

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

PRIEST AND VICTIM.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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“He offered up himself.”—Hebrews vii. 27.

I do not know when I have ever felt a more decided conflict of emotions in my own heart than I do just now. Happy is the man who has such a message as that in my text to deliver to his fellow-men; but burdened is the man who feels that the message is far too great for his lips, or, indeed, for any human tongue to convey. To be allowed to announce to men that our Lord Jesus Christ “offered up himself” on their behalf is, indeed, an errand which angels might envy, but the theme is too great for any human being to compass. I comfort myself with the reflection that it does not require any excellence of speech to tell it, the excellence lies in the truth itself; and if men's minds are in a right condition, if they are conscious of their lost state, and they really desire to know what Christ has done to save them from it, they will want no garnishing or tawdry fripperies of human eloquence; all they will want will be to hear, as plainly and as earnestly as it can be spoken, the message of reconciliation which God has sent through Jesus Christ his Son. Yet I cannot help feeling that the meaning of my text is so weighty that it may break the backs of the words that attempt to bring it to us. The axles of my human medium of conveyance are ready to snap when freighted with such a load of infinite love and wisdom as comes to us in my short, full text: “He offered up himself.”

But, to begin, I would remind you, dear friends, that the idea of a sacrifice for sin is, in some sense or other, found in almost all human religions. I believe that some of the most ignorant tribes of Africa, and also Unitarians, have been found without the doctrine of an atoning sacrifice in their religion; but I do not think there are any other persons so benighted as these to be found anywhere. Go where you may, you will discover that, as soon as ever people begin to say “God,” the next thing they say is “sacrifice”;

and though their idea of God is often distorted, and their idea of sacrifice is distorted also, yet both ideas are there. Man, however degraded, cannot altogether forget that there is a God; and then, shrinking back from the awful majesty of the divine holiness, he at least hopes that there is a sacrifice by which his sins may be put away. He feels that there must be one if he is ever to be brought into connection with God; and so, in some form or other, the notion of sacrifice crops up wherever there is any religion at all. It may be in the ghastly form of human sacrifice, which is a hideous misinterpretation which has crept in under the darkness and gloom of heathenism or false teaching; or it may appear in the continued sacrifice of bullocks, or lambs, or other victims; but, somehow or other, the idea is there. Man seems to know, in his inmost nature, that he must bring a sacrifice if he would appear before God; and this is, by no means, an error on his part. However erroneous may be the form it takes, in its essence there is truth in it.

Brothers and sisters, did you never know this truth in your own souls? Has not the conviction come to you, under a sense of sin, as an absolute certainty, that sin must be punished? I will not say that you have thought so when you have imagined yourself to be all right; or, at least, to be pretty nearly clear of anything wrong. No; but when conscience has been awakened, and has begun to speak; in the quiet night watches, in times of sickness, or when you have seemed to be on the brink of eternity, I ask you, has there not come the thought that sin would surely be visited with punishment? That—

“Dread of something after death,”—

of which the world's poet speaks, is an indication of belief in the truth which is most sure, that the Judge of all the earth will not suffer his laws to be trampled on with impunity, but that he will certainly punish iniquity, transgression, and sin.

Then there has also come to your mind, I feel sure;—at least, I remember well when it came to mine,—the thought that God could not pardon me without punishing my sin,—or that, if he did, his moral government of the whole universe would be weakened. If he permitted the guilty to enjoy the same rewards as the righteous received, where would be his justice? An amnesty to the guilty would, practically, be an abolition of the law; it would be tantamount to saying, “It does not matter how you live, all will come right at last.” There are some who teach that doctrine, nowadays; and, to state it in plain English, this is the doctrine that they teach,—that we may rebel against God, we may blaspheme God, we may despise God,—we may cheat, we may lie, we may murder, and so on; but it shall be just as well with us one day as it will be with the best man that lives. Does not the least atom of common morality that remains in man compel him to shrink back from teaching so intolerable as that? It cannot be right, we need not argue about the matter; it is impossible that it should be so, for human society would go to pieces under such an arrangement as that, and the Judge of all the earth would have to abdicate his throne ere this

could be. Many years ago, I put into words for myself, when I was under a sense of sin, a feeling which I believe others must have had under similar circumstances; and I said, "If God does not punish me for my sin, he ought to do so." I felt that, if he did not condemn me for my sin, my conscience would condemn him; and that, if he suffered me to go unpunished when I was guilty, in some way or other he would cease to be a just God, and would no longer be worthy of the respect of my own conscience.

