

The Annual Atonement

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that true access to God and cleansing from sin is only possible through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as symbolized by the Day of Atonement.

Scripture: Leviticus 16:30, Hebrews 9:8, John 14:6, Deuteronomy 4:24, Hebrews 12:29, Psalm 51:7, Isaiah 53:5, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Atonement", "Sacrifice", "Sin and Forgiveness"

Description

In this powerful expository sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound meaning of the Day of Atonement as described in Leviticus 16. He reveals how this ancient Jewish ordinance foreshadows the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who alone provides true cleansing from sin and access to God. Spurgeon emphasizes the necessity of atonement for both the individual and the community, highlighting the completeness of Christ's sacrifice for all sins. This sermon calls believers to embrace the new and living way opened through Jesus and to rejoice in the fullness of their cleansing and justification.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." Leviticus 16:30.

BEFORE Adam transgressed, he lived in communion with God, but after he had broken the Covenant and grieved God's Spirit, he could have no more familiar fellowship with God. Under the Mosaic dispensation, in which God was pleased, in His Grace, to dwell among His people and walk with them in the wilderness, it was still under a reserve—there was a Holy Place wherein the symbol of God's Presence was hidden away from mortal gaze. No man might come near to it except in one way, only, and then only once in the year, "The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest, while as the first Tabernacle was yet standing." Our subject today illustrates the appointed way of access to God. This chapter shows that the way of access to God is by Atonement and by no other method. We cannot draw near unto the Most High except along the blood-besprinkled way of sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus said, "No man comes unto the Father, but by Me." And this is true in many senses and in this, among them, that our way to God lies only through the Sacrifice of His Son.

The reason for this is that sin lies at the door. Brothers and Sisters, a pure and holy God cannot endure sin. He cannot have fellowship with it, or with those who are rendered unclean by it, for it would be inconsistent with His Nature to do so. On the other hand, sinful men cannot have fellowship with God—their evil nature could not endure the fire of His holiness! Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? What is that devouring fire and what are those everlasting burnings, but the Justice and Holiness of God? The Apostle says, "Even our God is a consuming fire." A guilty soul would perish if it were possible for it to draw near to God apart from the Mediator and His Atonement. The fire of God's Nature must consume the stubble of our nature so long as there is sin in us or about us. Hence the difficulty of access, a difficulty which only a Divine method can remove. God cannot commune with sinful men, for He is holy. Sinful men cannot commune with a holy God, because He must destroy them, even as He destroyed Nadab and Abihu when they intruded into His Holy Place. That terrible judgment is mentioned in the opening verses of the chapter before us as the reason why the ordinances herein contained were first of all made.

How, then, shall men come to God? Only in God's own way! He, Himself, devised the way and He has taught it to us by a parable in this chapter. It would be very wrong to prefer any one passage of Scripture beyond another, for all Scripture is given by Inspiration. But if we might do so, we should set this chapter in a very eminent and prominent place for its fullness of instruction—and its clear, yet deep doctrinal teaching. It treats upon a matter which is of the very highest importance to all of us. We are here taught the way by which the sin that blocks the door may be taken away, so that a seeking soul may be introduced into the Presence of God—and stand in His Holy Place—and yet live. Here we learn how we may say, with the astonished Prophet, "I have seen God and my life is preserved!" Oh that we might, today, so learn the lesson that we may enter into the fullest fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, in that safe way, that only way, which God has appointed for us! Oh for the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that we may know and use "the new and living way!"

Before I proceed to enlarge upon this chapter, I want to notice that, of course, this was only a type. This great Day of Atonement did not see an actual atonement made, nor sin really put away, but it was the figure of heavenly things—the shadow of good things to come. The substance is of Christ. If this Day of Atonement had been real and satisfactory, as touching God and the conscience of men, there would never have been another—for the worshippers once purged would

have had no more conscience of sin! If they had lived 50 or a hundred years, they would never have needed another Day of Atonement—but because this was, in its nature, imperfect and shadowy, being only typical—therefore, every year, in the seventh month, on the 10th day of the month, a fast was proclaimed, sin was confessed, victims were slain and atonement was again presented.

