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THE VOICE OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

A Sermon

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“The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”—Hebrews xii. 24.

OF all substances blood is the most mysterious, and in some senses the most sacred. Scripture teacheth us,—and after all there is very much philosophy in Scripture,—that “the blood is the life thereof,”—that the life lieth in the blood. Blood, therefore, is the mysterious link between matter and spirit. How it is that the soul should in any degree have an alliance with matter through blood, we cannot understand; but certain it is that this is the mysterious link which unites these apparently dissimilar things together, so that the soul can inhabit the body, and the life can rest in the blood. God has attached awful sacredness to the shedding of blood. Under the Jewish dispensation, even the blood of animals was considered as sacred. Blood might never be eaten by the Jews; it was too sacred a thing to become the food of man. The Jew was scarcely allowed to kill his own food: certainly he must not kill it except he poured out the blood as a sacred offering to Almighty God. Blood was accepted by God as the symbol of the atonement. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission” of sin, because, I take it, blood hath such an affinity with life, that inasmuch as God would accept nought but blood, he signified that there must be a life offered to him, and that his great and glorious Son must surrender his life as a sacrifice for his sheep.

Now, we have in our text “blood” mentioned—two-fold blood. We have the blood of murdered Abel, and the blood of murdered Jesus. We have also two things in the text:—*a comparison between the blood of sprinkling, and the blood of Abel*; and then *a certain condition mentioned*. Rather, if we read the whole verse in order to get its meaning, we find that the righteous are spoken of as coming to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; so that the condition which will constitute the second part of our discourse, is coming to that blood of sprinkling for our salvation and glory.

I. Without further preface I shall at once introduce to you the CONTRAST AND COMPARISON IMPLIED IN THE TEXT. “The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” I confess I was very much astonished when looking at Dr. Gill and Albert Barnes, and several of the more eminent commentators, while studying this passage, to find that they attach a meaning to this verse which had never occurred to me before. They say that the meaning of the verse is not that the blood of Christ is superior to the blood of murdered Abel, although that is certainly a truth, but that the sacrifice of the blood of Christ is better, and speaketh better things than the sacrifice which Abel offered. Now, although I do not think this is the meaning of the text, and I have my reasons for believing that the blood here contrasted with that of the Saviour, is the blood of the murdered man Abel, yet on looking to the original there is so much to be said on both sides of the question, that I think it fair in explaining

the passage to give you both the meanings. They are not conflicting interpretations; there is indeed a shade of difference between them, but still they amount to the same idea.

First, then, we may understand here a comparison between the offerings Abel presented, and the offerings Jesus Christ presented, when he gave his blood to be a ransom for the flock.

