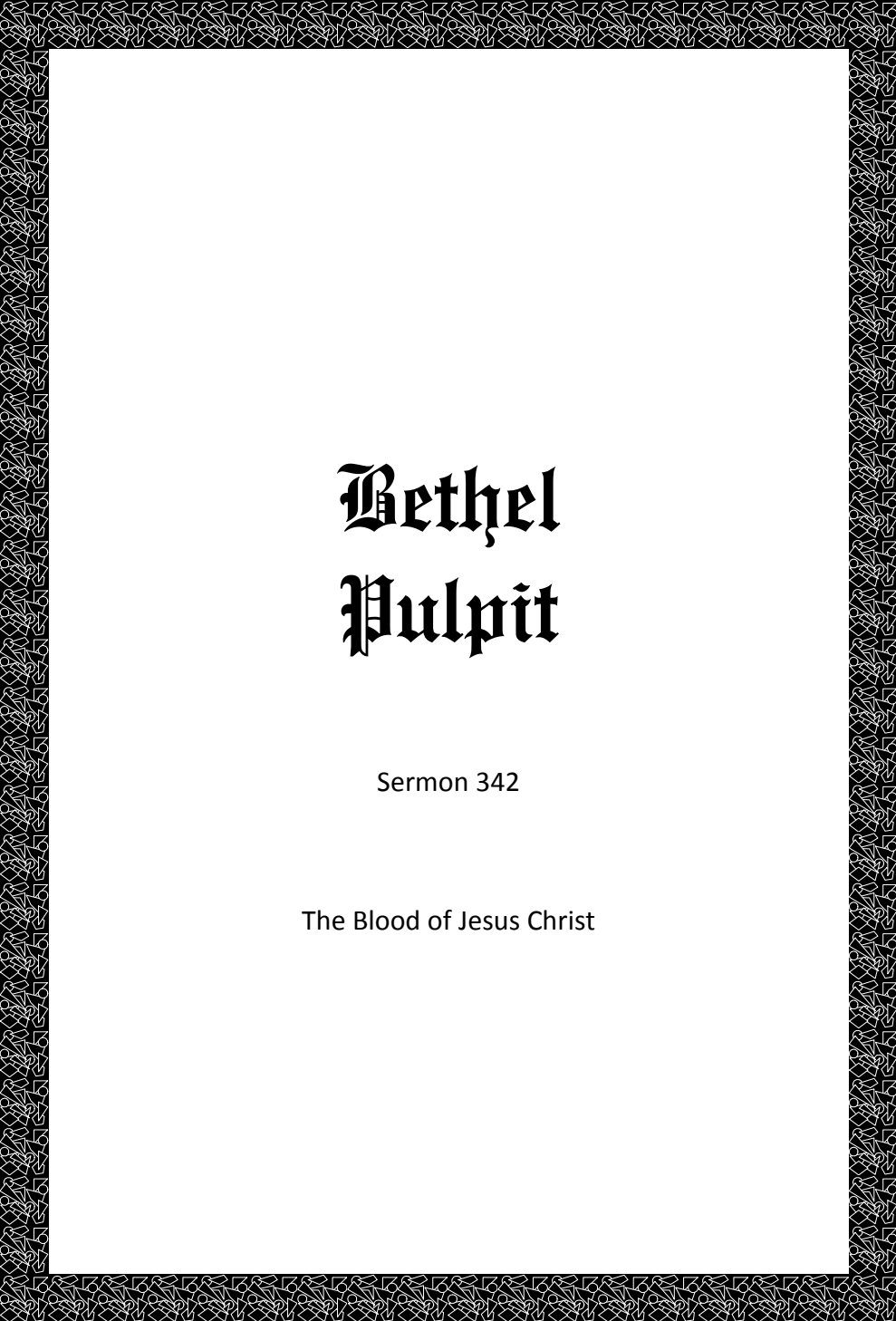




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 342

The Blood of Jesus Christ

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day evening, 20th October, 2013**

Text: *"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7).*

Beloved friends, here we are on holy ground, at Calvary, at the foot of the cross, we trust by faith. And may we tread with reverence this hallowed ground, and like Moses at the burning bush know what it is spiritually to take our shoes from off our feet. I do feel inadequate to speak on this beautiful word. I do not think I have ever ventured before, though I have looked at it for over fifty years and I hope felt it for more than fifty years. We have to say,

"Living tongues are dumb at best;
We must die to speak of Christ."

