

The Day of Atonement

by C.H. Spurgeon

The sermon emphasizes the significance of the day of atonement and the role of Jesus Christ as the ultimate atonement for our sins.

Scripture: Leviticus 16:34, Psalm 103:12, Isaiah 53:7, John 1:29, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:26, Hebrews 10:19-22, 1 Peter 3:18

Topics: "Atonement", "Sacrifice of Christ"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon expounds on the significance of the Day of Atonement, illustrating how it foreshadows the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ for humanity's sins. He emphasizes that this annual event, marked by the high priest's unique role and the sacrificial system, symbolizes Christ's singular and predestined atonement for our transgressions. Spurgeon highlights the humility and labor of the high priest, drawing parallels to Christ's suffering and the profound effects of atonement, including the sanctification of believers and the removal of sins. He calls for a response of repentance, rest in Christ's finished work, and joyful praise for the salvation provided through the atonement.

Transcript

"This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year."-Leviticus 16:34.

The Jews had many striking ceremonies which marvellously set forth the death of Jesus Christ as the great expiation of our guilt and the salvation of our souls. One of the chief of these was the day of atonement, which I believe was pre-eminently intended to typify that great day of vengeance of our God, which was also the great day of acceptance of our souls, when Jesus Christ "died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." That day of atonement happened only once a year, to teach us that only once should Jesus Christ die; and that though he would come a second time, yet it would be without a

sin offering unto salvation. The lambs were perpetually slaughtered; morning and evening they offered sacrifice to God, to remind the people that they always needed a sacrifice; but the day of atonement being the type of the one great propitiation, it was but once a year that the high priest entered within the veil with blood as the atonement for the sins of the people. And this was on a certain set and appointed time; it was not left to the choice of Moses, or to the convenience of Aaron, or to any other circumstance which might affect the date; it was appointed to be on a peculiar set day, as you find at the 29th verse: "In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month;" and at no other time was the day of atonement to be, to show us that God's great day of atonement was appointed and predestinated by himself. Christ's expiation occurred but once, and then not by any chance; God had settled it from before the foundation of the world; and at that hour when God had predestinated, on that very day that God had decreed that Christ should die, was he led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers he was dumb. It was but once a year, because the sacrifice should be once; it was at an appointed time in the year, because in the fulness of time Jesus Christ should come into the world to die for us.

Now, I shall invite your attention to the ceremonies of this solemn day, taking the different parts in detail. First, we shall consider the person who made the atonement; secondly, the sacrifice whereby the atonement was typically made; thirdly, the effects of the atonement; and fourthly, our behaviour on the recollection of the atonement, as well set forth by the conduct prescribed to the Israelites on that day.

I. First, THE PERSON WHO WAS TO MAKE THE ATONEMENT. And at the outset, we remark that Aaron, the high priest, did it. "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place; with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt

offering." Inferior priests slaughtered lambs; other priests at other times did almost all the work of the sanctuary; but on this day nothing was done by any one, as a part of the business of the great day of atonement, except by the high priest. Old rabbinical traditions tell us that everything on that day was done by him, even the lighting of the candles, and the fires, and the incense, and all the offices that were required, and that, for a fortnight beforehand, he was obliged to go into the tabernacle to slaughter the bullocks and assist in the work of the priests and Levites, that he might be prepared to do the work which was unusual to him. All the labour was left to him. So, beloved, Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and he only, works the atonement. There are other priests, for "he hath made us priests and kings unto God." Every Christian is a priest to offer sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God, but none save the High Priest must offer atonement; he, and he alone, must go within the vail; he must slaughter the goat and sprinkle the blood; for though thanksgiving is shared in by all Christ's elect body, atonement remains alone to him, the High Priest.

