

Hebrews - Commentaries by George Vicesimus Wigram

Food for the Flock: Volume 5, Purged Conscience, A (10:2)

EB 10:2{

largely

Now what is this conscience which the apostle speaks of here? It is very plain if we look at Scripture, and take the simple meaning of the word itself: con, and science, or knowledge. That is, it is the certain knowledge that a man has within himself about things. Scripture declares this to have been in man since he listened to Satan and partook of the tree. Man from that time onwards has had a knowledge within himself down at the bottom, notwithstanding all his unbelief. Sometimes he puts his thoughts out, as infidels do, and says, "I do not believe in eternity or in the Scriptures," but afterward he will say, as has been said to me before now: "I said that to keep you away from reaching me. You have got the advantage over me, for you, by the light you have got, see into, eternity, whereas death is to me a dark, black curtain."

The way in which this works is presented differently in Scripture, and people make a great many mistakes about it. If you turn to Gen. 3 you will see: "The eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked." This was the first effect of their taking of the tree that God prohibited. God had said, Do not touch it. They took of it, and then came the deep inward feeling, I am unfit for God's presence; so they had recourse to something that lay in their own circumstances; they put their hands on the thing nearest them to cover them, and they were apparently quite comfortable, having thus smoothed over the surface by something within their own range of things. But when the voice of the Lord is heard saying, "Adam, where art thou?" he tries to hide. What he had, this smoothed inward feeling, could not stand when God spoke and said, "Adam, where art thou?" And that has stuck in man's mind to the present time. He knows he is not fit for God's presence, and God is a heart-searching God. Thus I get, in the father and mother of the family, conscience brought in. And have not you got it? Have you not got the same feeling that Adam and Eve had in the garden? As I said just now, you have.

Now turn to Romans, where the apostle speaking of the heathen, in chap. 2., says: "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." There have been many instances of this inward persuasion in the mind of the heathen. One man, an old philosopher, came to the conclusion that there was but one God, and his arguments are as good as those of Paley in his "Natural Theology." He even argued from his works that this God was a beneficent being. But when he was going to be put to death for saying so, he said to his disciples: "I have vowed a cock to Esculapius, and I have not offered it." Just going to be put to death for maintaining the unity of the deity, he speaks of offering a sacrifice to a false god! 'So there was no power among the heathen, though they had conscience. We see what a stupid thing conscience is.

And if we go abroad to the individual, we shall see what an equally stupid thing, what a senseless thing, is conscience. Let me put the senselessness of it before you as it was seen in myself. When as a young man about twenty years of age I felt that I was a sinner, I looked at Scripture, and saw that I was descended from sinful parents. I said: "There Satan brought sin in;" and conscience added: "You are not fit for God's presence." So I began to do something to better myself. And what was the sense of that? It came to just this: Satan had overcome my parents in the garden, and I thought that I had more power as fallen than Adam had as unfallen. You see how senseless conscience was in me. And if ever there were a Pharisee who sought to get a good conscience I was that one; by starvation and fasting till I was at death's door. What did that do for me? I found I had got into a state of departure from God, and I was just telling God to stand back till I got to Him; thus quietly assuming that I could do God's work for Him. My trying to do it was only the expression of my senseless conscience. A conscience that can do that is blind and cannot see afar off.

Remark that when the apostle speaks of a purged conscience, that is, of a soul that has the sense of sin removed from it, he begins by showing how far the sacrifices appointed of God could give it. It was clear they could not, God had set up a system of sacrifices, and yet He never stopped talking of sin and sacrifices. They began at the passover; then came the feast of unleavened bread, and so on, till they came round to the great day of atonement. If we had been on earth then with the light we have now, we would have said: I will gladly offer a lamb, and a kid, and a bullock too, but, dear me, I am a great deal more important than fifty thousand bullocks! And if the sacrifice did not come up in value- to the one who offered it, it could not remove the sense of sin. All the bullocks that Solomon offered did not come up in value to Solomon himself, and so could not remove his sense of guilt.

And then the thought would come up: It is all very well for me to do these things, but even if I lay down my life itself, how can that make any compensation to God who has been insulted by my sin? I say, No; I have a feeling in my breast that God has not got His place here in my heart, and when I meet Him we shall have things to settle. He can say to me: You have got being from me, and yet you have not loved me. When young there may have been passions, blasphemy, and the like; and since I have Cut off these external bad fruits, inside my

heart what a want of trust in Him! I must feel that if I, as a creature, meet Him as a Creator, I have something to settle. The very feeling of this shows a conscience that is not purged. It has still blots and spots; it is not fit for His presence.

I want to draw your attention to what it is that gives a purged conscience, for it is very important at a time when knowledge is so much on the increase, when there is so much instruction as to the superstructure, and when the hour of trial comes it is found there is no answer within as to this settlement of God about things.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we find that the platform is drawn above. I am down here, but God has spread the heavens above, and pitched a tabernacle there; He has arranged the heavens after an entirely new order. Jesus Christ has sat down there in the true tabernacle, and God,

in taking His Son into the heavens, has taken Him there as the One who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," and has set Him at His own right hand according to His plan and, counsel before the world was.

