of GOD's holiness. (Psalm 97:12). How can they do this? Because their peace has been secured on the ground of the full vindication and perfect establishment of that holiness. Hence, the higher their sense of what that holiness is, the deeper and more settled must be their peace. This is a truth of the most precious nature. The unregenerate man could never rejoice in the divine holiness His aim would be to lower that holiness, if he could not ignore it altogether. Such an one will console himself with the thought that GOD is good, GOD is gracious, GOD is merciful; but you will never find him rejoicing in the thought that GOD is holy. He has unholy thoughts respecting GOD's goodness, His grace, and His mercy. He would fain find in those blessed attributes, an excuse for his continuing in sin.

On the contrary, the renewed man exults in the holiness of GOD.

He sees The full expression thereof in the Cross of the Lord JESUS CHRIST. It is that holiness which has laid the foundation of his peace; and, not only so, but he is made a partaker of it, and he delights in it, while he hates sin with a perfect hatred. The instincts of the divine nature shrink from it, and long after holiness. It would be impossible to enjoy true peace and liberty of heart, if one did not know that the claims connected with "**the holy things of the Lord**" had been perfectly met by our divine Trespass Offering. There would ever be, springing up in the heart, the painful sense that those claims had been slighted, through our manifold infirmities and shortcomings.

Our very best services, our holiest seasons, our most hallowed exercises, may present something of trespass "in the holy things of the Lord" - "something that ought not to be done." How often are our seasons of public worship and private devotion infringed upon and marred by barrenness and distraction! Hence it is that we need the assurance that our trespasses have all been divinely met by the precious Blood of CHRIST. Thus, in the ever-blessed Lord JESUS, we find One who has come down to the full measure of our necessities as sinners by nature, and trespassers in act. We find in Him the perfect answer to all the cravings of a guilty conscience, and to all the claims of infinite holiness, in reference to all our sins and all our trespasses; so that the believer can stand, with an uncondemning conscience and emancipated heart, in the full light of that holiness which is too pure to behold iniquity or look upon sin.

"And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him" (Leviticus 5:16).

In the addition of "**the fifth part**," as here set forth, we have a feature of the true Trespass Offering, which, it is to be feared, is but little appreciated.

When we think of all the wrong and all the trespass which we have done against the Lord; and, further, when we remember how GOD has been wronged of His rights in this wicked world, with what interest can we contemplate the work of the Cross as that wherein GOD has not merely received back what was lost, but whereby He is an actual gainer. He has gained more by redemption than ever He lost by the fall. He reaps a richer harvest of glory, honour, and praise, in the fields of redemption, than ever He could have reaped from those of creation. "**The sons of God**" could raise a loftier song of praise around the empty tomb of JESUS than ever they raised in view of the Creator's accomplished work.

The wrong has not only been perfectly atoned for, but an eternal advantage has been gained, by the work of the Cross.

This is a stupendous truth. GOD is a gainer by the work of Calvary. Who could have conceived this? When we behold man, and the creation of which he was Lord, laid in ruins at the feet of the enemy, how could we conceive that, from amid those ruins, GOD should gather richer and nobler spoils than any which our unfallen world could have yielded.

Blessed be the name of JESUS for all this. It is to Him we owe it all. It is by His precious cross that ever a truth so amazing, so divine, could be enunciated. Assuredly, that cross involves a mysterious wisdom "**which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory**" (I Corinthians 2:8).

- no marvel, therefore, that round that cross, and round Him who was crucified thereon, the affections of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, have ever entwined themselves.
- no marvel that the Holy Ghost should have given forth that solemn but just decree, "**If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha**" (I Corinthians 16:22). Heaven and earth shall echo forth a loud and an eternal amen to this anathema.
- no marvel that it should be the fixed and immutable purpose of the divine mind, that "**at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father**" (Philippians 2:10, 11).

The same law in reference to "**the fifth part**" obtained in the case of a trespass committed against a man, as we read, "**If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, * and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or have deceived his neighbour, or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath**

sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offerings (Leviticus 6:2-5).

* There is a fine principle invoked in the expression, "**against the Lord.**" Although the matter in question was a wrong done to one's neighbour, yet the Lord looked upon it as a trespass against himself. Everything must be viewed in reference to the Lord. It matters not who may be affected, the Lord must get the first place. Thus, when David's conscience was pierced by the arrow of conviction, in reference to his treatment of Uriah, he exclaims, "**I have sinned against the Lord**" (II Samuel 12:13). This principle does not, in the least, interfere with the injured man's claim.

Man, as well as GOD, is a positive gainer by the Cross.

The believer can say, as he gazes upon that cross, "Well, it matters not how I have been wronged, how I have been trespassed against, how I have been deceived, what ills have been done to me, I am a gainer by the Cross. I have not merely received back all that was lost, but much more beside."

