

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING.

A Sermon

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And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."—Hebrews xii. 24, 25.

WE are joyfully reminded by the apostle that we are *not* come to Mount Sinai and its overwhelming manifestations. After Israel had kept the feast of the Passover, God was pleased to give his people a sort of Pentecost, and more fully to manifest himself and his law to them at Sinai. They were in the wilderness, with the solemn peaks of a desolate mountain as their centre; and from the top thereof, in the midst of fire, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and with the sound of a trumpet, God spake with them. "The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel." We are not come to the dread and terror of the old covenant, of which our apostle saith in another place, "The covenant from the Mount Sinai gendereth unto bondage" (Gal. iv. 24.) Upon the believer's spirit there rests not the slavish fear, the abject terror, the fainting alarm, which swayed the tribes of Israel; for the manifestation of God which he beholds, though not less majestic, is far more full of hope and joy. Over us there rests not the impenetrable cloud of apprehension; we are not buried in a present darkness of despair; we are not tossed about with a tempest of horror; and, therefore, we do not exceedingly fear and quake. How thankful we should be for this! Israel was privileged even in receiving a fiery law from the right hand of Jehovah; but we are far more favoured, since we receive "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

Our apostle next tells us what we *are* come to. I suppose he speaks of all the saints after the death and resurrection of our Lord and the descent of the Holy Ghost. He refers to the whole church, in the midst of which the Holy Spirit now dwells. We are come to a more joyous sight than Sinai, and the mountain burning with fire. The Hebrew worshipper, apart from his sacrifices, lived continually beneath the shadow of the

darkness of a broken law ; he was startled often by the tremendous note of the trumpet, which threatened judgment for that broken law ; and thus he lived ever in a condition of bondage. To what else could the law bring him ? To convince of sin and to condemn the sinner is its utmost power. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ lives in quite another atmosphere. He has not come to a barren crag, but to an inhabited city, Jerusalem above, the metropolis of God. He has quitted the wilderness for the land which floweth with milk and honey, and the material mount which might be touched for the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem. He has entered into fellowship with an innumerable company of angels, who are to him, not cherubim with flaming swords to keep men back from the tree of life, but ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. He is come to the joyous assembly of all pure intelligences who have met, not in trembling, but in joyous liberty, to keep the feast with their great Lord and King. He thinks of all who love God throughout all worlds, and he feels that he is one of them ; for he has come to "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven." Moreover, he has come "to God the Judge of all," the umpire and rewarder of all the chosen citizens who are enrolled by his command, the ruler and judge of all their enemies. God is not to them a dreadful person who speaks from a distance ; but he is their Father and their Friend, in whom they delight themselves, in whose presence there is fulness of joy for them. Brethren, our fellowship is with the Father, our God. To him we have come through our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, in the power of the Spirit of God we realize the oneness of the church both in heaven and earth, and the spirits of just men made perfect are in union with us. No gulf divides the militant from the triumphant ; we are one army of the living God. We sometimes speak of the holy *dead* ; but there are none such : they live unto God ; they are perfected as to their spirits even now, and they are waiting for the moment when their bodies also shall be raised from the tomb to be again inhabited by their immortal souls. We no longer shudder at the sepulchre, but sing of resurrection. Our condition of heart, from day to day, is that of men who are in fellowship with God, fellowship with angels, fellowship with perfect spirits.

We have also come to Jesus, our Saviour, who is all and in all. In him we live ; we are joined unto him in one spirit ; he is the Bridegroom of our souls, the delight of our hearts. We are come to him as the Mediator of the new covenant. What a blessed thing it is to know that covenant of which he is the Mediator ! Some in these days despise the covenant ; but saints delight in it. To them the everlasting covenant, "ordered in all things, and sure," is all their salvation and all their desire. We are covenanted ones through our Lord Jesus. God has pledged himself to bless us. By two immutable things wherein it is impossible for him to lie, he has given us strong consolation, and good hope through grace, even to all of us who have fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus. We are happy to live under the covenant of grace, the covenant of promise, the covenant symbolized by Jerusalem above, which is free, and the mother of us all.

