

BLOOD EVEN ON THE GOLDEN ALTAR

NO. 2369

A SERMON
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“And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation.”
Leviticus 4:7

ALL through Holy Scripture you constantly meet with the mention of “blood.” “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.” “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ.”

The word “blood” is recorded over and over again, and if any complain of the preacher that he frequently uses this expression, he makes no kind of apology for it, he would be ashamed of himself if he did not often speak of the blood. The Word of God is as full of references to blood as the body of a man is full of life and blood.

But what does “the blood” mean in Scripture? It means not merely suffering, which might be very well be typified by blood, but it means suffering unto death, it means the taking of a life. To put it very briefly, a sin against God deserves death as its punishment, and what God said by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel still stands true, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

The only way by which God could fulfill His threatening sentence, and yet forgive guilty men, was that Jesus Christ, His Son, came into the world, and offered His life instead of ours. His life, because of the dignity of His person, and the majesty of His nature, was so vast in its value that He could give it not only for one man, but for the whole multitude of men who should believe in Him.

Now, that by which men are saved is the suffering of Jesus Christ even unto death, as Peter writes, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” Paul puts it, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,” and again, “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

All the sacrifices under the law, when their blood was poured out, were typical of the life of Christ given for men as a sacrifice in the room and place and stead of those who had offended unto the death against the law of God, and therefore were doomed to die. You who hear me constantly, know very well what I mean. Have I ever given any uncertain sound about this great central truth? There is no way of salvation under heaven but by faith in the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the way by which we are redeemed from eternal wrath is by Christ having stood as Substitute for us, and having died in our place, as it is written, “The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.”

It is worthy of note that in the death of Christ, the shedding of blood was made very conspicuous, as if to refresh our memories about the teaching of the types of the Mosaic law. Jesus was scourged unto bleeding, His temples were pierced and lacerated with a crown of thorns, His hands and feet were nailed with iron to the cross, His side was opened by the soldier's spear, and forthwith there flowed thereout blood and water.

There are many ways by which men may die without the shedding of blood, the capital punishment of our own country is free from this accompaniment, but our Savior was ordained to die by a death in

which the shedding of blood was conspicuous, as if to link Him forever with those sacrifices which were made as types and symbols of His great atoning work.

My dear brother, Mr. Pearce, in his prayer, seemed to set forth Christ evidently crucified among you. I wish that even though you have to use your imaginations a little, you would think that you see Jesus on the cross. Picture Him here tonight, and lovingly watch Him. You will need few words from me if you do but catch sight of Him. Behold your Savior pouring out His life's blood that He might bear your guilt away, dying for you that you might live forever!

In the verse before our text we read that the priest was to take of the blood of the bullock of the sin offering, and sprinkle it seven times "before the LORD, before the veil of the sanctuary." The veil concealed the inner dwelling place of God, and this veil was to be sprinkled seven times, that is, perfectly. There was to be a perfect presentation of the precious blood before the place where God was concealed.

After that was done, the priest was to take some of the blood of the bullock and smear with it the four horns of the golden altar which stood just in front of the veil, and near the golden candlesticks. This altar was intended for the burning of sweet incense upon it, and the priest was to smear with blood the four horns of it. What was meant by that act? Let me read the text again, and then at once seek to explain it. "The priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD."

I. My first observation is this, **THE ATONEMENT WAS PRESENTED WITH A VIEW TO THE LORD.**

Have you not often heard it said that all the atonement accomplished was something in relation to us? We think upon the death of Christ and it stirs our affections, but that is the only result, so some teachers say. It brings us to God, but it does not bring God to us. That is what they say, but when we turn to Holy Scripture, we find that the blood shedding was with reference to God Himself, as well as with reference to us, because in the text it is distinctly said, "The priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD."

