

THEREFORE LET US DRAW NEAR

by

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A SERMON

Preached at Broad Oak Chapel, Heathfield, on Sunday morning, September 16th, 1945.

Text: Hebrews 10 v. 19-22

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

These chapters contain the quintessence of the gospel, and they deal with that one thing dealt with by the whole of the gospel; that one thing is SIN. So that -

“Sinners can say, and none but they,
How precious is ...” - this text.

(Hart; Gadsby's 806)

What led me to read this chapter was this: before I came here this morning I felt to need something for an uttermost sinner. The Lord Jesus has no place for little sinners, or delicate refined sinners, nice sinners, but those people who feel what David felt when he wrote the 38th Psalm. He did not contrive better looking names for sin than he felt sin to be in him; he said, “My loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh” (v. 7). I think I said here lately (and it comes in again on this point), that a comparison may be made with the nature, the inconceivable, inexpressible nature of sin particularly in its entirety and in its malignity, with what might be seen in the grave after one has been buried a month. Some of you might say, ‘Well, that is a very revolting kind of remark to make.’ I make no apology for it, and I will tell you why - because that very physical condition is the result of sin. There you see sin in one of its absolute forms. I remember going to a funeral on one occasion when the vicar who was officiating altered a word, and instead of saying “who shall change our *vile* body,” had a better-looking word for it, “Who shall change our *poor* body.” Why, that took off all the point and edge. What kind of sinner are you?

The *viler* the wretch, the welcomer here.¹

Well now, sin has everything to do with the text and this chapter (and the preceding chapter). Are you glad? Oh, I was glad this morning; here is a remedy, not for little sinners, not for refined sinners, but for hell-deserving, corrupt sinners who understand a little of what Isaiah said: “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores” (Isa. 1 v. 5-6). We are loathsome lepers. This is not popular theology, but it is true. The grave will prove it true. It makes the gospel sweet, makes Christ precious, and it is a great part of experience to be made such a sinner; then you will be glad of the summing up of things as it is in chapter 8,

¹ His own variation on “The poorer the wretch, the welcomer here” - Hart; Gadsby's 155.

first two verses: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest" (blessed be God!), "who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man."

Well then, this text is addressed to sinners. It is the hope set before us in the gospel. I won't say that it will make you glad that you *are* a sinner, but, *being* a sinner, you will not wish to be ignorant of it.

The first word of importance in the text is "therefore." If we are enabled to look inside of this word "therefore," we shall see that underneath it is the whole of the chapters from the 7th to the 10th. Right underneath this word "therefore" is a ground, a reason, why sinners may enter boldly into the holiest; why the most depraved, the most utterly ruined may enter boldly into the very holiest. Let us then look at the reason, the ground of this boldness.

We might say before continuing, with respect to the awful fact and being of sin, that it is sin alone which has separated between man and God, and this separation is infinite: nothing can bridge the gulf. Our only disability Godward is sin. Nothing else has opened Hell and shut Heaven but sin; nothing has kept the way to the tree of life, nothing has lifted up that flaming sword of divine justice that none may enter, but sin, sin, sin. But *this* is the way of its removal.

The apostle in those two chapters in particular has been showing the impotency and imperfection of the moral levitical dispensation and worship. Oh, how beautiful when by faith we are enabled to trace the efficacy of the sacrifice and atoning work and divine Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, being brought by the Holy Ghost into an ineffable and living contact and union with Him; this is the vitality of religion. Oh how different from a mere moral essay of some eloquent orator, is the dispensing of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, which contains in it, as do these chapters and this text, all the efficacy of the merits of Christ poured out for sinners. Why, my friends, it would be ridiculous to see drawing up to a house doctors with all the apparatus for oxygen and blood transfusion, to a person that had the toothache. It would be altogether out of proportion, but how such would be welcome to a parent with a beloved child lying at the point of death. And these chapters contain in them - if one might speak with reverence - all the apparatus of the gospel that shall save a dying sinner. It won't be needed for those of you who have a scratch upon your conscience or something just awry on the surface:

"To see sin smarts but slightly;
To own, with lip confession,
Is easier still; but oh, to feel,
Cuts deep beyond expression."