Then it is interesting to notice, that the high priest on this day was a humbled priest. You read in the 4th verse, "He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments." On other days he wore what the people were accustomed to call the golden garments; he had the mitre with a plate of pure gold around his brow, tied with brilliant blue; the splendid breastplate, studded with gems, adorned with pure gold and set with precious stones; the glorious ephod, the tinkling bells, and all the other ornaments, wherewith he came before the people as the accepted high priest. But on this day he had none of them. The golden mitre was laid aside, the embroidered vest was put away, the

breastplate was taken off, and he came out simply with the holy linen coat, the linen breeches, the linen mitre, and girded with a linen girdle. On that day he humbled himself just as the people humbled themselves. Now, that is a notable circumstance. You will see sundry other passages in the references which will bear this out, that the priest's dress on this day was different. As Mayer tells us, he wore garments, and glorious ones, on other days, but on this day he wore four humble ones. Jesus Christ, then, when he made atonement, was a humbled priest. He did not make atonement arrayed in all the glories of his ancient throne in heaven. Upon his brow there was no diadem, save the crown of thorns; around him was cast no purple robe, save that which he wore for a time in mockery; on his head was no sceptre, save the reed which they thrust in cruel contempt upon him; he had no sandals of pure gold, neither was he dressed as king; he had none of those splendours about him which should make him mighty and distinguished among men; he came out in his simple body, ay, in his naked body, for they stripped off even the common robe from him, and made him hang before God's sun and God's universe, naked, to his shame, and to the disgrace of those who chose to do so cruel and dastardly a deed. Oh! my soul, adore thy Jesus, who when he made atonement, humbled himself and wrapped around him a garb of thine inferior clay. Oh! angels, ye can understand what were the glories that he laid aside. Oh! thrones, and principalities, and powers, ye can tell what was the diadem with which he dispensed, and what, the robes he laid aside to wrap himself in earthly garbs. But, men, ye can scarce tell how glorious is your High Priest now, and ye can scarce tell how glorious he was before. But oh! adore him, for on that day it was the simple clean linen of his own body, of his own humanity, in which he made atonement for your sins.

In the next place, the high priest who offered the atonement must be a spotless high priest; and because there were none such to be found, Aaron being a sinner himself as well as the people, you will remark that

Aaron had to sanctify himself and make atonement for his own sin before he could go in to make an atonement for the sins of the people. In the 3rd verse you read, "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering."

These were for himself. In the 6th verse it is said, "And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house." Yea, more, before he went within the vail with the blood of the goat which was the atonement for the people, he had to go within the vail to make atonement there for himself. In the 11th, 12th, and 13th verses, it is said, "And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself."

And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock (that is, the bullock that he killed for himself), and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times."

This was before he killed the goat, for it says, "Then shall he kill the goat." Before he took the blood which was a type of Christ within the vail, he took the blood (which was a type of Christ in another sense), wherewith he purified himself. Aaron must not go within the vail until by the bullock his sins had been typically expiated, nor even then without the burning smoking incense before his face, lest God should look on him, and he should die, being an impure mortal. Moreover, the Jews tell us that Aaron had to wash himself, I think, five times in the day; and it is said in this chapter that he had to wash himself many times.

We read in the 4th verse, "These are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on." And at the 24th verse, "He shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments." So you see it was strictly provided for that Aaron on that day should be a spotless priest. He could not be so as to nature, but, ceremonially, care was taken that he should be clean. He was washed over and over again in the sacred bath. And besides that, there was the blood of the bullock and the smoke of the incense, that he might be acceptable before God.

Ah! beloved, and we have a spotless High Priest; we have one who needed no washing, for he had no filth to wash away; we have one who needed no atonement for himself, for he, for ever, might have sat down at the right hand of God, and ne'er have come on earth at all. He was pure and spotless; he needed no incense to wave before the mercy seat to hide the angry face of justice; he needed nothing to hide and shelter him; he was all pure and clean. Oh! bow down and adore him, for if he had not been a holy High Priest, he could never have taken thy sins upon himself, and never have made intercession for thee.

Oh! reverence him, that, spotless as he was, he should come into this world and say, "For this cause I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." Adore and love him, the spotless High Priest, who, on the day of atonement took away thy guilt.

Again, the atonement was made by a solitary high priest-alone and unassisted.

