

Sermon preached by Mr. J. Raven at "Shaws Corner", Redhill
on 6th. November, 1951

Text: Hebrews 9.v.13-14

"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: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

How wonderfully the Gospel was preached and Christ was set forth in the types and shadows of the Old Testament dispensation in the tabernacle, its furniture, its priesthood, its sacrifices. Everything was a setting forth of Christ in His relation to the church and in His undertaking for His church, and happy were they who were given believing hearts and discerning minds to see this. Remember, the Psalmist desired that he might dwell in the house of the Lord to see the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple. He wanted to see the beauty of the Lord; and what was the beauty of the Lord but Christ as set forth in that priesthood, that tabernacle and in this sacrifice? In his temple everything testified of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Psalmist said again that he desired to see the glory of the Lord as he had seen Him in the sanctuary, "To see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary". (Ps.62.2) He had had some wonderful glimpses of the true end and significance of these things. The veil was mercifully removed in some measure from his heart so that he was able to look to the end of those things and to see the power and the glory of the Lord as set forth by them. Here the apostle in this wonderful Epistle takes up these very things and shows how they all pointed to one Object, to one Person, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, and you well know he begins his epistle by setting forth the divine majesty of Christ's Person, the brightness of the Father's glory, "the express image of His Person and upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb.1.3) He did it upon this earth by the offering of Himself to put away His peoples sins and then sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. But for that foundation this epistle would be meaningless; but for that foundation the Gospel would have no efficacy in it, no hope, no solid consolation in it and there would be no hope for sinners. The poet says,

"So guilty, so helpless am I,
I durst not confide in His blood,
Nor on His protection rely,
Unless I were sure He is God."

How we do need to have our hearts established in this precious truth. What a needful petition is that that was repeated in the hymn we sung just

now,

"Jesus, reveal Thyself to me"

Does your heart really crave from time to time the revelation of Jesus Christ? Is the burden of your heart's cry that Christ would reveal Himself to you? Has He made Himself to you a living and a bright reality? "Jesus reveal Thyself to me", O what a needful prayer is that. As we read the Scriptures do we not need the Lord to reveal Himself to us? as we ponder those wonderful types and shadows do we not need the Lord to manifest Himself to us as He does not to the world? As we read the Gospel narratives do we not again need the Lord Jesus to reveal Himself that the Word we read may be clothed with light, life and power to us and be to us the very testimony of Jesus Christ? So when we come to this epistle to the Hebrews we need to have the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in our hearts, set before us. O it is so important!

"What think you of Christ? is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him."

In this epistle we are shown how infinitely superior the Lord Jesus Christ is in His Person, in His sufferings, in all that He is, infinitely superior to the priesthood and to the sacrifices and the blood-shedding of the old dispensation. Thus everything in the law was only serviceable as sanctifying to the purifying of the flesh. There was no purging of the conscience; though man might offer innumerable sacrifices and shed rivers of blood it would not avail in the least degree to purge away one sin, so the Apostle says, "if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" You know how by the command of God these animals were again and again, year by year, slain and offered a sacrifice to God, their blood poured out. Those beasts whose bodies were brought into the sanctuary for sin were burnt without the camp, a fit type of the Lord Jesus Christ who suffered without the gate. The blood of bulls and of goats only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. The ashes of a heifer, - you know how, as recorded in the 19th. Numbers the red heifer was to be taken and it was to be slain in a place without the camp and it was to be burnt, every part of it without the camp and the ashes were to be laid up to be used with water, with pure water, for the purpose of purification. When any person became unclean by contact with a dead body, or something of that kind, these ashes with water were to be used to sprinkle the unclean person; but it was only effective to a ceremonial purification, there was no cleansing of the heart and conscience. The stains of sin are too deep to be removed by such means as these, nor can any work of man avail

to remove one stain of sin. One said, the more I do, the worse I get. O how some people have striven hard to get peace of conscience, to get some sense of the favour of God and the more they have tried the worse they have got, the heavier their burden of guilt has become. There has been no efficacy in all that they have endeavoured and all the remedies they have tried. There has been no efficacy; like the woman who tried many physicians and reduced herself to dire poverty and found no relief until she came poor and weak and destitute to Jesus Christ and pressed through the crowd to touch His garment and there she obtained relief.