Let me describe Abel's offering. I have no doubt Adam had from the very first of his expulsion from the garden of Eden offered a sacrifice to God; and we have some dim hint that this sacrifice was of a beast, for we find that the Lord God made Adam and Eve skins of beasts to be their clothing, and it is probable that those skins were procured by the slaughter of victims offered in sacrifice. However, that is but a dim hint: the first absolute record that we have of an oblatory sacrifice is the record of the sacrifice offered by Abel. Now, it appears that very early there was a distinction among men. Cain was the representative of the seed of the serpent, and Abel was the representative of the seed of the woman. Abel was God's elect, and Cain was one of those who rejected the Most High. However, both Cain and Abel united together in the outward service of God. They both of them brought on a certain high day a sacrifice. Cain took a different view of the matter of sacrifice from that which presented itself to the mind of Abel. Cain was proud and haughty: he said "I am ready to confess that the mercies which we receive from the soil are the gift of God, but I am not ready to acknowledge that I am a guilty sinner, deserving God's wrath; therefore," said he, "I will bring nothing but the fruit of the ground." "Ah, but" said Abel, "I feel that while I ought to be grateful for temporal mercies, at the same time I have sins to confess, I have iniquities to be pardoned, and I know that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin; therefore," said he, "O Cain, I will not be content to bring an offering of the ground, of the ears of corn, or of first ripe fruits, but I will bring of the firstlings of my flock, and I will shed blood upon the altar, because my faith is, that there is to come a great victim who is actually to make atonement for the sins of men, and by the slaughter of this lamb, I express my solemn faith in him." Not so Cain; he cared nothing for Christ; he was not willing to confess his sin; he had no objection to present a thank-offering, but a sin-offering he would not bring. He did not mind bringing to God that which he thought might be acceptable as a return for favours received, but he would not bring to God an acknowledgment of his guilt, or a confession of his inability to make atonement for it, except by the blood of a substitute. Cain, moreover, when he came to the altar, came entirely without faith. He piled the unhewn stones, as Abel did, he laid his sheaves of corn upon the altar, and there he waited, but it was to him a matter of comparative indifference whether God accepted him or not. He believed there was a God, doubtless, but he had no faith in the promises of that God. God had said that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head—that was the gospel as revealed to our first parents; but Cain had no belief in that gospel—whether it were true or not, he cared not—it was sufficient for him that he acquired enough for his own sustenance from the soil; he had no faith. But holy Abel stood by the side of the altar, and while Cain the infidel perhaps laughed and jeered at his sacrifice, he boldly presented there the bleeding lamb as a testimony to all men, both of that time and all future times, that he believed in the seed of the woman—that he looked for him to come who should destroy the serpent, and restore the ruins of the fall. Do you see holy Abel, standing there, ministering as a priest at God's altar? Do you see the flush of joy which comes over his face, when he sees the heavens opened, and the living fire of God descend upon the victim? Do you note with what a grateful expression of confident faith he lifts to heaven his eye which had been before filled with tears, and cries, "I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast accepted my sacrifice, inasmuch as I presented it through faith in the blood of thy Son, my Saviour, who is to come."

Abel's sacrifice, being the first on record, and being offered in the teeth of opposition, has very much in it which puts it ahead of many other of the sacrifices of the Jews. Abel is to be greatly honoured for his confidence and faith in the coming Messiah. But compare for a moment the sacrifice of Christ with the sacrifice of Abel, and the sacrifice of Abel shrinks into insignificance. What did Abel bring? He brought a sacrifice which showed the necessity of blood-shedding, but Christ brought the blood-shedding itself. Abel taught the world by his sacrifice that he looked for a victim, but Christ brought the actual victim. Abel

brought but the type and the figure, the Lamb which was but a picture of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world; but Christ was that Lamb. He was the substance of the shadow, the reality of the type. Abel's sacrifice had no merit in it apart from the faith in the Messiah with which he presented it; but Christ's sacrifice had merit of itself; it was in itself meritorious. What was the blood of Abel's lamb? It was nothing but the blood of a common lamb that might have been shed anywhere; except that he had faith in Christ the blood of the lamb was but as water, a contemptible thing; but the blood of Christ was a sacrifice indeed, richer far than all the blood of beasts that ever were offered upon the altar of Abel, or the altar of all the Jewish high priests. We may say of all the sacrifices that were ever offered, however costly they might be, and however acceptable to God, though they were rivers of oil and tens of thousands of fat beasts, yet they were less than nothing, and contemptible, in comparison with the one sacrifice which our high priest hath offered once for all, whereby he hath eternally perfected them that are sanctified.

We have thus found it very easy to set forth the difference between the blood of Christ's sprinkling and the blood which Abel sprinkled. But now I take it that there is a deeper meaning than this, despite what some commentators have said. I believe that the allusion here is to the blood of murdered Abel. Cain smote Abel, and doubtless his hands and the altar were stained with the blood of him who had acted as a priest. "Now," says our apostle, "that blood of Abel spoke." We have evidence that it did, for God said to Cain, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground;" and the apostle's comment upon that in another place is—"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh;" speaketh through his blood, his blood crying unto God from the ground. Now, Christ's blood speaks too. What is the difference between the two voices?—for we are told in the text that it "speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Abel's blood spoke in a threefold manner. It spoke in heaven; it spoke to the sons of men; it spoke to the conscience of Cain. The blood of Christ speaks in a like threefold manner, and it speaks better things.

