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## TIME ELEMENT IN THE ATONEMENT

As "hieroglyphics came before letters, and parables before arguments", so the Old Testament is filled with God's picture writing and prefigurations which find their Rosetta Stone and intelligibility in the New, and more specifically in the Person and work of our Lord. For example, in order to bring within the range of our finite intellectual capacity the details of the sacrificial and vicarious atonement of Christ, God, in the types, figuratively divides His Son in pieces and presents each before us in pictures we can appreciate. The Law, the Writings, and the Prophets, together submit the divine mosaic, the reality, fulfilment, and perfect counterpart of which is to be seen in the Son.

The sixteenth chapter of Leviticus is one of the most beautiful units of this composite picture, because it was on the Great Day of Atonement that conceptions embodied in the typical Mosaic offerings reached their most complete consummation. The question, why should we believe this chapter presents a foreshadowing of the Atonement of Christ, when there is no trace of such a suggestion in the immediate text? is admirably answered by Thomas J. Crawford (*The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures respecting the Atonement*, p. 249) in these words: "The Mosaic ordinances, in so far as they were of a prefigurative nature, were not intended to unfold their full import until the event should come to which they had an ultimate reference—A type, with its prophetic import clearly disclosed, would really amount to a full exposition, instead of a mere foreshadowing of its antitype." The long shadows of the Old Testament are continually shortened to assume increasing definiteness of outline until they utterly vanish away under the full meridian splendour of the Sun of Righteousness. This foreshadowing in type throws light upon the Emmaus' conversation, "and beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv. 27, A.R.V.). Indeed, we must consider that the sacrifice of Christ was the object in the mind of God when He appointed all preceding sacrifices, and that types were designed prefigurations of the antitype.

The paramount glory of the Mosaic worship system resided in the person and office of the High Priest, of which line Aaron, the brother of Moses, was the first. In Leviticus xxi. 10 the High Priest is called **הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל** "the Great Priest", which is appropriate, for upon him and his Levitical attendants hinged the whole worship of the Judaical church. This "Great Priest", in his person and office, became the most illustrious type of the Messiah and His office and, furthermore, he came to be the principal means whereby God instructed Israel in the mystery of reconciliation. In ways almost without number he typifies the Antitype, our Lord. He prefigures Him in his priesthood qualifications, his entrance into office and in his services. Of course, the Antitype transcends the type in many particulars.

Concluding these prefatory remarks, we now proceed to consider the Hebrew Day of Atonement and its prefigurement of our Lord's sacerdotal work.

#### THE HIGH PRIEST WAS TO ACT UNDER DIVINE DIRECTION

"Aaron shall" and "he shall" recurs repeatedly in the chapter, until we arrive at the conclusion God was directing the minutest detail of the Day. So Christ was sent of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit for His mission, and could truly say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to accomplish His work." On the completion of the same, in His high priestly prayer, he sums up His life of obedience, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." His resurrection is the glorious proof of perfect accomplishment.

On the anniversary of expiation the High Priest was exclusively commanded to officiate and only his foot could pass through the mysterious hanging that parted the tabernacle in two, and only his hand was to sprinkle the blood before the Shekinah glory. Alone he was to exercise his divinely appointed priestly prerogatives. He cared for even the most humble tasks, with the exception of the taking of the live scape goat into the wilderness which was appointed to another.

Aloneness, characterizes in a word our Lord in His high priestly work. Alone, even among his friends. Alone, in Gethsemane, his nearest disciples asleep. Alone on Calvary, forsaken of man and of God. Alone, in the work of expiation: The Son was alone on God's great Atonement day.

## AARON WAS TO BE CEREMONIALLY CLEAN

By way of preparation for the function, the High Priest had to bathe, not his hands and feet only, but his whole body, early on the morning of the Day of Atonement.

