

## THE CHURCH'S SHARE IN THE SIN-OFFERING

THE MERIT of Christ consisted in His keeping of the Law and in His obedience to the Father in the laying down of His life. That life which He laid down was the price. It was placed in the hands of Justice when He died – "Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit." All passed into the hands of the Father and it remains in the hands of the Father – a Ransom-price. When God raised our Lord from the dead He did not raise Him a human being, but a spirit being of the highest order.

As the Scriptures declare of the Church, so it is true of the Head of the Church, for we follow in His footsteps. Of the Church it is written, "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." (I Cor. 15:42-45.) Our Lord was raised a *quickenings*, a *life-giving* spirit. (I Cor. 15:45; I Pet. 3:18.) It was a *man* who forfeited his life; it was a *man* also who gave Himself a price in offset. (I Cor. 15:21,22.) The sacrifice of our Lord's human nature *remained a sacrifice on behalf of the world*. Has He given it to the world yet? No. What has He done with it? Merely [R4854 : page 213] committed it to the Father. To whose credit is it now? To our Lord's credit. Where? In the hands of Divine Justice. For what object? That it may be applied. How applied?

First of all, in an imputative sense, in this Gospel Age, it is applied to all those who come unto the Father through Him. He imputes it to these after they have turned to the Father in faith and have come to the point where they can say, "I present my body a living sacrifice"; "Here, Lord, I give myself away." There the great Advocate, the future Mediator for the world, imputes to them enough of His merit to make their sacrifice good. They, of themselves, have nothing to offer that God could accept; for, "There is *none* righteous; no, *not one*." – Rom. 3:10.

Here the great Advocate applies, or imputes, a sufficiency of His merit, already in the hands of Justice, to make these perfect in the sight of Justice. Divine Justice can then accept the sacrifice; and the acceptance of the sacrifice is manifested by the impartation of the Holy [R4855 : page 213] Spirit, the begetting of the Spirit; and that which is begotten of the Spirit will, in the resurrection, be born of the Spirit, unless in the meantime there be something to paralyze, or vitiate, the condition. If one thus begotten of the Spirit lose the spirit, become dead to spiritual things, then he is indeed "twice dead," as the Apostle says. – Jude 12.

### **DOES THE CHURCH SHARE IN THE SIN-OFFERING?**

But now, in the case of those who are thus accepted of Christ, what have they to do with the Sin-Offering? We answer that we should not know what they have to do if God did not show us; but God first makes a picture of the matter in the Old Testament. He made, with the Jews, a typical Day of Atonement, which prefigured what will be done during this Gospel Age and during the period of Messiah's reign. What is this? It is the work of reconciliation between God and men. How did the type show this? The Day of Atonement had various features. It began with the offering of a bullock; and that bullock represented the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of the Church. The blood of the bullock was sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat for the household of faith. The household of faith was represented in the two goats.

These goats represented you and me and all of God's people who have offered their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable. (Rom. 12:1,2; Heb. 13:11-13.) Only one of these goats became a follower of the bullock and had experiences exactly the same as the experiences of the bullock. This goat represents that class of believers who daily follow in the footsteps of Jesus and who are partakers with Him of His sufferings at the present time and will have a share with Him in the glory to follow.

The other goat represents the class which does not go voluntarily to sacrifice, but which, without turning to sin, fails to make a willing sacrifice. Therefore this class is treated as the "scapegoat" and dealt with accordingly, being driven into the wilderness condition for tribulation. The Apostle seems to refer to this class when he says that some are thus dealt with "that their spirits may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (I Cor. 5:5.) These are not the Bride class, but a servant class.

In the 45th Psalm we have the picture of the Heavenly Bridegroom and can see how He introduces His Bride to the Heavenly Father, the great King. Next follows the picture of the Bride, who is described as "all glorious within," and who is to be brought unto the Heavenly King in fine needlework and wrought gold. Then we have a third picture, "The virgins, her companions that follow her," and who also shall be brought unto the King. These represent the other class, the "scapegoat" class, who do not voluntarily go into death, into sacrifice, and who, consequently, cannot be counted in as members of the Bride.

Because the Scriptures show this Sin-Offering, therefore, we believe in the Sin-Offering; and because the Scriptures tell us that we are to be sharers in this matter, therefore we believe it. Where does the Apostle so state? We answer that he says to us, addressing us as the "Lord's goat" class, "Let us go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing the reproach with Him." He also says that the bodies of those beasts whose blood was brought into the Most Holy to make atonement for sin, were all burned outside the camp. (Heb. 13:11-13.) What beasts were those? ***Only the two.*** The bullock and the Lord's goat were the only ones. The Apostle urges that we were represented by this goat. "Let us, therefore, go forth unto Him without the camp." All that was done with the bullock was done with the goat. Let us, then, if we would walk in His steps, share with Him in His sacrifice – "Go to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach with Him"; for "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him"; we shall be glorified together. – 2 Tim. 2:11,12.

