**THE EXPOSITION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE BY ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

**LEVITICUS-003. THE FIRST STAGE IN THE LEPER'S CLEANSING by ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

*"1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2. This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest: 3. And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper; 4. Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: 5. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: 6. 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: 7. 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."*

*Leviticus 14:1-7*

The whole treatment of leprosy is parabolic. Leprosy itself is a parable of death. The horrible loathsomeness, the contagiousness, the non-curableness, etc. So the man was shut out from camp and from sanctuary. There was a double process in the cleansing rite, restoring to each.

**I.** Sketch the ceremonial. Two birds, one slain over a vessel of water so that its blood drained in. Then the living bird was to be dipped into this water and blood, along with cedar, scarlet, and hyssop, and the man sprinkled seven times and the living bird set loose.

**II.** The significance. This elaborate symbolism was partly intelligible even then. Two birds, like the two goats on the Atonement Day. Did both in some sense symbolise the man? The first one was not exactly a sacrifice. Its death points to the physical death which was the end of the disease, but also in some sense its death symbolised the death by which cleansing was secured.

**(a)** The purifying water is made by blood added to it, i.e. cleansing by sacrifice. By water and by blood.

**(b)** The sevenfold sprinkling. The cedar, symbol of incorruptibility; the scarlet, of full vital energy; the hyssop, of purifying. So the thought was suggested of the communication of cleansing, full health and incorruption, undecaying strength; all physical contrasts to leprosy sevenfold.

**(c)** The free, glad activity. The freed bird. The restored leper.