Aaron's person, washed with pure water, supplies a lovely and impressive type of the virgin-born, sinless Christ. Our Lord did not need to do anything to cleanse himself for He was the holy spotless One of God. What Aaron *did* constitutes only a faint shadow of what Christ *was*. It was essential that the priest be ceremonially clean, which purity was obtainable by washings in water, but infinitely more important is it to us that He who made no Atonement for Himself—only for us—should have been sanctified (John xvii. 19).

## THE HIGH PRIEST IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH HIS BRETHREN

His washing with water and his spotless linen garments were expressive of the righteousness and holiness pertaining to the office he represented. He could not be "stripped of his integrity; but as a sin-bearer he was divested of all his hereditary glory", and humbled to the state of common priesthood.

On this day Aaron was to lay aside his gorgeous canonicals, called by the Jews "garments of gold", and attire himself simply in pure white linen breeches, coat, girdle and mitre. Thus, in his habit he was to identify himself with those for whom he was to make atonement.

Christ laid aside the glory, which was His from the beginning, and the independent exercise of Divine prerogatives and "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 7).

Thus, in Aaron's garb the kenosis of the Great High Priest of the future is foreshadowed.

## THE DEATH OF THE SIN-OFFERING

"Herewith shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering" (Lev. xvi. 3).

The Day of Expiation had to do first of all with *sin*, for that which precluded reconciliation and fellowship had to be removed or, speaking more in harmony with what actually did happen, covered. With this in mind, we are not surprised that throughout

all the services of this unique day we have no record of a meal offering or a peace offering. This Day was given over to one, and only one, accomplishment; namely, *Atonement*, "and that in a double way, first, as meeting all the claims of God—the claims of His nature—the claims of His character—the claims of His throne; and secondly, as perfectly meeting all man's guilt and all his necessities (C.H.M., Leviticus, 277-8).

Jehovah directs that Aaron shall use two he-goats and a bullock in the sin-offering. One goat—which one being determined by lot—was to be sent "away for Azazel into the wilderness". This being done "Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself", a little later he is to "kill the goat of the sin-offering".

Of the five major Mosaic offerings, it is generally agreed that the sin-offering, and especially those of the Atonement Day, prefigures most perfectly the Cross, on which Christ, our sin-offering, gave His life.

That the death of Christ on the Cross was, as a sin-offering, vicarious is evident from the following passages: First—Christ was "once offered to *bear* the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 28). Second—Christ himself "*bare* our sins in His body upon the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24). And third—several passages in Isaiah liii. which prophetically describe the substitutionary nature of His death: "He was wounded *for* our transgressions, he was bruised *for* our iniquities"; "He shall *bear* their iniquities"; "He *bare* the sin of many". By Christ "*bearing* our sins" we are to understand that He, the Lamb of God, bore the penal consequences of our transgressions and died instead of us. As the goat and the bullock died on the Day of Expiation as a sin-offering, bearing the sins of priest and people, so did our Lord on the accursed tree of Calvary die with our iniquities laid on Him. This interpretation is the *usus loquendi* of the whole New Testament.

Still other passages may be recorded which reveal the peculiar character of Christ on the Cross as a sin-offering. Paul reminds us, "For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ" (1 Cor. v. 7). In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read, He "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb. x. 12). These Scriptures, and many others, teach us that the death of Christ was foreshadowed by the death of the sin-offering.

## THE SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD

Leviticus xvi. states that "Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself, and for his house". Our attention is drawn to two focal points in this command: First—Aaron "shall present the bullock of the sin-offering", second—"and make atonement for himself". Apparently this is not tautology, but has reference to distinct parts of the solemn exercises. And further, by the order of the two commands, we are led to suppose the death of the sin-offering was not the climactic action of the day. That these conclusions are correct, and the only proper ones, we shall proceed to demonstrate.