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious," and in a special way this evening may He be made precious to you, for this is the foundation of the gospel. Without it there would be no gospel. And this is the foundation of our hope, the only foundation for our hope. Without it we should have no hope, now or eternally.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." So there is a depth beneath this word and it is a solemn depth; it is an eternal depth; it is a black depth; and that is this: our need of cleansing. Now here we must begin. Everybody in this chapel needs cleansing; everyone on the face of this earth needs cleansing; and some people feel it, and if we never know this cleansing, then we shall never know salvation, and if we never know this cleansing, we can never enter heaven, because,

"Heaven is that holy, happy place,
Where sin no more defiles,"

and we are defiled, each one of us. So we cannot enter heaven unless cleansed from this defilement, neither can we cleanse ourselves. All our tears, all our repentance, all our resolutions can never wash away one sin.

So here we have man's lost and ruined condition through the Fall, rebels against goodness and God, against grace, against godliness. But it is

the defilement of sin; it is the filth of sin. What must it be in the eyes of a holy, heart-searching God, He who cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance – our vileness, our uncleanness? It is true of each one of us, all of us, whether we realise it or not. But if the Lord has a purpose of love and mercy to us, if we are on our way to heaven, there will be one thing in it: we shall be taught our uncleanness. We shall be taught our need of being cleansed, and we shall be brought to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the only way in which a sinner can ever be cleansed from all his defilement. So there is a dreadful malady and here is the glorious remedy.

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” So we are brought to view a Person and then to view His work. What an amazing work it was! O but what an amazing Person He is – our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God’s dear, eternal Son, and He only could deal with the malady of sin. And so there is a covenant, a covenant of grace, in which the Lord Jesus undertook to do everything for the salvation of His people and to bring them to heaven at last, that there might be some way provided in which they could be cleansed from their sin. So we read of the blood of the Lord Jesus as the blood of the everlasting covenant. It was ordained eternally. There was no other way. The Son of God must die. No other blood could avail.

“What would my blood avail, if spilt?
Thou hast in richer blood been paid,
When all my dreadful debt of guilt
Was on my dying Saviour laid.”

It must be nothing short of the blood of Christ.

So there is a Person here, because no other blood could avail. Under the Old Testament dispensation, under the law, those four thousand years in which there was the preparation for the Saviour’s coming, this lesson was very clearly taught to ancient Israel. How much they understood, we do not know; we are sure that some of them understood a lot – their need of cleansing because of their sin, that they could not cleanse themselves, that it must be through a sacrifice, that it must be through the shedding of blood. For, “Without shedding of blood is no remission.”

Now ancient Israel was well schooled in this, that it is only through blood, only through atonement, only through death, only through a sacrifice, that sin can ever be cleansed, that sin can ever be put away. But it was “not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.” That only pointed forward to One who should come, the Son of God. That is the emphasis in this verse: the Son of God. It is because of who He is that there is a value in the blood that He shed, the Son of God from everlasting, equal with the Father, equal with the Holy Ghost, the Creator of all things. How could He shed His own precious blood? “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” So He must become a real Man without ceasing to be Almighty God. He must take our nature into union with His divine Person. He must become a Man, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” So the wonderful mystery of the virgin birth. He must be a Man that He might die. He must be a Man that He might shed this precious blood. But He must be true, Almighty God that there might be the efficacy in this blood that He shed.