First, the blood of Abel spoke in heaven. Abel was a holy man, and all that Cain could bring against him was, "His own works were evil, and his brother's were righteous." You see the brothers going to the sacrifice together. You mark the black scowl upon the brow of Cain, when Abel's sacrifice is accepted, while his remains untouched by the sacred fire. You note how they begin to talk together—how quietly Abel argues the question, and how ferociously Cain denounces him. You note again how God speaks to Cain, and warns him of the evil which he knew was in his heart; and you see Cain, as he goes from the presence chamber of the Most High, warned and forewarned, but yet with the dreadful thought in his heart that he will imbrue his hands in his brother's blood. He meets his brother; he talks friendly with him; he gives him, as it were, the kiss of Judas; he entices him into the field where he is alone; he takes him unawares; he smites him, and smites him yet again, till there lies the murdered bleeding corpse of his brother. O earth! earth! earth! cover not his blood. This is the first murder thou hast ever seen, the first blood of man that ever stained thy soil. Hark! there is a cry heard in heaven; the angels are astonished; they rise up from their golden seats, and they enquire, "What is that cry?" God looketh upon them, and he saith, "It is the cry of blood; a man hath been slain by his fellow; a brother by him who came from the bowels of the self-same mother has been murdered in cold blood, through malice. One of my saints has been murdered, and here he comes, And Abel entered into heaven, blood-red, the first of God's elect who had entered Paradise, and the first of God's children who had worn the blood-red crown of martyrdom. And then the cry was heard, loud and clear and strong; and thus it spake—"Revenge! revenge! revenge!" And God himself, upstarting from his throne, summoned the culprit to his presence; questioned him, condemned him out of his own mouth, and made him henceforth a fugitive and a vagabond, to wander over the surface of the earth, which was to be sterile henceforth to his plough.

And now, beloved, just contrast with this the blood of Christ. That is Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God; he hangs upon a tree; he is murdered—murdered by his own brethren. "He came unto his own, and his own received

him not, but his own led him out to death." He bleeds; he dies; and then is heard a cry in heaven. The astonished angels again start from their seats, and they say, "What is this? What is this cry that we hear?" And the Mighty Maker answers yet again, "It is the cry of blood; it is the cry of the blood of my only-begotten and well-beloved Son!" And God, uprising from his throne, looks down from heaven and listens to the cry. And what is the cry? It is not revenge; but the voice crieth, "Mercy! mercy! mercy!" Did you not hear it? It said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Herein, the blood of Christ "speaketh better things than that of Abel;" for Abel's blood said, "Revenge!" and made the sword of God start from its scabbard; but Christ's blood cried "Mercy!" and sent the sword back again, and bade it sleep for ever.

"Blood hath a voice to pierce the skies,
 'Revenge!' the blood of Abel cries;
 But the rich blood of Jesus slain,
 Speaks peace as loud from every vein."

You will note too that Abel's blood cried for revenge upon one man only—upon Cain; it required the death of but one man to satisfy for it, namely, the death of the murderer. "Blood for blood!" The murderer must die the death. But what saith Christ's blood in heaven? Does it speak for only one? Ah! no, beloved; "the free gift hath come upon many." Christ's blood cries mercy! mercy! mercy! not on one, but upon a multitude whom no man can number—ten thousand times ten thousand.