Then comes the last thing of all, mentioned last, as I shall have to show you, for a purpose. We have come "*to the blood of sprinkling.*"

On that first day at Sinai no blood of sprinkling was presented ; but afterwards it was used by divine order to ratify the national covenant which the tribes made with Jehovah at the foot of the hill. Of that covenant the Lord says, "which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them." *He* never brake his covenant, but *they* brake it ; for they failed to keep that condition of obedience without which a covenant founded upon works falls to the ground. We have come to the blood of sprinkling which has fallen upon a covenant which never shall be broken ; for the Lord hath made it to endure though rocks and hills remove. This is called by the Holy Ghost "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." We are come to the covenant of grace, to Jesus the Mediator of it, and to his blood, which is the seal of it. Of this last we are going to speak at this time—"The blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel."

I shall need this morning to occupy all the time with what I regard as only the first head of my discourse. *What is it?* "The blood of sprinkling." It will be our duty afterwards to consider *where we are*—"we are come unto this blood"; and, thirdly, to remember *what then?* "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."

I. FIRST, WHAT IS IT? What is this "blood of sprinkling"? In a few words, "the blood of sprinkling" represents the pains, the sufferings, the humiliation, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, which he endured on the behalf of guilty man. When we speak of the blood, we wish not to be understood as referring solely or mainly to the literal material blood which flowed from the wounds of Jesus. We believe in the literal fact of his shedding his blood ; but when we speak of his cross and blood we mean those sufferings and that death of our Lord Jesus Christ by which he magnified the law of God ; we mean what Isaiah intended when he said, "He shall make his soul an offering for sin"; we mean all the griefs which Jesus vicariously endured on our behalf at Gethsemane, and Gabbatha, and Golgotha, and specially his yielding up his life upon the tree of scorn and doom. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." "Without shedding of blood there is no remission"; and the shedding of blood intended is the death of Jesus, the Son of God.

Remember that his sufferings and death were not apparent only, but true and real ; and that they involved an incalculable degree of pain and anguish. To redeem our souls cost our Lord an exceeding sorrowfulness "even unto death"; it cost him the bloody sweat, the heart broken with reproach, and specially the agony of being forsaken of his Father, till he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Our Mediator endured death under the worst possible aspects, bereft of those supports which are in all other cases of godly men afforded by the goodness and faithfulness of God. His was not merely a natural death, but a death aggravated by supernatural circumstance, which infinitely intensified its woe. This is what we mean by the blood of Christ, his sufferings, and his death.

These were voluntarily undertaken by himself out of pure love to us, and in order that we might thereby be justly saved from deserved punishment. There was no natural reason on his own account why he

should suffer, bleed, and die. Far from it,—“He only hath immortality.” But out of supreme love to us, that man might be forgiven without the violation of divine rectitude, the Son of God assumed human flesh, and became in very deed a man, in order that he might be able to offer in man’s place a full vindication to the righteous and unchangeable law of God. Being God, he thus showed forth the wondrous love of God to man by being willing to suffer personally rather than the redeemed should die as the just result of their sin. The matchless majesty of his divine person lent supreme efficacy to his sufferings. It was a man that died, but he was also God, and the death of incarnate God reflects more glory upon law than the deaths of myriads of condemned creatures could have done. See the yearning of the great God for perfect righteousness: he had sooner die than stain his justice even to indulge his mercy. Jesus the Lord, out of love to the Father and to men, undertook willingly and cheerfully for our sakes to magnify the law, and bring in perfect righteousness. This work was so carried out to the utmost, that not a jot of the suffering was mitigated, nor a particle of the obedience foregone: “he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Now he hath finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness: for he has offered such an expiation that God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth. God is at once the righteous Judge, and the infinitely loving Father, through what Jesus hath suffered.

Brethren, though I have said that there was no reason why the Son of God should bleed and die on his own account, yet towards us there was a reason. Our Lord from of old in the eternal covenant was constituted the head and representative of all who were in him; and so, when the time came, he took the place, bore the sin, and suffered the penalty of those whom the Father gave him from before the foundations of the world. He is as much the representative man as the first Adam was the representative man; and as in Adam the sin was committed which ruined us, so in the second Adam the atonement was made which saves us. “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” There was no other person so fit to undertake the enterprise of our redemption as this second man, who is the Lord from heaven. He properly, but yet most generously and spontaneously, came and shed his precious blood, in the room and place and stead of sinners, to bring the guilty near to God.