Thus, whether we think of the injured, or the injurer, in any given case, we are equally struck with the glorious triumphs of redemption, and the mighty practical results which flow from that Gospel which fills the soul with the happy assurance, that "**all trespasses**" are "**forgiven,**" And that the root from whence those trespasses have sprung, has been judged - "**The Gospel of the glory of the blessed God**" is that which alone can send forth a man into the midst of a scene which has been the witness of his sins, his trespasses, and his injurious ways - can send him back to all who, in anywise, have been sufferers by his evil doings, furnished with grace, not only to repair the wrongs, but, far more, to allow the full tide of practical benevolence to flow forth in all his ways, yea, to love his enemies, to do good to them that hate him, and to pray for them that spitefully use him and persecute him. Such is the precious grace of GOD, that acts in confession with our great Trespass Offering. - such are its rich, rare, and refreshing fruits!

What a triumphant answer to the caviller who could say, "**Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?**"

Grace not merely cuts up sin by the roots, but transforms the sinner:

- from a curse into a blessing;
- from a moral plague, into a channel of divine mercy;
- from an emissary of Satan, into a messenger of GOD;
- from a child of darkness, into a son of the light;
- from a self-indulgent pleasure-hunter, into a self-denying lover of GOD;
- from a slave of vile, selfish lusts, into a willing-hearted servant of CHRIST;
- from a cold, narrow-hearted miser, into a benevolent minister to the need of his fellow-man.

Away, then, with the oft repeated taunts,

- "Are we to do nothing?"
- "That is a marvelously easy way to be saved"
- "According to this Gospel we may live as we list."

Let all who utter such language behold yonder thief transformed into a liberal donor, and let them be silent for ever. (See Ephesians 4:28). They know not what grace means. They have never felt its sanctifying and elevating influences. They forget that, while the blood of the trespass offering cleanses the conscience, the law of that offering sends the trespasser back to the one whom he has wronged, with "**the principal**" and "**the fifth**" in his hand.

Noble testimony this, both to the grace and righteousness of the GOD of Israel!

Beauteous exhibition of the results of that marvellous scheme of redemption, whereby the injurer is forgiven, and the injured becomes the actual gainer!

The conscience has been set to rights, by the Blood of the Cross, in reference to the claims of GOD, the conduct must be set to rights, by the holiness of the Cross, in reference to the claims of practical righteousness. These things must never be separated. GOD has joined them together, and let not man put them asunder. The hallowed union will never be dissolved by any mind which is governed by pure Gospel morality. Alas! it is easy to profess the principles of grace, while the practice and power thereof are completely denied. It is easy to talk of resting in the blood of the trespass offering, while "**the principal**" and "**the fifth**" are not forthcoming. This is vain, and worse than vain. "**He that doeth not righteousness is not of God**" (I John 3:10).

Nothing can be more dishonouring to the pure grace of the Gospel than the supposition that a man may belong to GOD, while his conduct and character exhibit not the fair traces of practical holiness.

"**Known unto God are all his works,**" no doubt; but He has given us, in His holy Word, those evidences by which we can discern those that belong to Him.

"**The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity**" (II Timothy 2:19).

We have no right to suppose that an evildoer belongs to GOD. The holy instincts of the divine nature are shocked by the mention of such a thing. People sometimes express much difficulty in accounting for such and such evil practices on the part of those whom they cannot help regarding in the light of Christians.

The Word of GOD settles the matter so clearly and so authoritatively, as to leave no possible ground for any such difficulty.

"**In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.**"

It is well to remember this, in this day of laxity and self-indulgence. There is a fearful amount of

easy, uninfluential profession abroad, against which the genuine Christian is called upon to make a firm stand, and bear a severe testimony - a testimony resulting from the steady exhibition of **"the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."**

It is most deplorable to see so many going along the beaten path - the well-trodden highway of religious profession, and yet manifesting not a trace of love or holiness in their conduct. Christian reader, let us be faithful. Let us rebuke, by a life of self-denial and genuine benevolence, the self-indulgence and culpable inactivity of evangelical yet worldly profession.

May GOD grant unto all His true-hearted people abundant grace for these things!

*Let us now proceed to compare the two classes of trespass offering; namely, the offering on account of trespass **"in the holy things of the Lord,"** and that which had reference to a trespass committed in the common transactions and relations of human life. In so doing, we shall find one or two points which demand our attentive consideration.*

And, first, the expression, **"if a soul sin through ignorance,"** which occurs in the former, is omitted in the latter. The reason of this is obvious. The claims which stand connected with the holy things of the Lord, must pass, infinitely, beyond the reach of the most elevated human sensibility. Those claims may be, continually, interfered with - continually trespassed upon, and the trespasser not be aware of the fact. A man's consciousness can never be the regulator in the sanctuary of GOD. This is an unspeakable mercy. GOD's holiness alone must fix the standard, when GOD's rights are in question.