Now, that is a truth, a great truth, a terrible truth; and hence it is that the mind of the convinced sinner is driven to the hope of an atonement. If God is to pardon sin, there must be something done by which his law can be honoured, his justice can be vindicated, and his truthfulness can be established; in fact, there must be an atonement. That is what it all comes to; or else pardon is impossible, and you and I must be lost for ever. I would to God that we all not only believed this truth,—as I suspect that the most of us do;—but that we felt it to be the case in our own personal experience, that we realized our need of an atoning sacrifice, in order that God might be just, and yet be the Justifier of the ungodly,—that the honour of his law might shine out in unsullied purity like the terrible crystal, and yet that "a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald," might be seen by the sons of men, reminding them of the covenant made between the Father and the Son concerning all who believe in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

This brings me to the blessed announcement of the text, that the atonement which men have blindly felt after has been made, that the sacrifice which the conscience longs for has been presented. Here is the best possible news in four words: "He offered up himself." Spirit of God, help us to think about this sublime truth, and to speak of it aright!

I. Here is, first, THE PRIEST: "HE offered up himself." Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world, and "offered up himself" as a sacrifice for sin. The great High Priest, who officiated on the occasion of that wondrous and unique sacrifice, was Jesus Christ himself.

"He," who was of *infinite dignity*,—he who, in his first estate as very God of very God, was worshipped and obeyed by all the angels of heaven,—he who was with the Father when he spanned the heavens, and laid the foundations of the universe,—he it was, this Son of God, who "offered up himself." No inferior priest was there. There were wicked men, who were the instruments employed in accomplishing his death; but, after all, the great hand that presented the Lamb of God as the one sacrifice for sin was the hand of the Christ of God: "He offered up himself." Our High Priest is of such dignity that none can be compared with him. He is the Son of the Highest, the equal of the Father. I want you to think of this truth, because it may help you to see how great must have been the merit of the sacrifice when it was God himself who "offered up himself." He was no mere delegated or elected priest, but Christ Jesus himself, in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead

bodily;”—Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, he it was who stood at the altar presenting “himself” to God as the one and only sacrifice for sin. O sinful men, come ye hither, for here is a sacrifice which may well satisfy the demands of the divine law, since Christ himself puts on the priestly garments, and offers it unto God!

“He offered up himself;” that is to say, *he voluntarily agreed to be the Victim for this wondrous sacrifice.* Did you not notice this truth in the chapter we read just now? “Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God.” Christ was not compelled to come to earth except by the sweet compulsion of his own love; but with that as his master-motive,—

“Down from the shining seats above
With joyful haste he fled.”