Again: Abel's blood cried to heaven for revenge, for one transgression of Cain; that for ought that Cain had done, worthless and vile before, the blood of Abel did not demand any revenge: it was for the one sin that blood clamoured at the throne of God, and not for many sins. Not so the voice of the blood of Christ. It is "for many offences unto justification." Oh! could ye hear that cry, that all-prevailing cry, as now it comes up from Calvary's summit—"Father, forgive *them!*" not one, but many. "Father, forgive them." And not only forgive them this offence, but forgive them all their sins, and blot out all their iniquities. Ah! beloved, we might have thought that the blood of Christ would have demanded vengeance at the hands of God. Surely, if Abel be revenged seven fold, then must Christ be revenged seventy times seven. If the earth would not swallow up the blood of Abel, till it had had its fill, surely we might have thought that the earth never would have covered the corpse of Christ, until God had struck the world with fire and sword, and banished all men to destruction. But, O precious blood! thou sayest not one word of vengeance! All that this blood cries is peace! pardon! forgiveness! mercy! acceptance! Truly it "speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Again: Abel's blood had a second voice. It spoke to the whole world. "He being dead yet speaketh"—not only in heaven, but on earth. God's prophets are a speaking people. They speak by their acts and by their words as long as they live, and when they are buried they speak by their example which they have left behind. Abel speaks by his blood to us. And what does it say? When Abel offered up his victim upon the altar he said to us, "I believe in a sacrifice that is to be offered for the sins of men;" but when Abel's own blood was sprinkled on the altar he seemed to say, "Here is the ratification of my faith; I seal my testimony with my own blood; you have now the evidence of my sincerity, for I was prepared to die for the defence of this truth which I now witness unto you." It was a great thing for Abel thus to ratify his testimony with his blood. We should not have believed the martyrs half so easily if they had not been ready to die for their profession. The Gospel in ancient times would never have spread at such a marvellous rate, if it had not been that all the preachers of the gospel were ready at any time to attest their message with their own blood. But Christ's blood "speaketh better things than that of Abel." Abel's blood ratified his testimony, and Christ's blood has ratified his testimony too; but Christ's testimony is better than that of Abel. For what is the testimony of Christ? The covenant of grace—that everlasting covenant. He came into this world to tell us that God had from the beginning chosen his people—that he had ordained them to eternal life, and that he had made a covenant with his son Jesus Christ that if he would pay the price they should go free—if he would suffer in their stead they should be delivered. And Christ cried—e'er "he bowed his head and gave up the ghost"—

"It is finished." The covenant purpose is finished. That purpose was "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Such was the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, as his own blood gushed from his heart, to be the die-stamp, and seal, that the covenant was ratified. When I see Abel die I know that his testimony was true; but when I see Christ die I know that the covenant is true.

"This covenant, O believer, stands
Thy rising fears to quell;
'Tis signed and sealed and ratified,
In all things ordered well."

