

33. Q. What important lesson, respecting Divine ordinances, should we derive from this incident?

Lesson Thirty

THE ORDINANCE OF SACRIFICE

Scripture Reading: Heb. 9:16-28.

Scripture to Memorize: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life" (Lev. 17:11). "And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

34. Q. What was the first institution of true religion which God established?
 A. The Altar.
35. Q. What was the first ordinance of true religion which God established?
 A. The ordinance of Sacrifice.
36. Q. What was the ordinance of Sacrifice?
 A. It was the solemn infliction of death upon an innocent and unoffending victim, and the subsequent offering of that victim to God upon the altar.
37. Q. To whom was Sacrifice offered?
 A. It was offered to God only.
38. Q. For whom was Sacrifice offered?
 A. It was offered for man.
39. Q. By whom was Sacrifice offered?
 A. It was offered by a priest, or by someone acting in the capacity of a priest.

40. Q. What was the victim customarily offered as a sacrifice for sin in olden times?

A. It was usually a lamb, a firstling of the flock, without blemish or spot. Hence Christ, our Perfect Sacrifice for sin, is referred to in scripture as the Lamb of God "that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Gen. 4:4—"and Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock." Exo. 12:5—"your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old." Cf. John 1:29, 36; 1 Pet. 1:19; 1 Cor. 5:7; Rev. 13:8, etc.

41. Q. What is the fourfold design of Sacrifice?

A. As respects God, it is a propitiation; as respects the sinner, it is a reconciliation; as respects sin, it is an expiation; as respects the saved, it is a redemption.

42. Q. In what sense is Sacrifice a propitiation?

A. It is a propitiation, in the sense that it is designed to satisfy the demands of justice upon the sinner.

God's moral kingdom, like His physical world, is established upon a foundation of divine law. Transgression of this divine law is sin. Consequently, when the divine law is disobeyed, justice requires that something be done about it, in order that the sanctity and majesty of the law may be properly sustained. Even under human government, to allow infraction of the civil law to go unpunished or unpropitiated, is to encourage further violation and rebellion, and to eventually, in effect at least, completely nullify the law itself. A great many human teachers, in their eagerness to emphasize the love of God, completely ignore the fact of His unfailing justice. The Psalmist says: "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne" (Psa. 89:14). This being true, it follows that God cannot consistently allow transgression of His laws to go unpropitiated and at the same time extend mercy to the transgressor. To do so

would be to condone sin, and to undermine the foundations of His government. "The indignity offered His person, authority and government, by the rebellion of man, as also the good of all His creatures, made it impossible for Him, according to justice, eternal right, and His own benevolence, to show mercy without sacrifice. . . In this sense only, God could not be gracious to man in forgiving him without a propitiation, or something that could justify Him both to Himself and all His creatures" (Campbell, *Christian System*, p. 39). See Rom. 3:24-26. In short, God could not be infinitely just and extend mercy to the sinner, without an offering from or for the latter, sufficient to satisfy the demands of perfect Justice with respect to the divine law violated. Propitiation is, in a sense, a legal term.

43. Q. In what sense is Sacrifice a reconciliation?

A. It is reconciliation, in the sense that it is designed to bring the offended party and the offender together, and so to make peace between them.

The offended party is God, the offender is man. So far as it honors law and justice, then, Sacrifice reconciles God to forgive; and so far as it brings love and mercy to the offender, it overcomes the rebellion in his heart and reconciles him to his offended Sovereign. "God's 'anger is turned away' (not a turbulent passion, not an implacable wrath) but 'that moral sentiment of justice' which demands the punishment of violated law, is pacified or well pleased; and man's hatred and animosity against God is subdued, overcome and destroyed in and by the same sacrifice. Thus, in fact, it is, in reference to both parties, a reconciliation" (Campbell, *ibid.*, p. 40). See Eph. 2:15-16, 2 Cor. 5:18-20.

44. Q. In what sense is Sacrifice an expiation?

A. It is an expiation in the sense that it is designed to actually cleanse and purify the heart of the guilt of sin.

Sacrifice is designed to do even more than to cover sin—it

is designed to cancel it, to put it away, hence to cleanse and purify the heart and life of sin's guilt and pollution. See Heb. 9:26.

45. Q. In what sense is Sacrifice a redemption?

A. It is a redemption in the sense that it is designed to deliver the offerer from the bondage of sin and to consecrate him anew to the service of God.

See Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Acts 20:28; Gal. 3:13, 4:4-5; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 9:12, 2:14-15; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9, etc.

46. Q. What is the meaning of the word Atonement?

A. It is equivalent to Propitiation.

(1) "The Hebrew term *copher*, translated in the Greek Old Testament by *ilamos*, and in the common English version by atonement or propitiation, signifies a covering. The word *copher* 'to cover' or 'to make atonement,' denotes the object of sacrifice; and hence Jesus is called the *ilamos*, the covering, propitiation or atonement for our sins" (Campbell, *ibid.*, p. 38, fn.). (2) 1 John 2:2—"he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10—"God . . . loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (3) To make atonement, means, then, to satisfy the claims of justice with respect to the divine law which has been violated. Lev. 17:11—"it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life." It is thus obvious that atonement and propitiation are synonymous terms.

47. Q. What was the typical design of animal sacrifices in olden times?

A. They were designed to foreshadow and to point forward to the Supreme Sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the Perfect Atonement for 'the sin of the world' (John 1:29).

(1) This is another incontrovertible evidence of the divine origin of Sacrifice. (2) Rev. 5:9—"Worthy art thou to

take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth." 1 Pet. 2:24—"who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." Heb. 9:26—"but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

48. Q. **What great truth did God establish with respect to His ordinances, in the Altar and in Sacrifice?**

A. **He established the truth that all His positive ordinances are divine appointments.**

(1) All positive ordinances are divine appointments. When you agree, for instance, to meet a friend at a certain time and place, that is an appointment. So God's positive ordinances are appointments where Divine grace and human faith meet in a solemn trust. (2) In olden times God and man met at the altar of sacrifice. See Gen. 22:1-19, Exo. 20:24-26. (3) Similarly, the Christian ordinances are divine appointments. In the ordinance of Christian baptism, God meets the penitent believer and there confers upon him, through the efficacy of the atoning blood of Christ, the full and free blessing of remission of sins. Hence baptism is said, in scripture, to be the institution in which sins are washed away (Acts 22:16); and is also said to be for salvation (Mark 16:16, 1 Pet. 3:21), for remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and for induction into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). (4) The Lord's Supper is likewise the divinely-appointed observance in which the children of God under the new covenant meet with their Savior, King, and Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, in solemn religious convocation and communion, on each first day of the week. See Matt. 26:26-29, Luke 22:14-20, Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 10:16, 1 Cor. 11:23-29, etc. (5)

On the human side, then, the ordinances are essentially manifestations and acts of faith. When the truth is once fully appreciated by Christian people that the Lord's ordinances are not rites, forms or meaningless ceremonies; but solemn, spiritual, heart acts, essentially acts of faith, and solemn meetings with our heavenly Father and with our great Redeemer, then indeed a great spiritual awakening will be engendered throughout the whole of Christendom. The thing most needed in this day and age is a correct evaluation of the divine ordinances in the light of scripture teaching.

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON THIRTY

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