Voluntarily he took upon himself our nature, and was born at Bethlehem, and voluntarily did he tarry here for three and thirty years. He might have gone back when “he came unto his own, and his own received him not.” But he had come in order that he might be a sacrifice for sin, so he remained until the hour appointed for his death; and, even then, he was not forced to die: “He offered up himself.” Pilate's servants and Herod's soldiers could not have slain him unless he had been willing to die. He had but to breathe the wish, and the legions of heaven would have burned up the legions of Herod as chaff is consumed in the furnace. Neither the Romans nor the Jews could have nailed him to the tree, nor could all their priests, nor all the ribald mob, have put him to death without his own consent. When he did but speak to them in the Garden of Gethsemane, they went backward, and fell to the ground. He that made the earth to quake and open when he died could have shaken them off the earth, or buried them in it, while he lived, if he had so pleased. But he voluntarily delivered himself up to death. To the very last, there was no compulsion upon him to die, except that compulsion of love of which I have spoken. You and I must die; the infirmities of nature will compel us to give up the ghost; but he was strong and vigorous even at the moment of his death. That glorious shout, “*Consummatum est,*”—“It is finished,”—came from One who was still in the vigour of his strength, and just entering on his eternal victory. When he bowed his head, it was because he would do it, and willingly yielded up his soul, committing his spirit to the Father,—not under constraint, but “he offered up himself.” Oh, this makes the sacrifice of Christ so blessed and glorious! They dragged the bullocks and they drove the sheep to the altar; they bound the calves with cords, even with cords to the altar's horn; but not so was it with the Christ of God. None did compel him to die; he laid down his life voluntarily, for he had power to lay it down, and to take it again. “For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame.” “He offered up himself.”

From this great truth, we may learn two or three practical lessons. The first is, the blasphemy of supposing that any so-called

“priest” can offer up Christ. There are men who say that, in the unbloody sacrifice of the mass, “there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead.” Stand back, beloved; withdraw from the sons of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, lest the earth should again open, and swallow them up, and they should perish alive in their iniquity. “He offered up himself;” and yet these shavelings say that they offer him again. God have mercy upon them, and open their blind eyes, that they may no longer thus perpetrate an infamous blasphemy against his holy name!

But there is a lesson for us also to learn; and that is, the folly of our attempting to offer any sacrifice whatever to God in and of ourselves; for, brethren, there never was such a sacrifice as Christ on earth. It was the best sacrifice that ever could be, yet nobody offered that but Christ himself. What are your sacrifices and mine? They are very poor things, so shall we dare to offer them to God? Nay, let us ask Christ to offer all our sacrifices for us. If the best sacrifice needed Christ to present it to his Father, then our imperfect sacrifices can only be offered by Jesus Christ our great High Priest; and though we, who trust him, and love his name, are all priests, for he “hath made us kings and priests unto God,” yet we are only priests in him, and our sacrifices are only presented in and through him. It must be so; for, if the chief sacrifice is offered by him, all the minor ones must also be presented by him if they are to be accepted by God.

And, dear brethren, here is one other lesson, namely, the security of those who trust in the sacrifice of Christ; for if I accept the sacrifice of Christ for me, and trust in it, if I am not saved by it,—suppose that to be possible,—then it follows that the great High Priest, when “he offered up himself,” did not perform an effectual work. That would be a terrible imputation upon his honour. God forbid that we should entertain it for a single moment! Much, it is said, in the offering of the mass in the Romish Church, depends upon the intention of the priest. I should think so; but we know what the intention of our High Priest was. We dare not rely upon the intention of any human priest, but we know that our Lord Jesus Christ “offered up himself,”—not in fiction or hypocrisy, but in reality, and with his whole heart and soul; and we are certain that he offered an acceptable and an effectual sacrifice to God, and that we who trust in it must be saved. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the effect of that dread sacrifice must stand, for he who offered it is the Son of God. Fall back, my soul, on this firm rock, and there rest securely whatever doubts may come to assail thee.

II. Now, in the second place, I shall ask you carefully to look at THE SACRIFICE: “He offered up *himself*.” That is to say, Jesus Christ did not offer lamb or ram, bird or bullock; but “*himself*.”

That is a great word, and it means that his whole nature as man was offered up in death as an atonement for us,—*his whole nature as man, perfect and sinless, and indissolubly united with his Divine nature*. I do not say that God died, nor would I put it quite so;

but I will say that he who died was God, though man, and that "he offered up himself,"—the whole of himself,—in sacrifice to God on our behalf. His precious body suffered pains which are indescribable, but which I pray you never to undervalue or forget. I have seen criticisms concerning what is called "the sensuousness" of certain of our hymns that speak of his wounds, and so on. Never mind the criticism,—be willing to be called sensuous, Holy Scripture might be condemned on the same ground. You will never understand the agony of Christ's soul if you despise the agony of his body; for, while the sufferings of his soul were the soul of his sufferings, yet the sufferings of his body were the body of his sufferings, and he who does not think much of the body of the sufferings is not likely to know much about the soul of them.

