

THE RED HEIFER.

In Numbers xix. we learn the excessive jealousy of the Lord about sin, not in the sense of guilt, but defilement. This He measures by His sanctuary. We have to do with it, and nothing unclean can be allowed. We are "clean every whit" (John xiii. 10), but the feet-washing is needed. We belong to the sanctuary, and yet are in the world, though not of it (John xv. 19; xvii. 14); we need to have a just estimate of both. If we but touch evil, a remedy is required. Still it is not the question of justification, but of communion. Sin hinders that—hinders my coming boldly into the holiest. How was this met? The blood of the unblemished heifer, representing Christ who knew no sin and could not be brought under its power, was sprinkled before the tabernacle seven times—that is, before the place of communion, not of atonement. The sin-offering was burnt without the camp; but the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled seven times where we meet God in intercourse. This marks the full efficacy of Christ's blood when I meet God. The body was reduced to ashes, as Christ was judged and condemned for what I am apt to be careless about; but God is not careless, and would make me sensible of sin. Christ had to suffer for it, and it is gone; but the sight of His suffering shews me the dreadfulness of it.

God has an eye that discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart; He would have us discern