

## The Ritual of Leviticus in the Book of Numbers.<sup>1</sup>

BY THE REV. ANDREW CRAIG ROBINSON, M.A.

THE true key to the understanding of the development of the ritual of Leviticus, which we find prescribed in the Book of Numbers, would seem to be the change which was about to take place from the wilderness life to the Promised Land. The modification of the ritual in view of this change is concerned especially with three materials used in sacrifice—flour, oil, and wine. It is easy to understand that these commodities were not very readily procurable in the wilderness; for although no doubt the Israelitish camp was visited from time to time by many a caravan of “Midianites, merchantmen,” from whom fine flour, oil, frankincense and wine could be purchased, yet in the wilderness such things were luxuries, and though men might from time to time elect to offer of their own free-will the meal offering of fine flour, with oil and frankincense, yet to require that such an offering, with wine besides, should be presented with every victim would be to demand from the people something which in the wilderness they would find it impossible to give. But the case would be quite different after the people had entered into possession of the Promised Land. In that land flowing with milk and honey, with plenty of corn, and wine, and olives, a regulation that every sacrifice should be accompanied by an offering of flour, and oil, and wine would involve no difficulty whatsoever.

And so accordingly it was ordained. Under the existing code of Leviticus it was not required that an animal offered in sacrifice should be accompanied by an offering of flour, oil, and frankincense—the offering of the animal was complete in itself—a burnt offering, peace offering, etc., as the case might be, the only exceptions being the daily sacrifice of the two lambs

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the ritual of Leviticus the reader is referred to a small book on Leviticus by the present writer (Marshall Brothers), in which the subjects of sacrifice and ritual are dealt with. The limits of the present paper preclude the discussion of the general subject.

(Exod. xxix. 40, 41) and a "sacrifice of peace offerings for a thanksgiving" (Lev. vii. 11). If flour, oil, and frankincense were offered they were mixed together, and constituted a completely independent form of offering—the "meat [or meal] offering" (Lev. ii.).

So, too, the offering of wine under the early code was only prescribed in the same case—the daily sacrifice of the two lambs (Exod. xxix. 40, 41). The only passage in which a drink offering is mentioned in Leviticus has reference to the time when the people should be settled in the Promised Land.

But in the Book of Numbers, in view of the settled life in the Land of Canaan, a change passes over the ritual, and a remarkable development takes place; for in the code of Numbers it is prescribed that with every animal offered in sacrifice there is to be presented an offering of fine flour, oil, and wine, in specified quantities according to the importance of the victim.

Another point, again, in which the earlier ritual of Leviticus is expanded in the Book of Numbers would also seem to be connected with the impending change from the wilderness to the Promised Land. The question as to what particular animals should be offered on the occasion of each of the great feasts was left in the code of Leviticus in great part undefined, in consideration, no doubt, of the limited conditions of the wilderness life; but in the ritual of Numbers it is commanded that at each of the feasts the sacrifices should consist of a very large number of animals distinctly specified, with their meal offerings and their drink offerings; and these prescribed sacrifices were to be in addition to the free-will offerings of the people (Num. xxviii., xxix.). These requirements would seem to be adapted to the future condition of the people in the Land of Canaan, where they would be wealthy in flocks and herds.

Then a third modification and development of the ritual was that, in addition to the daily sacrifice of the two lambs, a weekly burnt offering of two lambs on the Sabbath Day and a monthly burnt offering at the beginning of each month were prescribed.

In the twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Numbers is re-enacted the law of the daily burnt offering of the two lambs, morning and evening (Exod. xxix. 38); and in this re-enactment the Book of Exodus is presupposed, because the law in Numbers goes on to say: "It is a continual burnt offering which was ordained in Mount Sinai" (Num. xxviii. 6; *cf.* Exod. xxix. 42).