After the bullock is killed, Aaron is to enter the most Holy Place with "a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before Jehovah, and his hands full of sweet incense—and he shall put the incense upon the fire before Jehovah", the reason being given, "that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not". Then the High Priest "shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat on the east, and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times". "Again and again he thus presents his atonement, till the seventh time ends the whole transaction, and he stands alone with God, justified, accepted, loved, and blessed. Happier man than Adam! More holy spot than Eden! (Andrew A. Bonar, *Commentary on Leviticus*, 1856 ed., pp. 306-7). Next the "goat of the sin-offering" is to be killed and his blood brought within the veil and sprinkled upon the capporeth, as was the blood of the bullock.

While the people wait prayerfully and breathlessly in the outside court the High Priest enters within the veil, and there, standing before the Glory of Jehovah as it is visible in the Shekinah between the Cherubim above the capporeth, he, in careful and exact obedience to commands, sprinkles the blood that has been shed, and lo, in the moment of sprinkling, atonement is made.

By the sprinkling of the blood, Aaron was to make "atonement for himself, and for this household, and for all the assembly of Israel". That in the sprinkling of the shed blood we find the manner of the atonement is even more clearly evident from verses 18 and 19, "and he shall go out unto the altar that is before

Jehovah, and make atonement for it, and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel ”.

Again, when referring to the disposal of the carcase of the “bullock of the sin-offering”, and the carcase of the “goat of the sin-offering”, this parenthetical and enlightening information is given, “whose (meaning both the bullock and goat) blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place”. Apparently it is the blood, and the blood alone, which truly expiates. It is the life of an animal given for the life of man. It denotes death, the penalty of sin. James G. Murphy (*Commentary on Leviticus*, 1874 edition, p. 210) shows the pre-eminence of blood on the Day of Expiation thus: “In this way there was a three-fold sprinkling in a twofold mode on the day of atonement—at the mercy-seat within the veil, at the altar of incense without the veil, and on the altar of sacrifice without the curtain at the door of the tent of meeting. The last is the place of sacrifice; the intermediate, the place of intercession; and the first the place of fellowship. The twofold mode of applying the blood points to a twofold need of expiation; the spattering of the blood seven times, like the sprinkling of it round the altar, refers to atonement directly for the worshipper; the spattering of it once, like the putting of it on the horns of the altar, appears to be a propitiation for the altar itself, that it may avail for the worshipper. Hence there was propitiation here, not only for the priests and people, but also for the holy things which they had defiled by their sins.”

Types prefigure many things not clearly revealed in anti-type. In our Leviticus chapter the time element is very evident, and also in that part of the service to which atonement more particularly belongs. In the New Testament antitype we cannot trace as clearly and distinctly the time element but most certainly “death” and “blood” do not want for importance by lack of emphasis. By typology, direct scriptural statement, and sober inference do we come to some conclusions as to the nature of, and time element in, our Lord’s work of Atonement.

Considering Leviticus xvi. to be typical of the Great Atonement there certainly must have been two phases of the

latter ; first, the death of the sacrifice, and second, the presentation of the blood. This parallelism is emphatically axiomatic according to the first principles of typology.

In Scriptural consideration we content ourselves with the ninth chapter of Hebrews. Let us closely observe verses eleven and twelve : “ But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, He entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” The writer “ declares and allows a treble dissimilitude in the comparates ” : First—the High Priest entered an earthly tabernacle ; Christ entered heaven. Second—the High Priest entered each year ; Christ only once. Third—the High Priest entered through the blood of animals ; Christ entered “ through his own blood ”. The dilemma presented by those who deny atonement’s second phase, presentation of the blood, in reference to Christ’s sacerdotal administration, is portrayed strikingly by John Owen (*An Exposition of Epistle to Hebrews*) on this passage, in form of a question : “ And what similitude is there between the High Priest entering into the holy place by the blood of the sacrifice that he had offered, and the Lord Christ entering into heaven without his own blood, or any respect unto the virtue of it as offered in sacrifice ? ”

“ Having obtained eternal redemption ”, verse 12, may seem contrary to our thesis but let us quote A. B. Davidson’s comment (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, T. and T. Clark, p. 175) : “ Having obtained . . . for us ; rather, obtaining, or perhaps best, and obtained. Obtaining redemption was not an act that preceded entering in, they were one act ; to enter in was to obtain redemption, though it was at the same time a token that redemption was obtained.”