Now, if I should seem to run the type into the substance, you will just separate them in your own minds. It is not easy to speak as to keep shadow and substance quite clear of each other. We are apt to say, "This is so-and-so," when we mean, "this represents so-and-so," and we have our Lord's example for so doing, for He said, "this is My body and My blood," when He meant that the bread and wine represented His body and blood. We are not speaking to fools, nor to those who will wrench the letter from its obvious spiritual sense! I shall trust to your intelligence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit that you will, in this discourse, discern between the symbol and the substance! May the Divine Spirit help me and help you to a right understanding of this sacred type!

I. Now, then, let us come to the text and note, first, WHAT WAS DONE on that particular day. The text tells us what was done symbolically—"On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord."

The persons, themselves, were cleansed. If any of them had become unclean so as to be denied communion with God and His people, they were made clean, so that they might go up to the Tabernacle and mingle with the congregation. All the host were, that morning, regarded as unclean—and all had to bow their heads in penitent sorrow because of their uncleanness. After the sacrifice and the sending away of the scapegoat, the whole congregation was clean and in a condition to rejoice. If it happened to be the Year of Jubilee, the joyful trumpets rang out as soon as the atonement was complete. Every year, within four days after the Day of Atonement, the people were so clean that they kept the joyful Feast of Tabernacles. Jewish Rabbis were known to say that no man had ever seen sorrow who had not seen the Day of Atonement and that no man had ever seen gladness who had not witnessed the hilarity and delight of the people during the Feast of Tabernacles!

The people, themselves, were made to be a clean people and I lay great stress on this, because unless you, yourself, are purged, everything that you do is defiled in the sight of God. When a man was unclean, if he went into a tent and sat upon anything, it was unclean. If a friend touched his garments, he was rendered unclean. The man, himself, needed, first, to be delivered from impurity and it is precisely the same in your case and mine! I have need to cry, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean! Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Your very person, by nature, is defiled and obnoxious to the justice of God. In body, soul and spirit you are, by nature, altogether as an unclean thing and all your righteousnesses are as filthy rags—you, yourself, need to be washed and renewed. It is a far simpler thing to remove outward stains than it is to purge the very substance and nature of man, yet this is what was done, typically, on the Day of Atonement—and this is what our redeeming Lord actually does for us! We are outlaws and His Atonement purges us of outlawry and makes us citizens. We are lepers and by His stripes we are so healed as to be received among the clean! By nature we are only fit to be flung into those fires which burn up corrupt and offensive things—but His Sacrifice makes us so precious in the sight of the Lord that all the forces of Heaven stand sentinel about us! Once black as night, we are so purged that we shall walk with Him in white, for we are worthy.

Their persons being made clean, they were also purged of all the sins confessed. I called attention, in the reading of the chapter, to its many, "alls." I think there are seven or eight of them. The work which was done on that day was comprehensive—a clean sweep was made of sin. I begin with that which was confessed, for it was that for which cleansing would

be most desired. It is said that, "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." All sin that was confessed over the scapegoat was carried away into a land not inhabited. Sin that is confessed is evidently real sin and not a mere dream of a morbid conscience. There is a certain mythical cloud of sin which people talk about and pretend to deplore and yet they have no sense of the solid weight and heinous-ness of their actual iniquity. Certain grievous sins are comparable to cauldrons of foaming filth—no man will willingly acknowledge them, however clearly they may be his, but when he does admit them before God, let him remember that it is this real sin, this foul and essentially abominable transgression, which is put away by the Atonement of Christ!

Sin confessed with tears. Sin which causes the very heart to bleed—killing sin, damning sin—this is the kind of sin for which Jesus died! Sham sinners may be content with a sham Savior, but our Lord Jesus is

the real Savior who did really die—and died for real sin. Oh, how this ought to comfort you, you that are sadly bearing the pressing burden of an execrable life! And you, too, who are crushed into the mire of despondency beneath the load of your guilt! Brothers and Sisters, sin which you are bound to admit to as most assuredly committed is the sort of pollution from which Jesus cleanses all Believers. Sin which you dare not confess to man, but acknowledge only as you lay your hand upon the Divine Sacrifice—such sin the Lord removes from you.