When he bowed his head and gave up the ghost, he did as much as say, "All things are made sure unto the seed by my giving myself a victim." Come, saint, and see the covenant all blood-bestained, and know that it is sure. He is "the faithful and true witness, the prince of the kings of the earth." First of martyrs, my Lord Jesus, thou hadst a better testimony to witness than they all, for thou hast witnessed to the everlasting covenant; thou hast witnessed that thou art the shepherd and bishop of souls; thou hast witnessed to the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of thyself. Again: I say, come, ye people of God, and read over the golden roll. It begins in election—it ends in everlasting life, and all this the blood of Christ crieth in your ears. All this is true; for Christ's blood proves it to be true, and to be sure to all the seed. It "speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Now we come to the third voice; for the blood of Abel had a three-fold sound. It spoke in the conscience of Cain. Hardened though he was, and like a very devil in his sin, yet he was not so deaf in his conscience that he could not hear the voice of blood. The first thing that Abel's blood said to Cain was this: Ah! guilty wretch, to spill thy brother's blood! As he saw it trickling from the wound and flowing down in streams, he looked at it, and as the sun shone on it, and the red glare came into his eye, it seemed to say, "Ah! cursed wretch, for the son of thine own mother thou hast slain. Thy wrath was vile enough, when thy countenance fell, but to rise up against thy brother and take away his life, Oh! how vile!" It seemed to say to him, "What had he done that thou shouldst take his life? Wherein had he offended thee? Was not his conduct blameless, and his conversation pure? If thou hadst smitten a villain or a thief, men might not have blamed thee; but this blood is pure, clean, perfect blood; how couldest thou kill such a man as this?" And Cain put his hand across his brow, and felt there was a sense of guilt there that he had never felt before. And then the blood said to him again, "Why, whither wilt thou go? Thou shalt be a vagabond as long as thou livest." A cold chill ran through him, and he said, "Whosoever findeth me will kill me." And though God promised him he should live, no doubt he was always afraid. If he saw a company of men together, he would hide himself in a thicket, or if in his solitary wanderings he saw a man at a distance, he started back, and sought to bury his head, so that none should observe him. In the stillness of the night he started up in his dreams. It was but his wife that slept by his side; but he thought he felt some one's hands gripping his throat, and about to take away his life. Then he would sit up in his bed and look around at the grim shadows, thinking some fiend was haunting him and seeking after him. Then, as he rose to go about his business, he trembled. He trembled to be alone, he trembled to be in company. When he was alone he seemed not to be alone; the ghost of his brother seemed staring him in his face; and when he was in company he dreaded the voice of men, for he seemed to think every one cursed him, and he thought every one knew the crime he had committed, and no doubt they did, and every man shunned him. No man would take his hand, for it was red with blood, and his very child upon his knee was afraid to look up into his father's face, for there was the mark which God had set upon him. His very wife could scarcely speak to him,—for she was afraid that from the lips of him who had been cursed of God some curse might fall on her. The very earth cursed him. He no sooner put his foot upon the ground, than where it had been a garden before it suddenly turned into a desert, and the fair rich soil became hardened into an arid rock. Guilt, like a grim chamberlain, with fingers bloody red, did draw the curtain of his bed each night. His crime refused him sleep. It spoke in his heart, and the walls of his memory

reverberated the dying cry of his murdered brother. And no doubt that blood spoke one more thing to Cain. It said, "Cain, although thou mayest now be spared, there is no hope for thee; thou art a man accursed on earth, and accursed for ever; God hath condemned thee here, and he will damn thee hereafter." And so wherever Cain went, he never found hope. Though he searched for it in the mountain top, yet he found it not there. Hope that was left to all men, was denied to him: a hopeless, houseless, helpless vagabond, he wandered up and down the surface of the earth. Oh! Abel's blood had a terrible voice indeed.

But now see the sweet change as ye listen to the blood of Christ. It "speaketh better things than that of Abel." Friend! hast thou ever heard the blood of Christ in thy conscience? I have, and I thank God I ever heard that sweet soft voice.

"Once a sinner near despair;
Sought the mercy seat by prayer."

He prayed: he thought he was praying in vain. The tears gushed from his eyes; his heart was heavy within him; he sought, but he found no mercy. Again, again, and yet again, he besieged the throne of the heavenly grace and knocked at mercy's door. Oh! who can tell the mill-stone that lay upon his beating heart, and the iron that did eat into his soul. He was a prisoner in sore bondage; deep, as he thought, in the bondage of despair was he chained, to perish for ever. That prisoner one day heard a voice, which said to him, "Away, away, to Calvary!" Yet he trembled at the voice, for he said, "Why should I go thither, for there my blackest sin was committed; there I murdered the Saviour by my transgressions? Why should I go to see the murdered corpse of him who became my brother born for adversity?" But mercy beckoned, and she said, "Come, come away, sinner!" And the sinner followed. The chains were on his legs and on his hands, and he could scarcely creep along. Still the black vulture Destruction seemed hovering in the air. But he crept as best he could, till he came to the foot of the hill of Calvary. On the summit he saw a cross; blood was distilling from the hands, and from the feet, and from the side; and mercy touched his ears and said, "Listen!" and he heard that blood speak; and as it spoke the first thing it said was, "Love!" And the second thing it said was, "Mercy!" The third thing it said was, "Pardon." The next thing it said was, "Acceptance." The next thing it said was, "Adoption." The next thing it said was, "Security." And the last thing it whispered was, "Heaven." And as the sinner heard that voice, he said within himself, "And does that blood speak to me?" And the Spirit said, "To thee—to thee it speaks." And he listened, and oh what music did it seem to his poor troubled heart, for in a moment all his doubts were gone. He had no sense of guilt. He knew that he was vile, but he saw that his vileness was all washed away; he knew that he was guilty, but he saw his guilt all atoned for, through the precious blood that was flowing there. He had been full of dread before: he dreaded life, he dreaded death; but now he had no dread at all; a joyous confidence took possession of his heart. He looked to Christ, and he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" he clasped the Saviour in his arms, and he began to sing:—"Oh! confident am I; for this blest blood was shed for me." And then Despair fled and Destruction was driven clean away; and instead thereof came the bright white-winged angel of Assurance, and she dwelt in his bosom, saying evermore to him, "Thou art accepted in the Beloved: thou art chosen of God and precious: thou art his child now, and thou shalt be his favourite throughout eternity." "The blood of Christ speaketh better things than that of Abel."