“The blood of Jesus Christ” – now this is it: “His Son” – God’s Son – “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” So this takes us to the cross, and we see the blood of Jesus Christ shed. But always remember this: that as you read of the doctrine of the blood of Christ – and it is mentioned so often throughout the New Testament, especially in the Epistles – it means His sin-atonement death. It was death by crucifixion. When we read of the blood of Jesus, never forget this, always remember it: it means His blood *that was shed in death*. And so at the foot of the cross we see this precious blood shed. Because we must pause here. It is a sad thing when people just speak about the shedding of the Saviour’s blood, and they speak of His death on the cross, and they speak of the atonement, just as some kind of doctrine, some kind of legal transaction. Never forget that this dear Saviour was a real Man, and it was real blood He shed, and it was real suffering He endured. The Holy Ghost throws a sacred cloak over the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, and yet we are called to remember them, and,

“What He endured no tongue can tell,
To save our souls from death and hell” –

the crown of thorns and the cruel nails and the spear in His side and that precious blood that flowed, as well as the deeper sufferings of His holy soul.

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Now the mystery of it, but it is a wonderful mystery! In what way can blood shed on the cross cleanse away sin? In what way is this the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy: “In that day” – the day when Messiah should die and they should look on Him whom they pierced – “In that day there shall be a fountain opened ... for sin and for uncleanness.” Well, in all its sacred simplicity and yet its mysterious depth, in love to His poor, unworthy, sinful people, in order that they might be cleansed and so saved with an everlasting salvation and so inherit heaven, all the sins of all God’s people were imputed to Christ. They were charged to Him. They were laid on Him, and the punishment they deserved He bore, and as He bore those sins, He for ever bore them away. “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.”

Now it was as His precious blood flowed and then as He bowed His head in death, that all the sins of His people were atoned for, and so they were taken out of the way, and as if washed away, washed away for ever, by the freely-flowing fountain. And do not forget what this wonderful word says: “From all sin” – the whole blood-bought church of God. For, “Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” This is when His precious blood was shed. This is when the fountain was opened. “Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ... that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” So a holy God can look on a guilty sinner and as his sins are atoned for, washed away in the blood of Christ, He says, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.” O this is the great mystery of redemption! We used to sing in our early days,

“Mystery of redemption this:
All my sins on Christ were laid;
My offence was reckoned His;
He the great atonement made!”

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Now at Calvary the sins of all God’s people from Adam’s day to the end of time were atoned for, taken away, washed away in the blood of Christ, the

whole blood-bought church of God, past, present and to come – the wonder of it! And Joseph Hart said He

“Bore all incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough, and none to spare.”

And none but He who was Almighty God as well as a true Man could ever have accomplished this great salvation, this finished redemption, opening the fountain for sin and for uncleanness.

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

Now,

“Here is our hope, our joy, our rest;
Hither, when hell assails, we flee;
We look into our Saviour’s breast.
Away, sad doubt and gloomy fear;
Mercy and love are written there.”

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” But then the people of God are led into it personally. This is the Holy Spirit’s work, to make the blood of Christ precious as our only hope, the only way of forgiveness, the only way to heaven. And the Holy Spirit is sovereign, but His work is always this, always to make you feel your need of Christ. Now that is the great point. “Have I here begun, to feel my need of Christ?” And in this, in greater or less measure, to know that we are unclean, that we are sinful, we need to be cleansed.

“My best is stained and dyed with sin;
My all is nothing worth.”

And then we shall realise we cannot do anything to fit and prepare ourselves for heaven, but we shall see an attraction in this fountain opened, the blood of Jesus. We will know what Peter means when he speaks of it as precious blood. “Not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Moses cried, “Behold the blood of the covenant,” when he sprinkled the blood on the people, and gospel ministers point sinners to Christ and to Calvary, because we preach Christ crucified. It is not just

Christ as an example, not just Christ in His beautiful teaching. “We preach Christ crucified,” and the gospel, pointing to Calvary, says, “Behold the blood of the covenant.” And our Lord Jesus, that same night in which He was betrayed, as He broke the bread and poured out the cup, He spoke of the blood of the new covenant, the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of their sins.