Its place was where the Lord would especially see it. I would like the young people, when they get home, to take a pencil and mark in the first chapters of the book of Leviticus how often the expression is used, "before the LORD." The bringing of the bullock, the killing of the sacrifice, the sprinkling of the blood, all was to be done "before the LORD." Whether any man saw it or not, was of small account, for it was "before the LORD." True, it was done in the presence of the congregation, but it is specified over and over again that it was "before the LORD."

I would remind you that in the memorable type of the paschal lamb, the Lord gave special instructions as to where the blood was to be sprinkled. Was it to be within the house? Remember that all the people were inside the house, on the passover night there was not a man outside. Where then, was the blood put? Upon the interior walls of the house where they could see it? Might it not tend to comfort them if they could look upon it?

That was not the Lord's plan, and the blood was not put where the people could see it, it was sprinkled outside the house, and the inspired account tells us that the Lord Himself said to Moses and Aaron, "And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses....and when I see the blood, I will pass over you." It was put where God could see it, and as if to show that that was the main point, it was put where the people could not see it, that it might be distinctly said to them, "It is, after all, God's sight of the great sacrifice which saves you."

Next, *the place of the blood is where the Lord sees it in reference to us*, understand that, where the Lord sees it with reference to us. They charge us with teaching that the atonement in some way changes the nature of God, we have never said so, and we never dreamed anything of the kind. Above all things, we have always taught that God is immutable, and cannot be changed either in His nature or in His purpose. They tell us that we teach, and they tell others that we teach, that the sacrifice of Christ was

offered to make God love His people. We have over and over and over again denied this, and declared that—

*“Twas not to make JEHOVAH’s love
Towards the sinner flame,
That Jesus, from His throne above,
A suffering man became!*

*“Twas not the death which He endured,
Nor all the pangs He bore,
That God’s eternal love procured,
For God was love before.”*

Christ in His sacrifice is the result of God’s love, not the cause of it! Yet, dear friends, we do confess, without any demur, to this fact, that the death of Christ has a reference to God’s dealing with us in this way. The claims of divine justice must be met, the Judge of all the earth must do right, and He cannot suffer sin to go unpunished. Our own conscience confirms that truth, there is no sinner, even when he is most hardened, who deep down in his soul does not know that to be true, and when he lies dying, it causes him great trouble to think that he is going where God must visit his sin upon him.

Now, what Christ has done is this, the Father has given us in Christ that which satisfies the claims of infinite justice. God can be just and yet the Justifier of him that believeth. Executing the death penalty upon our Surety, He declares that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Oh, dear friends, this it is, God’s looking on and seeing in His Son the vindication of His law, the honoring of His holiness, it is this which is the very essence of Christ’s sacrifice as to its result upon us!

I believe that the great Lord, the just Judge of all, looks on Jesus Christ with extreme delight as having suffered for His people. *He sees in the sufferings of Christ the honoring of His own holiness.* Jesus loved holiness so much that He would sooner die than that holiness should be impugned. He was so true, so upright, so just, that He would rather suffer to the death on the tree, than that God should in the least degree, violate His word, or infringe His justice. The Father looks on Christ’s great sacrifice, and He takes great delight in it because He sees in it His own holiness honored and glorified.

And what a delight He must take in *the love of Christ* when He sees that Jesus loved us with a love which many waters could not quench, and which death itself could not drown! The great Father looks to the death of Christ and sees Christ’s love triumphant on the tree, and He is charmed with it. I do not think that you and I can ever tell what pleasure the Father has in the finished work and sacrifice of His dear Son.

We read that He “smelled a savor of rest” in what was only a typical sacrifice, but what a savor of rest must the great heart of the infinite JEHOVAH find in the infinite sacrifice of His Well-beloved! You look upon it with bleared and bedimmed eyes, yet you see enough to make you wonder and adore, but what does God see in the atonement of Jesus?

Ah, beloved, we cannot fully answer you, but we know that He sees there that which He eternally looks upon with infinite complacency, and for the sake of it He looks upon us, poor guilty ones as we are, with complacency too. He loves us because of what Christ has done in reference to us.

