

## APPROACH TO, AND DELIGHT IN, GOD. SINS AND SIN.

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I am not sure that I have sufficiently distinguished in the following article between the atonement and the sprinkling on the altar of incense. The blood of the bullock was sprinkled on the mercy seat for Aaron and his sons—the heavenly saints ; the blood of the goat also. This made an atonement for himself and for the holy place, and for the tabernacle of the congregation. He was alone within in doing it ; the congregation of Israel being in view also, for God must have been glorified in order to bless them. Then he went out and sprinkled the altar of incense with the blood both of the bullock and of the goat. After all this was complete, he confessed the sins of Israel on the scape-goat, and it was sent away.

Controversy, where there is research after truth, has this advantage attending it, that it urges the spirit to more attention and diligent research, and, where the subjects are scriptural, to search the Scriptures ; and these ever afford to the humble and enquiring soul, fresh and blessed inlets into the mind of God. Two points have been before me in consequence of recent controversy on the law and the righteousness of God. I would now bring them before the reader.

If we examine the order of the ceremonies of the great day of atonement, we shall perhaps find a

more definite character in them than the reader has previously noticed. The blood was sprinkled *on* the mercy seat, and *before* the mercy seat, and *on* the altar of incense, but on nothing else, according to the directions of Leviticus xvi. ; we may specially remark, not on the altar of burnt offering. But atonement is made for the holy place ; I presume it is meant, by the sprinkling that did take place, but there was none on the candlestick or the shew bread. These aspersions of blood at once lead to the thought, that what was in view was approach to God in the sanctuary. There was clearly the great general fact, that the blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, so that God's nature and character were glorified in Christ's shedding His blood ; so that, His blood being thus presented to God, the gospel founded on that could be preached to every creature. It was the Lord's lot. But this I have spoken of elsewhere, as of the other aspect of Christ's sacrifice typified by the scapegoat, that is, bearing the sins of His people. I only note now the specific character of the offering.

The blood was sprinkled on the place connected with the drawing near of the priests in the sanctuary, and that as representing the whole people approaching God, coming into God's presence in the highest way, or a daily approaching in the same character. For us there is no veil ; but the altar of incense, though without the veil, specially referred to what was within. God in the holy places

was seen in His divine righteousness. It is such as He is that He must be approached. It is not merely how He deals with responsible man as such, but His own nature. If we approach Him, we must approach Him as He is in Himself. This is evidently the character of approaching Him in the sanctuary. This connects itself, I have no doubt, with the gold. All was gold in the sanctuary. In the court of the tabernacle the vessels were of brass, specially the laver and the brazen altar. This refers, as the place also shows, to God's dealing with sin in this world. Not that the court represented this world; but it was not the sanctuary. It referred to God's dealings with sinners in this world. Men came there as unclean, whether for sacrifice for their sins when in them, or for cleansing; that is, to Christ as a sacrifice, or to have the washing of water by the word, which, without the sacrifice, they could not have had. Hence it was priests who washed; but it was washing.

The idea in all these cases was drawing near, whether as a sinner or a saint: only one, drawing near about sin; the other, drawing near to God as cleansed, the laver being a washing to consecrate at the first, or cleanse for present service. But on the great day of atonement it was only in the holy places that the blood was sprinkled. But this gives it a very full character. A blessed thought it is for us that we draw nigh to God in His own nature and character, what He is