His body was given for you and for me; and, then, his spiritual nature—his mind, his intellect, his heart, his imagination,—every pure unspotted faculty of that blessed soul of his,—he gave up all for us. The alabaster box, his body, was broken; and the precious nard, his soul, was poured out like a divine perfume upon the head of our poor humanity. It was all given for us: "He offered up himself." Not his garments only, though he was stripped naked;—not his glory only, though he emptied himself;—not his life only, though he laid down his life for us;—but "he offered up himself." Oh, it is a great word, but it describes a great sacrifice; and it needed all that to make an atonement for our sins, and all that he gave.

"He offered up himself;" that is, *he presented himself to God as a sacrifice, and he did actually die.* O brothers and sisters, I cannot describe that wondrous death! You and I have never died. We have been sick, but to actual death we have never yet come. Some of us never shall know death as Christ knew it; for, remember, death was death to him; but for his saints the bitterness of death is past. Christ had to endure death in all its bitterness, but he has taken away the wormwood and the gall of death for us who believe in him. Many of those who were martyred for his name's sake, when they burned at the stake could sing as they died, and counted the flames as though they were but beds of roses, for he was with them, and God was with them to sustain them; but, for him, there was no such succour, no Divine support. "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" was the cry into which more grief was packed away than can even be found in any sufferer in hell; for, recollect, the griefs of Christ were not the griefs sufficing for one lost man, but for unnumbered myriads who would otherwise have been banished from the presence of God for ever. "He offered up himself." Oh! see him die, if you can bear the sight; his blessed soul exhaled, his body left behind to be buried in the tomb. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

I always think, with regard to that offering up of himself, that *it was a very mysterious transaction, into which you and I must not pry with any sinful curiosity.* Yet, as I meditated upon this subject, it appeared to me that the cross, which seemed so small a thing out yonder on that little rising ground of Golgotha,—that one cross,

standing in the centre of the three, appeared to me to be the centre of the entire universe, and so it is. If the inhabitants in all the stars did not see Christ die, if from all worlds they could not behold the dreadful sight, yet they must have heard of it in many a star by this time. Swift spirits have told, in those bright orbs where myriads of unfallen creatures dwell, the story that, on this little dusky planet, sin struggled against incarnate love, and love, to conquer it, did die, and in the dying won the victory. I cannot tell you how many races of intelligent beings there are beside the hierarchy of angels, but it is not at all improbable that there are as many worlds as there are grains of sand upon the seashore, and perhaps every one of these teems with inhabitants more than our earth does; and they have heard, and they keep on hearing, and the news keeps spreading everywhere, that the God, who made them all, took human form, and died to put away human sin.

And, supposing this is the case, what do you think all these intelligent beings say? It must be that the impression made upon them is that sin is a horrible thing, since it stabs at God himself. All intelligences must also feel that God is just, since he will sooner himself die than let sin go unpunished. It further rings throughout the spheres that God is love,—that he will sooner bleed to death than let his creatures perish; and that here he once proved, in his death, that he was infinite both in his vengeance and his mercy. All the universe throughout eternity shall hear this wondrous story; it is so marvellous that it will never grow stale. They are telling it, to-night, to wondering assemblies, compared with which this vast congregation is but as a drop in a bucket. Standing in some central star, some mighty intelligence is proclaiming this story, perhaps to as many worlds as there are men and women in this building. Certainly, it is worthy of such an audience, for never was there such news as that the infinite, immortal, eternal, invisible, almighty, loving God did come, and take upon himself the sin of men, and at last suffered and died in the room and stead of guilty sinners.

