

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

“THE BLOOD OF THE TESTAMENT.”

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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“For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.”—Hebrews ix. 19, 20.*

BLOOD is always a terrible thing. It makes a sensitive mind shudder even to pronounce the word; but to look upon the thing itself causes a thrill of horror. Although by familiarity men shake this off, for the seeing of the eye and the hearing of the ear can harden the heart, the instinct of a little child may teach you what is natural to us in reference to blood. How it will cry if its finger bleeds ever so little, shocked at the sight, if actually there be no smart. I envy not the man whose pity would not stir to see a sparrow bleed or a lamb wantonly put to pain; and as for the cruel man, I shudder at the thought of his depravity. What exquisite pain it must have caused our first parents—how keenly it must have touched the fine sensibilities of their nature—to have had to offer sacrifice! Probably they had never seen death until they brought their first victim to the altar of God. Blood! Ah! how they must have shuddered as they saw the warm life-fluid flowing forth from the innocent victim. It must have seemed to them to be a very horrible thing, and very properly so, for God intended them to feel their feelings outraged. He meant them to take to heart the anguish of the victim, and learn, with many a shudder, what a destructive and killing thing sin was. He meant them to see before their eyes a commentary upon his threatening, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” He meant Adam and Eve to witness the harrowing appearance, as

* Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, upon verse 20, is No. 1,567 in *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*; it also is entitled “The Blood of the Testament.”

the sentence upon sin was executed, stabbing at the very heart of life, convulsing all the frame, sealing up the senses, and leaving behind but a wreck of the beautiful creature, and not a relic of happiness for it in the world. How dreadful must have been the spectacle when the first pair gathered around the corpse of their second son, slain by his brother! There were the clots of blood on the murderous club, or the sharp stone, or whatever other instrument Cain may have used in smiting his brother to the grave. How they must have mourned and sighed as they saw the precious crimson of human life wantonly poured out upon the ground, and crying to God against the murderer!

Yes, blood is always a ghastly and a terrible thing. It is so, I suppose, because we recognize in it the destruction of life. Is it not so, also,—though we may not be able to define the emotion,—because we are compelled, in our consciences, to admit the effect of sin, and we are staggered as we see what our sin has done? All through the great school of the Jewish law, blood was constantly used to instruct the Israelite in the guilt of sin, and in the greatness of the atonement necessary for putting it away. I suppose that the outer court of the Jewish temple was something worse than ordinary shambles. If you will read the lists of the multitudes of beasts that were sometimes slain there in a single day, you will see that the priests must have stood in gore, and have presented a crimson appearance,—their snow-white garments all splashed over with blood as they stood there offering sacrifice from morning till night. Every man who went up to the tabernacle or to the temple must have stood aside for a moment, and have said, “What a place this is for the worship of God! Everywhere I see signs of slaughter.” God intended this to be so. It was the great lesson which he meant to be taught to the Jewish people, that sin was a loathsome and a detestable thing, and that it could only be put away by the sacrifice of a great life, such a life as had not then been lived,—the life of the Coming One, the life of the eternal Son of God, who must himself become man, that he might offer his own immaculate life upon the altar of God to expiate the guilt, and put away the filth and the loathsomeness of human transgression.

Some of you will feel sickened at these reflections, and object to what I have already said, as unworthy of my lips and offensive to your ears. I know who these will be,—the creatures of taste, who have never felt the loathsomeness of sin. Oh, I would that your sins would sicken you! I would to God that you had some sense of what a horrible thing it is to rebel against the Most High, to pervert the laws of right, to overthrow the rules of virtue, and to run into the ways of transgression and iniquity, for if blood be sickening to you, sin is infinitely more detestable to God; and if you find that being washed in blood seems awful to you, the great bath which was filled from Christ's veins, in which men are washed and made clean, is a thing of greater and deeper solemnity to God than any tongue shall be ever able to express.

I do not think anyone ever knows the preciousness of the blood of Christ till he has had a full sight and sense of his sin, his uncleanness, and his ill-desert. Is there any such thing as truly coming to the cross of Christ until you first of all have seen what your sin really deserves? A little light into that dark cellar, sir; a little light into that hole within the soul; a little light cast into that infernal den of your humanity, and you will soon discern what sin is, and, seeing it, you would discover that there was no hope of being washed from it except by a sacrifice far greater than you could ever render. Then the atonement of Christ would become fair and lustrous in your eyes, and you would rejoice with joy unspeakable in that boundless love which led the Saviour to give himself a ransom for us, “the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” May the Lord teach us, thundering at us, if need be, what sin means. May he teach it to us so that the lesson shall be burned into our souls, and we shall never forget it! I could fain wish that you were all burden-carriers till you grew weary. I could fain wish that you all laboured after eternal life until your strength failed, and that you might then rejoice in him who has finished the work, and who promises to be to you All-in-all when you believe in him, and trust in him with your whole heart.