in Himself. He is there in His own nature, in righteousness and holiness ; and we, absolutely cleansed for that, and, in the new man, created therein after God (Ephes. iv. 24), draw near to Himself without having any question as to sin, now put away. Our delight is in holiness and righteousness, in God as He is ; and we draw near *according to the intrinsic value* IN GOD'S SIGHT *of the blood of Jesus*. It is the enjoyment of what God is, in righteousness and true holiness ; but Christ in His offering has been the glorifying of what He so is. This is very blessed. We approach God, and joy in God. This is divine righteousness as it is in itself, as it is in God, enjoyed by us as admitted through Christ. And, note here, it is in this way *we* specially *know* atonement, for peace and drawing near to God. Hence for the atonement for Aaron and his sons this only was done. The bullock was slain, and the blood sprinkled upon the mercy seat and the altar of incense. There was no confession of sins, no scape-bullock. Christ, raised from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant, enters in according to the glory of the Father, according to the display of all His perfections brought out in the resurrection of Christ (for He was raised through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and by the glory of the Father,—Heb. xiii. 20 ; Rom. vi. 4) ; so we, as associated with Him, draw nigh in the full acceptance which that blood has in the necessary righteousness of God as regards it. It is not merely

that sins can be forgiven, and therefore I can have to say to God as a moral governor (which is also true—"There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mightest be feared"); but I draw near in the positive and perfect acceptance in which God in His own nature receives, in righteousness, that which has glorified it absolutely; that is, according to His own nature. God is active in owning Christ thus in righteousness, in raising Him from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand; and thus we enter.

But there is another thing needed. The sacrifice of Christ is available for transgressions. There is not only its intrinsic value as the Lord's lot, but Christ is the bearer of the sins of His people as the scapegoat. God, as a governor that has to do with sins, has to do with us as responsible men, the Jews as a responsible nation, both in flesh. Christ has borne them in His own body on the tree, and they are gone. It is not and cannot be, of course, another sacrifice. The sacrifice must be suited to God, but it is another aspect of it than the one we have previously spoken of. It is the removing of sins that men may be received judicially in righteousness, not the entering into God's presence according to the intrinsic excellence of His nature, and Christ's acceptableness in it, and the enjoying that nature. (In the new nature we enter in. The transgressions belong to the old.) This is our proper and only *present* place, because we are risen, and in Christ, in the place of priests.

The bullock fully represents the character of Christ's sacrifice in this aspect for us. Then our sins, when we were alive in the flesh, have been put away, and we are reckoned dead, and he that has died is justified from sin (Rom. vi. 7, 11.) The whole nature of the flesh and its deeds are viewed as a past existence, the moment Christ rose, which is actually realized when we put off the old man and put on the new.

As all my sins were future when He died for them, so, when once I am not in the flesh, all that belongs to it faith looks on as past, as to atonement and righteousness, when He died. For so, and so only, could they be put away. But, as risen, I come into the holiest, not only because I am cleared from sins (a process which, in itself, went no farther than judicial acknowledgement of me where I was responsible), but according to all the value of that in which Christ is entered in. This, I repeat, is our only proper present position; because the old man, who was the responsible man in this world, is viewed as dead and buried, so that we are not in the flesh (Rom. viii. 9). Hence, though we were responsible, and the sins were borne and atoned for, we are not at all now in the place, and condition, or nature, in which that government and dealing took place; it is over for us. The bullock, the fullest and highest value of Christ's sacrifice, is ours, and represents our present standing. The two goats clearly shew that the same one sacrifice, of course, applies to.

both parts of His work ; our being presented to God according to His nature, and the putting away of sin, which was inconsistent with our duty as children of Adam.

But the application is, in a measure, different when Israel comes in question : because they do not enter into the holiest through the rent veil, the new and living way. They know the value of Christ's sacrifice *when He comes out*, and they look on Him whom they have pierced. They are under the weight of multiplied transgressions as a nation, and stand on that ground, and in flesh—have not to do with Christ within the veil, but when He has come out. I need not say, it is no new sacrifice. Isaiah liii. presents to us their recognition of the One we already own. They are not in heavenly places in Him ; but He appears to and is with them, to bless them in the earth. They are accepted according to the righteousness of God as a moral governor. I do not say individuals, and all of them, as spared, are not viewed *of God* in His sight according to Christ's blood in heavenly places—I cannot doubt indeed they are ; but it is not their dispensed place to stand there in their own souls before God. That moral government indeed continues as that under which they are as men in flesh on the earth.

