

Text:- "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."
 (John xiv.6).

We are met here this morning with the world full of noise, riot, and uproar. Never was it more so than in our day, and most people's minds are preoccupied with the uproar, din, and riot of the world. But for those who are sin-distressed and devil-driven, this truth meets them and is addressed in particular to them: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out", and "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

We will look at the connection of our text. The Lord speaks most blessedly to His real people in this chapter: "Let not your heart be troubled." How sweet it is to have a word like that come into the heart when we are in trouble! "Many are the afflictions of the righteous" (Psa.xxxiv.19). The Lord says, "Let not your heart be troubled," just as He says in another chapter, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John xvi.33). You shall have it. It is of no use to think you will not; you shall have it. But, though Christ said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation", your trouble shall never crush you. So it is with God's people now; they shall have trouble, but shall never be crushed by it, for they have faith in Him. These words were spoken more especially to comfort His disciples because of His going away and leaving them. They could not bear the thought. He knew that His departure from them would cut them to the heart; therefore He said, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions." Why should Christ have said, "Ye believe in God," and then, immediately after, "believe also in Me"? Why, because down to that time - notwithstanding all He had said to them as to the purposes of God - they had not grasped the mystery of His death. If they had at that time apprehended the design of God by Christ's death and resurrection and all the glorious fruits of them, they would not have regretted His going away and have regarded it as a calamity; their hearts would not have been so troubled when He said to them, "I go away." Therefore says Christ, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." He knew that the great and grand mysteries concerning Himself, on which He had discoursed to them, would not in their full glory enter their spiritual understandings until the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost (John xvi.12; Acts i,5).

"In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas said unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest." We cannot tell what Thou meanest. Thy words are very puzzling, Lord; we would fain grasp the meaning, but, Lord, we cannot. "We know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." You see, then, upon what grounds He uttered the words of our text; so that this text is one of the greatest truths in the Bible. Then what follows is very blessed: "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Show us the Father." Here was another evidence of confusion in their minds. At the beginning of the chapter Christ had said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Did they believe in God? Yes; they did believe in God. They believed in His greatness, His supremacy, and His spiritual power; they believed He was the God of heaven, and that He had sent Christ into the world; they believed that all things were possible with God. But their views concerning the mysteries of Christ were at this time very indistinct. Therefore when Christ spoke to them about the Father, they seemed to stumble more than ever. So we hear Philip saying, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake."

As the eternal Son, He was one in His ineffable subsistence in the indivisible essence of the Deity, and hence He was in the Father and the Father in Him. Not that there was any suffusion of His humanity into the Deity; but He had a distinct Personality as the Second glorious and ineffable subsistence in the indefinable Godhead. It was the eternal Person of the Son of God who, by voluntary assumption, took our nature into hypostatical union with His eternal Godhead. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col.ii.9). He is the one way of salvation; "He is the propitiation for our sins" (I John ii.2); He is "The Lord our righteousness" (Jer.xxiii.6).

Now, then, you can see the force of His words, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Nothing of God can be known but by Me. Thousands worship Christ, as they think, but, with all their supposed knowledge of God, know no more of Him than the stones in the street. What multitudes there are in this state today! The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is like a light put under a bushel by Ritualist and Romanist. Such men are blind to its real meaning, as blind as were those Jews who ignorantly asked, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" But Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." (John vi.52,53). Some said, "This is a hard saying" (verse 60). Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (verse 63). These cavilling Jews took the words of Christ just according to their natural import, and could not see into the mystery of our text, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Such men in our day have not known what it is to take one step towards God. But blessed are those who know what it is to be sprinkled with the glorious blood of atonement. They go as trembling souls, as poor, doubting, waiting ones. Blessed are those who are fed by Christ; such shall never perish, for Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

There must be a real spiritual coming to the Father in order to be saved, and that coming to the Father can only be by Christ, through the rent veil of His flesh - that is, His death, His sacrificial death. This is God's way, and His only way, of receiving sinners ever since the fall of man. Never did a sinner in the world find acceptance with God in any other way than this. It was just as much the one and only way of approaching God under the Levitical economy as it is now in the gospel dispensation. Blessed is it for those here this morning who know what it is to go unto the Father, really and truly by faith, through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, as led by the eternal spirit of God. There is no greater truth in the Bible, no truth which God has revealed that stands out with greater grandeur, glory, majesty, power, and blessedness - that is, for the guidance of poor sensible sinners - than the truth in my text.

And, in setting it forth by the help of the Lord, for the building up of ourselves in the faith of the gospel, if it be the will of God, I shall endeavour to follow the great truth, as much as I possibly can, in the scriptures of truth; for the whole of divine revelation proclaims and reiterates the truth of my text throughout all the ages of time.