You read in the 17th verse, "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place,

until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." No other man was to be present, so that the people might be quite certain that everything was done by the high priest alone. It is remarkable, as Matthew Henry observes, that no disciple died with Christ. When he was put to death, his disciples forsook him and fled; they crucified none of his followers with him, lest any should suppose that the disciple shared the honor of atonement. Thieves were crucified with him because none would suspect that they could assist him; but if a disciple had died, it might have been imagined that he had shared the atonement. God kept that holy circle of Calvary select to Christ, and none of his disciples must go to die there with him. O glorious High Priest, thou hast done it all alone. O, glorious antitype of Aaron, no son of thine stood with thee; no Eliezer, no Phineas, burned incense; there was no priest, no Levite save himself. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." Then give all the glory unto his holy name, for alone and unassisted he made atonement for your guilt. The bath of his blood is your only washing; the stream of water from his side is your perfect purification. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, has wrought out the work of our salvation.

Again, it was a laborious high priest who did the work on that day. It is astonishing how, after comparative rest, he should be so accustomed to his work as to be able to perform all that he had to do on that day. I have endeavoured to count up how many creatures he had to kill, and I find that there were fifteen beasts which he slaughtered at different times, besides the other offices, which were all left to him. In the first place, there were the two lambs, one offered in the morning, and the other in the evening; they were never omitted, being a perpetual ordinance.

On this day the high priest killed those two lambs. Further, if you will turn to Numbers xxix. 7-11, "And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: But ye shall offer a burnt unto the Lord for a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram.

A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: One kid of the goats for a sin offering; besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings." Here, then, was one bullock, a ram, seven lambs, and a kid of the goats; making ten. The two lambs made twelve. And in the chapter we have been studying, it is said in the 3rd verse: "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering;" which makes the number fourteen.

Then, after that, we find there were two goats, but only one of them was killed, the other being allowed to go away. Thus, then, there were fifteen beasts to be slaughtered, besides the burnt offerings of thanksgiving which were offered by way of showing that the people now desired to dedicate themselves to the Lord from gratitude, that the atonement of sin offering had been accepted. He who was ordained priest in Jeshurun, for that day, toiled like a common Levite, worked as laboriously as priest could do, and far more so than on any ordinary day.

Just so with our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what a labour the atonement was to him! It was a work that all the hands of the universe could not have accomplished; yet he completed it alone. It was a work more laborious than the treading of the wine-press, and his frame, unless sustained by the divinity within, could scarce have borne such stupendous labour. There was the bloody sweat in Gethsemane; there was the watching all night, just as the high priest did for fear that uncleanness might touch him; there was the hooting and the scorn which he suffered every day before-something like the continual offering of the Lamb; then there came the shame, the spitting, the cruel flagellations in Pilate's hall; then there was the via dolorosa through Jerusalem's sad streets; then came the hanging on the cross, with the weight of his people's sins on his shoulders.

Ay, it was a Divine labour that our great High Priest did on that day-a labour mightier than the making of the world: it was the new making of a world, the taking of its sins upon his Almighty shoulders and casting them into the depths of the sea. The atonement was made by a toilsome laborious High Priest, who worked, indeed, that day; and Jesus, thought he had toiled before, yet never worked as he did on that wondrous day of atonement.

II. Thus have I led you to consider the person who made the atonement: let us

now consider for a moment or two THE MEANS WHEREBY THIS ATONEMENT WAS MADE.

You read at the 5th verse, "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering." And at the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses, "And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be

presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." The first goat I considered to be the great type of Jesus Christ the atonement: such I do not consider the scapegoat to be. The first is a type of the means whereby the atonement was made, and we shall keep to that first.

Notice that this goat, of course, answered all the pre-requisites of every other thing that was sacrificed; it must be a perfect, unblemished goat of the first year. Even so was our Lord a perfect man, in the prime and vigour of his manhood. And further, this goat was an eminent type of Christ from the fact that it was taken of the congregation of the children of Israel, as we are told at the 5th verse. The public treasury furnished the goat. So, beloved, Jesus Christ was, first of all, purchased by the public treasury of the Jewish people before he died. Thirty pieces of silver they had valued him at, a goodly price; and as they had been accustomed to bring the goat, so they brought him to be offered: not, indeed, with the intention that he should be their sacrifice, but unwittingly they fulfilled this when they brought him to Pilate, and cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Oh, beloved! Indeed, Jesus Christ came out from the midst of the people, and the people brought him. Strange that it should be so! "He came unto his own, and his own received him not;" his own led him forth to slaughter; his own dragged him before the mercy seat.