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” So there will be an attraction to it. It will be our only hope. It will be our only plea. But Satan will tempt you, those of you who feel your need as sinners, those of you who look to Jesus only, those who long for cleansing in His blood, Satan will tempt you. He will say, It was only shed for the people of God; it may not have been shed for you. Now I do not find any teaching like that in the whole of the New Testament. I firmly believe in the doctrine of a definite atonement, a particular redemption. I cannot agree with that Arminian doctrine that believes that Jesus shed His precious blood for everyone. It sounds very beautiful and loving and very kind and all-embracing, but what does it mean if it was shed as much for Esau as for Jacob, for Judas Iscariot as much as Peter?

We believe the blood of Jesus Christ shed at Calvary atones for all for whom it was shed, but what an emphasis Paul lays on it that *His precious blood was shed for sinners*. I do not believe a sinner is led to Calvary knowing that he was chosen, knowing that it was for him, but believing that sinners are welcome, believing that the fountain has been opened for sin and for uncleanness, the sinner ventures as a sinner whose only hope is in the blood, “and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” O what a wonderful mercy it is an open fountain for every sinner who feels his need. Every sinner who feels his need is welcome to the blood of Christ, and how does that fit in with the doctrine? Well, it is feeling your need of Christ that is a mark of your election. It is only the elect who are ever brought to feel their need. But you will not go as an elect, chosen sinner; you will go as an unworthy, guilty, lost, wretched, filthy sinner, but you will go feeling your need of a Saviour, and these are the ones who are invited, and these are the ones who are welcome.

“Fly, then, awakened sinners, fly;
Your case admits no stay;

The fountain's opened now for sin;
Come, wash your guilt away."

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." It is to be known personally. It is to be led into it by the Holy Spirit. It is to look on Him whom we pierced and mourn for Him. And how does the blood of Christ personally wash away sin? Well, as a sinner is brought by faith to trust in Jesus, as he is brought by faith to look to the cross, as he is like those serpent-bitten Israelites who looked to the serpent of brass lifted up, it is there that he receives the promise of forgiveness, the promise of atonement, the promise of being received, the promise of all his sin being washed away. For that work at Calvary can never be repeated. The blood has once been shed. We abhor the Romanist sacrifice of the mass week by week, but that precious blood that was shed at Calvary still has the same vital power this evening to cleanse "the vilest sinner out of hell who lives to feel his need."

I believe that is what the scripture means when John on the Isle of Patmos had that wonderful view of heaven and he had a glimpse of the Lamb of God, this same Jesus, the Lamb of God before the throne and he saw Him "a Lamb as it had been slain." He still appears in heaven, "a Lamb as it had been slain." I take that to mean that the value of His sin-atonement death, the value of His precious, cleansing blood is the same this evening as when He hung bleeding, dying on the cross. And you think of those characters – we read about Manasseh in the Old Testament, the chief of sinners, and think of some of these wretched sinners you have heard of and read of, and the blood of Christ has washed away their sin. And then think of yourself, and then remember that

"That sacred stream, from Jesus' veins,
Was free to take away
A Mary's or Manasseh's stains,
Or sins more vile than they."

Beloved friends, this is the gospel as I understand it and as I believe I have been taught it, and this is the vital point in the gospel of the grace of God: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from *all sin*." So you remember David even in the Old Testament. He had a little glimpse of this through the types and shadows and he felt the vilest sinner on earth, but he said, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." You

know, there are some deep sins and they not only need to be washed; they need to be purged. And we have that wonderful “How much more shall the blood of Christ ... *purge* your conscience” – that is where the trouble is, where you feel it – “*purge* your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.” What did David mean? Hyssop was a little plant that the Jews used in their ceremonies to apply the blood that had been shed, the blood of the sacrifice, the blood of the lamb. David wanted an interest in the blood and he knew it was more than the blood, the sacrifice of a beast. He was looking forward to Calvary, and he wanted to know this purging effect and he wanted to know it personally, as brought into his conscience. “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” So the Lord reasons with His people and He says, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” O how many sinners have gone to heaven on the grounds of this! And the knowledge of this wonderful word in Scripture applied by the Holy Ghost with power to your heart will give you “a gospel day, and heaven begun below.” Why, we have read of a person under deep concern, knowing nothing of real religion, and they found just part of a leaf of a Bible – not a full leaf, just a part of a leaf of a Bible. It had been torn out; it had blown away; and they picked it up, and they read this: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” It did the deed.