Hence it was, after all the blood sprinkling was done—"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,

&c"—that the live goat was sent off into the wilderness with the sins of Israel on its head. I dare say the godly Israelite, thus at peace with God, may be learning the intrinsic value of the great sacrifice which has cleansed Him, so as to get in growing nearness into the knowledge of God ; but his dispensational place is, according to sin-bearing, ours according to Christ's presence in heaven, our old man, in which we were connected with earth, having died in that by which our sins were put away.

It is this point I feel important—the character of the blood-sprinkling, as confined to the holy place and tabernacle itself. Israel's ordinary sacrifices were on the altar of burnt offering ; the blood was sprinkled there ; they came as from without there. It was all right ; every sinner must do so. It is as blessed as it is needed that we can. The sins must be put away if we are to draw near to God. But it does not take into the sanctuary. And here multitudes of Christians rest, if indeed they know this : they rest in the putting away, or hoped for putting away of their sins. It must be the first approach, but they stay on Jewish ground ; and indeed in every way ; for they look for a new sprinkling with blood (a new sacrifice they dare not, and nothing else would do, for, as the apostle says, Christ must often have suffered from the foundation of the world—Heb. ix. 26) every time they fail. It is not the value of the sacrifice in itself which is different. There is, we know, but

one—never to be repeated, which has its own intrinsic, necessary value; but the sacrifice and sprinkling of blood on the brazen altar has a different character from sprinkling it on the mercy seat and on the altar of incense. This, the brazen altar, was judicial righteousness, as dealing with man as responsible to God, and in the exercise of moral government. Here the Israelites came to God. Christ met this claim on the cross, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, dying for the nation of Israel also. This bearing of sins was shewn in the scape goat, but in a way which not only met our case in principle, but had, in its form, special reference to Israel in the last days after the church's time was over. But the sprinkling of blood on the day of atonement went further. It entered into that within the veil. It carries us up to God, where Christ is gone. It may be remarked that the offerings of the day of atonement, which gave it its special character, did not include burnt offerings. The bullock and the goat were both sin offerings. The burnt offering for himself and for the people were not offered till the last special service of the day—the letting loose the live goat into the wilderness—was concluded. All was properly sin offering. It placed Christ, and those associated with Him, in the sanctuary, and, as far as this world went, outside the camp. A religion of the world in flesh was not recognized in it, but the cross (i. e., Christ rejected on the earth, and His place in heaven). It is available for Israel but

as bearing their sins and making a sacrifice of Himself, by which they could be blessed on earth. The burnt offerings were offered on the brazen altar. These prefigure Christ presenting Himself to God as a sacrifice here on earth, through the eternal Spirit. This was the perfection of Christ here on earth, and that indeed in which, consequent on our admission into the holy place, we have to follow Him here below. These things are presented as subjects for meditation, and will be found, if soberly followed out, for profit according to Scripture, and full of rich edification.

I turn to the second subject of which I spoke, introducing it by begging the reader to refer to the well known chapter John iii., as shewing the way the Lord connects His life and death with the heavenly place, which He contemplates, but does not then speak of. A man must be born again, He assures Nicodemus, even to have a share in the earthly part of the kingdom of God, as taught by Ezekiel ; but it was sovereign grace, and so went out, as the wind, whither it listed. But Christ spoke from His own knowledge, who came from heaven, yea, was in heaven, and it was a nature intrinsically capable—immense blessing!—of enjoying God ; and the rejected Messiah was the Son of man lifted up, that whosoever believed in Him should have eternal life ; not blessing, as life on earth. He died to all that was here, yea, even to His own Messiahship, as born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and opened the door