Note, again, that though this goat, like the scapegoat, was brought by the people, God's decision was in it still. Mark, it is said, "Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat." I conceive this mention of lots is to teach that although the Jews brought Jesus Christ of their own will to die, yet, Christ had been appointed to die; and even the very man who sold him was appointed to it-so

saith the Scripture. Christ's death was fore-ordained, and there was not only man's hand in it, but God's. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." So it is true that man put Christ to death, but it was of the Lord's disposal that Jesus Christ was slaughtered, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God."

Next, behold the goat that destiny has marked out to make the atonement. Come and see it die. The priest stabs it. Mark it in its agonies; behold it struggling for a moment; observe the blood as it gushes forth. Christians, ye have here your Saviour. See his Father's vengeful sword sheathed in his heart; behold his death agonies; see the clammy sweat upon his brow; mark his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth; hear his sighs and groans upon the cross; hark to his shriek, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," and you have more now to think of than you could have if you only stood to see the death of a goat for your atonement. Mark the blood as from his wounded hands it flows, and from his feet it finds a channel to the earth; from his open side in one great river see it gush. As the blood of the goat made the atonement typically, so, Christian, thy Saviour dying for thee, made the great atonement for thy sins, and thou mayest go free.

But mark, this goat's blood was not only shed for many for the remission of sins as a type of Christ, but that blood was taken within the veil, and there it was sprinkled. So with Jesus's blood, "Sprinkled now with blood the throne." The blood of other beasts (save only of the bullock) was offered before the Lord, and was not brought into the most holy place; but this goat's blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat, to make an atonement. So, O child of God, thy Saviour's blood has made atonement within the veil; he has taken it there himself; his own merits and his own agonies are now within the veil of glory, sprinkled now before the throne. O

glorious sacrifice, as well as High Priest, we would adore thee, for by thy one offering thou hast made atonement for ever, even as this one slaughtered goat made atonement once in a year for the sins of all the people.

III. We now come to the EFFECTS.

One of the first effects of the death of this goat was sanctification of the holy things which had been made unholy. You read at the end of the 15th verse, "He shall sprinkle it upon the mercy seat: and he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." The holy place was made unholy by the people. Where God dwelt should be holy, but where man comes there must be some degree of unholiness. This blood of the goat made the unholy place holy. It was a sweet reflection to me as I came here this morning. I thought, "I am going to the house of God, and that house is a holy place;" but when I thought how many sinners had trodden its floors, how many unholy ones had joined in its songs, I thought, "Ah! it has been made defiled; but oh! there is no fear, for the blood of Jesus has made it holy again." "Ah!" I thought, "there is our poor prayer that we shall offer: it is a holy prayer, for God the Holy Spirit dictates it, but then it is an unholy prayer, for we have uttered it, and that which cometh out of unholy lips like ours, must be tainted." "But ah!" I thought again, "it is a prayer that has been sprinkled with blood, and therefore it must be a holy prayer." And as I looked on all the harps of this sanctuary, typical of your praises, and on all the censers of this tabernacle, typical of your prayers, I thought within myself, "There is blood on them all; our holy service this day has been sprinkled with the blood of the great Jesus, and as such it will be accepted through him." Oh!

beloved, it is not sweet to reflect that our holy things are now really holy; that through sin is mixed with them all, and we think them defiled, yet they are not, for the blood has washed out every stain; and the service this day is as holy in God's sight as the service of the cherubim, and is acceptable as the psalms of the glorified; we have washed our worship in the blood of the Lamb, and it is accepted through him.

But observe, the second great fact was that their sins were taken away. This was set forth by the scapegoat. You read at the 20th, "And 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: And 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, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited, and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."