We have read of a faithful minister who came to the end, after all his eminent ministry tried and tempted by Satan, and he said, “There is only one thing I can rest on now: ‘The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.’” He did not need any other.

We have read of a Jew who feeling his uncleanness said, “But where is the blood?” He read so much in the Old Testament Scriptures of the blood, and no hope and no salvation and no cleansing without the blood. Where is the blood? Because though the Passover is still kept by the Jewish nation, there is not the slaying of the lamb and the shedding of the blood. Where is the blood? No-one could say, and even the rabbi said, You must wait till Messiah comes. But where is the blood? He had been

taught to hate the very sound of the Christian religion. One evening, in black despair, he passed a Christian chapel, and something urged him to go in, and as he opened the door, feeling almost condemned in his conscience for daring to venture, the minister was quoting this text: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” That did the deed. He had found the blood. He knew where the blood was.

You all know the well-known story of Martin Luther, of how Satan viciously assailed him, and it seems that Luther was really plagued with dreadful visions in which Satan was so real, and he showed him that dreadful list and said, “Luther, these are all your sins,” and Luther read them, and acknowledged them all, and said, “Yes, Satan, they are.” He said it was such a long list it seemed to go all the way round the world and back again. He said, “Now Satan, are you sure you have all my sins listed there? Then take thy pen and write at the bottom, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin.’” He said, “Satan fled, and troubled me no more.”

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Now there may be some of you here this evening and all these things I have been saying do not really mean anything to you if you are honest. But always remember this: there may come a day when you feel a need of this text, and do not forget when you come to die, you may feel a need of this text, as John Wesley told the highwayman who robbed him. One day John Wesley was returning from preaching, and those were the days of highwaymen, and a highwayman robbed him. As the highwayman was leaving, having taken all Wesley’s money and possessions, Wesley said to him, “Friend, remember this word; there may come a day in your life when you need it: ‘The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.’” And so it turned out years later when that wicked man was brought into deep concern and he remembered what that man that he had robbed had once told him, and it came with power into his heart and it was sufficient. It did the deed.

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” And how it changes a sinner’s life, and how it has a sanctifying effect! “Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people” – as well as cleanse them – “with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” But do not forget the grace that runs through it all and do not forget the love displayed by the Saviour in it all. And one last thing: the blood of Christ is the glory of heaven and it is the song of the redeemed. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood ... to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,” and has redeemed us to God by His blood. This is the song, the everlasting song of the redeemed in heaven. And remember that John saw the whole blood-washed host in heaven, and one of the elders said, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” And John said, “Sir, thou knowest.” “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Let us be clear, these were the robes of their profession – not the robes of Christ’s righteousness; they do not need any cleansing – but the robes of our profession, our best stained and dyed with sin. “They ... have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Now this is it: “Therefore are they before the throne.” *Therefore* – on no other ground. *Therefore* – for no other reason. Not because they have come out of great tribulation, not because they have endured it, not because some of them were faithful witnesses. This is the whole blood-bought church of God in heaven. This is the only ground, the one and only ground why they are there, because the blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanseth us from all sin.

“They ... have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. *Therefore* are they before the throne.... They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb” – He who shed this precious blood, the Lamb slain, the Lamb exalted – “the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” And all, everything because of that precious, cleansing blood that was shed at Calvary. O may we know what it is feelingly to enter into these things, to feel our personal interest in them.

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”