Looking carefully at the text, I would have you notice *the name given to the blood of Christ, the ministry in which it was used, and the effect that it produced.*

I. First, observe THE NAME GIVEN IN THE TEXT TO THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. It is said to be “THE BLOOD OF THE TESTAMENT.”

You are aware, perhaps, you who read your Bibles thoroughly, that the word here rendered “testament” is more commonly rendered “covenant”, and although it would be wrong to say that it does not mean “testament”, yet it would be right to say that it signifies both “covenant” and “testament”, and that its first and general meaning is “covenant.”

Let us take it so. *The blood of Jesus is the blood of the covenant.* Long before this round world was made, or stars began to shine, God foresaw that he would make man. He also foresaw that man would fall into sin. Out of that fall of man his distinguishing grace and infinite sovereignty selected a multitude that no man can number to be his. But, seeing that they had offended against him, it was necessary, in order that they might be saved, that a great scheme or plan should be devised, by which the justice of God should be fully satisfied, and yet the mercy of God should have full play. A covenant was therefore arranged between the persons of the blessed Trinity. It was agreed and solemnly pledged by the oath of the eternal Father that he would give unto the Son a multitude whom no man could number who should be his, his spouse, the members of his mystical body, his sheep, his precious jewels. These the Saviour accepted as his own, and then on his part he undertook for them: that he would keep the divine law, that he would suffer all the penalties due on their behalf for offences against the law, and that he would keep and preserve every one of

them until the day of his appearing. Thus stood the covenant, and on that covenant the salvation of every saved man and woman hangs. Do not think it rests with thee, soul, for what saith the Scripture? "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." He said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." To show you that salvation is not by human merit, God was pleased to cast it entirely upon covenant arrangements. In that covenant, made between himself and his Son, there was not a word said about our actions having any merit in them. We were regarded as though we were not, except that we stood in Christ, and we were only so far parties to the covenant as we were in the loins of Christ on that august day. We were considered to be the seed of the Lord Jesus Christ, the children of his care, the members of his own body. "According as he hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world." Oh, what grace it was that put your name and mine in the eternal roll, and provided for our salvation, provided for it by a covenant, by a sacred compact between the Father and his eternal Son, that we should belong to him in the day when he should make up his jewels!

Now, beloved, in a covenant there are pledges given, and on those pledges we delight to meditate. You know what they were. The Father pledged his honour and his word. He did more; he pledged his oath; and "because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself." He pledged his own word and sacred honour of Godhead that he would be true to his Son, that he should see his seed, and that by the knowledge of him Christ should "justify many." But there was needed a seal to the covenant, and what was that? Jesus Christ in the fulness of time set the seal to the covenant, to make it valid and secure, by pouring out his life's blood to make the covenant effectual once for all. Beloved, if there be an agreement made between two men, the one to sell such-an-such an estate, and the other to pay for it, the covenant does not hold good until the payment is made. Now, Jesus Christ's blood was the payment of his part of the covenant; and when he shed it, the covenant stood firm as the everlasting hills, and the throne of God himself is not more sure than is the covenant of grace; and, mark you, that covenant is not sure merely in its great outlines, but sure also in all its details. Every soul whose name was in that covenant must be saved. Unless God can undeify himself, every soul that Christ died for he will have. Every soul for which he stood Substitute and Surety he demands to have, and each of those souls he must have, for the covenant stands fast. Moreover, every blessing which in that covenant was guaranteed to the chosen seed was by the precious blood made eternally secure to that seed. Oh, how I delight to speak about the sureness of that covenant! How the dying David rolled that under his tongue as a sweet morsel! "Although my house," said he, "be not so with God,"—there was the bitter in his mouth; "yet," said he,—

and there came in the honey, “yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” And this sureness, mark you, lies in the blood; it is the blood of Christ that makes all things secure, for all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us.