But the text does not merely speak of the blood *shed*, which I have explained to you, but of “the blood of *sprinkling*.” This is the atonement applied for divine purposes, and specially applied to our own hearts and consciences by faith. For the explanation of this sprinkling we must look to the types of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the blood of sprinkling meant a great many things; in fact, I cannot just now tell you all that it signified. We meet with it in the Book of Exodus, at the time when the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt. Then the blood of sprinkling meant *preservation*. The basin filled with blood was taken, and a bunch of hyssop was dipped into it, and the lintel and the two side-posts of every house tenanted by Israelites were smeared with the blood; and when God saw the blood upon the house of the Israelite, he bade the destroyer pass that family by, and leave their

first-born unharmed. The sprinkled blood meant preservation : it was Israel's passover and safeguard.

The sprinkled blood very frequently signified the *confirmation* of a covenant. So it is used in Exodus xxiv., which I read to you just now. The blood was sprinkled upon the book of the covenant, and also upon the people, to show that the covenant was, as far as it could be, confirmed by the people who promised, "All that the Lord hath said will we do." The blood of bulls and of goats in that case was but a type of the sacrificial blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The lesson which we learn from Exodus xxiv. is that the blood of sprinkling means the blood of ratification or confirmation of the covenant, which God has been pleased to make with men in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since Jesus died, the promises are Yea and Amen to all believers, and must assuredly be fulfilled. The covenant of grace had but one condition, and that condition Jesus has fulfilled by his death, so that it has now become a covenant of pure and unconditional promise to all the seed.

In many cases the sprinkling of the blood meant *purification*. If a person had been defiled, he could not come into the sanctuary of God without being sprinkled with blood. There were the ashes of a red heifer laid up, and these were mixed with blood and water; and by their being sprinkled on the unclean, his ceremonial defilement was removed. There were matters incident to domestic life, and accidents of outdoor life, which engendered impurity, and this impurity was put away by the sprinkling of blood. This sprinkling was used in the case of recovery from infectious disease, such as leprosy; before such persons could mingle in the solemn assemblies, they were sprinkled with the blood, and thus were made ceremonially pure. In a higher sense this is the work of the blood of Christ. It preserves us, it ratifies the covenant, and wherever it is applied it makes us pure; for "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." We have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; for we have come unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

The sprinkling of the blood meant, also, *sanctification*. Before a man entered upon the priesthood the blood was put upon his right ear, and on the great toe of his right foot, and on the thumb of his right hand, signifying that all his powers were thus consecrated to God. The ordination ceremony included the sprinkling of blood upon the altar round about. Even thus hath the Lord Jesus redeemed us unto God by his death, and the sprinkling of his blood hath made us kings and priests unto God for ever. He is made of God unto us sanctification, and all else that is needed for the divine service.

One other signification of the blood of the sacrifice was *acceptation and access*. When the high priest went into the most holy place once a year, it was not without blood, which he sprinkled upon the ark of the covenant, and upon the mercy-seat, which was on the top thereof. All approaches to God were made by blood. There was no hope of a man drawing near to God, even in symbol, apart from the sprinkling of the blood. And now to-day our only way to God is by the precious sacrifice of Christ; the only hope for the success of our prayers, the acceptance of our praises, or the reception of our holy works, is through the ever-abiding merit of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. The

Holy Ghost bids us enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus ; there is no other way.

There were other uses besides these, but it may suffice to put down the sprinkling of the blood as having these effects, namely, that of preservation, satisfaction, purification, sanctification, and access to God. This was all typified in the blood of bulls and of goats, but actually fulfilled in the great sacrifice of Christ.

With this as an explanation, I desire to come still closer to the text, and view it with great care ; for to my mind it is singularly full of teaching. May the Holy Spirit lead us into the truth which lies herein like treasure hid in a field !