I. The Fall. This truth was preached in the very first congregation that ever met for the worship of God after the fall, which congregation consisted of three only - a man, a woman, and the eternal God. The man and the woman were, as most of you know, Adam and Eve, who had sinned and brought death upon themselves and upon the whole human race, and had thereby effectually cut themselves off from God and from all hope in Him upon the ground of the law. So that there seemed nothing whatever awaiting them but eternal death as the wages of sin, an eternity in hell as the due reward of their transgression. But to our first parents thus fallen, stricken, and condemned - and the only two individuals then in the world - God, the eternal God, came and proclaimed in their ears the truth of our text: "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

II. The Blood and Righteousness of Christ. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent:.... I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; It (that is, the seed of the woman - Christ) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Gen.iii.14,15). God thus taught our first parents that the only way to come to Him was by sacrifice. They had sinned, they had brought death upon themselves; and now the Lord God utters this promise in their hearing, and He taught them the way that they must ever after approach Him, that is, by sacrifice. To have tried to approach Him by any way of their own would have been utterly impossible. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen.iii.21). This was a blessed type of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was to come. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

III. Abel's Lamb. Abel, led by the Spirit and being a partaker of "like precious faith" (II Peter i.1), "offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Heb.xi.4). Cain, for the want of the inward spiritual leading and teaching of the Holy Ghost, "brought of the fruit of the ground.... And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect" (Gen.iv.3-5). I dare say that thousands in our day think they do their best in all the superstitious reverence which they pay to altars and to priests, penances, sacraments, and so on. But it is all blind devotion, nothing but an abomination in the eyes of the Lord; "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom.xiv.23). "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

IV. The Passover Lamb. Then, again, what was the teaching of the Passover? It was this: that every man of Israel was a sinner, and that not one amongst them could stand before God under the awful judgment which was about to come upon the land by the messenger of death passing through the whole land and smiting the firstborn in every house. Not a man in the congregation of Israel could have stood before God under that judgment without sacrificial death. Therefore God commanded His people to kill the paschal lamb, and its blood was to be taken and sprinkled upon the lintels of the door posts of their houses; and then God Himself said: "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (Ex.xii.13). When the words of my text fell from Christ's lips, it was just as though He had stood up at the time the blood of the paschal lamb was sprinkled upon the houses of the people, and said: "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

V. The Brazen Altar. Passing on from Genesis and Exodus to Leviticus, there was the Tabernacle with its holy and most holy places, and inside the holiest of all was the great God, the infinite God, His awful presence there being symbolized by the visible glory which shone forth from the Shechinah. Now, then, how was God to be approached? There was only one way of entrance into that holy place; that was by the brazen altar, which stood right in front of the doorway, making it impossible for a man to go into the most holy place without passing that (Lev.i.5). And any man daring to approach God otherwise than by that brazen altar - on which the fire was ever burning and on which the blood was constantly spilt - would have been instantly consumed by the blast of God's righteous indignation against him. But if he approached God as the priest did, by that brazen altar, then he would find God approachable; there would be no wrath, no indignation, and there need not be any terror, any dismay, on the part of poor mortal dust and ashes in thus approaching God. And, because it was a type of Christ and served for the time being to point to Him, it was just as though Christ had stood there, right at the front of the door, and said: "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

VI. The Psalms. Coming to the book of Psalms, the whole book sounds the same truth; for what Genesis predicts and Exodus portrays and Leviticus teaches, that truth the Psalms all repeat - that there is no coming to God but by Jesus Christ. In all the Psalms it is Christ (Luke xxiv.44). I do not say in every verse, but in all the Psalms it is Christ speaking in the spirit of prophecy. It is Jesus looking down from the watch tower of the cross upon all the ages of time and seeing that poor sinners approach unto God by Him. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

VII. The Prophets. To Christ all the prophets gave witness (Acts x.43). Isaiah was inspired to give us some of the very words of Christ: "Come unto Me" (Isa.lv.3; Matt.xi.28). "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa.xlv.22). And did not Isaiah speak of Him in His sorrows, afflictions, and distresses? He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa.liii.3,5).

Jeremiah had deep afflictions. "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath" (Lam.iii.1). Yet he dries up his tears, rises by faith above his sorrows, and speaks of Christ as "The Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. xxiii.6). Oh, how beautiful it is to see in these Old Testament prophets such a blessed description of the substitutionary character of the Lord Jesus Christ: to find everything pertaining to His life, His nativity, His bringing up, His ministry, His miracles, the wonders which marked His whole life; to find His very utterances, His very cry upon the cross, all the torments which He met with in the world - all more or less minutely predicted and pointed out for our instruction!

Just look at Daniel, pondering the deep and mysterious visions of the divine wrath which God gave him, the overturning of empires and kingdoms, the death and ruin sweeping through the earth as the very besom of heaven. Then, in the light of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, he breaks forth out of the deep visions and the gloom of his captivity as he writes: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy" (Dan.ix.24). Here, I repeat, it was just as though Christ had stood there and proclaimed this truth with the voice of heaven amidst all that exhibition of divine wrath upon God's enemies: "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

VIII. The Apostles. Coming to the days of the Apostles, we find that Peter stood up immediately after Pentecost, and said: "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv.12).

Paul says: "Through Him we both (that is, Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph.ii.18). And in the Epistle to the Hebrews (vii.25) he writes: "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God

by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Then John declares: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John ii.1).

IX. The Tremendous Amen. Finally, in the closing book of Holy Scripture, the Revelation gives its tremendous Amen to this glorious truth, the utterance of patriarchs, prophets, priests, psalmists, and apostles - all that they had spoken and written concerning Christ: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Rev.i.5-7). This is what I may call the loud, strong voice of Calvary in the opening chapter of the book of Revelation. In the fifth chapter, this voice is taken up by the company of the elders which were before the throne of God: "They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (verses 9 and 10).

This mighty shout of the elders is heard by the entire host of the redeemed, who join the chorus: "And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (verses 11 and 12).

And then, once more, this exulting song of the redeemed is represented awakening the whole creation of God, compelling every creature to pay its homage to Christ and to join the song: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (verse 13).

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