Verse 23 reminds us, “ It was necessary therefore (because of the imperfect and provisional atonement of the old dispensation) that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these ; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these (‘ blood of the calves and the goats with water’, etc., v. 19).” By “ the copies of the things in the heavens ” our author refers to the tabernacle and its furniture, and according to God’s appointment, it was “ necessary ” to



atone for them yearly. The *ἐπουράνια* (existing in heaven, or heavenly things), we believe with J. H. Thayer (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*) to refer to "the heavenly sanctuary". Not that the *ἐπουράνια* was defiled and therefore was the object of purification, as was the earthly Tabernacle, for most certainly such a comparison cannot be pressed. "He conceives the heavens, the true sphere of communion between God and His people of the new covenant, locally; and by analogy the heavenly localities, which are to be the sphere of the people's service of God, are conceived as made the object of purification just as the earthly Tabernacle was" (A. B. Davidson, *Hebrews*, p. 185).

In verses 24 and 25 the author continues the theme of purification but proceeds from "the heavenly things" to the people of the New Covenant. We are told that Christ entered into heaven "to appear before the face of God for us", not often as the Mosaic High Priest, but once "at the end of the ages". Context and text alike speak of this entrance as *sacerdotal*, not *regal*. It was not until his ascension that, with respect to his kingly office, with authority and power he triumphantly entered heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father. The offices of our Lord are distinct and so is their exercise. The author of *Hebrews* now refers to his entrance in relation to the completion of his atoning work. He entered into the heavenly holy of holies, as did the High Priest, with respect to the earthly tabernacle on Expiation Day, to make Atonement *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*. The High Priest offered the sacrifice at the altar outside the tabernacle proper and then brought of its blood into the most holy place and sprinkled some upon the capporeth. Then, and not before, atonement was made. The antitype follows the type. The antitype gave His life on Calvary, shedding His blood, but made atonement "for us" in the heavenly holy of holies by the presentation of His efficacious blood.

This sacerdotal presentation of our Lord's blood was made before *τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ*, the face, countenance or look of God, which, in the earthly tabernacle, was continually represented by the Shekinah Glory dwelling between the cherubim above the mercy seat of the Ark.

We should make clear to the reader, that, although there is no question as to the materiality of the blood used throughout the atonement process by the earthly high priest, we are not

justified in pressing corporeality into the phase *διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος*. *Διὰ* is only used to define the means, not the mode (B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews, in loco*). "The fact that such a mode of purifying by blood was enjoined for the material instruments of worship carried with it the inevitable consequence that some analogous and therefore some nobler purification should be provided for the divine archetypes. In an external system the purification might be external, but in the spiritual order it was requisite that the purification should be of corresponding efficacy, spiritual and not material only" (*Ibid.*).

#### "TOUCH ME NOT"

On the first resurrection morning Mary Magdalene, tardily recognizing her Lord, said, "Rabboni", and apparently moved toward our Lord as if to touch Him. And then, significant for our purpose, the words of Jesus, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father . . . I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God" (John xx. 17). These three sayings of our Lord are indisputably among the "hard to be interpreted things" of Scripture. Few perplexed by them have gone to the Old Testament in search of a solution. This, at least in part, we propose to do. However, before proceeding with this investigation we must attend to several New Testament observations. Not long after this, perhaps only an hour or two, Christ was met by others who said "all hail" and "took hold of His feet, and worshipped Him".

The important problem, for which we seek solution, is this: Why did our Lord forbid Mary touching him when only a little later he makes no objection, at least none is mentioned in the record, to others taking hold of his feet? Why non-touchable one hour and touchable the next?