The passage is very particular to mention "all sins." "The goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities." This includes every form of sin of thought, of word, of deed, of pride, of falsehood, of lust, of malice, of blasphemy. This comprehends crimes against man and offenses against God of peculiar blackness. And it does not exclude sins of inadvertence, or carelessness, or of omission. Transgressions of the body, the intellect, the affections are all blotted out. The outrageous scandals which I dare not mention are yet pardonable—yes, such have been pardoned! There is not the same degree of virus in all sins, but whether or not, the Atonement is for all transgressions. The Lord Jesus Christ did not pour out His heart's blood to remove one set of stains and leave the rest—He takes away from the soul that puts its trust in Him every spot and trace of sin. "Wash me," said David, "and I shall be whiter than snow." He looked for the extreme of cleanness and such the Savior brings to the soul for whom He has made effectual Atonement. I desire to be so plain and broad that the chief of sinners may gather hope from my words. I speak in very simple language, but the theme is full of sublimity—especially to you that feel your need of it. The Atonement removed all sin. I must give you the exact expression. He says, "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins."

It seems that the Divine Atonement puts away the sin of sin—the essence and heart of sin. Sin has its core, its kernel, its mortal spot. Within a fruit there is a central stone, or pip—this may serve as the likeness of sin. Within each iniquity there seems to lie a something more essentially evil than the act itself—this is the kernel of intent, the core of obstinacy, the inner hate of the mind. Whatever may be the sin of the soul, or the soul of the sin, Atonement has been made for it all. Most sins are a conglomerate of sins. A sin may be compared to a honeycomb—there are as many sins within one sin as there are cells within a piece of comb. Sin is a swarming, hiving, teeming thing! You can never estimate its full vileness, nor perceive all its evil bearings. All sorts of sins may hide away in one sin.

It would puzzle all the theologians in the world to tell what sin was absent from Adam's first offense. I could take any point you choose and show that Adam sinned in that direction. All sin was within that first sin. Sin is a multitudinous evil, an aggregate of all manner of filthiness, a chain with a thousand deadly links! A sinner is like a man possessed with a devil who cries, "My name is Legion, for we are many!" It is one in evil and yet countless in forms. The Atonement is more than equal to sin—it takes away all our transgressions in all our sins. It is the fullest purgation that could be imagined. The Lord Jesus has not left upon those for whom He has made Atonement a single spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, so far as their justification is concerned. He has not left an iniquity for which they can be condemned before the bar of judgement. "You are clean every whit," is His sure verdict and none can contradict it.

It appears from this chapter, too, that another thing was done. Not only were all the sins that they had committed put away, but also all their holy things were purged. There stood the altar upon which only holy things were offered, but because imperfect men ministered there, it needed to be sprinkled with blood before it could be clean. There was the Holy Place of the Tabernacle which was dedicated solely to God's service, wherein the holiest rites of God's ordaining were celebrated—but because the priests that served there were fallible and unholy thoughts might cross their minds even when they handled the holy vessels,

therefore the blood was sprinkled seven times within the Holy Place! Inside, within the veil, the sanctuary was called the "Holy of Holiest." Yes, but standing, as it did at first, in the midst of the camp of an

erring people and afterwards near to it, it needed to be purged! It is written, "the priest shall make an atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel." Even the Mercy Seat and the ground whereon it rested were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice seven times!