That is my first remark, and though I have but feebly set it forth, yet, beloved, it is a great and glorious truth. The atonement has a bearing towards the Lord Himself, and therefore, in this ancient type, the blood was smeared upon the altar of sweet incense before the Lord.

II. But now, secondly, coming to the very heart of the text, THE ATONEMENT GIVES POWER TO THE INTERCESSION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

That altar of sweet incense was the type of Christ pleading for men, making intercession for the transgressors. The horns of the altar signify the power of His intercession, and the power of Christ’s intercession lies in His sacrifice, lies in the blood. If I might be allowed to picture such a scene, I seem to see the divine Son pleading with His Father, and He pleads the merit of His own blood.

The Father sees it first as a reason why the Son should plead with Him, for the blood shows *His nearness of kin to man*. Has Jesus blood? “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” Here is the token to His Father that He is truly man, here is the sure testimony of His identification with His people for whom He makes intercession. The mark is made by His own blood upon the horns of the altar, and its presence there proves that He is qualified to plead for men, seeing that, while He is God, His blood shows that He is evidently also man.

I hear Him begin to plead, and if Justice would stay Him and say, “How can You plead for the guilty? Before this great white throne, unsullied by a stain, how can You ask that God should bless the impure and foul?” Jesus points to His own blood as the token of *His removal of impeding sin*. “The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world,” has taken it away by the shedding of His own blood! “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” “Hear Me, My Father,” He cries, “hear My plea on behalf of the penitent sinner. I have put away his sin. Answer My prayer and bless him, for I have taken away the sin that cursed him. I have borne its penalty and made expiation for it by My death.”

Do you not think also that this blood, which is the very power of Christ’s intercession, signifies *His fulfillment of covenant engagements*? We read of “the blood of the everlasting covenant.” Jesus had engaged with His Father “to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,” and He has done so.

By His death He could say of His work as the Messiah, “It is finished.” By that death He had fulfilled His suretyship engagement to His Father in connection with the covenant of grace, and this, beloved, is the very sinew of His strength in interceding for His people, this is the very essence of His pleading. He has done all that He agreed to do, therefore He asks the Father to fulfill His part of the everlasting covenant, and to save the people redeemed by the blood shed on Calvary.

And it seems to me that Christ also uses His blood as the great power of His pleading in *His claim of reward*. “Have I not died for My people? Then will You not let them live, O My Father? Behold, O Justice, with uplifted sword, if you do seek Me, let these go their way.” Jesus seems to say, “My Lord, My God, I have become Your servant, I took upon Myself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and I have performed all the service You did lay upon Me. Reward Me, then, for all My toil. Let Me see of the travail of My soul, let Me be satisfied according to the promise which You did make to Me when I undertook this work.”

Do you not see then, my brother, my sister, that the blood on the horns of the altar means this, that Christ’s blood is the very strength of His pleading with God? Because He died for guilty men, therefore today, when He asks for the sinner’s salvation, He will have it granted to Him, for the blood prevails with God, speaking better things than that of Abel.

III. And now in the last place, I want to say to you that THIS BLOOD GIVES ACCEPTANCE TO OUR WORSHIP.

We bring to God sweet incense through Jesus Christ our Savior, our prayers, our praises, our services, are like the mixture of sweet perfumes which were burnt of old upon the altar before God, but it is the blood-mark on the altar that makes the incense acceptable. It is the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ that gives prayer, praise, and service acceptance in the sight of God.

In beginning to speak upon this point, I want you to notice that *the blood is on the altar before we begin to pray*. It was the blood that gave acceptance to the incense burnt upon the altar, it was not the stacte, onycha, and galbanum, those “sweet spices, with pure frankincense,” that by themselves ascended with fragrance unto the Lord, there must be the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled on the horns of the altar.