You say, perhaps, that I am dreaming while talking to you thus. But dear friends, we sometimes learn more truth in dreams than when we are awake. At any rate, this I know. I would sooner be mistaken in enlarging too much upon the wondrous fact and efficacy of the cross than I would ever become one of those who shrivel up the atonement till there is little or nothing of it left. I believe that there was such a necessity for Christ to die as you and I have never yet imagined; that he did not die merely because his death was necessary upon this planet, but that it was necessary through every province of the infinite dominions of God, and that it was necessary to the very nature of God himself, which is saying still more. There was a supreme necessity that Christ should die; I am sure of it, for else he would not have died. The Father would never have given up his Son to the death of the cross unless it had been imperative that this sacrifice should be offered, or else that men should suffer for ever. Oh, wonder of wonders! Tell it everywhere, and never cease to tell it. "He offered up himself."

III. Now, lest I should weary you, I will, in closing, only say a

little upon the third point, which is, CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THIS TRUTH, WHICH ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO US.

The first is this. "He offered up himself;" *but he did not offer up himself for himself.* That is an offering which cannot be imagined. So far as Christ was himself alone concerned, there was no necessity that he should die. He was infinitely glorious and blessed. "He offered up himself," but not for himself; then, for whom did he die? For men. We are told that he took not up angels, but he took up the seed of Abraham, he took up sinful men. O poor sinner, I want you to think of this! Let your soul see Jesus on the cross,—bleeding, writhing, suffering, tortured, dying, dead; and then recollect that there was not one pang, or groan, or sigh for himself; it was all for others,—for his enemies. I wish we could all say, one by one, "It was for me. He loved me, and gave himself for me. He endured the cross for me, his blood was shed for me, those agonies and cries and griefs were all for me. For me, the death-pang and the expiring groan; all for me, for me." If thou believest in Jesus, it is even so. There must have been something great done for thee there. Thy great sin must have been buried there. The great hell, which thou oughtest to have endured, must have been extinguished there so far as thou art concerned. The great heaven, which thou couldst never else have entered, must have been opened there, if he died there for thee. Untold blessings are insured to thee in that matchless death. Dwell on that thought, beloved. "He offered up himself;" but not for himself. It must have been, then, for the guilty. O my soul, it must have been, it was, for thee if thou believest in him!

Next, notice that *this great deed of love was really done*: "He offered up himself." He did really do it. I know that, when I am preaching, some of you seem to think that I am only talking about fanciful or imaginary matters. If I were to begin to speak of President Garfield and his sickness, or about the wet weather and the harvest, you would say, "These are facts." O sirs, but this also is a fact, and the greatest of all facts: "He offered up himself." It happened long ago, but it is true that he did this. That same God that painted every flower,—that spread the skies,—the God that made us,—came here in human form, and after living here a life of blessing and beneficence, he died as a sacrifice for human guilt. This is not something that is yet to be done. It is all over; Jesus himself said, "It is finished." If I had to tell you that God would come here, and become man, and die for us, you might say, "It may not be; it is too great a condescension. Do you know how great God is, and can it be imagined that he should come down to earth, and be veiled in human flesh, and in that flesh should suffer and die? It cannot be." But I have to tell you that it has been done, it is a fact accomplished. He did it: "He offered up himself." It may sometimes have been a question among believers who lived before Christ died,—"Will he really die?" But it is no question to you and me, for he has died, his great deed of love is done.

And he so completely did this that *it will never be done again.* If you will not accept this Christ, there will never be another; and

if you will not be saved by his redemption, you will never be redeemed at all. And there is this comfort about it,—that he only died once because there is no need that he should ever die again. His one death has slain death for all who trust him. His one bearing of sin has put their sin away for ever. God now can justly forgive the believing sinner; and he may well blot out the debt when it has been paid by his Son. Well may he remit the sentence against us now that his Son has stood in our place, and borne the penalty due to our sin. God is therefore just when he justifies those for whom Christ died; where would his justice be if he did not so? Did Christ pay my debts, and am I arrested for them? Did he die for me, and shall I perish? Where then is the atonement? Beloved, if thou believest in Jesus, be glad that he died once, and be gladder still that he cannot die again, and that there is no need that he should. The atonement is completed; thou art saved; and thou shalt never come into condemnation. How I wish that I could preach on such a theme as this as it deserves! But I do not know how it is to be done; it does not seem to me as if any human words could ever fittingly set forth such a wondrous mystery. Nay, though they were written across the face of the sky,—unless God himself wrote them with a finger of lightning,—I know of no way in which this truth could be fitly set out: “He offered up himself.”