Oh the other hand, the human conscience can readily grasp the full amount of a human claim, and can readily take cognizance of any interference with such claim. How often may we have wronged GOD, in His holy things, without ever taking a note of it in the tablet of conscience - yea without having the competency to detect it. (See Malachi 3:8).

Not so, however, when man's rights are in question. The wrong which the human eye can see, and the human heart feel, the human conscience can take notice of. A man, **"through ignorance"** of the laws which governed the sanctuary of old, might commit a trespass against those laws, without being aware of it, until a higher light had shone in upon his conscience. But a man could not, **"through ignorance,"** tell a lie, swear falsely, commit an act of violence, deceive his neighbour, or find a lost thing and deny it.

These were all plain and palpable acts, lying within the range of the most sluggish sensibility. Hence it is that the expression, **"through ignorance"** is introduced, in reference to **"the holy things of the Lord,"** and omitted, in reference to the common affairs of men. How blessed it is to know that the precious Blood of CHRIST has settled all questions whether with respect to GOD or man - our sins of ignorance or our known sins! Here lies the deep and settled foundation of the believer's peace. The Cross has divinely met ALL.

Again, when it was a question of trespass **"in the holy things of the Lord,"** the unblemished sacrifice was first introduced; and, afterward **"the principal"** and **"the fifth."** This order was reversed when it was a question of the common affairs of life. (Comp. Leviticus 5:15, 16 with Leviticus 6:4-7). The reason of this is equally obvious. When the divine rights were infringed,

the blood of atonement was made the great prominent matter. Whereas, when human rights were interfered with, restitution would naturally assume the leading place in the mind. But, inasmuch as the latter involved the question of the soul's relation with GOD, as well as the former, therefore the sacrifice is introduced, though it be last in order.

If I wrong my fellow man, that wrong will, undoubtedly, interfere with my communion with GOD; and that communion can only be restored on the ground of atonement. Mere restitution would not avail. It might satisfy the injured man, but it could not form the basis of restored communion with GOD. I might restore "**the principal**" and add "**the fifth**," ten thousand times over, and yet my sin remain, for "**without shedding of blood is no remission**" (Hebrews 9:22).

Still, if it be a question of injury done to my neighbour, then restitution must first be made.

"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23, 24). *

* From a comparison of Matthew 5:23, 24 with Matthew 18: 21, 22, we may learn a fine principle, as to the way in which wrongs and injuries are to be settled between two brothers. The injurer is sent back from the altar, in order to have his matters set straight with the injured one; for there can be no communion with the Father so long as my brother "**hath ought against me.**" But, then, mark the beautiful way in which the injured one is taught to receive the injurer. "**Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, until seventy times seven.**" Such is the divine mode of settling all questions between brethren. "**Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye**" (Colossians 3:13).

There is far more involved in the divine order prescribed in the trespass offering, than might, at first sight, appear. The claims which arise out of our human relations must not be disregarded. They must ever get their proper place in the heart.

This is distinctly taught in the trespass offering.

When an Israelite had, by an act of trespass, deranged his relation with the Lord, the order was, sacrifice and restitution. When he had, by an act of trespass, deranged his relation with his neighbour, the order was, restitution and sacrifice. Will any one undertake to say this is a distinction without a difference? Does the change of the order not convey its own appropriate, because divinely appointed, lesson?

Unquestionably. Every point is pregnant with meaning, if we will but allow the Holy Ghost to convey that meaning to our hearts, and not seek to grasp it by the aid of our poor vain imaginings. Each offering conveys its own characteristic view of the Lord JESUS, and His work; and each is presented in its own characteristic order; and we may safely say, it is, at once, the

business and the delight of the spiritual mind to apprehend both the one and the other.

The very same character of mind which would seek to make nothing of the peculiar order of each offering, would also set aside the idea of a peculiar phase of CHRIST in each. It would defy the existence of any difference between the burnt offering and the sin offering; and between the sin offering and the trespass offering; and between any or all of these and the meat offering or the peace offering. Hence, it would follow that the first seven chapters of the Book of Leviticus are all a vain repetition, each successive chapter going over the same thing. Who could cede ought so monstrous as this? What Christian mind could suffer such an insult to be offered to the sacred page?

