

"FILLING UP THAT WHICH IS BEHIND."

Question. – (1) What significance should we attach to the Apostle's words, that the heavenly things are cleansed by "better sacrifices" than those offered by the Jewish priesthood for the cleansing or atonement in the typical system? (2) When did those better sacrifices begin and when did they end? (3) What will follow the completion of those better sacrifices? – that is, what will be the outward manifestation or blessing that will follow their completion?

Answer. – The better sacrifices are the antitypical ones begun by our Lord Jesus, and participated in by his faithful footstep-followers, who are invited by the Lord, through the Apostle, to present their bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God, and their reasonable service (Rom. 12:1); and assured that in so doing they are filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, which is the Church (Col. 1:24), those antitypical sufferings occupying the entire Gospel age. They began when our Lord consecrated himself to death at baptism. They reached a large degree of accomplishment when he finished the sacrifice at Calvary. The finished sacrifice represented in value all that Justice did, or could, demand as the ransom price for Adam and his [R3319 : page 47] entire race. Consequently our Lord, when he ascended up on high, was fully prepared to present his sacrifice to divine Justice as in full offset for the sins of the whole world.

But the divine plan contemplated an Anointed One composed of many members, under the headship of Jesus; and in harmony with this arrangement those who would be invited to be members of the anointed body were granted the opportunity of participating with the Head in his sacrifice, that they might also in due time be participators with him in the divine nature and the glorious work of the Kingdom, the restitution work. For this reason alone, and not because of any

lack of sufficiency in our Redeemer's sacrifice, his work before the Father when he ascended up on high was merely applied for the household of faith and not for the world.

True, certain passages of Scripture speak of our Lord's work as "a propitiation for our sins [the Church's sins] and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." This, however, according to the clear showing of the type, is an accommodated expression, referring to all the work which will ultimately be accomplished by our Lord as the result of his atonement sacrifice. Nothing is more clearly taught in the Scriptures than that atonement has not yet been accomplished on behalf of the world, but as yet only on behalf of believers.

All this is most beautifully typified in the Day of Atonement sacrifices.* These are shown to be one, in the sense that they are all performed by the High Priest and in the one day, and as parts of the one great atonement; but they are distinctly divided into two as respects the sacrifices: **(a)** the bullock, which represented our Lord sacrificed, and its blood applied specifically for the priest's members, and his house, typical of the body of Christ and the household of faith; **(b)** following this came the sacrifice of the goat, not for the same class – not for the members and household of the priest – but "for all the people." The blessing of God resulting from the sacrifice of the bullock was merely upon the priestly tribe, representing the Church, and the household of faith of this Gospel age. Only by reason of our Lord's sacrifice would any of us have any standing whatever before the Lord, or any privilege whatever in the way of sacrifice. Not until the sacrifice of the goat had been complete, and its blood had been sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat, was there a passing over or remission of the sins of the people. And so, in the antitype, the blessing of the Lord has come to the household of faith during this Gospel age, granting us the great privilege of becoming joint-heirs with the Lord, while the foretold blessing of the world, "all the families of the earth," waits – waits until the sacrifice of the goat shall

have been finished – waits until the High Priest shall thus, by the sacrifice of his body-members, make atonement for the sins of mankind in general. As soon as that work shall have been accomplished we may be sure that the blessing of the Lord, the manifestation of his forgiveness, etc., will be made known to the whole world of mankind, and the curse still resting upon the race as a whole will then be lifted from every creature, and instead the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shall flood the earth.

[*See "Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices."](#)

"Ye see your calling, brethren" – your invitation to the priesthood – the Melchisedec priesthood. We see our Lord Jesus as the great High Priest, and his faithful ones of this Gospel age, as a Royal Priesthood, under his headship. We thus consider the High Priest of our profession, order, Christ Jesus. Only the High Priest could offer the blood of these atonement sacrifices at the Mercy Seat. He offered first himself, and during this age has been working in his members to will and to do, enabling them thus to sacrifice, and giving merit and character to their sacrifices, making them acceptable as a part of his own. He will shortly finish the work and present the whole before the Father, and this will signalize the closing of this Gospel age of sacrifice; for there will be no opportunity of participating in this sacrifice after the elect members shall have filled up the measure assigned to them by their Lord.

When we think of our priesthood, let us call to mind the statement of the Apostle, that every priest must have somewhat to offer. (Heb. 8:3.) Our Lord had himself, the Perfect One, to offer – a sacrifice well pleasing to the Father. No other soul in all the world could have presented this sacrifice, for no other was worthy, and any addition to it would have been not only a superfluity, but an insult to him who arranged the plan. But the redemption having been guaranteed in our Lord's death, Justice could make no objection, and did make no objection to his appropriating a portion of this merit to those who, believing in him and being justified by faith in his blood,

and thus accounted righteous, should desire to follow in his steps of sacrifice, and be counted in with him, and have their sacrifices, counted in as a part of his sacrifice on behalf of the sins of the whole world. In order to be members of this Royal Priesthood, then, it was necessary that we offer something, and we offer ourselves. We offer ourselves, not *as* ourselves, but as those justified through our Redeemer's merit, and desirous of being counted in as members of his body, and having whatever sacrifice we may perform counted in as a part of the general sacrifice of our Lord. The heavenly Father is pleased to accept the matter in this way; more than this, he planned it and foreshadowed it in the typical sacrifices of ancient times.

This is in full agreement with the Apostle's statement, "By man came death, and by man came also the resurrection of the dead." The first man, who brought death, was Adam; the second man, who brought life is our Lord; but our Lord has accepted a little flock as members of his body – "one new man." This is in harmony with the statement, also, that "there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." It was for all in the most absolute sense – because without that sacrifice all could not have received the intended blessing, and because all are to receive the blessing as a result of that sacrifice, in God's due time. The fact that the Church is associated with the Lord as his members during this Gospel age alters the matter not one whit. It is still of him and by him and through him, and not of us nor by us nor through us, that the blessings are to come to mankind.

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