O Brothers and Sisters, I feel so glad that our Lord has atoned for the sins of our holy things! I rejoice that Jesus forgives the sins of my sermons! I have preached my very soul out among you with purity of motive, seeking to win men for Christ, but I dare not hope to have them accepted in and of themselves, for I perceive that they are defiled with sin! I feel so glad that Jesus has purified our prayers! Many saints spend much time in hearty, earnest cries to God, but even on your knees, you sin—and herein is our comfort, that the precious blood has made Atonement for the shortcomings of our supplications. Sometimes when we get together, Beloved, we sing to the praise of our Lord with heart and will. I have felt in this place as if you and I and all of us were so many burning coals, all blazing within a censer and thus letting loose the odors of the sweet incense of our Lord's praise! How often has a pillar of fragrant smoke risen from this house to Heaven! Yes, but even then there was sin in our praises and iniquity in our doxologies. We need pardon for our Psalms and cleansing for our hymns! Blessed be God, Atonement is made for all our faults, excesses and shortcomings. Jesus puts away not only our unholy things, but also the sins of our holy things!

Once more, on that day, all the people were cleansed. All the congregation of the house of Israel were typically cleansed from all sin by the Day of Atonement—not only the priests, but all the people—not only the princes, but the poorest servants in the camp! The aged woman and the little child. The gray beard and the youth were, alike, purified. Men of business inclined to covetousness, they were cleansed. And younger men and maidens in their gaiety, too apt to descend into wantonness—they were all made clean that day! This gives great comfort to those of us who love the souls of the multitude. All who believe are justified from all things! It is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." I have often heard the text quoted with the, "us," left out. Permit me to put it in at this moment—"cleanses us from all Sin." Now put yourself into the, "us." Dare to believe that Grace admits you there! By an act of faith, let all of us all round the galleries and in this great area say, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses US." If you pull, "us," to pieces, it is made up of a great many "me's." A thousand, thousand times "me" will all pack away into a single "us!" Let each one say—"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses me, and cleanses me from all sin." Be glad and rejoice forever because of this gracious Truth of God! This was done on the Day of Atonement in the symbol—and it has really been done by the Lord Jesus through His atoning Sacrifice.

II. Now we notice, in the second place, HOW IT WAS DONE. We have seen what was done and this is most cheering. But now we will see how it was done. I shall have to be brief in this description. The Atonement was made, first of all, by sacrifice. I see a bullock for a sin offering, a ram for a burnt offering and, again, a goat for a sin offering. Many victims were offered that day and thus the people were reminded of the instrumental cause of atonement, namely, the Blood of Sacrifice. We know that the blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin, but very distinctly do these point to the sufferings of our dear Redeemer. The woes He bore are the Expiation for our guilt. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are

healed."

If you want to know by what means sin is put away, think of Messiah's life of grief and shame and arduous service. Think of His agony and bloody sweat in the garden. Think of the betrayal and denial, the scourging and the spitting. Think of the false accusations and the reproaches and the jeers. Think of the Cross, the nailed hands and feet, the bruised soul and the broken spirit. Fierce were the fires which consumed our Sacrifice. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" is the quintessence of agony—and this came from the heart which was crushed for our sins! Atonement was made for your sins and mine by the shedding of blood—that is to say, by our Lord's suffering and especially by His laying down His life on our behalf. Jesus died—by that death He purged our sin, He who only has Immortality gave up the ghost—in the cold embrace of Death, the Lord of Glory slept! They wrapped Him in spices and linen cloths and laid Him in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea. In that death lay the essential deed by which sin dies and Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

Notice, next, that the atonement was made not only by the blood of sacrifice, but by the presentation of the blood within the veil. With the smoke of incense and a bowl filled with blood, Aaron passed into the Most Holy Place. Let us never forget that our Lord has gone into the heavenly places with better sacrifices than Aaron could present. His merits

are the sweet incense which burns before the Throne of the heavenly Grace. His death supplies that Blood of Sprinkling which we find even in Heaven. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven, itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us." "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." The presenting of the blood before God effects the Atonement. The material of the Atonement is in the blood and merits of Jesus, but a main part of the atoning act lies in the presentation of these in the heavenly places by Jesus Christ, Himself.