First. *The blood of sprinkling is the centre of the divine manifestation under the gospel.* Observe its innermost place in the passage before us.* You are privileged by almighty grace to come first to Mount Zion, to climb its steeps, to stand upon its holy summit, and to enter the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. In those golden streets, surrounding the hallowed shrine, you behold an innumerable company of angels. What a vision of glory ! But you must not rest here ; for the great general assembly, the festal gathering, the solemn convocation of the enrolled in heaven, is being held, and all are there in glad attire, surrounding their God and Lord. Press onward to the throne itself, where sits the Judge of all, surrounded by those holy spirits who have washed their robes, and, therefore, stand before the throne of God in perfection.

Have you not come a long way ? Are you not admitted into the very centre of the whole revelation ? Not yet. A step further lands you where stands your Saviour, the Mediator, with the new covenant. Now is your joy complete ; but you have a further object to behold. What is in that innermost shrine ? What is that which is hidden away in the holy of holies ? What is that which is the most precious and costly thing of all, the last, the ultimatum, God's grandest revelation ? The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot—the blood of sprinkling. This comes last ; it is the innermost truth of the dispensation of grace under which we live. Brethren, when we climb to heaven itself, and pass the gate of pearl, and wend our way through the innumerable hosts of angels, and come even to the throne of God, and see the spirits of the just made perfect, and hear their holy hymn, we shall not have gone beyond the influence of the blood of sprinkling ; nay, we shall see it there more truly present than in any other place beside. "What !" say you, "the blood of Jesus in heaven ?" Yes. The earthly sanctuary, we are told, was purified with the blood of bulls and of goats, "but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (Heb. ix. 23). When Jesus entered once for all into the holy place, he entered by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us : so saith the apostle in the ninth chapter of this epistle. Let those who talk lightly of the precious blood correct their view ere they be guilty of blasphemy ; for the revelation of God knows no lower deep, this is the heart and centre of all. The manifestation of Jesus under the gospel is not only the revelation of the Mediator,

* For this line of thought I am much indebted to a chapter in an admirable book, entitled "Every-day Life," by C. H. Waller, M.A. Shaw and Co.

but especially of his sacrifice. The appearance of God the Judge of all, the vision of hosts of angels and perfect spirits, do but lead up to that sacrifice which is the source and focus of all true fellowship between God and his creatures. This is the character which Jesus wears in the innermost shrine where he reveals himself most clearly to those who are nearest to him. He looks like a lamb that has been slain. There is no sight of him which is more full, more glorious, more complete, than the vision of him as the great sacrifice for sin. The atonement of Jesus is the concentration of the divine glory; all other revelations of God are completed and intensified here. You have not come to the central sun of the great spiritual system of grace till you have come to the blood of sprinkling—to those sufferings of Messiah which are not for himself, but are intended to bear upon others, even as drops when they are sprinkled exert their influence where they fall. Unless you have learned to rejoice in that blood which taketh away sin, you have not yet caught the key-note of the gospel dispensation. The blood of Christ is the life of the gospel. Apart from atonement you may know the skin, the rind, the husk of the gospel; but its inner kernel you have not discovered.

I next ask you to look at the text and observe that *this sprinkling of the blood*, as mentioned by the Holy Ghost in this passage, *is absolutely identical with Jesus himself*. Read it. "To Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not *him* that speaketh." He saith it is the blood that speaketh; and then he proceeds to say, "See that ye refuse not *him* that speaketh." This is a very unexpected turn, which can only be explained upon the supposition that Jesus and the blood are identical in the writer's view. By what we may call a singularity in grammar, in putting *him* for *it*, the Spirit of God intentionally sets forth the striking truth, that the sacrifice is identical with the Saviour. "We are come to the Saviour, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh; see that ye refuse not *him*." Beloved friends, there is no Jesus if there is no blood of sprinkling; there is no Saviour if there is no sacrifice. I put this strongly, because the attempt is being made nowadays to set forth Jesus apart from his cross and atonement. He is held up as a great ethical teacher, a self-sacrificing spirit, who is to lead the way in a grand moral reformation, and by his influence to set up a kingdom of moral influence in the world. It is even hinted that this kingdom has never had prominence enough given to it because it has been overshadowed by his cross. But where is Jesus apart from his sacrifice? He is not there if you have left out the blood of sprinkling, which is the blood of sacrifice. Without the atonement, no man is a Christian, and Christ is not Jesus. If you have torn away the sacrificial blood, you have drawn the heart out of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and robbed it of its life. If you have trampled on the blood of sprinkling, and counted it a common thing, instead of putting it above you upon the lintel of the door, and all around you upon the two side-posts, you have fearfully transgressed. As for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, since to me that cross is identical with Jesus himself. I know no Jesus but he who died the just for the unjust. You can separate Jesus and