You will ask, it may be, “What is the purpose of this doctrine?” Its purpose is this,—To you who have believed in Jesus covenant mercies are sure, not because of your frames and feelings, but because of the precious blood of Jesus. Yesterday you were happy, mayhap, and to-day you are downcast. Well, but the covenant has not changed. To-morrow you may be in the very depths of despair, while to-day you are singing upon the top of the mountain; but the covenant will not alter. That august transaction was not made by you, and cannot be undone by you. It tarrieth not for man, and waiteth not for the sons of men. There it stands fast and settled, signed by the eternal signet, and your security is not in yourselves, but in Christ. If Christ bought you, if the Father gave you to him, if Christ became a Surety for you, then—

“Nor death, nor hell, shall e'er remove
His favourites from his breast;
In the dear bosom of his love
They must for ever rest.”

The name of the blood, as we find it in our own translation, is “*the blood of the testament.*” This teaches a similar truth, though it puts it under another figure. Salvation comes to us as a matter of will. Jesus Christ has left eternal life to his people as a legacy. Here are the words:—“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.” Now, a will, as the apostle rightly tells us, has no power whatever unless the man who made it is dead. Hence the blood of Jesus Christ, the token of his death, gives validity to all the promises which he has made. That spear-thrust by the Roman soldier was a precious proof to us that our Lord was really dead. And now, beloved, whenever you read a precious promise in the Bible, you may say, “This is a clause in the Redeemer’s will.” When you come to a choice word, you may say, “This is another codicil to the will.” Recollect that these things are yours, not because you are this or that, but because the blood makes them yours. The next time Satan says to you, “You do not believe as you ought, and therefore the promise is not sure,” tell him that the sureness of the promise lies in the blood, and not in what you are or in what you are not. There is a will proved in heaven’s Court of Probate, whose validity depends upon its signatures, and upon its witnesses, and upon its being drawn up in proper style. The person to whom the property is left may be very poor, but that does not overthrow the will; he may be very ragged, but that does not upset the will; he may have disgraced himself in some way or other, but that does not make the will void; he who

made the will, and put his name to the will, makes the will valid, and not the legatee to whom the legacy was left. And so with you this covenant stands secure, this will of Christ stands firm. In all your ups and downs, in all your successes and your failures, you, poor needy sinner, have nothing to do but to come and take Christ to be your All-in-all, and put your trust in him, and the blood of the covenant shall make the promises sure to you.

This is a sweet topic. I have not time, however, to enlarge upon it; but I heartily commend it to your private meditations, and trust you may find consolation in it.

II. The blood which Moses called "the blood of the covenant" or "of the testament" was of the utmost importance in the ministry of the tabernacle, for IT WAS SPRINKLED BY HIM EVERYWHERE.

First, we are told that *he sprinkled it upon the book*. Oh, how delightful this Bible looks to me when I see the blood of Christ sprinkled upon it! Every leaf would have flashed with Sinai's lightnings, and every verse would have rolled with the thunders of Horeb, if it had not been for Calvary's cross; but now, as you look, you see on every page your Saviour's precious blood. He loved you, and gave himself for you, and now you who are sprinkled with that blood, and have by faith rested in him, can take that precious Book, and find it to be green pastures and still waters to your souls.

The blood was then sprinkled upon the mercy-seat itself. Whenever you cannot pray as you would, remember that Jesus Christ's blood has gone before you, and is pleading for you before the eternal throne; like the good Methodist, who, when a brother could not pray, cried out, "Plead the blood, brother!" Ay, and when you feel so unworthy that you dare not look up, when the big tears stand in your eyes because you have been such a backslider, and have been so cold in heart, plead the blood, my sister, for you may always come where the blood is. There you see that this sin of yours has been already atoned for. Before you committed it, Jesus carried it. Long before it fell from your heart, the weight of it had pressed upon the Redeemer's heart, and he put it away in that tremendous day when he took all the load of his people's guilt, and hurled it into the sepulchre, to be buried there for ever.

Then the blood was sprinkled upon every vessel of the sanctuary. I like that thought. I like to come up to God's house, and say, "Well, I shall worship God to-day in the power and through the merit of the precious blood; my praises will be poor, feeble things, but then the sweet perfume will go up out of the golden censer, and my praises will be accepted through Jesus Christ; my preaching, oh! how full of faults; how covered over with sins! but then the blood is on it, and because of that, God will not see sin in my ministry, but will accept it because of the sweetness of his Son's blood."