Furthermore, atonement was made effectual by its application to the thing or person cleansed. The atonement was made for the Holy Place—it was sprinkled seven times with blood. The same was done to the altar—the horns thereof were smeared seven times. So to make the Atonement effectual between you and God, the blood of Jesus must be sprinkled upon you by a lively faith. Though this does not so plainly appear in the type before us as to the people on this occasion, yet it comes out in other types—the cleansing blood was always the Blood of Sprinkling. Before the blood of the Paschal lamb could cause the avenger to pass over the house, it must be marked with the crimson sign. This is that scarlet thread in the window which delivers the Lord's Rahabs in the day of destruction. Before any man can receive reconciliation with God, the Atonement must be applied to his own heart and conscience. Faith is that bunch of hyssop which we dip into the blood and, with it, sprinkle the lintel and two side posts of the house wherein we dwell—and so we are saved from destruction.

Further, my dear Brothers and Sisters, inasmuch as no one type was sufficient, the Lord set forth the method of the removal of sin, as far as we are concerned, by the scapegoat. One of two goats was chosen to live. It stood before the Lord and Aaron confessed all the sins of Israel upon its head. A fit man, selected for the purpose, led this goat away into a land not inhabited. What became of it? Why do you ask the question? It is not to edification. You may have seen the famous picture of the scapegoat, representing it as expiring in misery in a desert place. That is all very pretty and I do not wonder that imagination should picture the poor devoted scapegoat as a sort of cursed thing, left to perish amid accumulated horrors. But please observe that this is all fancy—mere groundless fancy! The Scripture is entirely silent as to anything

of the kind and purposely so. All that the type teaches is this—in symbol the scapegoat has all the sin of the people laid upon it and when it is led away into the solitary wilderness, it has gone and the sin with it! We may not follow the scapegoat even in imagination! It is gone where it can never be found, for there is nobody to find it—it is gone into a land not inhabited—into "no man's land" in fact.

Stop where the Scripture stops! To go beyond what is written is unwise, if not presumptuous. Sin is carried away into the silent land, the unknown wilderness. By nature, sin is everywhere, but to Believers, in the Sacrifice of Christ, sin is nowhere! The sins of God's people have gone beyond recall. Where to? Do not ask anything about that. If they were sought for, they could not be found! They are so gone that they are blotted out. Into oblivion our sins have gone, even as the scapegoat went out of track of mortal man. The death of the scapegoat does not come into the type. In fact, it would mar the type to think of it. Of Melchizedek, we read that he was without father, without mother, without descent and so on, because these things are not mentioned in Scripture and the omission is part of the teaching. So in this case, the fate of the scapegoat is not spoken of and the silence is a part of the instruction. The scapegoat is gone, we know not where, and so our sins have vanished quite away—nobody will ever find the scapegoat—and nobody will ever find the Believer's sins!

"Where are my sins? Oh where?" Echo answers, "Where?" Gone to the land of nobody, where Satan, himself, could not find them! Yes, where God Himself cannot find them. He says He has cast our sin behind His back where He cannot see. What part of the creation must that be which lies behind God's back, whereas He is everywhere present, beholding all things both by night and by day? There is no such place as, "behind His back"—and there is no place for our sins. They have gone into nowhere. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." He has cast them into the depths of the sea—and even that is not so good a figure as the scapegoat, for things that are at the bottom of the sea are still there—but the scapegoat soon passed away altogether and, as far as Israel was concerned, it ceased to be. The sins of God's people are absolutely and irrevocably forgiven! Never, never, never can they be laid to our charge! They are extinct, buried, blotted out, forgotten. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

Yet, dear Friends, the ceremony was not quite finished, for now everybody who had had a hand in it must be washed, so that everybody might be clean. There is Aaron—he takes off his garments and washes himself scrupulously clean! Yes,

he does it a second time. Here is the man who took the scapegoat away and he washes himself. Here is a third person, who carried away the skin and the flesh of the sin offering and burnt them outside the camp—he also washes himself. Everybody becomes purged. The whole camp is clean right through. So, when Jesus completes His sacrifice, we sing—

"Now both the sinner and Surety are free." No sin remains upon Him on whom the Lord once laid the iniquities of us all! The great Atonement is made and everything is cleansed, from beginning to end. Christ has put it all away forever by the water and the blood which flowed from His riven side. All is purified and the Lord looks down on a clean camp—and soon He will have them rejoicing before Him, each man in his home, feasting to the full! I am so glad, my joy overflows! O Lord, who is a pardoning God like You? Where can such forgiveness be found as You do freely give to sinners through Jesus, Your Son?