But, my dear hearers, I wish you would all lay hold of this blessed truth! When I laid hold of it, it was the crisis in my whole history; and to this hour it is the joy of my soul. I could not give up this blessed belief,—that “he offered up himself” in the room and place and stead of all his people, of all who believe in him, and that, therefore, they are safe for ever.

I must sum up, in a few words, much more that I might have said. And, first, this truth quiets the conscience. “He offered up himself.” Conscience never murmurs after the blood of Jesus has been applied to it. I say to myself, “Jesus died for me; Jesus suffered in my stead; Jesus took my guilt; Jesus bore my punishment;” and my conscience says, “That is enough; that is all I want.”

This truth also satisfies my understanding. Let those who will sneer at the simple gospel, and the doctrine of substitution; but I have no understanding that is too large to be satisfied with these things. It seems to me that, if God appointed Christ to be an atonement for sin, and if he is satisfied with his sacrifice, I may well be content. Surely, if my great Creditor and Judge is appeased by what his Son has offered on my behalf, it is not for me to begin to cavil at it. I know how some criticize the great central truth of the atonement. I care not how they criticize it so long as God has accepted it; and since he has also accepted me in Christ Jesus, my Lord and Saviour, my soul feels perfectly content, and understands why she is contented.

And, oh! how this truth also wins the affections of men! Can you help loving the Christ who offered up himself for you? And loving him, do you not desire to honour and glorify him? Do you not feel that you hate the sin that made him die? Do you not wish

to be like him, and in everything to give him pleasure by a life of holiness, and self-denial, and self-sacrifice? I know you do; it must be so. Because Jesus sacrificed himself for you, you feel that you must love him with all your heart.

Does not this truth also arouse your admiration? Say, brothers and sisters, if there is anything that can move you like this glorious truth of which I have been speaking? Does it not arouse your highest admiration when you remember that the Lord Jesus Christ took your sin upon himself, and suffered in your stead? I know that there is no hand that can sweep the strings of my heart with such power as can the hand that was pierced for me. This theme enkindles my enthusiasm, and stirs my passions to a flame, and makes me wish for the tongues of men and of angels that I might be able to tell out this story of "love so amazing, so divine." I would ask no other heaven, if I might have my choice, than, having to meditate upon the passion of my Lord, and to tell it out to others, and then to fall at his dear feet, and worship him world without end, for he was slain, and has redeemed me by his precious blood. You take Christ out of the gospel, and out of your preaching, and see whether you will arouse any enthusiasm among your people. There is a cold, steely religion, sharp and deadly, out of which the atonement has gone; but was it ever a power in this land, or any other, or will it ever be? Only preach the Christless gospel, and you shall have spiders in abundance in your places of worship, and very few men and women. They run away, if they are wise, from the place where Christ is not preached, and his atoning blood is not constantly set forth. Point that place out to me on the map of London, and I will show you the spot where there is a beggarly array of empty benches, and few hearers; for they fly, and rightly so, as hungry men flee from the place where there is no bread, and as the thirsty in the wilderness turn away from the dried-up well. They get still more thirsty as long as they stay by the empty mockery, so they hasten away from it. But preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, preach the atoning sacrifice, and see how the people flock together. Let them believe this truth, let them love it, and their whole spirit is stirred within them, and everyone becomes a soldier of the cross, a warrior for Jesus Christ. I am sure it is so; and what I feel within my own spirit I know that you all feel too, for "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

And, finally, this truth, that Christ offered up himself, leads us who accept it to be ready for self-sacrifice. It makes the believing man say, "As he offered himself for me, I must give myself for him." It teaches the doctrine of the self-sacrifice of men for God, and of men for men. This is the nursery of brave spirits, and the school in which true heroes are trained. None have been bolder for the truth, and for the right, and for the advancement of the ages, and for the glory of God, than those who have enshrined the blood-red cross within their hearts, and who have been prepared for love of it even to die. O Christ of God, thou who hast offered thyself for us, we offer ourselves to thee; accept us now! Amen.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

HEBREWS X. 1—22.

