

"THE BETTER SACRIFICES"

"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?" – Heb. 13:14.

MOSES took the blood and sprinkled it both upon the Book of the Law and upon all the people, for the institution of the Law Covenant. And this was repeated year by year, the repetition being necessary to maintain the cleansing and their Covenant relationship with God.

That a cleansing of a certain kind was accomplished is evident, because the nation which at the beginning of the Day of Atonement was counted unclean – the people being commanded to repent in sackcloth and ashes and to fast and to "eat no pleasant food" – were thus symbolically represented as being in great distress through sin and Divine condemnation until the close of this day, when the High Priest came out and blessed the prostrated multitudes and they arose with a shout of joy. This institution of the Law Covenant at the hand of Moses and the repetition of it year by year by the priests of Israel, produced a cleansing effect in the sense that as a nation they were reckoned clean, as being justified for that year, which began with the Day of Atonement and would last 360 days, or until the following Day of Atonement.

But all the while the people of Israel realized that they were not actually cleansed from sin; that there was merely a covering of their sins for the year, and that this was the reason why, when the year was past, it was necessary for them to recognize again

their defilement, individually and collectively, and to make use afresh of the provisions for sin-cleansing.

THE GREATER SACRIFICES THAN THOSE OF BULLS AND GOATS

The Apostle here goes on to show that the basis for that reconciliation was the sacrifice represented by the blood, and that this, being efficacious with God – a certain typical merit attaching to that typical sacrifice – it would be an easy matter for them to understand that he had now, as shown in the text, provided a *better* sacrifice; that a larger value attached to this greater sacrifice, and that this would be sufficient – not to typically cleanse the people and bring them back into a temporary reconciliation with God, but sufficient also to establish them fully and completely in the Divine favor.

This greater arrangement, then, is that Christ had offered himself through the eternal spirit to God, and this, to all who rightly accept him, cleanses from all consciousness of sin. We realize that it is not a covering for a moment, or for a day, or for a year, but a permanent covering, through faith, of all of our sins that are past. We have the basis for this in the fact that we are drawn of the Father and invited to approach him. When we do this and believe in Christ, God approaches us and thus he recognizes our step of justification; and when we come *fully* to him and give him our hearts, this Great One, who has offered himself as a Better Sacrifice, appears as our Advocate, to the intent that we may be accepted of the Father as members of Christ's Body – as members of the Bride class. He then applies the merit of his sacrifice on our behalf to make up for our Adamic [R4656 : page 247] sin and imperfection, that we may be acceptable sacrifices. Thenceforth our flesh, which is reckoned justified fully and freely through faith in Christ and consecration, is considered dead – "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." – Col. 3:3.

And not only is the flesh counted dead, but the New Creature alone is thenceforth recognized of God. The New Creature is not the old creature; it has a *new standing* and is not responsible for the sins that are past, because those were all canceled when the old creature was accepted as a "living sacrifice" in conjunction with the merit of the Advocate. Hence the New Creature has [R4656 : page 248] a consciousness of absolute forgiveness of the sins of his mortal flesh reckoned dead – for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." – Rom. 8:1.

If he should turn again to walk after the flesh he would incur condemnation as a New Creature. For the New Mind to turn wilfully to sin would imply that it had died, and that the Old Mind had come to life again. Such are "twice dead – plucked up by the roots," as the Apostle says (Jude 12); they have ceased to have any relationship with God. All who are consecrated and begotten of the holy Spirit and who are abiding in the Lord Jesus through faith, seeking to walk in his footsteps, are privileged to know that their sins are forgiven and that nothing in the past can in any sense stand against them. As the Apostle says, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died;" yea, "It is God that justifieth." (Rom. 8:34,33.) The very One who "condemned sin in the flesh" has accepted us as New Creatures, has justified us and admitted us to his family as members (prospectively) of the Royal Priesthood.

The typical yearly cleansing of the Jews was not a faith-cleansing; it was an actual condition of things. God treated them, as a people, from that standpoint. They had privileges and favors which they would not have had, had they been Gentiles. "What advantage hath the Jew? Much every way, but chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:1,2), and because of God's arrangement that if they committed a trespass the priest would offer a peace offering for them and cleanse them. All these were blessings and opportunities which they had as Jews

by virtue of their covenant relationship established through Moses. But since their rejection of the Messiah that nation has had no relationship with God. They have been cut off completely from favor and "wrath has come upon this people to the uttermost." – I Thess. 2:16.

But, God be thanked, we now see that their long period of disfavor and casting off is about ended, and they will soon be re-grafted into the olive tree, from which, through unbelief, they were broken off (Rom. 11:17-24), and shall again share the fatness thereof, and, under the Christ glorified, will bring blessings to all the families of the earth.

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