the blood materially; for by the spear-thrust, and all his other wounds, the blood was drawn away from the body of our Lord; but spiritually this "blood of sprinkling" and the Jesus by whom we live, are inseparable. In fact, they are one and indivisible, the selfsame thing, and you cannot truly know Jesus, or preach Jesus, unless you preach him as slain for sin; you cannot trust Jesus except you trust him as making peace by the blood of his cross. If you have done with the blood of sprinkling, you have done with Jesus altogether; he will never part with his mediatorial glory as our sacrifice, neither can we come to him if we ignore that character. Is it not clear in the text that Jesus and the blood of sprinkling are one? What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. Note this right carefully.

Thirdly, observe that *this "blood of sprinkling" is put in close contact with "the new covenant."* I do not wonder that those who are lax in their views of the atonement have nothing honourable to say concerning the covenants, old or new. The doctrine of the covenants is the marrow of divinity; but these vain-glorious spirits affect to despise it. This is natural, since they speak slightly of the atonement. What covenant is there without blood? If it be not ratified, if there be no sacrifice to make it sure, then is it no covenant in the sight of God or of enlightened men. But, O beloved, ye who know your Lord, and follow on to know him yet better, to you the covenant of promise is a heritage of joy, and his atonement is most precious as the confirmation of it. To us the sacrificial death of our Lord is not *a* doctrine, but *the* doctrine, not an outgrowth of Christian teaching, but the essence and marrow of it. To us Jesus in his atonement is Alpha and Omega, in him the covenant begins and ends. You see how it was confirmed by blood. If it be a man's covenant, if it be confirmed, it standeth; but this is God's covenant, confirmed with promises, oaths and blood, and it stands fast for ever and ever. Every believer is as much interested in that covenant as was Abraham the father of believers; for the covenant was made with Abraham and his spiritual seed; and in Christ it is confirmed to all that seed for ever by his most precious blood. That, also, is evident enough in the text: fail not to consider it well.

But, fourthly, I want you to notice that according to the text *the blood is the voice of the new dispensation.* Observe that on Sinai there was "the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more." You look, therefore, under the new dispensation, for a voice, and you do not come to any till you reach the last object in the list, and there see "the blood of sprinkling that speaketh." Here, then, is the voice of the gospel; it is not the sound of a trumpet, nor the voice of words spoken in terrible majesty; but the blood speaks, and assuredly there is no sound more piercing, more potent, more prevailing. God heard the voice of Abel's blood and visited Cain with condign punishment for killing his brother; and the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cries in the ears of God with a voice which is ever heard. How can it be imagined that the Lord God should be deaf to the cry of his Son's sacrifice? Lo, these many ages the blood has cried—"Forgive them! Forgive them! Accept them! Deliver them from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom!"

The blood of sprinkling has a voice of instruction to us even as it has a voice of intercession with God. It cries to us, "See the evil of sin! See how God loveth righteousness! See how he loveth men! See how impossible it is for you to escape from the punishment of sin except by this great sacrifice in which the love and the justice of God equally appear! See how Jehovah spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all."

What a voice there is in the atonement!—a voice which pleads for holiness and love, for justice and grace, for truth and mercy. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."

Do you not hear it? If you take away the blood of sprinkling from the gospel, you have silenced it. It has no voice if this be gone. "Oh," they say, "the gospel has lost its power"! What wonder when they have made it a dumb gospel! How can it have power when they take away that which is its life and speech? Unless the preacher is evermore preaching this blood, and sprinkling it by the doctrine of faith, his teaching has no voice either to rouse the careless or to cheer the anxious. If ever there should come a wretched day when all our pulpits shall be full of modern thought, and the old doctrine of a substitutionary sacrifice shall be exploded, then will there remain no word of comfort for the guilty or hope for the despairing. Hushed will be for ever those silver notes which now console the living, and cheer the dying; a dumb spirit will possess this sullen world, and no voice of joy will break the blank silence of despair. The gospel speaks through the propitiation for sin, and if that be denied, it speaketh no more. Those who preach not the atonement exhibit a dumb and dummy gospel; a mouth it hath, but speaketh not; they that make it are like unto their idol.