*Μή μου ἄπτου*, "touch me not", or better, A.R.V. marginal reading, "Take not hold on me". Without cataloguing the multitudinous interpretations of these enigmatical three words we propose the following solution: Hold me not here, for my work as your Saviour is not yet complete. I must ascend immediately and through my own blood once for all before the mercy seat of heaven to make complete and perfect atonement for you.

The syntax of the Greek phrase in John xx. 17 translated by the R.V., "for I am not yet ascended unto the Father", reveals His ascension not yet to be a past act. The negated Greek verb ἀναβέβηκα is in the perfect indicative. However, our Lord proceeds to say, "go unto my brethren and say to them, Ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου. . ." This Greek present tense is best translated, "I am ascending", for the process has been initiated but not consummated. We believe the exact shade of the Greek tense was used advisedly by our Lord to describe definitely exactly what was transpiring. He had not yet ascended, but He was ascending, and He was not to be detained.

It was, so to speak, as if the High Priest the Day of Atonement was stopped with the vessel of blood in his hands, which had just been shed by the sacrificed animal, and he would say: "Do not touch me! I have not yet made atonement for the people", and as He moved on, call back, "I am now making atonement". He was moving between the two poles of a single atonement and so was our Lord as He stopped to see Mary between Calvary and the heavenly capporeth.

#### CONCLUSION

The master-key which unlocks some of the secrets of our Lord's atonement, and His appearance to Mary Magdalene as recorded by John, is Leviticus xvi. There were two phases in Israel's annual Expiation Day. The death of the sacrifice and the presentation of the blood.

The further consideration which beckons our attention has to do with dilemma in which we place ourselves when we deny time element in the work of Atonement. If Christ completed His atoning work on the cross and did not go to heaven to consummate some part of it we say, with W. McEwen discussing the same subject in his typological *Grace and Truth*, "The resemblance betwixt Him and the Jewish High Priest would be very lame and imperfect" (p. 260).

Additional confirmation of our interpretation is revealed in Exodus xii., the Passover chapter. The focal point is not the slaying of the lamb, nor the eating of the lamb; not even the shedding of the blood, but the proper application or presentation. Israel was definitely instructed to "take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel" and then Jehovah says, "when I see the blood, I will pass over you". The *blood*

constituted the true ground for security of life and peace of mind.

We cannot terminate without calling attention, by quoting Scripture, to the emphasis on the blood of Christ in the Word. Peter, in one of his epistles, reminds us the price of our redemption was "not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious *blood*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the *blood* of Christ". The beloved disciple in his Apocalypse gives us the new song which the twenty-four elders sing before the Christ, "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". Then there is this striking passage from the Apocalyptic introduction: "Unto Him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins by His *blood*." Again we conclude the purifying agency is the Blood of Christ which was shed for sinners on the Cross and sprinkled for their atonement on the heavenly capporeth.

We conclude, the purifying, atoning, and redeeming agency for fallen man is the Blood of Christ which was shed on the cross and sprinkled on the heavenly capporeth before the face of God. The understanding and appreciation of time element in our Lord's Atonement enables us to place the proper emphasis, with the Scripture, on His blood and also leads us to the following:

#### PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

On the Cross our Lord suffered the penalty for sin, there "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Is. liii. 5).

The death of the Lamb of God was necessary that His blood might be shed, for "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22).

As our High Priest, Christ, sprinkled His own blood—more precious than that of any or all sacrificial animals—upon the heavenly mercy seat.

The Blood of the slain Lamb comes between the sins of the Redeemed and the eye of God, so that those under the blood have forgiveness.

Those who leave the Blood out of their Gospel—and such preaching is rather common to-day—have no Scriptural doctrine of atonement for sin.

Only those denying the atoning work of Christ are interested in removing all references to “the Blood” in our hymns.

In the Scriptures, importance of a doctrine may be partially determined by repetition and emphasis. Blood expiation has both.

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