

Hebrews 13:15-16 (John Thomas Mawson) 135951

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Hebrews 13:15-16

The sacrifices mentioned in the Old Testament, of whatsoever character they were, pointed only and altogether to the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is recorded that "once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and that He offered "one sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 9:26, and 10:12).

When the efficacy of this sacrifice is duly appreciated, the soul becomes settled in the fact that there is no more sacrifice for sin necessary or required. To think otherwise were indeed to detract from the infinite value of Christ's one offering.

The thought that something propitiatory is still necessary to be offered by us to the Deity is natural to men, and this thought is the cause of all the idolatry in the world, and Christians are not by any means free from it.

It is in the Epistle to the Hebrews that the eternally subsisting value of the death of Christ is unfolded, and it is in the last chapter of this epistle when all questions of atonement and sacrifice for sin are seen to have been settled by the one offering of Jesus Christ, that the response from the believer's heart for the blessings received is stated. This response is spoken of as "sacrifice."

The sacrifices that the Christian is privileged to offer are twofold, one towards God and the other towards men, reminding us of the law — of the two tables of stone, one of which spoke of man's duty towards God, and the other of his duty to his fellows (Ex. 20). That law was utterly broken by men in every point of it, but now on the ground of accomplished redemption, the Christian has become possessed of a power to do that which was impossible under law, and in this new power he can make use of the resources of grace stored up in the Lord for him.

The first exhortation runs: —

"By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 13:15).

This is the result of the great benefits we realize and enjoy, secured for us through the one sacrifice of Christ.

We see the thought graphically expressed in the case of the one leper who returned to give glory to God; ten were cleansed but only one came back to the Blesser. (Luke 17:15). Many Christians today are, like the nine, occupied with the forms and ceremonies of cleansing, and do not realize that they have been cleansed once for all, by the blood of Christ, from all their sins and iniquities. It is our privilege to be like the tenth, giving the sacrifice of praise, the wellings over of peace and joy in believing, to God.

This is to be the continual sacrifice of all Christians.

Praise should ever occupy the lips of God's people. What blessed fruit from lips which aforesaid gave expression to words full of bitterness!

God having had His portion from His people, and they being now free from self-occupation, they are able to look upon this world in the mind of God and act towards it accordingly.

"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:16).

Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, and went about doing good; and we, being anointed by the same Power, are in our measure to follow in His steps.

As the Lord has blessed us we should seek to communicate to others, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus when He said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The apostle John speaks of this obligation when he says: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" James equally presses the matter when he says: "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" (1 John 3:17, James 2:15, 16).

We see now the character of the sacrifices which can be rendered by us and are so well-pleasing to God.

Dear Christians, are we so occupied? — giving to God His due meet of praise and thanksgiving, and bestowing upon men (especially those who are of the household of faith) those temporal blessings and mercies which are in the power of our hand to minister.

There is nothing legal about this, it is the outflow of the divine nature, and it is thus God would have His people occupied in this world while waiting for the glory so soon to be revealed.

What a cure these simple truths would be for ennui and idleness. Carrying out these apostolic directions, the body of each Christian would become a living sacrifice, and we should thus prove in the actuality of our lives the perfect and acceptable will of God — not exhibiting a dead, lifeless faith, but becoming living exponents of the grace of our God day by day.

The apostle Paul fully realized this character of service when he said, in writing the epistle which of all others unfolds practical Christianity, namely, that to the Philippians, that he was ready to be poured out as a libation on the sacrifice and service of their faith, willing to do them every spiritual good, and communicate to them of all those eternal things of which he had been divinely appointed an apostle and minister; and concurrently he similarly commended the gifts and ministrations of the Philippians, stating that they were an odor of a sweet savor, an acceptable sacrifice, agreeable to God (Phil. 2:17, and 4:18).

May the Lord graciously put His people in the line of these things, that they may render intelligent service, and be able to rightly apportion what is due to God, and what is due to man, that they may be kept free from thinking that anything they can do, is or can be of any propitiatory value, all that side of things having been forever settled by the ONE OFFERING of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In conclusion we see that all these sacrifices are to be freely offered of a ready mind, not of constraint or of necessity; it says in the first place "let us offer," and in the second place, let us "forget not" to do these things, being assured that with both the one and the other of these sacrifices God is well pleased.

We know God is infinitely pleased, yea, glorified, by the sacrifice which His Son has offered to Him, and which indeed is the only basis upon which He can accept any sacrifice from us.

Indeed we cannot properly touch these things at all if our minds and hearts are not in the enjoyment of that perfect clearance before God, which flows from the redemption work which the Lord Jesus Christ has Himself wrought for all who believe on Him.

Do not imagine that the choicest blessings are placed upon some high shelf, so that you will have to grow tall or climb high to reach them; they are placed within the reach of the lowly, and if you would have them you must stoop.

If we are clear upon the fact that good works are not the cause or means of salvation, let us be equally clear upon the truth that they are the necessary fruit of it.

Men of faith are not idle men.

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