And now I must have you notice that the blood of Christ bears a *comparison* with the blood of Abel in one or two respects, but it excelleth in them all.

The blood of Abel cried "Justice!" It was but right that the blood should be revenged. Abel had no private pique against Cain; doubtless could Abel have done so, he would have forgiven his brother; but the blood spoke justly, and only asked its due when it shouted "Vengeance! vengeance! vengeance!" And Christ's blood speaketh justly, when it saith, "Mercy!" Christ has as much right to demand mercy upon sinners, as Abel's blood had to cry vengeance against Cain. When Christ saves a sinner, he does not save him on the sly, or against law or justice, but he saves him justly. Christ has a right to save whom he will save, to have mercy on whom he will have mercy, for he can do it justly, he can be just, and yet be the justifier of the ungodly.

Again, Abel's blood cried effectively. It did not cry in vain. It said, "Revenge!" and revenge it had. And Christ's blood, blessed be his name, never

cries in vain. It saith, "Pardon;" and pardon every believer shall have; it saith, "Acceptance," and every penitent is accepted in the Beloved. If that blood cry for me, I know it cannot cry in vain. That all-prevailing blood of Christ shall never miss its due; it must, it shall be heard. Shall Abel's blood startle heaven, and shall not the blood of Christ reach the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth?

And again, Abel's blood cries continually, there is the mercy-seat, and there is the cross, and the blood is dropping on the mercy-seat. I have sinned a sin. Christ says, "Father, forgive him." There is one drop. I sin again: Christ intercedes again. There is another drop. In fact, it is the drop that intercedes, Christ need not speak with his mouth; the drops of blood, as they fall upon the mercy-seat, each seemeth to say, "Forgive him! forgive him! forgive him!"

Dear friend, when thou hearest the voice of conscience, stop and try to hear the voice of the blood too. Oh! what a precious thing it is to hear the voice of the blood of Christ. You who do not know what that means, do not know the very essence and joy of life; but you who understand that, can say, "The dropping of the blood is like the music of heaven upon earth." Poor sinner! I would ask thee to come and listen to that voice that distils upon thy ears and thy heart to-day. Thou art full of sin; the Saviour bids thee lift thine eyes to him. See, there, his blood is flowing from his head, his hands, his feet, and every drop that falls, still cries, "Father, O forgive them! Father, O forgive them." And each drop seems to say also as it falls, "It is finished: I have made an end of sin, I have brought in everlasting righteousness." Oh! sweet, sweet language of the dropping of the blood of Christ! It "speaketh better things than that of Abel."

