

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 42 The Finished Work of Christ

Reading: Hebrews 10. 1-14

1 For the law 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.

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

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy

will, O God.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

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

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Address

Beloved friends, these are the things that really matter: the Person and finished work of Christ. “This Man” – this glorious Man – “after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

There is a contrast here between the Levitical dispensation and the gospel, between the Old Testament priesthood and Christ. And in two things specially the contrast is emphasised here. In the old dispensation, the multitude of sacrifices “year by year continually,” and then the one sacrifice of Christ. There is no need for any other. “By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that

are sanctified.” And the other thing, the second thing: all the sacrifices of the ceremonial law, all the blood that was shed, never had any real effect, any vital effect. It was just a shadow. It just pointed to good things to come. “For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” – the value of the death of Christ.

“No blood of goats, nor bullocks slain
For sin could e’er atone;
The death of Christ shall still remain
Sufficient and alone.”

O this glorious Person and this glorious work, the wonders of redemption, the Saviour’s love, the complete putting away of sin, the work for ever completed!

“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down.” It has been remarked that in all the furniture (and there are so many details of it in Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers), there is no mention of a chair. The priest could not sit down even if he wanted. And it all means this: that his work was never complete. He could not sit down. But this Man sat down, the mark of a finished work. He “sat down on the right hand of God,” the place of glory and honour.

Well, beloved friends, this evening we meet for our prayer meeting. Never, never forget that in prayer and especially in public prayer there is worship. Of course, we ask for many things, and rightly so. We confess our many sins, and rightly so. But do not forget the worship, the thanksgiving, the praise, the reverence, the adoration. These things we have read are the blessed foundation for all worship.

“Worship God, then, in His Son;
There He’s love and there alone.”

Why, we sing,

“Sin to pardon without blood
Never in His nature stood.”

“Think not that He will, or may,
Pardon any other way.”

Now this is the ground and foundation of worship.

And secondly, it is the ground and foundation of our hope. We have no other; we seek no other. It is an immovable foundation, an unchangeable foundation. Thousands of sinners have rested their hope here and gone to heaven, despite all their unworthiness and guilt, as sinners saved by grace. And sinners are still welcome on the venture of faith to this blessed foundation in the finished work of Christ.

“They rest their whole salvation here,
Nor shall they suffer shame.”

And then thirdly, this is the foundation of prayer, the foundation of all our approaches to God. How can we, sinful, guilty, come into the immediate presence of a holy God in prayer? On the grounds of redemption, redemption finished, redemption complete. It “provides for all who come to God an all-prevailing plea.”

May the Holy Spirit this evening open these things to us, give us faith in them, bless us with faith’s resting place, bless us with faith’s plea. And so may we, though sinners, be able to pray acceptably.

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 4th August, 2008

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Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine;

While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burdens Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the accursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing His bleeding love.

I. Watts