These are the changes in the ritual of Leviticus ordained in the Book of Numbers—changes which appear to be very natural in prospect of entering the Promised Land. There are many indications of a most convincing character which show that the code of Numbers presupposes and rests upon Leviticus. Thus we see that the minute directions as to how the various sacrifices are to be performed contained in the early chapters of Leviticus are absent from the Book of Numbers; they are tacitly assumed as having been already laid down. So also, whilst Numbers refers to the fast of the Day of Atonement, on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the words, "Ye shall have . . . a holy convocation, and ye shall afflict your souls," and prescribes certain sacrifices for that day, including "one kid of the goats for a sin offering," it adds the words, "beside the sin offering of atonement" (Num. xxix. 7, 11), but gives no particulars of the ritual of the Day of Atonement—no doubt because that ritual had been already so fully laid down in Leviticus (Lev. xvi.).

And, in accordance with this resting on Leviticus, we see that while the people were still in the wilderness the ritual followed the wilderness code. The offerings of the princes of the tribes at the dedication of the altar, recounted in the seventh chapter of Numbers, will be seen to have conformed to the regulations laid down in Leviticus. Each of the princes offered all the principal offerings mentioned there. Each of them offered (a) a meat (or meal) offering, consisting of fine flour mingled with oil, presented in a silver charger and a silver bowl, accompanied by incense in a golden spoon (*cf.* Lev. ii. 1); (b) a burnt offering, consisting of one young bullock, one ram, and one lamb of the first year (*cf.* Lev. i. 2); (c) a sin offering,

one kid of the goats (*cf.* Lev. iv. 22, 23); and (*d*) peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five lambs of the first year (*cf.* Lev. iii.).

The reader will observe that in these offerings by the princes of the tribes the meal offering is a distinct and independent offering by itself; and, on the other hand, that in the burnt offering, sin offering, and peace offerings the animal victims are not accompanied by any meal offering or drink offering. All this was in accordance with the ritual of Leviticus, but not in accordance with the ritual prescribed subsequently in Numbers.

The remaining sacrifice mentioned in Leviticus, the trespass offering, was of course not offered by the princes, because this offering had always reference to a definite wrong, done either in the holy things of the Lord or against a fellow-man; but this offering is also fully mentioned in one of the early chapters of Numbers (the fifth), where we read, at the close of the other regulations as to confession of the sin and restitution and fine in the case of a trespass against the Lord, the following words: "Beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him" (Num. v. 6-8). The reader will observe how a sacrifice always accompanied the trespass money (the *ashâm*).<sup>1</sup>

In this manner, then, the ritual of the sacrifice in Numbers is linked in continuation with that ordained in Leviticus, of which it appears to be a natural development, in prospect of the people entering the Promised Land.

The modern school of critics, for the most part, recognize that the ritual contained in Numbers is a development of that laid down in Leviticus,<sup>2</sup> but they, of course, attribute that development to the times after the return from the Exile. Thus Kuenen, speaking of Numbers expanding, explaining, and supplementing Leviticus, says: "All alike may be explained by the practical requirements revealed or developed soon after

<sup>1</sup> For the important bearing of this point on the critical theory of the late origin of the trespass offering, see the present writer's "Leviticus," p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Kuenen, "Hexateuch," pp. 96, 309; Driver, "An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 68.

B.C. 444, and provided for either by the incorporation of a tora which had previously only been delivered orally, or by the framing of a new precept to meet the demands of the time."<sup>1</sup>

What these "practical requirements revealed or developed soon after B.C. 444" might be is not added, nor what the "demands of the time."

To such vague and shadowy conjectures are the critics driven when they tear the Book of Numbers out of its natural position in the Mosaic age, and drop it down in the days after the Exile; but if the book be left in its natural position, the reason for the development of the ritual can be seen to be natural also. The ritual was modified in view of the people entering into possession of the Promised Land.

The injunctions laid down in Numbers complete the development of the Mosaic code of sacrifice, leaving nothing more to be done. Dr. Driver observes: "With the table of sacrifices in Num. 28 *f.* there is no point of contact in Dt."<sup>2</sup> But, seeing that the sacrificial code was complete in Numbers, and that Deuteronomy consists, for the most part, of exhortations to the laity, it was only natural that the technical prescriptions of Numbers should not be repeated.