Verse 1. *For the law—*

The old ceremonial law of Moses,—

1. *Having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.*

Those that were sprinkled with the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices did not feel that their sin was for ever put away. They went back, after the victim had been offered, with a certain measure of rest and relief, but not with that perfect rest which is the accompaniment of the pardon that Jesus gives to those who come unto God through him.

2. *For—*

If the worshippers had thus been made perfect ; if they had been completely cleansed and accepted through these sacrifices,—

2. *Then would they not have ceased to be offered ? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*

The fact that there was a lamb to be offered every morning and every evening, and that there was a great day of atonement to be observed every year, proved that there was sin still remaining, which had not been put away, and that the worshippers needed to come again, and again, and yet again, with fresh sacrifices for their fresh sins. The apostle's argument is unanswerable.

3, 4. *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

Your common sense tells you "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Although rivers of such blood should continually be flowing, what efficacy could there be in them to put away the moral stain of guilt and transgression against God ?

5. *Wherefore when he cometh into the world,—*

That great HE,—that Divine HE,—our Saviour and our God. "when he cometh into the world,"—

5—7. *He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me : in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.*

That will had not been done, although myriads of sacrifices had been offered. But Christ came really to do that will by offering himself as the one and only acceptable sacrifice.

8, 9. *Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein ; which are offered by the law ; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*

An end was made of the types and shadows of the ceremonial law, that the real substance might be introduced by Christ. Never imagine, dear friends, that the old Jewish ceremonial law is to drag on its existence, and to be intermingled with the Christian dispensation. Ah, no ! As the shadows of the night vanish when the sun arises, as the lamps in yonder street are put out when daylight returns, so was it with all the types and shadows of the ancient law when the great Antitype appeared.

10. *By the which will—*

That is, the will of God as done by Christ: "By the which will"—

10—12. *We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;—*

Oh, what a blessed doctrine this is,—that the one offering of Christ has done what the tens of thousands of offerings under the old law never could accomplish! All the work of man is but the spinning of a righteousness which is undone as quickly as it is spun; but Christ has finished the seamless and spotless robe of his righteousness which is to last for ever. By his one sacrifice, he has ended all the fruitless labour of the ages; and, now, as many of us as have believed in him have all the benefits of his perfect work.

Having completed his great task, he "sat down on the right hand of God;"—

13. *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.*

"Expecting." That was the subject of this morning's sermon.* We are expecting something better than we have yet seen. "We were saved in hope." We are expecting that which is yet to be revealed; and our covenant Head is expecting, too. This is the age of expectancy. We have not yet come to the fulness of the blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus. The mercy of God is at present only in the bud; the fully-developed flower has yet to be seen. Christ is expecting; his saints are expecting; the whole creation is expecting.

14—17. *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

Oh, what a blessed covenant this is! Christ's death has established a covenant of grace in which there is no flaw, and no possibility of failure, for the one condition of the covenant has been fulfilled by Christ, and now it stands as a covenant of "shalls" and "wills" on God's part from which he will never run back. It is not, "If they do this, and if they do that, I will do the other;" but it is all "I will." "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

18. *Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*

No more offering for sin is needed, for the work of atonement is fully done, and done for ever. As the sin of all who believe in Jesus is put away, what need is there of any further sacrifice on account of it? The atonement is complete; let us therefore rejoice in it, and praise God for it.

19—22. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—555, 299, 289.

* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1,616, "Saved in Hope."