(Hart; Gadsby's 806)

Ah, it would be good to preach to a chapel-full of loathsome lepers crying, 'Unclean, unclean.' The biggest leper would be in the pulpit. I don't say that lightly; I say it sadly. As I said, the reason I was led to these chapters this morning was that I felt just like a man bleeding to death or one in an extreme case of pneumonia. I did feel to want the very quintessence of the gospel to save my dying soul. Do you? Well, here it is: "Having *therefore* ..." If it were not for this word "therefore," what would you have to look at? You could not say, 'Because of my condition.' No, the word "therefore" brings you to depend on what precedes, and this will make the gospel precious. I would impress it upon you, as I felt it in secret before God with respect to my own uttermost, vile case, that you have no ground or right because you are ruined and lost and dying; that does not constitute in you a claim to salvation. No, it may appear to do so; it may appear good ground, but I'm glad that it isn't. Now you may wonder why. Because if that was the ground for us to demand salvation, it would put upon Christ a necessity to save us, and He can know no necessity. No, there is

another ground, but, blessed be the Lord, He has in infinite mercy involved that in His free grace, and founded it on the oath of Jehovah in the covenant of grace. That foundation was laid in Zion by God, in the Person of Immanuel, through the rent veil, that is to say, His flesh.

You look at the difference between the sacrifices, for “if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh” - that is to say, those ceremonials gave the people a right to the ceremonial washing so that they were fitted to enter in; they sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, but they did not touch the consciences nor remove sin - “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God” - here is a distinction from the earthly priest, for they could not offer themselves, and if they did, they would not be without spot - how much more shall His blood “purge your conscience” (Heb. 9 v. 13-4). His blood touches the conscience; it reaches the heart; it removes sin. All this is underneath the word “therefore,” and because of this, brethren, oh, it will give hope to the hopeless. It will enable a poor sinner in the dust to say, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help” (Ps. 121 v. 1). Then again, concerning those sacrifices, “There is a remembrance again made of sins every year” (v. 3), but concerning the Lord Jesus, it is said, “for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (v. 14), and “by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (v. 10). It is a *finished* work, and this made possible because the Lord Jesus in His divine Person contained all the properties essential to the Godhead. I say, my friends, Do you feel (I would touch these things reverently) - but do you feel your condition is such that you need spiritually what is given in the hospital physically, a transfusion? Oh, I do feel to need the gospel run right into the very veins of my soul with the precious righteousness and the merits and the grace and sanctification and all the redeeming power of Christ - all that is necessary to take out the stains, to change the Ethiopian’s skin, to take out the leopard’s spots.

“Having therefore” the “boldness,” or liberty, or right - think of it, think of the ground of it. This people have liberty, have a right, because their right is purchased to them; they have a right that none can withstand: every law, every prohibition is removed; all the conditions necessary in order to obtain access unto God - *all* the conditions - have been fulfilled by the Lord Jesus. The law which stood in the way in its justice, just severity, the inexorable law of God, has been satisfied, its frown turned into a smile, its sword sheathed in the sacred side of the Lord Jesus.

“Having therefore boldness ...” This is the ground of the boldness: “This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them” (Luke 15 v. 2); this is why this Man is “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him” (Heb. 7 v. 25). I do desire that the Holy Ghost might lead me to speak of this boldness to enter into the holiest, the holiest of all, so that poor needy sinners might receive the benefit of it. Why, I believe that was just the place into which Job laboured to enter when he said, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat” (Job 23 v. 3). Where is His seat? In the holiest of all.

All these things imply that there will be in your experience, in your religion, a case commensurate with the remedy. There is nothing incongruous in the gospel, nothing superfluous; everything fits. It is very solemn, but a great mercy, to be made fitting for the gospel, and for the gospel to fit our case.

“Boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,” by whom, says the same apostle to the Ephesians, “we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. 2 v. 18), by a “new and living way.” The old way was a dead way. It was a way by slaying beasts, a way by dead beasts, but this is a living way - Christ, a living Christ; His are living works, His a living righteousness. A living way because a living Christ walked in it; a living way because of His sacred humanity; everything in it is living. The old way was a dead way, as it is said in

the conclusion of the 8th chapter - "Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8 v. 13). But here is the new and living way to God, "which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." Now, may we be enabled to look at this, or rather, may it look at us, look into our hearts.

This new and living way is the Person of Christ, the Son of God incarnate; and therefore we read in the second chapter about the children being partakers of flesh and blood: "He himself likewise took part of the same," for "it became Him, for whom are all things" - that is to say, it was necessary for Him. (This is a description of His infinity, His Godhead, and yet it blessedly connects that divine Person in the work of salvation to poor sinners.) "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory ..." - think of it: it was *necessary* in order to bring some of you here to heaven. You are such sinners, so lost, the law of God so holy, His justice so inflexible (and the glory of His character may not be infringed to procure salvation), that to bring "many sons unto glory, "the Captain of their salvation" was made "perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2 v. 14 & 10).

When Jesus, as He was ordained the Servant of His Father, heard that His Father had no pleasure in the sacrifice of beasts, "then said He, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (v. 9). He came to be this Way; nothing else could constitute a way to God for poor sinners; and when He condescended to become the Way to God, He took into consideration the place and condition from which His people must be brought, and therefore it was necessary that He should descend into that very case and place to become their Surety and Substitute. Oh, what a thing is sin: look what it needs in order to save from it!

"Nothing but thy blood, O Jesus,
Can relieve us from our smart."

(Hart, Gadsby's 746)

"A new and living Way;" there is something about that expression, "living Way," that has such an attraction to me. Has it to you? And I will tell you why: because I am full of death and because I believe there is sin and death in every other stream.

"Death's within thee, all about thee;
But the remedy's without thee;
See it in thy Saviour's blood."

(Hart, Gadsby's 876)

"A new and living way" - everything living in it. What a mercy to be put into it! I wonder if there is a soul here that says, "Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me" (Ps. 25 v. 4 - 5). One who sees this in the text says, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people; O visit me with thy salvation" (Ps. 106 v. 4). "A new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us ..." - and there is something very sweet in this, at least I feel it so. We read in Isaiah that He shall make the place of His feet glorious (Isa. 60 v. 13), and when He became the Way, He also consecrated that way for us. And how did He do it? Why, when He cast up a highway in the desert,² when He undertook and went through all that was required of Him in the covenant to make a way for His people to heaven; and you can see Him walking that way from the manger to the grave. Have you ever traced Him, for that was virtually when the way was cast up. There will be no experience in your heart of a way to heaven, except that the Lord Jesus had become that living Way, and had cast it up thither. 'Oh, look at a living Saviour,' says the apostle: "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. 4 v. 10), by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us" sinners. Do you wish you knew that He consecrated that way for you? Well, I believe you have some hope of it if you feel your need of Him.

² "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. 40 v. 3).

The new and living way is “through the veil, that is to say, His flesh,” His humanity. The human nature of the Lord Jesus was essential because except for that He could never have been constituted a high priest. That hymn that we have been singing (117) could never have been written. The sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us, is the rock upon which the church is built, and against which “the gates of hell shall not prevail” (Mat. 16 v. 18).