That the ritual in Numbers is not in any way dependent on that laid down by Ezekiel for his ideal temple is shown by the difference between them in regard to the quantities of meal and oil to be offered with each victim, and also by the circumstance that Ezekiel appoints no offering of wine. It is fully admitted, however, by the critics that wine as an accompaniment of sacrifice was much more ancient than the times of Ezekiel. Dr. George Buchanan Gray says: "In Ezekiel wine is not even mentioned; but it would be, in view of the references to early literature just given,<sup>3</sup> a wholly erroneous conclusion to infer that wine was first made an accompaniment of offerings after the time of Ezekiel."<sup>4</sup> This writer, then, who fully holds the

<sup>1</sup> "Hexateuch," 1886, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> "Introduction," p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Judg. ix. 9, 13; 1 Sam. i. 24, x. 3; Hos. ix. 4; Mic. vi. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "Numbers," 1903, p. 171.

views of the criticism, freely admits that wine offerings were ancient, as no doubt they were. And although no mention of wine connected with sacrifice occurs in Ezekiel, yet drink offerings are mentioned—viz., in Ezek. xx. 28, and xlv. 17, where we read: "It shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings and meat offerings and drink offerings in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all the solemnities of the house of Israel." It would seem as if Ezekiel, who himself prescribed no drink offerings, had the ordinances of the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters of Numbers before his mind.

The antiquity of the drink offering is amply proved by passages cited by Dr. Gray himself—for example, 1 Sam. i. 24, 25. This passage not only proves the antiquity of the offering of wine, but also clearly shows that the ritual prescribed in Numbers, whereby with every free-will offering of a victim a meal offering and a drink offering were to be combined, was observed in the house of the Lord in Shiloh. So in later, but still pre-exilic, times we have Hosea saying: "They shall not offer wine offerings to the Lord, neither shall they be pleasing to Him" (Hos. ix. 4). And in the sixteenth chapter of 2 Kings we find it said that King Ahaz "burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering . . . upon the altar." In this passage also we have the drink offering mentioned, and we find the ritual of Numbers in full action at the Temple in Jerusalem 150 years before the Exile.

Ezekiel, then, in not assigning a drink offering to be presented with the sacrifices which he prescribes for his ideal temple, exhibits a contrast to Numbers which ought to preclude any idea that Numbers could possibly be dependent on Ezekiel; and a further proof of this is that, whilst Numbers very particularly prescribes the sacrifices to be offered at the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, Ezekiel makes no reference to that great feast whatsoever, although he prescribes regulations for the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. As the Feast of Pentecost, however, is mentioned in what the critics call "the

earlier codes," they fully admit that it must have been in existence in the days of Ezekiel. It would seem that the prophet, in his conception of the ritual of his ideal temple, did not feel himself bound to conform in all points to existing regulations.

Four developments, then, of the ritual of Leviticus are to be particularly noted in the Book of Numbers :

(a) The meal offering is to be an accompaniment of almost every sacrifice.

(b) The drink offering is to be an accompaniment of almost every sacrifice.

(c) The sacrifices at the great feasts—hitherto for the most part undefined—are fully and expressly ordained.

(d) In addition to the daily sacrifice of the two lambs, stated weekly and monthly sacrifices are commanded.

But all these developments of the ritual are only to take effect after the people have entered into possession of the Promised Land.



## Studies in Texts.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

BY THE REV. HARRINGTON C. LEES, M.A.

### I.

TEXT: "*The joy of my heart.*"—Jer. xv. 16.

[Books consulted: (a) "How to Enjoy the Bible" (Bullinger = B.); (b) "Solomon's Temple" (Caldecott = C.); Davidson's article "Jeremiah" in "Hastings' Dictionary" (= D.); see also Payne Smith's "Jeremiah" in "Speaker's Commentary" (= P.S.)]

**M**UCH of Jeremiah's message is in a minor key. Why this exultant tone here? The verse is a reference to a personal spiritual episode.

I. *The Finding of the Word.*—Verse 16 is linked by the word "found" (Heb. *matza*) with 2 Kings xxii. 8, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14 (B., p. 3). The young prophet was moulded by the discovery. "Jeremiah was a child of Josiah's reformation" (C., p. 169). Mrs. Bell, in a book now preparing for the press, suggests that the volume of the Law was found in Joash's old money-chest, which appears to have been used again for Josiah's offertory (*cf.* 2 Kings