II. Having thus, I trust, sufficiently enlarged upon this subject I shall now close by addressing you with a few earnest words concerning the second point.—THE CONDITION INTO WHICH EVERY CHRISTIAN IS BROUGHT. He is said to be "come to the blood of sprinkling." I shall make this a very brief matter, but a very solemn and pointed one. My hearers, have you come to the blood of Christ? I do not ask you whether you have come to a knowledge of doctrine, or of an observance of ceremonies, or of a certain form of experience; but I ask you if you have come to the blood of Christ. If you have, I know how you come. You must come to the blood of Christ with no merits of your own. Guilty, lost, and helpless, you must come to that blood, and to that blood alone, for your hopes; you come to the cross of Christ and to that blood too, I know, with a trembling and an aching heart. Some of you remember how you first came, cast down and full of despair; but that blood recovered you. And this one thing I know: if you have come to that blood once, you will come to it every day. Your life will be just this—"Looking unto Jesus." And your whole conduct will be epitomized in this—"To whom coming as unto a living stone." Not to whom I have come, but to whom I am always coming. If thou hast ever come to the blood of Christ thou wilt feel thy need of coming to it every day. He that does not desire to wash in that fountain every day, has never washed in it at all. I feel it every day to be my joy and my privilege that there is still a fountain opened. I trust I came to Christ years ago; but ah! I could not trust to that, unless I could come again to-day. Past experiences are doubtful things to a Christian; it is present coming to Christ that must give us joy and comfort. Did you not, some of you, sing twenty years ago that hymn,

"My faith doth lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin."

Why, beloved you can sing it as well to-day as you did then. I was reading the other day some book, in which the author states, that we are not to come to Christ as sinners as long as we live; he says we are to grow into saints. Ah! he did not know much, I am sure; for saints are sinners still, and they have always to come to Christ as sinners. If ever I go to the throne of God as a saint, I get repulsed; but when I go just as a poor humble seeking sinner, relying upon nothing but thy blood, O Jesus, I never can get a repulse, I am sure. To whom coming as unto "blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Let this be our experience every day.

But there are some here who confess that they never did come. I cannot exhort you, then, to come every day, but I exhort you to come now for the first time. But

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you say, "May I come?" Yes, if thou art wishing to come thou mayest come; if thou feelest that thou hast need to come thou mayest come.

"All the fitness he requireth,
Is to feel your need of him:"

And even

"This he gives you,
'Tis his Spirit's rising beam."

But you say, "I must bring some merits." Hark to the blood that speaks! It says, "Sinner, I am full of merit: why bring thy merits here?" "Ah! but," thou sayest "I have too much sin." Hark to the blood: as it falls, it cries, "Of many offences unto justification of life." "Ah! but," thou sayest, "I know I am too guilty." Hark to the blood! "Though your sins be as scarlet I will make them as wool; though they be red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow." "Nay," says one, "but I have such a poor desire, I have such a little faith." Hark to the blood! "The bruised reed I will not break, and smoking flax I will not quench." "Nay, but," thou sayest, "I know he will cast me out, if I do come." Hark to the blood! "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "Nay, but," sayest thou, "I know I have so many sins that I cannot be forgiven." Now, hear the blood once more, and I have done. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin." That is the blood's testimony, and its testimony to thee. "There are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood;" and behold the blood's witness is—"The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Come, poor sinner, cast thyself simply on that truth. Away with your good works and all your trustings! Lie simply flat on that sweet word of Christ. Trust his blood; and if thou canst put thy trust alone in Jesus, in his sprinkled blood, it shall speak in thy conscience better things than that of Abel.

I am afraid there are many that do not know what we mean by believing. Good Dr. Chalmers once visiting a poor old woman, told her to believe in Christ, and she said, "But that is just the thing I do not know what you mean by." So Dr. Chalmers said, "*Trust* Christ." Now, that is just the meaning of believing. Trust him with your soul; trust him with your sins; trust him with the future; trust him with the past; trust him with everything. Say,

"A guilty, weak, and worthless worm,
On Christ's kind arms I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all."

May the Lord now give you his blessing; for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.