This high Priest over the house of God is a Son over His own house, whose house, says the apostle, we are, “if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (Heb. 3 v. 6). Being therefore “an high priest over the house of God,” He must have somewhat to offer,³ and the priestly office of the Lord Jesus has not ceased, but the virtue and merit of His work He pleads before the Throne; He pleads His own precious blood, by that one sacrifice through which He “perfected for ever them that are sanctified (v. 14), or set apart, in eternal election, in the covenant of grace in the purposes of the sovereign love of God. One Sacrifice, and they were perfected for ever. “It is finished.” It is an infinite mercy to be a stone in that house of God; yes, the Corner Stone was “disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious” (1 Pet. 2 v. 4). It was the head stone of the corner, that is to say, the principal stone upon which the building rested. I think that is a very blessed word we were reading, “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands ...” (Heb. 9 v. 24). Poor sinner, do you need something higher and greater than those things which are made with hands? Have you an exercise, an inward trouble, a condition discovered to you that needs something far higher and different from the things which are made with hands, which are only figures of the true? This High Priest is in the presence of God for us. That will help you to pray; yes, I believe it will help you to pray even before you know you have an interest in Him; you believe there is an High Priest there, and you will venture, as did Esther, into the presence of the king. I thought the other day, if I could only keep groaning in prayer, I think I should groan even if I were banished from His presence; I would go to hell groaning, praying, seeking, calling, wrestling ... but I never *would* go to hell.

“In the world of endless ruin,
Never let it, Lord, be said,
Here’s a soul that perished suing
For the boasted Saviour’s aid.”

(D Turner; Gadsby’s 1068)

It will never be, having such a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, and you will be glad of this, that there is an High Priest, a divine High Priest, divinely ordained, that is in heaven for you in things that pertain to God. Now, you think of it! What are these things that pertain to God? His glory, His character, and His holiness - they pertain to God. What have we done with them? And what will that character and that holiness do to us as sinners? Why, they would only destroy us, but there is a High Priest in those things that pertain to God for His people here below, and He stands there as representative of them. What about their sins? He has put them away, made an acceptable sacrifice, given to the law all it demanded, and taken out by the sacrifice and shedding of His blood the stain, the defilement, the being of sin, so that as His divine Father looked upon Him and His sacrifice and precious death, He said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mat. 3 v. 17), and He says the same concerning His people when He sees them in Him.

“With cries and tears He offered up
His humble suit below;

³ “We have such an high priest ... For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.” (Heb. 8 v. 3)

But with authority He asks,
Enthroned in glory now.”

(Toplady; Gadsby's 117)

And that authority He uses on behalf of His dear people; so, says the Lord, “If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (John 14 v. 14). *Anything!* His name prevails.

“This is the name the Father loves
To hear His children plead;
And all such pleading He approves,
And blesses them indeed.”

(Medley; Gadsby's 383)

And what a constitution the High Priest has! He could not be a High Priest as He is God; He could not be a High Priest unless He was God. This is no contradiction: the mystery is solved in His sacred humanity, and so, says Rutherford,

“I hail the glory dawning
In Immanuel's land.”

(‘Rutherford's Last Words,’ by Anne Cousin)

Doesn't it make the doctrine of Christ, His Person and work, of first importance? Well, my friends, what do you think about it?

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to come ...” Yes, sinners,

“Look to Jesus, kind as strong -
Mercy joined with power.”

(Hart; Gadsby's 780)

This is the gospel as far as I know it. This is that ladder which Jacob saw, the steps of which led to heaven, at the top of which he saw one like unto the Son of man, a High Priest who was his Substitute, his Representative, his Advocate in heaven. Do you look for Him? Do you love His appearing? Will anything less than this boldness to enter in, do? That is false humility; that is feigned love; that is a rotten hope; that is a false faith, that can rest short of the holiest of all. If there is that in you that would exalt your unworthiness above the worthiness of Christ, may a sight of Christ pull you through it. I believe we said here this week that faith does appear at times to lose its manners. It is rude, blessedly rude, has no ceremonies about it, but it has reverence; it has *reverence*. But oh my friends, when these things are set before a dying sinner, he becomes violent, reverently violent, sacredly violent, to take the kingdom of heaven.

Well, may the Lord bring this strong drink, this wine of the kingdom, and pour it into the lips of any of you who are ready to perish.

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