III. In the third place, I ask your attention, for a brief interval, to this special point—WHO DID IT? The answer is, Aaron did it all. Aaron was quite alone in the work of that day. It was heavy and even

exhausting work, but he had no assistant. Aaron performed the work of priest and Levite that day and no one helped him, for it is written, "There shall be no man in the Tabernacle of the congregation when he goes in to make an atonement in the Holy Place until he comes out and has made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." The Tabernacle seemed lonely that day. Aaron went into its courts and chambers and saw no sign of man. Of course there were lamps to be lighted, but Aaron had to light them himself—the showbread had to be changed—Aaron had to change it. All the offices of the tabernacle were left to his sole care for the day.

When it came to killing the victims, priests and Levites were there on other days, but now the High Priest must do it all. He must kill and receive the blood and sprinkle it himself. He must kindle the sacrificial fire and lay the burning coals upon the incense. He must carry both the incense and the basin of blood into the Holy Place with his own hands. I think I see him looking around in the solitude. He says, "I looked and there was no man." Of the people there was none with him. In the Holy Place there stood no priest to minister before the Lord except Aaron. It must have been with trembling that he lifted up the curtain and passed into the secret place of the Most High with the censer smoking in his hand. There he stood in that awful Presence quite alone with the Eternal—no man was with him when he sprinkled the blood again and again till the seven-fold rite was finished.

Three times he goes in and out and never a soul is there to so much as smile upon him. The tension of mind and heart which he endured, alone, that day, must have been trying, indeed. All that day he must have been conscious of a burden of responsibility and a weight of reverence enough to bow him to the dust and yet no one was present to cheer him. Now fix your eyes on the great Antitype of Aaron. There was none with our Lord—He trod the winepress alone. He bore our sins in His body on the tree. He alone went in where the thick darkness covered the Throne of God and none stood by to comfort Him. "All the disciples forsook Him and fled." It would have been a very natural thing, one would think, that Peter should have defended Him and even died with Him—but no one died with Jesus except thieves—and nobody could suspect that thieves aided Him in His Sacrifice! They showed the need of the Sacrifice, but they could do no more.

Worship our Lord as working salvation by His own single arm! Do not tolerate those who would share His work. Do not believe in priests of any church who pretend to offer sacrifice for the quick and the dead! They cannot help you and you do not need their help! Do not put your own merits, works, prayers, or anything else side by side with your one lone High Priest, who in His white garments of holy service performed the whole work of Expiation and then came forth in His garments of Glory and of beauty to gladden the eyes of His chosen! I say no more. Let that Truth of God abide in your hearts—our High Priest, alone, has made Reconciliation!

IV. Lastly, WHAT WERE THE PEOPLE TO DO for whom this atonement was made? There were two things they had to do that day, only I must add that one of them was doing nothing. For the first thing, they had to afflict their souls that day. Brothers and Sisters, does it seem a strange thing to you that on a day of rest they were to afflict their souls? Think of it a little and you will see that there was cause for it. We most rightly sing—

"Here let our hearts begin to melt, While we, His death record And with our joy for pardoned guilt Mourn that we pierced the Lord." It was a day of confession of sin. And should not confession be made with sorrowful repentance? A dry-eyed confession is a hypocritical confession! To acknowledge sin without grieving over it is to aggravate sin. We cannot think of our sin

without grieving—and the more sure we are that it is forgiven—the more sorry we are that ever it was committed! Sin seems all the greater because it was committed against a sin-forgiving God. If you do wrong to a person and he grows angry, you may be wicked enough to persist in the wrong. But if, instead of growing angry, he forgives and does you good in return, then you will deeply regret that ever you had an unkind thought towards him. The Lord's pardoning love makes us feel truly sorry to have offended Him.