## DOES THE CHURCH ADD TO THE SIN-OFFERING?

The question may be asked, "What does the Church *add* to the Sin-Offering if the Lord gave the necessary per cent. of His merit to each to make his or her sacrifice possible?" We answer that it depends upon what thought is *behind* the expression "*add* to the Sin-Offering." THE SIN-OFFERING NEEDED NO ADDITION. The *sinner* was a *man* – Adam. Our Lord left His glory and became a *man* in order that He might redeem *man*. When a perfect man's life was given for the other perfect man who sinned, it constituted a sufficiency, or as the Scriptures express it, a *Ransom-Price*.

This word "*Ransom*" (I Tim. 2:6), in the Greek (*anti-lutron*) signifies a price, as *an equivalent*; a *satisfactory* price. Consequently there is *no addition needed* to the Ransom which our Lord gave and *nothing could be added* to it, for *we cannot add* to that which is *already complete*. If the price of an article is \$1 and you add \$25 to it, you are not really adding anything to the *price*, for the price is *only \$1*, and the other dollars added on neither *affect the price nor are necessary, in any sense of the word*.

There is another sense, however, in which the Church has a share with her Lord; namely, Not only was our Lord Himself the Ransom-Price for the world, but in order that He might be highly exalted and receive the reward of the divine nature, it was *necessary* that He should *die*. So, then, the death of Christ effected *two* things; first, it was the Ransom-Price for mankind; second, it was the condition upon which He would obtain His glorious reward – the divine nature. If He had not been obedient *even unto death*, then He would not have been highly exalted.

As the Apostle says, "And being found in fashion *as a man*, He *humbled Himself* and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore [*on which account*] God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a Name which is above every name." (Phil. 2:8,9.) *He could not, therefore, have been exalted to that high position*

*except by obedience unto death* – obedience to His covenant. Had He failed to carry out His covenant of sacrifice, *He would have failed* to gain His glorious reward, and also failed *to be a satisfactory price for [R4855 : page 214] mankind*. But *He did not fail*. He attained the prize of the "high calling" to the divine nature.

There is, however, an arrangement in God's Plan that takes in the Church as well as Jesus, the Head of the Body, the Head of the Church; and so the Apostle says that God *foreknew us* also by Jesus. (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4,9-12.) Not that he foreknew you and me as *individuals*, necessarily, but that He foreknew a Church, a class; He had fore-intended the gathering of such a class, or Church, from the beginning. It is just as much a part of the Divine Plan that the Church, the Body of Christ, should be called to walk in His steps, to be dead *with Him*, to present their bodies living sacrifices, as it was a part of the Divine Plan from the beginning that Jesus should do these things. The difference between Jesus and the Church is that *He was perfect*, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; and therefore, His death could be in the nature of a *ransom-price* – all that was necessary. We have no such perfection of our own; and therefore, in order to be permitted to sacrifice at all, we must first have His merit imputed to us, that we might be acceptable sacrifices on the Lord's altar.

### **WHY MUST THE CHURCH SACRIFICE?**

Then the question comes up, What is the object of having any of these sacrifices on the altar? Why is the Church on the altar with her Lord, as expressed by the Apostle Paul (Romans 12:1), "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service." Why does God invite us to be living sacrifices with Christ, since Christ is sufficient as a ransom-price for the sins of the whole world? The answer is that the Father invites us to come in and be partakers of the *sufferings* of Christ in order that we may also be sharers of

His *glory*; for it is only "if we *suffer* with Him that we may *reign* with Him – if we be *dead with Him*, we shall *live with Him*."

As our Lord was called to sacrifice, so the Church is also called. If He would be found worthy, if He would have the Father's highest approval, He must leave the glory which He had with the Father and must do all the Father might require of Him. And only by so doing would He gain the reward offered. During the Gospel Age the Church is invited to enter into that covenant with Him. We who are by nature sinners, "children of wrath, even as others," are justified through His merit in order to permit us to have a share in His suffering, in His sacrifice.

What is the *use* of all this? Why should this be done? That is the only way that we could be with Him on the spirit plane. If we retain the human nature we can never get to heaven. None can ever go to heaven except those of the sacrificial class. Those not begotten from above will never get a share in the heavenly blessing, but will get an earthly blessing, if they get any. They will keep their earthly nature and will in due time be made perfect. But those who are now invited to become the Bride of Christ are invited to join with Him in sacrifice. Our Lord sacrificed the earthly nature and its rights. All those who wish to belong to this Bride class must sacrifice the flesh, the earthly nature, its rights, etc., that they may be sharers with Him in the Heavenly, the divine nature.