What does this mean? Why, beloved, that God accepts us in Christ because of Christ Himself, and Christ alone. It is true that we are to bring forth good works, for faith without works is dead. Still, the reason of our acceptance with God is not our good works, but Christ, and His atoning sacrifice alone. As we come to Him, we sing—

*“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.”*

Before you have performed a single work of holiness, before you have felt any of those sweet emotions which come out of the possession of divine love shed abroad in your heart, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are accepted with God, Christ has saved you. Therefore is it that a man is justified by faith without works, for it is the faith that justifies him as it lays hold on Christ. There shall be an abundance of sweet spices on the altar by and by, but apart from them, and before there has been a living coal smoking there, the altar has been consecrated unto God by the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice.

I like to think of that glorious fact. Let your good works be multiplied, but keep all of them at a distance from the sacrifice of Christ, never dream of adding them to Christ's sacrifice to make it complete, for it is perfect without anything of yours. When you do repent of sin, if you begin to trust in your repentance, away with your repentance! When you do serve God, if you begin to trust in your service, away with it! Away with it! It becomes an antichrist if it takes the place that should be occupied by Jesus only, for His precious blood alone can put away sin.

But now I want you to note, dear friends, that whenever you come to God with your worship, you must take care that you notice the blood on the altar, because *it removes the sin of our worship*. The best worship that we ever render to God is far from perfect. Our praises, ah, how faint and feeble they are! Our prayers, how wandering, how wavering they are! When we get nearest to God, how far off we are! When we are most like Him, how greatly unlike Him we are!

This I know, that my tears need be wept over, and my faith is so mingled with unbelief that I have to repent of that sad admixture. Brethren, keep your eye fixed on the blood of Jesus. There is no prayer, no praise, that can come before God of itself, for it is so imperfect, therefore, keep your eye on the blood of Jesus, that the sin even of your holy things may be put away by the sacrifice once offered on Calvary.

Do you not think also that we would pray a great deal better if we thought more of the blood on the altar as *our plea in prayer*? I remember a Primitive Methodist prayer meeting at which a brother could not get on with his supplication. He was very earnest and fervent, but he could not make any progress, he did not seem as if he had power to pray. He shouted, as Methodists do, but there is not much in that, yet he could not get on with real praying, till a friend at the farther end of the room cried out, “Plead the blood, brother! Plead the blood!” He did so, and then he began to pray with mighty power.

Here lies the force of all your pleas in prayer, if you can plead for Jesu's sake and in His name, by His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, then you have discovered the great secret of prevailing with God, your hand is on the lever, and you can move the world if you will.

Should we not also make the precious blood of Jesus *the highest note of our praises*? When we are praising God, we think a great deal of the music. I do not blame anybody for doing that, especially if he is the leader of the psalmody, but brethren, we may come to think more of the melody and the harmony than we do of the heart and soul of praise.

Keep your eye on the crucified Christ, and then sing as loudly as you like. Fix your gaze on those five precious wounds, they shall help you to praise Christ better than all the notes of the gamut, for what higher note can we ever reach than this, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood”? Now you have sounded out the very highest note in the scale.

Oh, the precious blood, the atoning sacrifice, the great substitution of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Hallelujah Chorus of all the redeemed shall have no nobler note than this, “He loved us and laved us. He loved us and died for us, and we are washed in his blood.”

Let me here say that every sort of worship, not only prayer and praise, but every kind of worship that we can render to the Lord, will be acceptable with God in proportion as we exhibit with it the blood upon the altar. I find it a very sweet way of worshipping God to sit down and meditate, I hope you feel the same. You do not need any words at such seasons. You have been reading a chapter of the Bible, and

God has spoken to you, and you perhaps have knelt in prayer and have spoken with Him. Now you sit down and meditate.

I like to sit quite still and look up, or sit quite still with closed eyes, and just think. Now, the thinking, the meditating, the contemplation, which will be best for you and most acceptable with God, is that which keeps close to the cross, and near the precious sacrifice.