The apostle says, "If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more" - we can never measure the extent of those words, "How much more shall the blood of Christ?" I have sometimes said these words represented heaven's infinite height above the earth. "How much more shall the blood of Christ?" O these words speak of the divine efficacy, of divine sufficiency, of divine virtue, "How much more shall the blood of Christ?" Look at the Person; it is good to be helped to look at the Person, one of our hymnwriters says:-

"And strong affections fix my sight
On God's incarnate Son."

and it is well to have our attention called to this Person and our minds fixed on this Person and to have faith going out to this Person, the Christ of God.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ". Think of the greatness of the Person then, think of the preciousness of the blood that is shed, there is a divine virtue and efficacy in that precious blood, the blood of Christ, the blood of the Incarnate Son of God, the Son of God took upon Him human nature in the womb of Mary that He might have blood to shed, a life to lay down, that He might be able to offer up His soul unto death. He assumed human nature for that express purpose.

"Jesus, my great High Priest,
Offered His blood and died;
My guilty conscience seeks
No sacrifice beside".

"How much more shall the blood of Christ?"

"The law demanded blood for blood,
And out He lets His vital flood"

Nothing less than this will do. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him and put Him to grief, it was the will of the Father that His dear Son should live the life He lived in this world and that He should die the death and suffer the things that He did suffer. It was the will of the Father, it pleased the Father to bruise Him and to put Him to grief. "God commendeth His love" towards His people; O what love was in the Father's heart toward worthless,

hell-deserving sinners when He sent His own Son into this world to suffer, bleed and die. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." O God did not wait for His people to improve themselves, to get into a salvable condition, so to speak. While they were yet sinners Christ died for them; while they were yet sinners He sent His Son to accomplish that reconciling work here upon the earth. The blood of Christ! You will remember that when the first passover was instituted the Israelites were commanded that each house-holder should take a lamb for his house and slay the lamb and the blood was to be sprinkled upon the lintel and the door posts of the house in which they were and they were to eat that lamb roast with fire, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, with their loins girded and their staffs in their hand and God said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you". What a beautiful setting forth of the Gospel of the grace of God we have in that, "When I see the blood I will pass over you". A wonderful thing it was for an Israelite family to be under the shelter of the blood so that God Himself, the God of Israel, was their defence from the destroying angel that went through the land. God Himself said, "I will pass over you", that is I will defend you, I will hover over your dwellings and be your defence, when I see the blood. O what a wonderful significance there is in these words, "When I see the blood I will pass over you". What a wonderful mercy it is to know something of a conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ. One says,

Sprinkled with blood his conscience is;
He feels the sweets of sin forgiven;
While Jesus' spotless righteousness
Becomes his meetness for heaven."

Only by faith in Jesus' blood the sinner finds relief. It is "When I see the blood I will pass over you", and the Lord's purpose is that His people shall plead the blood of Christ as their only plea, their only hope, I plead the atoning blood with the Father, the blood of Christ. The holy Father looked down from heaven upon those dreadful sufferings of His Son, upon the sacrifice of this blood when He offered Himself without spot to God. The holy Father looked upon it with infinite satisfaction and delight. He knew the value of that sacrifice, He well knew the preciousness of that blood, the sufficiency of that blood, how it was sufficient to answer every claim of the law and justice. The precious blood of Christ - a sweet word is that, is it not? - the precious blood of Christ. Precious it is in the sight of God the Father, precious in His sight is the blood of His dear Son, He knows well the value of it, and precious it is in the sight of a poor sinner who is taught by the Spirit to build all his hopes upon that Person and upon that great sacrifice and that precious blood and that glorious

righteousness. The blood of Christ! O how willingly He poured out His soul unto death, how willingly He shed His blood! That is a significant word that we read when "He set His face" to go to Jerusalem. There was a holy determination, He knew what awaited Him but willingly went to be slaughtered, sacrificed, He willingly went. "For the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God".