Let me draw you nearer still to the text. Observe, that *this voice is identical with the voice of the Lord Jesus*; for it is put so. "The blood of sprinkling that speaketh. See that ye refuse not *him* that speaketh." Whatever the doctrine of the sacrifice of Jesus may be, it is the main teaching of Jesus himself. It is well to notice that the voice which spoke from Sinai was also the voice of Christ. It was Jesus who delivered that law the penalty of which he was himself to endure. He that read it out amidst the tempest was Jesus. Notice the declaration—"Whose voice then shook the earth." Whenever you hear the gospel, the voice of the precious blood is the voice of Jesus himself, the voice of him that shook the earth at Sinai. This same voice shall by-and-by shake, not the earth only, but also heaven. What a voice there is in the blood of sprinkling, since indeed it is the voice of the eternal Son of God, who both makes and destroys! Would you have me silence the doctrine of the blood of sprinkling? Would any one of you attempt so horrible a deed? Shall we be censured if we continually proclaim the heaven-sent message of the blood of Jesus? Shall we speak with bated breath because some affected person shudders at the sound of the word "*blood*"? or some "*cultured*" individual rebels at the old-fashioned thought of sacrifice? Nay, verily, we will sooner have our tongue cut out than cease to speak of the precious blood of Jesus Christ. For me there is nothing worth thinking of or preaching about but this grand truth, which is the beginning and the end of the whole Christian system, namely, that God gave his Son to die that sinners might live.

This is not the voice of the blood only, but the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. So saith the text, and who can contradict it?

Further, my brethren, from the text I learn another truth, namely, that *this blood is always speaking*. The text saith not "the blood of sprinkling that spoke," but "that speaketh." It is always speaking, it always remaineth a plea with God and a testimony to men. It never will be silenced, either one way or the other. In the intercession of our risen and ascended Lord his sacrifice ever speaketh to the Most High. By the teaching of the Holy Ghost the atonement will always speak in edification to believers yet upon the earth. It is the blood that speaketh. According to our text, this is the only speech which this dispensation yields us. Shall that speech ever be still? Shall we decline to hear it? Shall we refuse to echo it? God forbid. By day, by night, the great sacrifice continues to cry to the sons of men, "Turn ye from your sins, for they cost your Saviour dear. The times of your ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, since he is able to forgive and yet be just. Your offended God has himself provided a sacrifice; come and be sprinkled with its blood, and be reconciled once for all." The voice of this blood speaks wherever there is a guilty conscience, wherever there is an anxious heart, wherever there is a seeking sinner, wherever there is a believing mind. It speaketh with sweet, familiar, tender, inviting voice. There is no music like it to the sinner's ear: it charms away his fears. It shall never cease its speaking so long as there is a sinner yet out of Christ; nay, so long as there is one on earth who still needs its cleansing power because of fresh backslidings. Oh, hear ye its voice! Incline your ear and receive its blessed accents: it says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

This part of my discourse will not be complete unless I bid you notice that we are expressly told that *this precious blood speaks "better things than that of Abel."* I do not think that the whole meaning of the passage is exhausted if we say that Abel's blood cries for vengeance, and that Christ's blood speaks for pardon. Dr. Watts puts it:—

"Blood has a voice to pierce the skies:
'Revenge!' the blood of Abel cries;
But the dear stream when Christ was slain
Speaks peace as loud from ev'ry vein."