Do you notice what holy men and women say when they come to die? You stand at their bedside, and talk to them. If they are in any trouble and distress of conscience, what do they begin to talk about? Why, about the precious sacrifice of Christ upon the cross! It does not matter to what sect they belong, or to what denomination they have been joined in life, they always come back to this point at the last. There is no passing out of this life with comfort, there is no hope of entering into heaven with delight, except as we are resting upon the precious blood of Christ.

Ah, dear friends, there may be some here who do not think much of this theme. There always were such, it is nothing to you that Jesus should die. But if there is anything that sanctifies, any truth that digs deep into the heart, and puts the seeds of life into the very center of our being, if there is anything that makes the Christian devout, humble, holy, it is the doctrine of the cross.

I can almost gauge your piety to a certainty by what you think of the bleeding Savior. If He is nothing to you, you are not in the blessed secret, but if Jesus Christ is first and last with you, if you preach Christ crucified, if you love Christ crucified, in that proportion God dwells in you, and you dwell in Him.

This is not theory that I am talking now, this is no truth that lies upon the borders of the Christian religion, and may be, or may not be accepted. This is the very heart of the Gospel, and if you take this away, you have killed it! You are no Christian if you disbelieve this truth, if you are not saved by the precious blood of Christ, you are damned. There is but one gate of life, and that is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, if you turn away from that door, you have chosen the broad road that leads to destruction.

O you who feel your guilt, come to my Lord for pardon! O you who confess your sin, come to His blood for cleansing! It is still true that—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One;
There is life at this moment for you.”*

How many years have I come to this pulpit, telling this old, old story, telling it very poorly and very imperfectly, and yet you are not tired of hearing it! Look how the crowds still throng this house. I might have given you some pretty novelties every now and then, but had I done so, I believe I should have lost you, but this old truth, even if you do not accept it, commands your attention. You cannot help coming to hear it, oh, that you would also believe it!

It has made me supremely happy, I was about to say that it has given me an angel’s happiness, and sometimes I could say even that without exaggeration. It gives me solid peace with which I can live, and with which by and by I hope to die. It enables me to stand alone against unnumbered foes, and feel as happy as if everybody were with me, for in this great truth that Jesus died for me, that Jesus bore my sins in His own body on the tree, there is a rock beneath my feet. He who is on that rock may stand there, and defy even death and hell.

Oh, that you would come and trust my Lord, you restless ones, you who do not know what peace means! Trust Him. Believe that He died for you, trust Him, and you shall have peace like a river, and righteousness like the waves of the sea.

May we now come to the communion table thinking much of the precious blood, once shed for many for the remission of sins!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

LEVITICUS 16:1-31 AND HEBREWS 9:1-22

Leviticus Chapter 16. Verse 1-2. *And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died; and the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.*

The way into the heavenly places was not yet made manifest, the inner shrine, called the holy of holies, was specially guarded from human access. No one could have said in those days, "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace," for only the high priest could approach the mercy seat at all, and he must go within the veil strictly in accordance with the instructions given to Moses by the Lord. Nadab and Abihu appear to have entered into the presence of God wrongfully, they had probably been drinking, for there was a command, afterwards given that no priest should drink wine or strong drink when he went into the house of the Lord. God in His righteous anger slew these young men at once, and now, lest any others should intrude into the secret place of communion, a law was given to tell when and how man might approach his God.

3. *Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.*

There is no access to God except by sacrifice, there never was, and there never can be, any way to God for sinful man except by sacrifice.

4. *He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.*

Our great High Priest offered Himself without spot to God, and He is Himself without sin, but the Jewish high priest must make himself typically pure by putting on the snow white garments of holy service, and before doing so, he must wash himself with water, that he might come before God acceptably. None might approach the Holy God with impurities upon them.

5-6. *And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.*

These priests were sinful, and therefore they must first themselves be purged from guilt before they could come near to God, but the true High Priest of God, our Lord Jesus, needed to offer no sacrifice for Himself, for He was pure and without blemish or stain or sin.

7. *And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.*

These two goats were not for himself, but for the people. You must regard them as if they were but one offering, for it needed both of them to set forth the divine plan by which sin is put away, one was to die, and the other was typically to bear away the sin of the people.