A German rationalist or theologian may put forth such vain and detestable notions; but those who have been divinely taught that "**all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,**" will be led to regard the various types, in their specific order, as so many variously-shaped caskets, in which the Holy Ghost has treasured up, for the people of GOD, "**the unsearchable riches of Christ.**"

There is no tedious repetition, no redundancy. All is rich, divine, heavenly variety; and all we need is to be personally acquainted with the great antitype, in order to enter into the beauties and seize the delicate touches of each type. Directly the heart lays hold of the fact that it is CHRIST we have, in each type, it can hang, With spiritual interest, over the most minute details. It sees meaning and beauty in everything - it finds CHRIST in all. As, in the kingdom of nature, the telescope and the microscope present to the eye their own special wonders, so with the Word of GOD. Whether we look at it as a whole, or scrutinize each clause, we find that which elicits the worship and thanksgiving of our hearts.

Christian reader, may the name of the Lord JESUS ever be more precious to our hearts! Then shall we value everything that speaks of Him everything that sets Him forth - everything according a fresh insight into His peculiar excellency and matchless beauty.

NOTE - The remainder of Leviticus 6, together with the whole of Leviticus 7, is occupied with the law of the various offerings to which reference has already been made. There are, however, some points presented in the law of the sin offering and the trespass offering which may be noticed ere we leave this copious section of our book.

In none of the offerings is CHRIST's personal holiness more strikingly presented than in the sin offering.

"Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering, in the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord: it is most holy . . . Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy...All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it is most holy" (Leviticus 6:25- 29).

So also in speaking of the meat offering, "**it is most holy, as is the sin offering, and as the trespass offering.**"

This is most marked and striking. The Holy Ghost did not need to guard with such jealousy, the personal holiness of CHRIST in the burnt offering; but lest the soul should, by any means, lose

sight of that holiness, while contemplating the place which the Blessed One took in the sin offering, we are, again and again, reminded of it by the words, "**it is most holy.**"

Truly edifying and refreshing it is to behold the divine and essential holiness of the Person of CHRIST shining forth in the midst of Calvary's profound and awful gloom.

The same point is observable in "**the law of the trespass offering** (See Leviticus 7:1, 6). Never was the Lord JESUS more fully seen to be "**the Holy One of God**" than when He was "**made sin**" upon the cursed tree. The vileness and blackness of that with which He stood identified on the Cross, only served to show out more clearly that He was "**most holy.**"

- though a sin-bearer, He was sinless.
- though enduring the wrath of GOD, He was the Father's delight.
- though deprived of the light of GOD's countenance, He dwelt in the Father's bosom. precious mystery!

Who can sound its mighty depths How wonderful to find it so accurately shadowed forth in "**the law of the sin offering.**"

Again, my reader should seek to apprehend the meaning of the expression, "**all the males among the priests shall eat thereof.**"

The ceremonial act of eating the sin offering, or the trespass offering, was expressive of full identification. But, to eat the sin offering - to make another's sin one's own, demanded a higher degree of priestly energy, such as was expressed in all "**the males among the priests.**"

"And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings, of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever. This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons. In the most Holy place shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee, and this is thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it" (Numbers 18:8-11).

It demanded a larger measure of priestly energy to eat of the sin or trespass offering, than merely to partake of the heave and wave offerings of gift. The "**daughters**" of Aaron could eat of the latter. None but the "**sons**" could eat of the former. In general, "**the male,**" expresses a thing according to the divine idea: "**the female,**" according to human development. The former gives you the thing in full energy; the latter, in its imperfection.

How few of us have sufficient priestly energy to enable us to make another's sin or trespass our own!

The blessed Lord JESUS did this perfectly. He made His people's sins His own, and bore the

judgment thereof, on the Cross. He fully identified Himself with us, so that we may know, in full and blessed certainty, that the whole question of sin and trespass has been divinely settled. If CHRIST's identification was perfect, then, the settlement was perfect, likewise; and that it was perfect, the scene enacted at Calvary declares: "**All is finished.**"

The sin, the trespasses, the claims of GOD, the claims of man - all have been eternally settled; and, now, perfect peace is the portion of all who, by grace, accept as true the record of GOD. It is as simple as GOD could make it, and the soul that believes it is made happy. The peace and happiness of the believer depend wholly upon the perfection of CHRIST's sacrifice. It is not a question of his mode of receiving it, his thoughts about it, or his feelings respecting it. It is simply a question of his crediting, by faith, the testimony of GOD, as to the value of the sacrifice. The Lord be praised for His own simple and perfect way of peace!

May many troubled souls be led by the Holy Spirit into an understanding thereof!

We shall here close our meditations upon one of the richest sections in the whole canon of inspiration.

It is but little we have been enabled to glean from it. We have hardly penetrated below the surface of an exhaustless mine. If, however, the reader has, for the first time, been led to view the offerings as so many varied exhibitions of the great Sacrifice, and if he is led to cast himself at the feet of the great Teacher, to learn more of the living depths of these things, I cannot but feel that an end has been gained for which we may well feel deeply thankful.

~ end of chapter 5:14-6:8 ~

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