That is quite true; but I conceive that it is not all the sense, and perhaps not even *the* sense here intended. Revenge is scarcely a good thing; yet Abel's blood spake good things, or we should hardly read that Christ's blood speaks "better things." What does the blood of Abel speak? The blood of Abel speaks to a complete and believing obedience to God. It shows us a man who believes God, and, notwithstanding the enmity of his brother, brings to God the appointed sacrifice of faith, strictly following up, even to the bitter end, his holy obedience to the Most High. That is what the blood of Abel says to me; and the blood of Jesus says the same thing most emphatically. The death of Jesus Christ was the crown and close of a perfect life; it was a fit completion of a course of holiness. In obedience to the Great Father, Jesus even laid down

his life. But if this be all the blood of Jesus speaks, as some say that it is, then it does not speak better things than the blood of Abel; for it only says the same things in a louder voice. The martyrdom of any saint has a voice for obedience to God as truly as the martyrdom of Jesus; but the death of our Lord says far more, infinitely more, than this: it not only witnesses to complete obedience, but it provides the way by which the disobedient may be forgiven and helped to obedience and holiness. The cross has a greater, deeper, gladder gospel for fallen men than that of a perfect example which they are unable to follow.

The blood of Abel said this, too—that he was not ashamed of his faith, but witnessed a good confession concerning his God, even to the death; he put his life in his hand, and was not ashamed to stand at the altar of God, and avow his faith by obediently offering the ordained sacrifice. Now, I grant you that the blood of Jesus also declares that he was a faithful and true witness, who willingly sealed his witness with his blood. He proved by shedding his blood that he could not be turned aside from truth and righteousness, even though death stood in his way; but if that is all that the blood of sprinkling speaketh, it saith no better things than the blood of Abel. “Be faithful unto death,” is the voice of Abel as well as of Jesus. Jesus must have said more than this by his blood-shedding.

The blood of Abel said good things; that is implied in the fact that the blood of Jesus Christ says better things; and no doubt the blood of Abel rises to the dignity of teaching self-sacrifice. Here was a man, a keeper of sheep, who by his mode of life laid out his life for the good of those committed to his charge; and at the last, in obedience to God, he yielded himself up to die by a brother's hand. It was the first draught of a picture of self-sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus Christ also made a complete self-sacrifice. All his life long he gave himself to men. He lived never for himself. The glory of God and the good of men were united in one passion which filled his whole soul. He could say, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” His death was the completion of his perfect self-sacrifice. But if that were all, the blood of Jesus saith no better thing than Abel's death saith, though it may say it more emphatically.

Our Lord's blood saith “better things than that of Abel”; and what doth it say? It saith, “There is redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.” “He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we were healed.” “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” The voice of the blood is this, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Now, my brethren, these are better things than Abel's blood could say, and they are what the blood of Jesus speaks to every one upon whom it is sprinkled by faith. It must be applied to each one of us by faith, or it says nothing to us. But when it falls on each believing individual, it saith to him words of blessing which pacify his conscience and delight his soul.

The apostle says that "Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling." Is it so? Has that blood of sprinkling ever been applied to you? Do you feel it? Are you preserved? Are you cleansed? Are you brought nigh to God? Are you sanctified unto God's service by the atoning sacrifice? If so, then go you out, and in firm confidence that never can be shaken, make your glory in the blood of sprinkling. Tell every sinner whom you meet that if the Lord Jesus wash him he shall be whiter than snow. Preach the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and then sing of it. Recollect that wondrous threefold song in the fifth chapter of the Revelation, where, first of all, the elders and living creatures round about the throne, sing a new song, saying, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Then ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels take up the strain and cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Nor is this all; for the apostle tells us, "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." See you not that they all extol the Lord Jesus in his sacrificial character as the Lamb slain? I have scant patience with those who dare to put this great truth into the background, and even sneer at it or misrepresent it of set purpose. Sirs, if you would be saved you must have the blood of Jesus sprinkled upon you. He that believeth not in Christ Jesus, in Jesus the atoning sacrifice, must perish. The eternal God must repulse with infinite disgust the man who refuses the loving sacrifice of Jesus. Inasmuch as he counted himself unworthy of this wondrous sacrifice, this marvellous expiation, there remaineth no other sacrifice for sin, and nothing for him but that eternal blackness and darkness and thunder which were foreshadowed at Sinai. Those who refuse the atonement which wisdom devised, which love provided, and which justice has accepted, have signed their own death-warrant, and none can wonder that they perish. The Lord lead us to glory in Christ crucified. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus xx. 1—21;
xxiv. 1—8.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—236, 279, 291.