8. *And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.*

One goat was to show how sin is put away in reference to God by sacrifice, and the other goat was to show how it is put away in reference to us, God's people, by being carried into oblivion.

9-14. *And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself: and he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:*

and he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

This was his first entrance within the veil, with holy incense to denote the acceptance which Christ has with God, though He is always well-beloved, and dear, and precious to His Father. This incense sent up a cloud that veiled the glory of the Shekinah which shone between the two wings of the cherubim, and so the high priest was better able to bear the wondrous brilliance by which God revealed His presence.

When Aaron had thus filled the place with the sweetly perfumed smoke, he took the blood of the bullock of the sin offering, and carefully sprinkled it seven times on the mercy seat, and on the ground around the mercy seat. What a mercy it is for you and me that the spot where we meet with God is a place where the blood of the great sacrifice has been sprinkled, ay, and that the ground of our meeting with God, the place on which the mercy seat rests, has also the blood mark upon it!

15. *Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:*

Twice, you see, is the holy place thus besprinkled, first with the blood of the bullock, and then with that of the goat.

16. *And he shall make an atonement for the holy place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.*

If God is to dwell in the midst of sinful men, it can only be through the blood of the atonement. Twice seven times were the holy place and the tabernacle to be sprinkled with blood, as though to indicate a double perfectness of efficacy of the preparation for God's dwelling among sinful men.

17-19. *And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.*

Even this altar, to which we bring our prayers and our thankofferings, has sin upon it. There is some defilement even in the saltwater of our penitent tears, there is some unbelief even in our most acceptable faith, there is some want of holiness about our holiest things. We are unclean by nature, and by practice too, what could we do without the sprinkling of the blood? See how the Lord insisted upon it in the case of His ancient people, yet there are some in these modern times who deride it. God forgive their blasphemy!

20-21. *And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness.*

Notice the "all" in this twenty-first verse, "Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him *all* the iniquities of the children of Israel, and *all* their transgressions in *all* their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness." This was the second part of the atonement showing, not sacrifice, but the effect of sacrifice, and explaining what becomes of sin after the sacrifice has been accepted, and the blood has been presented within the veil.

22-25. *And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them*

there: and he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people. And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar.

Only the fat of it, the best of it, was burnt upon the altar, for sin offerings were not acceptable to God. They were regarded as being filled with impurity by reason of the sin which they brought to mind, for this reason the bullock and the goat of the sin offering had to be burnt without the camp, “Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate,” as our sin offering. Yet, inasmuch as the fat was accepted upon the altar, so is Christ, even as our sin offering, acceptable before God.

26-27. *And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp. And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.*

All must be burnt, and the last is mentioned because it more strikingly sets forth the impurity of the sin connected with the sin offering. All must be burnt right up, there must not be a particle of the sin offering left unconsumed.

28. *And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.*

Everything that has to do with God’s service must be clean and pure, purified by fire, and purified by water. An atonement cannot be made by that which is itself defiled, it must be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing before it can put sin away, this is the virtue of Christ’s atonement, for He was altogether without sin of any kind.

29-31. *And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: for on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.*

This shows what sacredness the Lord attached to the great day of atonement, and gives us more than a hint of the preciousness of our Lord’s atoning work for us.

Now let us turn to the epistle to the Hebrews, and see how the apostle spiritualizes the services of the Mosaic dispensation.

Hebrews Chapter 9. Verse 1. *Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.*

An external sanctuary, a material structure, and therefore belonging to this world.

2. *For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread: which is called the sanctuary.*

Or “the Holy Place.”

3-8. *And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:*

Notice especially those words, “Not without blood.” There could be no approach to God under the old dispensation without the shedding of blood, and there is no access to the Lord now without the precious blood of Christ.

9-22. Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testators. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

That is the great Gospel truth that was set forth by all the sacrifices under the law, “without shedding of blood is no remission.”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—279, 281, 289

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