You will come to the communion table to-night, most of you; but, oh! do not come without the precious blood, for the best place

of all upon which it was sprinkled was *upon all the people*. The drops fell upon them all. As Moses took the basin, and scattered the blood over the whole crowd, it fell upon all who were assembled at the door of the Tabernacle. Have you had a sprinkling with the precious blood, my hearer? If you have, you shall live for ever; but if you have not, the wrath of God abideth on you. Do you ask how you can have the blood of Christ sprinkled upon you? It cannot be done literally, but faith does it. Faith is the bunch of hyssop which we dip into the basin, and it sprinkles man's conscience from bad works. You say you have been christened, confirmed, baptized; but all these things together would not save one soul, much less all the multitudes who trust in them. They are not sufficient for the taking away of a single sin. But you always say your prayers, and you have family prayers, and you are very honest, and so on. I know all this; but all these things you ought to have done, and they will not make amends for what you have not done. All the debts that you have paid will not discharge those that are still due. Know you not that saying of the Scriptures, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin"? You may work your fingers to the bone, but you can never weave a righteousness that shall cover your nakedness before God. The only hope of the sinner is to come and cast himself upon what Jesus Christ has done for him, depending upon the groans, and agonies, and death of the martyred Saviour, who stood for us and suffered in our stead, that we might escape the wrath of God.

I hope that there is never a Sunday but what I teach this one doctrine; and, until this tongue is silent in the grave, I shall know no other gospel than just this,—Trust Christ, and you shall live. The bloody sacrifice of Calvary is the only hope of sinners. Look there, and you shall find the Star of peace guiding you to everlasting day; but turn your backs upon Christ, and you have turned your backs upon heaven, you have courted destruction, you have sealed your doom. It is by the sprinkling of the blood, then, that we are saved. We must have the blood of Christ upon us in one way or the other. If we do not have it upon us to save us, we shall have it upon us to destroy us. "His blood be on us and on our children," said the Jews to Pilate in their madness, and the siege of Jerusalem was the answer to the cry. Worse than was the siege of Jerusalem to the Jews shall be the death of those who do despite to the Spirit of grace, and despise the blood of Jesus; but happy shall they be who, giving up every other confidence, come to the blood of the covenant, and put their trust there, for it shall not deceive them.

III. THE EFFECT OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST claims our earnest heed; yet the minutes are few in which I can enlarge upon it. Whenever Jesus Christ's blood comes upon a man, the instantaneous effect is something more than miraculous. Before the application of Christ's blood, the man was distracted. His guilt, and its consequent punishment, weighed heavily upon him.

"Alas!" said he, "I shall soon die, and then hell will be my lot!" Oh! some of us will never forget when we were in that miserable, burdened state. I protest before you all that, when I felt the weight of my sin, I wished that I had never been born; and I envied frogs, and toads, and the most loathsome creatures, and thought that they were so much better off than I, because they had never broken the law of God, which I had so wickedly and so wilfully done. If I went to my bed, I started with the fear that I should wake up in hell; and by day the same dread thought distracted me, that I was cast off by God, and must perish. But the moment that I looked to Christ,—do not mistake me,—the very self-same moment that I put my trust in Christ, I rose from the depths of despair to the utmost heights of joy. It was not a process of reasoning; it was not a matter which took hours and days; it was all done in an instant. I understood that God had punished Christ instead of me, and I saw that, therefore, I could not be punished any more; that I never could be, if Christ died for me,—and I was assured that he did if I did but trust him. So I did trust him; with my whole weight I threw myself into his arms, and thought at the time that he had never had such a load to carry before. But I found that he was able to save, even to the uttermost, them that came unto him; and what joy and peace I had in that moment it is impossible for me to describe, and I thank God that I have never lost it. There have been times of depression; there have been seasons when the light of God's countenance has been withdrawn; but one thing I know,—Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I am a sinner, and my soul rests alone on him; and how can he cast me away, since his own promise is, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"? I have believed; I have been baptized as an avowal of my faith; and he is not true if he does not save me. But he must be true, he cannot break his word. O dear friends, there are hundreds here who have passed through the same blessed experience, and they can tell you that the blood of Jesus in an instant speaks peace to the soul.

And this precious blood has this property about it, that, if the peace which it first causes should become a little dim, you have only to go to the precious blood to have that peace once more restored to you.