by His death to those heavenly things of which He was able to speak. The life of the Spirit and the death of Christ, in their proper value, when known as death to this world, as seen in Christ, and glorifying God in His nature, are the entrance, as possessing life in Him risen, into the heavenly sanctuary. Compare Colossians iii. (where life aspiring after those heavenly things is the subject) and Ephesians (where the power of the Holy Ghost, uniting us to Christ, gives us the sitting of the saints in heavenly places in Him). In John iii. it is only opened out to us in vista. Thus, in the resurrection of Christ, as risen with Him, we pass up into the heavenly places, while Christ has died to the whole world, and sin, to everything which is in the world and connected with sin. It is passed and gone as non-existent. Christ is risen, and is the first fruits and beginning of a new state of things, of a new creation. Old things being passed away, God has quickened us together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses. Christ died to sin and for sins. The new covenant does not go beyond forgiveness, remembering sins and iniquities no more. But it never deals with any entrance into the presence of God in the sanctuary. This, as we have seen, is our place by redemption. This leads me to the second point I would refer to—the difference of sins and sin. It is not new, but I do not think that Christians have sufficiently remarked the force of Paul's reasonings on the subject. Sins of course are fully recognized, wholly con-

demned, and atonement made for them. Nay, it is by them that the conscience is first acted on and brought to repentance. The blood of Jesus, the cross, is the blessed answer to them. Not only so, but even where all are brought under the sin of Adam, the actual sins which affect the conscience, are introduced as that which is the added occasion of death (Rom. v. 12). Of course, where the law is alluded to, positive transgression is recognised. But we shall find, besides all this, and where this has been recognized, the great question treated, of a state of sin, and being in the flesh. Up to the end of Rom. iii. sins are dealt with, but the conclusion drawn that we are all under sin, in that state or condition, before God, as in Psalm xxxii.: "Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord doth not impute sin." This question Rom. v. treats. But it goes farther; it shews sin entering into the world—a principle of evil in which man was alienated from God. It has reigned. It is not merely that I have committed sins; but sin has reigned, death being the proof of it. Chapter vi. carries out this thought distinctly, and introduces death as that which closes the evil; that, our state being one of sin, as alive as children of Adam, death closes that state. We are crucified with Christ, do not any longer exist as before God, as alive in the flesh. But what was this death in Christ? Here we have no dying *for sins* but *to sin*.

We are all aware that there was in Christ no sin, but ever living in the midst of this scene of sinners, His obedience tried to the utmost, even unto death, and drinking the cup, tempted in all points, like as we are, He died to that scene, died rather than fail in perfect and absolute obedience, in glorifying God. And He did so glorify Him, and, perfect in all things, closed all connection with this world, and with man as in a state of sin. He died to sin once, closed all connection of man with God, as on the ground of living in the flesh.

There was not a movement of His life which was not the perfection of the divine nature in man, in the midst of the temptations through which we pass, and having completed and finished that obedience, He died to the whole sphere and scene of existence—really died to it, and in resurrection entered on another, which did not belong to that order or state of things, but which had its starting point, its womb of existence, in death to it. Always morally separate from sinners, His life proved that that divine display could not win man to association with it, or to come to Him to have life, and He died so as to make a final and judicial separation of divine life from the whole first Adam condition, because there was nothing but sin there in will, and transfers, so to speak, the divine life which was in Him to a new and heavenly sphere, where flesh or sin could not come—that resurrection state.

In this life of Christ as risen with Him, our sins are all atoned for, we live, He Himself being our righteousness, according to His acceptance in the value of His work. Romans vi. therefore speaks no more of sins, save as past fruits of another state, from which we are freed. Christ has died unto sin once; we are to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Him. He that is dead is justified from sin; no state of sin can be charged on him, for as to that he is dead. He cannot be accused of being in that state, for he has died. Sin will not have dominion over us.

. So, in chapter vii., we have died; when we were in the flesh, there were motions of sins, and the law only provoked them. Hence when by a new nature, as taught of God, we see the spirituality of the law, I discover this active principle of sin, and look to be delivered, and so I am in Christ. I die in the state I was in, and am now alive in Christ arisen. The law is seen here—not as working a course, but—as the means, when we are under it, of detecting the hopelessness of flesh, its sin being only detected, and made exceeding sinful by it. It is the body of death. We are delivered from it (not pardoned its fruits) through Jesus Christ our Lord. Sin in the flesh is condemned, but in that in which Christ was for sin—a sacrifice for sin (chap. viii. 3). And then the contrast of flesh and Spirit in their nature is dwelt upon and insisted on.