Not only was it a day of confession, but it was a day of sacrifice. No tender-hearted Israelite could think of that bullock, ram and goat dying for him without saying, "That is what I deserve." If he heard the moans of the dying creature he would say, "My own heart groans and bleeds." When we think of our dying Lord, our emotions are mingled—we feel a pleasing grief and a mournful joy as we stand at Calvary. Thus it is we sing—

"Alas! And did my Savior bleed?

And did my Sovereign die?

Could He devote that sacred head

For such a worm as I?

Was it for crimes that I have done

He died upon the tree?

Amazing pity, Grace unknown,

And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide

And shut his glories in,

When God the mighty Maker died

For man, the creature's sin!

Well might I hide my blushing face

When His dear Cross appears,

Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,

And melt my eyes to tears."

It was a day of sacrifice and, therefore, a day of affliction of their souls and herein we are in sympathy with them.

Once more, it was a day of perfect cleansing and, therefore, by a strange logic, a day of the affliction of the soul, for, oh, when sin is forgiven, when we know it is forgiven, when, by Divine Assurance, we know that God has blotted out our sins like a cloud, then it is we mourn over our iniquities! "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced"—that look gives life! "And they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born"—this bitterness is one

of the truest signs of life! They were to afflict their souls. Brethren, we cannot talk of the Cross of Christ except in subdued tones. If you think you can laugh and sport yourself because your sin is forgiven, you know nothing of the matter. Sin has been pardoned at such a price that we cannot, from this day on, trifle with it. The sacrifice was so august that we must always speak of it with holy trembling.

I always feel a suspicion of those converts who get up and glibly boast that once they were drunks, thieves, blasphemers and so forth. Brothers and Sisters, if you tell the story of your sin, blush scarlet to think it should be true! I am ashamed to hear a man talk of his sins as an old Greenwich pensioner might talk of his sea-fights. I hate to hear a man exhibiting his old lusts as if they were scars of honor! Friend, these things are disgraceful to you, however much the putting of them away may be to the honor and Glory of God—and they are to be spoken of by you with shame and confusion of face. Afflict your soul when you remember what you once were!

On the day of atonement they were to afflict their souls and yet they were to rest. Can these things come together—mourning and resting? Oh yes, you and I know how they meet in one bosom. I never am so truly happy as when a sober sadness tinges my joy. When I am the fullest of joy I could weep my life away at Jesus' feet. Nothing is more really sweet than the bitterness of repentance. Nothing is more healthful than self-abhorrence mixed with the grateful love which hides itself in the wounds of Jesus! The purified people were to rest—they were to rest from all servile work. I will never do a hand's turn to save myself by my own merits, works, or feelings. I have done forever with all interference with my Lord's work. Salvation as to its meritorious cause is complete—we will not think of beginning it over again, for that would be an insult to the Savior.

"It is finished," said our Lord Jesus, as He bowed His dear triumphant head and gave up the ghost. And if it is finished, we will not dream of adding to it. It is finished! We have no work to do with the view of self-salvation. But you say

to me—"Have we not to work out our own salvation?" Certainly we have! We are to work out our own salvation because God works it in us. It is our own salvation and we show it forth in our lives—we work it out from within—we develop it from day to day and let men see what the Lord has done for us! It must first be worked for us and then in us, or we can never work it out!

They were assuredly to cease from all sinful work. How can the pardoned man continue in sin? We have done with toiling for the devil! We will no more waste our lives in his service. Many men are worn to rottenness in the service of their lusts, but the servant of God has been set free from that yoke of bondage. We are slaves no longer—we quit the hard bondage of Egypt and rest in the Lord.

We have also done with selfish work. We now seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and look that all other things shall be added unto us by the goodness of our heavenly Father. Henceforth we find rest by bearing the easy yoke of Christ. We joy to spend and be spent in His beloved service. He has made us free and, therefore, we are under bonds to His love forever. O Lord, I am Your servant, I am Your servant! You have loosed my bonds—from this day on I am bound to You. God grant that this may be a high day to you because you gladly realize the grand Truths of God which are shadowed forth in these delightful types! Amen.

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