When that was done, you see, the great and wonderful atonement was finished, and the effects of it were set forth to the people. Now, I do not know how many opinions there are about this scapegoat. One of the most strange opinions to me is that which is held by a very large portion of learned men, and I see it is put in the margin of my Bible. Many learned men think that this word scapegoat, Azazel, was the name of the devil who was worshipped by the heathen in the form of a goat; and they tell us that the first goat was offered to God as an atonement for sin, and the other went away to be tormented by the devil, and was called Azazel, just as Jesus was tormented by Satan in the wilderness.

To this opinion, it is enough to object that it is difficult to conceive when the other goat was offered to God, this should be sent among demons. Indeed, the opinion is too gross for belief. It needs only to be mentioned to be refuted. Now the first goat is the Lord Jesus Christ making atonement by his death for the sins of the people; the second is sent away into the wilderness, and nothing is heard of it any more for ever; and here a difficulty suggests itself-"Did Jesus Christ go where he was never heard of any more for ever?"

That is what we have not to consider at all. The first goat was a type of the atonement; the second is the type of the effect of the atonement. The second goat went away, after the first was slaughtered, carrying the sins of the people on its head, and so it sets forth, as a scapegoat, how our sins are carried away into the depth of the wilderness. There was this year exhibited in the Art Union a fine picture of the scapegoat dying in the wilderness: it was represented with a burning sky above it, its feet sticking in the mire, surrounded by hundreds of skeletons, and there dying a doleful and miserable death.

Now, that was just a piece of gratuitous nonsense, for there is nothing in the Scripture that warrants it in the least degree. The rabbis tell us that this goat was taken by a man into the wilderness and here tumbled down a high rock to die; but, as an excellent commentator says, if the man did push it down the rock he more than God ever told him to do. God told him to take a goat and let it go: as to what became of it neither you nor I know anything; that is purposely left. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away our sins upon his head, just as the scapegoat, and he is gone from us-that is all: the goat was not a type in its dying, or in regard to its subsequent fate.

God has only told us that it should be taken by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The most correct account seems to be that of one Rabbi Jarchi, who says that they generally took the goat twelve miles out of Jerusalem, and at each mile there was a booth provided where the man who took it might refresh himself till he came to the tenth mile, when there was no more rest for him till he had seen the goat go. When he had come to the last mile he stood and looked at the goat till it was gone, and he could see it no more.

Then the people's sins were all gone too. Now, what a fine type that is if you do not enquire any further! But if you will get meddling where God intended you to be in ignorance, you will get nothing by it. This scapegoat was not designed to show us the victim or the sacrifice, but simply what became of the sins. The sins of the people are confessed upon that head; the goat is going; the people lose sight of it; a fit man goes with it; the sins are going from them, and now the man has arrived at his destination; the man sees the goat in the distance skipping here and there overt the mountains, glad of its liberty; it is not quite gone; a little farther, and now it is lost to sight.

The man returns, and says he can no longer see it; then the people clap their hands, for their sins are all gone too. Oh! soul; canst thou see thy sins all gone? We may have to take a long journey, and carry our sins with us; but oh! how we watch and watch till they are utterly cast into the depths of the wilderness of forgetfulness, where they shall never be found any more against us for ever. But mark, this goat did not sacrificially make the atonement; it was a type of the sins going away, and so it was a type of the atonement; for you know, since our sins are thereby lost, it is the fruit of the atonement; but the sacrifice is the means of making it.

So we have this great and glorious thought before us, that by the death of Christ there was full, free, perfect remission for all those whose sins are laid upon his head. For I would have you notice that on this day all sins were laid on the scapegoat's head—sins of presumption, sins of ignorance, sins of uncleanness, sins little and sins great, sins few and sins many, sins against the law, sins against morality, sins against ceremonies, sins of all kinds were taken away on that great day of atonement.

Sinner, oh, that thou hadst a share in my Master's atonement! Oh! that thou couldst see him slaughtered on the cross! Then mightest thou see him go away leading captivity captive, and taking thy sins where they might ne'er be found.

I have now an interesting fact to tell you, and I am sure you will think it worth mentioning. Turn to Leviticus xxv. 9, and you will read: "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall yet make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." So that one of the effects of the atonement was set forth to us in the fact that when the year of jubilee came, it was not on the first day of the year that it was proclaimed, but "on the tenth day of the seventh month." Ay, methinks, that was the best part of it. The scapegoat is gone, and the sins are gone, and no sooner are they gone than the silver

trumpet sounds,

"The year of jubilee is to come,

Return, ye ransomed sinners, home."