And where is the groundwork of deliverance?

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Resurrection. I have passed, as dead with Christ, out of the flesh ("Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" chap. viii. 9) into a new scene by resurrection, not as to our bodies (for the redemption of which we wait—chap. viii. 23), but as to our state before God and our souls. It is the Spirit, because this is the power of life; but it is Christ risen, our life, and we alive in Him, and by the Holy Ghost united to Him, as sitting in the heavenly places, and so sitting there in Him. If I speak of being at the foot of the cross, I simply say that I have not died with Christ; I have not passed through the rent veil into the holiest of all. I am then before the cross in my old nature, with my sins upon me; for if I am dead with Christ and risen with Him, I have passed on through the cross, as the door of faith, without any sins into God's presence in light.

So, in Galatians, though not with the same development.

I would draw some practical conclusions from this. I get a double character of divine righteousness, typified by the gold and the brass. One, His own divine nature and delight; the other, judicial requirement from the creature, according to its place. The gold is divine righteousness as in the nature of God. According to this, Christ, having glorified God in all that He is, is received within as man, and sits at God's right hand; we, partakers of the divine nature, being of God in Christ Jesus, created after God in righteousness and true holiness, and renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created us, united to Him whom God has set on high, have our place (not personally of course) at God's right hand—that could not be but in Him—in that heavenly place.

according to the delight of God's nature, for that is in Christ. It is fellowship with this, or restoration to it, which is the character of our approach to God, as simply enjoying it in the new nature; it is not in contrast with evil, it is not forgiveness of what is past, sweet as that is in its place. I have, for faith—and shall have, in fact—entirely done with the nature which sinned, and the whole state of existence in which flesh moved. I exist only in the new creation. Hence the apostle says he did not even know Christ after the flesh any more. It is the joy of the new man in the presence and blessedness and glory of God.

The brazen altar is righteousness too, and divine righteousness, but in its claims on man's nature, not in the revelation of its own. Here the blood was sprinkled by which the sinner approaches God, and this will be the standing of Israel. How many of God's children remain here in fact! How little have they boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus! They remain outside, and hope, when the time comes, they will pass in judgment, and have a share in glory. They are in Egypt, looking to the blood to keep the holy Judge out; not in the wilderness redeemed out of the bondage they were in and passed the Red Sea. They do look to the blood as that which is the ground of their hope against judgment, but they have no thought of having been crucified with Christ, and risen. They hope in Christ, as in fear of the righteousness of God, instead of in a new nature and life as risen with Christ, enjoying God as in the Spirit, and not in the flesh. One thing we must remember: that even there, where we enter into the full blessedness of God's presence, the Lamb that was slain will be the Object in whose perfection we have learnt that blessedness.

## ROMANS V. AND VI.

The lively and energetic style of the apostle in these chapters is very striking. He treats sin as a person—as a king. He shows that he entered this world through the door of man's disobedience, and as soon as he entered, he took the seat of government, and death became the power of his kingdom, as well as its character. For man's departure from God let sin, the very opposite of God, who is the *holy* God, in; and sin brought death with it, being also the opposite of God, who is the *living* God. And this is the character of this present evil world. It is the place, or scene, of the reign of sin and death; and nothing in it is left untouched by the influence of it—it pervades all.