I would recommend any of my doubting brethren to come to Christ over again as they came to him at first. Never mind about your experience; never care about your marks and evidences. Never get piling up your experiences. If you go to the top of some mountains such as Snowdon or the Righi, you will find it all solid and firm enough; but there are some people who want to get a little higher than the mountain, so the people there build a rickety old stage, and charge you fourpence or sixpence to go to the top of it; and when you get up there, you find it is all shaky, and ready to tumble down, and you are alarmed. Well, but what need is there to go up there at all? If you would stand on the

mountain, that would not shake. So, sometimes, we are not content with resting upon Christ as poor sinners, and depending on him. We get building a rickety stage of our own experience, or sanctification, or emotions, and I know not what besides, and then it begins to shake under our feet. Better far if we were like the negro, who said he “fell flat down on de promise, and when he had done that, he couldn’t fall no lower.” Oh, to keep close to a promise! Job says that the naked embrace the rock for want of a shelter, and there is no shelter like the Rock of ages.

“None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.”

But I have not told you all the power of this blood, nor could I tell you to-night. That blood gives the pardoned sinner access with boldness to God himself. That blood, having taken away the guilt of sin, operates in a sanctifying manner, and takes away the power of sin, and the pardoned man does not live as he lived before he was pardoned. He loves God, who has forgiven him so much, and that love makes him enquire, “What shall I do for God, who has done so much for me?” Then he begins to purge himself of his old habits. He finds that the pleasures that once were sweet to him are sweet no more. “Away ye go,” he says to his old companions; “but I cannot go with you to hell.” Having a new heart, a new love, a new desire, he begins to mix with God’s people. He searches God’s Word. He makes haste to keep God’s commandments. His desires are holy and heavenly, and he pants for the time when he shall get rid of all sin, shall be quite like Christ, and shall be taken away to dwell for ever where Jesus is. Oh! the blood of Christ is a blessed sin-killer. They say that St. Patrick drove all the snakes out of Ireland. Ah! but Christ drives all the serpents out of the human heart when he once gets in. If he does but sprinkle his blood upon our hearts, we become new men,—such new men as all the rules of morality could not have made us, such new men as they are who, robed in white, day without night sing Jehovah’s praises before his throne.

Sinner, would you be saved to-night? Trust Jesus, and you shall be. Sinner, would you be saved upon a dying bed? Trust Jesus now, and you shall be. Sinner, would you be saved when the heavens are in a blaze, and the stars fall like withered fig-leaves from the firmament? Look to Jesus now, and you shall be saved then. Oh! I would to God that some of you would look to him! ’Tis not for the eyes of your body to do it, but for the eyes of your mind to do it. Think of what Christ is; God, and yet man. Think of such a Being suffering instead of you. What must be the merit of such suffering, and what an honour to God’s justice that such an One should suffer instead of you! Then, depend upon Christ; and if you do so, your sins are forgiven you. Believe that they are. Then will you feel springing up within your heart great love to him who has forgiven you, and that will become the

mainspring of your new life. You will start afresh like one that is born to-night. You will, indeed, be born again, for this is regeneration. Not sprinkling your face with drops of water, but making a new man of you,—generating you over again, not by natural generation, but by the eternal Father begetting you again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,—the true and only spiritual generation; and then, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, you shall go your way through this life up to the life eternal, God's blessing shielding you and crowning you for ever.

The Lord grant you his blessing, for Christ's sake! Amen.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

HEBREWS IX., AND EXODUS XXIV. 1—10.

Hebrews ix. Verse 1. *Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.*

That is, a sanctuary belonging to this world, a visible sanctuary. That first covenant was to a large degree a thing of outward rites and ceremonies, which the new covenant is not; that is a covenant of spiritual and unseen realities.

2—5. *For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.*

Because it was not his main purpose at that time, and he was writing an important Epistle upon the most vital truths, and it would not do to encumber it with too many explanations.

6—9. *Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;*

All these sacrifices and ceremonies, although full of instruction, were not in themselves able to give peace to the conscience of men. The new and better covenant does give rest to the heart by the real and actual taking away of guilt, but this the first covenant could not do. It is astonishing that there should be any who want to go back to the "beggary elements" of the old Jewish law, and again to have priests, and an elaborate ritual, and I know not what besides. These things were faulty and fell short of what was needed even when God instituted them, for they were never intended to produce perfection, or to give rest to the troubled conscience;