On that day sinners go free; on that day our poor mortgaged lands are liberated, and our poor estates which have been forfeited by our spiritual bankruptcy are all returned to us. So when Jesus dies, slaves win their liberty, and lost ones receive spiritual life again; when he dies, heaven, the long lost inheritance is ours. Blessed day! Atonement and jubilee ought to go together. Have you ever had a jubilee, my friends, in your hearts? If you have not, I can tell you it is because you have not had a day of atonement.

One more thought concerning the effects of this great day of atonement, and you will observe that it runs throughout the whole of the chapter-entrance within the vail. Only on one day in the year might the high priest enter within the vail, and then it must be for the great purposes of the atonement.

Now, beloved, the atonement is finished, and you may enter within the vail:

"Having boldness, therefore, to enter into the holiest, let us come with boldness into the throne of the heavenly grace." The vail of the temple is rent by the atonement of Christ, and access to the throne is now ours. O child of God, I know not of any privilege which thou hast, save fellowship with Christ, which is more valuable than access to the throne. Access to the mercy seat is one of the greatest blessings mortals can enjoy. Precious throne of grace! I never should have had any right to come there if it had not been for the day of atonement; I never should have been able to come there if the throne had not been sprinkled with the blood.

IV. Now we come to notice, in the fourth place, what is our PROPER BEHAVIOUR

WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. You read at the 29th verse, "And this

shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls." That is one thing that we ought to do when we remember the atonement. Sure, sinner, there is nothing that move thee to repentance like the thought of that great sacrifice of Christ which is necessary to wash away thy guilt. "Law and terrors do but harden." but methinks, the thought that Jesus died is enough to make us melt. It is well, when we hear the name of Calvary, always to shed a tear, for there is nothing that ought to make a sinner weep like the mention of the death of Jesus. On that day "ye shall afflict your souls." And even you, ye Christians, when ye think that your Saviour died, should afflict your souls: ye should say,

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?

And did my Sov'reign die?

Would he devote that sacred head

For such a worm as I?"

Drops of grief ought to flow, ay, streams of undissembled sympathy with him; to show our grief for what we did to pierce the Saviour. "Afflict your souls," O ye children of Israel, for the day of atonement is come. Weep o'er your Jesus; weep for him that died; weep for him who was murdered by your sins, and "afflict your souls."

Then, better still, we are to "do not work at all," as ye find the same verse, 29th. When we consider the atonement, we should rest, and "do no work at all." Rest from your works as God did from his on the great Sabbath of the world; rest from your own righteousness; rest from your toilsome duties: rest in him. "We that believe do enter into rest." As soon as thou seest the atonement finished, say, "it is done, it is done? Now will I serve my God with zeal, but now I will no longer seek to save myself, it is done, it is

done for aye."

Then there was another thing which always happened. When the priest had made the atonement, it was usual for him, after he had washed himself, to come out again in his glorious garments. When the people saw him they attended him to his house with joy, and they offered burnt offerings of praise on that day:

he being thankful that his life was spared, (having been allowed to go into the holy place and to come out of it) and they being thankful that the atonement was accepted; both of them offering burnt offerings as a type that they desired now to be "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God."

Beloved, let us go into our houses with joy; let us go into our gates with praise. The atonement is finished; the High Priest is gone within the vail; salvation is now complete. He has laid aside the linen garments, and he stands before you with his breastplate, and his mitre, and his embroidered vest, in all his glory. Hear how he rejoices over us, for he hath redeemed his people, and ransomed them out of the hands of his enemies. Come, let us go home with the High Priest; let us clap our hands with joy, for he liveth, he liveth; the atonement is accepted, and we are accepted too; the scapegoat is gone, our sins are gone with it. Let us then go to our houses with thankfulness, and let us come up to his gates with praise, for he hath loved his people, he hath blessed his children, and given unto us a day of atonement, and a day of acceptance, and a year of jubilee. Praise ye the Lord? Praise ye the Lord!

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