But there is another scene, of which the grace of God is the source, as the disobedience of man has been the source of this; and this grace has prepared the way for Christ—as disobedience prepared the way for sin—and Christ brings with Him righteousness and life, as Adam, through disobedience, opened the door to sin and death. Thus, Adam is the figure of Christ, of "Him who was to come" after. But righteousness enters the scene with a "much more," because grace is the source of it—and it was due to God's glory to bear this witness to that which had its source in Him. And having entered, it accordingly does "more" than merely measure the power of sin; for sin came in

upon one offence or disobedience of Adam, but righteousness comes in and sweeps away from the scene thousands of offences which followed the train of that one. And righteousness, accordingly, has now its kingdom here, as well as sin—life has its scene as well as death. But it is not visible as yet, like the other. The reign of sin is felt; the power of death is seen, all abroad; the reign of righteousness, which brings life with it, is only known to faith now.

And how has the *law* entered, and what has it done in this scene of these contending kingdoms? It has only magnified the offence of the disobedience of man, which let sin and death in. For it was holy, just and good, and served to expose the entire departure of man from God, the Author of the law. But still grace was triumphant. It had brought in a gift—a righteousness which could, through Jesus, assert itself, and be supreme over all this aggravated power of sin and death. But how was this? How could grace take it away? How could love enter to operate in a scene where sin was reigning unto death, and had *title* thus to reign?

By PROVIDING A VICTIM. Sin reigned unto death. Sin had title to exercise its power even to death—for death was the wages it paid—the result of any man of the mere tribe of Adam entering its territory. And Jesus, the Son of the *living* God, entered its territory and received its wages; but having life in Himself—life untouched by

Adam's disobedience—He survived the stroke; and thus really destroyed him that had the power of death and asserted a kingdom of righteousness and life, in which not only He reigns, but all those reign with Him who believe in Him—who rejoice with Him in His victory, and have no confidence in anything else.

Thus sin, as a tyrant, is overthrown. The Son of the living God has asserted His supremacy in the very region of the power of sin. Sin has paid its wages; sin reigned, it is true, unto death, even the death of Jesus on the cross; but sin was entitled to do no more. "He died unto sin." All that sin could demand—that is, death—it got; it exacted death; it rewarded its servants, its subjects, with death, and Jesus "died *unto* sin." His death owned the title of sin; but then He carried a life with Him that remained untouched by all this; and in that life, and the righteousness of God, in which it has its source, He and His saints for ever reign together,

But if the Son of God thus "died unto sin"—that is, owned the demands or rights of sin by His death—it was God that He owned in His resurrection. For if He "died unto sin," it is equally true that "He liveth unto God;" so that His saints cannot continue in sin, for they have union with Him. If in death, so in resurrection; and as this union with Him in the one has delivered them from the tyranny and supremacy of sin, so their union with Him in the other has made them alive unto God. And however sin may still have to do

with them, as it still dwells in their flesh, yet they should assert their place in the risen Son of God, and know that they have nothing to do with sin ; they should count themselves dead to it ; the connection between them and it is gone by the death and resurrection of Jesus, who has taken them rather into connection with Himself. *Grace* is the source of that kingdom in which they now move—it is not the other kingdom where law has aggravated, as we saw, the power of sin (vi. 14).

We have to see sin as an unclean creature now, that has sunk in its own element, the flesh, there to perish, while we ourselves are risen with Christ. It was once a king, but is now bound in the dungeon of the flesh. The judgment unto condemnation came upon one offence, but the justification unto life came upon, or after, many offences. Death entered on the eating of the fruit of the tree ; life is secured after sin, trespass, transgression, and offences have been multiplied, by the application of the law, again and again,

Sin has reigned *unto death*—that is, death is the final stroke of the power of sin, the last exercise of his dominion over us (the judgment that follows being God's, not sin's, or Satan's action), so grace has reigned unto eternal life, *i. e.*, eternal life will be the ever fresh, unfading witness of grace, the budding rods of its kingly power. Sin has exercised the final stroke of his power by putting Jesus to death, so that if, by faith, we plead the death of Jesus, or are united in His death, we are freed from sin, or discharged from his service or bondage, and consequently from his wages. For "he that is dead is freed from sin." This is glorious triumph for the sinner. God said to Adam, "If thou doest sin, thou shalt die." Adam did sin, but  
**CHRIST HAS DIED !**