It was love that moved Him, love to sinners, love to rebels, love to ungodly wretches that moved Him thus to suffer, bleed and die and offer Himself without spot to God through the eternal Spirit. He was anointed through the Holy Ghost, anointed by the Father, anointed for the priesthood, anointed to offer this great sacrifice. The Father gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him. You will remember that concerning holy anointing oil used in the old dispensation very minute directions were given as to its composition and there was to be none like it. It was not to put to any common use but only for those uses designed by the law, sacred uses. But Christ offered Himself without spot to God through the eternal Spirit. It is a wonder to think that the Holy Spirit rested upon Him in such a rich effusion, without measure, rested upon Him as He stood before His Father. He was anointed for this great work of redemption through the eternal Spirit, He offered Himself without spot to God. Here is another important thing that He offered Himself without spot. Had there been one blemish in His Person or His life, (I would speak that with reverence), He could not have been offered; there could have been no atonement but He is the Christ of God, He is the Son of God incarnate, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. His life was pure, without spot and all His nature clean. It was a pure, spotless offering that He offered upon the cross of Calvary, a Lamb without blemish and without spot. Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God and did not the Father look down upon His own dear, Incarnate Son and bore His testimony, This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. The Father was well pleased with all that Christ did as the Lord Himself testified, I do always the things that please My Father, there was no spot in Him, no wrong motive ever had a place in His heart. No wrong word ever escaped His lips how ever provoked He might have been by those about Him. No wrong speech ever issued from His lips, no wrong action did He ever perform, that is the blessed truth, His life was pure, without spot and all His nature clean, a perfect offering. He offered Himself without spot to God, "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled", O the faith of God's elect does I believe exult in this truth the absolute purity, the perfect holiness, the spotlessness of the Christ of God and therefore

the offering that He offered was everything, without spot, that the Father could look upon with approval. Yes, the Father looked upon everything that His dear Son offered with approval and ineffable delight.

"How much more shall be blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God". As I have often tried to express to you this offering, this precious blood, those awful pangs that the dear Redeemer suffered, all bore the impress of divine excellence. Preciousness, infinite preciousness, is stamped upon all and what a beauty appears in Him to a believing heart as He is revealed, what a beauty. Yea, He is altogether lovely, lovely in His Person, lovely in His life, lovely in all His atoning work, in His priesthood, in every office He bears, in every character He sustains, He is altogether lovely. O how good to have our hearts taken up with this Person, with His superlative beauty, "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." (Song of Solomon 2.3) There is something follows: because Christ is what He is and because His finished work has such excellence and virtue and efficacy because of what He is and what He has done is so satisfying to His Father and so delightful in His Father's eyes, therefore His blood purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. It is not something that a sinner just reasons himself into, as he would go through the twice times table. No! it is something that a sinner has access unto by nothing less than the gracious power of the Holy Spirit; it is the blessed Spirit who takes of the blood of Christ and reveals it and sprinkles it upon the guilty heart and conscience and when He does it there is a purging. There is a release from guilt and from bondage. There is deliverance from the curse of the law, there is peace with God. There is nearness to God. "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." (Eph.2.13,14) O do you covert this? You may say I have never had it yet. Is it the thing you long for? O "wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." (Ps.27.14) You have no reason to despair because you have not had it, but if you are seeking it there is every ground for encouragement for "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him." (Nahum 1.7) and He says to the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye my face". A poor sinner

thinks the blood of Christ is a thing to be desired in the application of it. Is your heart set upon this as the thing you must have to do your soul good, the sprinkling of the blood of Christ to purge your conscience from dead works, the proclamation of your peace with God? "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works." From dead works, from all that mass of guilt that lies upon it, from all that burden of sin, guilt and filth that you feel; O there is such a thing as the purging of the conscience, there is such a thing as a receiving the atonement; there is such a thing as being made free by the Son, as being let into the sweet liberty of the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. There is such a thing as access to God, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus". (Hebrews.10.19) O it is this precious blood, faith in this blood, that sets a poor sinner near the throne, gives access to God, a sense of access, a realisation of divine favour, on the ground of His blood shedding and the righteousness that He wrought. "Purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" Our God is a living God, as distinct from the gods of the heathen which are dead gods, can neither speak, nor move, can neither taste, nor smell. "They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat" (Ps.115.7) but this God is a living God and He does mighty things for poor sinners who seek Him. He does this mighty thing for sinners who seek Him, grants them release from their guilt and their bondage and their fear with the application of the blood of Christ. There is such a thing as to feel it applied, to rejoice at the application of it, there is such a thing as some poor sinners have been able to sweetly testify. One said,

"I felt it applied, and joyfully cried,

Me,me Thou hast loved and for me Thou hast died".

O that the hearing of these things might put an edge on your appetite, might add vehemence to your desires, urgency to your petitions, that you might beseech the Throne of Grace with your cries and entreaties, that this stupendous gift of God's love might be bestowed upon you, what one called "the rich gift of love divine", the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake.

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