But what has that to do with my conscience? Directly I get into the light of it, it has everything to do with it; because when there is trouble within me about the things I have to settle with God, I lift my eyes there and I say: He has been there before me, making the throne of the Highest a throne of mercy, and letting the only question now be, whether mercy suits Me. I am a sinner, and God has a right to show mercy. I cannot say He is bound not to let out mercy because man has rebelled; He had not shown it out in creation or providence, but He thought He had a perfect right to show it out when His Son was in the heavens at His own right hand. And what mercy and compassion this is! God looks down and says: How will you be when you stand before me, and plead guilty as one who has had to do with the God of mercy? Oh! I say, I will not settle then; I say for myself now, that if He look over the whole of England He will not find a specimen better fitted to show what mercy is to, than myself. That is the feeling in one's own conscience, and then one gets rest.

But He here shows me how He makes His throne the throne of mercy; He explains the ground on which He feels justified in His holiness to speak to a sinner. He would have felt that His honor was tarnished if He had spoken to a poor sinner about mercy, except through the death of Christ. But now He has used sin itself as an occasion to show out His mercy. On the cross He showed out the horrid character of the world and the horrid character of Satan, and then He took Christ up to a new place as man at His own right hand, and so He says, I am free to speak of mercy to the poor sinner.

I would press the death of Christ in connection with the character of God. People look for something to satisfy themselves, and we need to have this. But God needs to be satisfied, for there had been an impediment in the way. How could He be just and yet the justifier? His own Son bare the wrath, and if so God can now speak of mercy; nay, God can come out and look for the poor sinner, because Christ has died.

Now heaven is arranged at present in a way to throw out in the light the accepted sacrifice of Christ; and if I come to that, can I have a spot remaining on my conscience? Can I have conscience of sins? I do not say, the consciousness of sin. I have got that, or I could not have forgiveness; but I have not conscience of sins. Conscience and consciousness are two different things. Saul had no consciousness of sins when his conscience was so hard that he was putting God's saints to death. If any one had said to him, 'What a dreadful sinner you are, he would have answered, No, I am a righteous man. When he saw the sacrifice of Christ he had no more conscience of sins, but he became perfectly conscious that the law of sin and death was in his members, and that he could not have it taken out until he was glorified.

Am not I a happy creature to have no conscience of sins at all? Do I go into His presence and say: I have been trying to rub out this score and that score; sometimes I think I have succeeded and then again not? No! I go and say, This is astonishing! I have learned in Jesus, alive at Thy right hand, the full volume of Thy mercy and of my sin, such as it defies a finite mind to grasp.

I can remember, when trying to get the consciousness of rest, and I have seen it over and over again in others, trying to get a measure for sin-something to measure sin by as perhaps by looking at it in its aggravations. For instance, that it was much more awful in a Christian land, and with the Bible in one's hand. All this supposes that the person does not admit that sin is infinite because it is against God. But directly I saw sin finished on the cross I got rest, because I had got a measure by which I saw sin infinite, and until you, a human being, can get into a state to, in a measure, understand what passed in the soul of the Son of man, you will never know what passed between Him and God. Sin was indefinitely great, but sin was indefinitely put away, and sin too that was against God. And who was the person who bore it? The Son of God and Son of man. Now I could not say that I am better than He. Thousands of bullocks are not so much worth as one man; but put the whole human race together, and can they be compared to the Son of God as Son of man? No! Well, He went in and bore what was due to me, and the whole thing was settled then and there, and to my faith directly I knew it.

In this chapter, I find that this tablet written in me, called. conscience, directly it gets into the light of heaven (unless I am prepared to judge God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost), must say that the whole is settled. If God feels perfectly free to speak to the sinner, and not only so but looks out for the chief of sinners to show His mercy to; what if I should say, I am more punctilious than thou, and do not feel that I am free to go? If He say, You are free to come right clean into the presence of the Majesty in the heavens, and if you say, I cannot come, then all that it proves is that your eye is not upon Christ. If God sees no difficulties and I do, what is the sense of that?

(G. V. W.)

I NEVER can meet a cross, that I do not meet a blessing, if I take it up as such.

(J. N. D.)

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Call and Faith of Abraham, The (11:8-19)

Heb. 11:8-19

Quite a new principle was brought to light when God began to deal with Abraham; i.e. the principle of calling out. God distinctly called Abraham. Many other things are connected with Abraham, as father of the faithful, and a pattern, model man to show forth God's dealings; but he was the first that God called forth out of his own country. One of the first principles of truth to a soul lies in the discovery that Abraham made; that is, the personal existence of God, and an invitation from Him to keep in His company. "Come unto the land that I shall show thee." Many may not have denied the existence of God, but as to any personal connection with Him, it never would have entered their minds unless He had revealed Himself. Others had faith too, but it did not come out like Abraham's. Abel showed his by offering a lamb. Again, we get Enoch's call, but his heart was above before he went on high. Noah's lot was cast in exceedingly evil days; he believed God, prepared the ark, and was carried out of one earth to another.

Abraham is among an idolatrous people, and God comes and calls him, saying, " I have a place for you, and there I will make you a blessing in every way, and you shall know what it is to have the living God as your help in every time of need." I want you who are old and you who are young in faith to set to your seal, that God has introduced Himself as a living Person to your soul. Directly we are in connection with Jesus Christ we have God, and all our associations are connected with God. Faith produces different effects. The moment you bring in anything save God and His word, that is not faith. The path of faith is never the path of nature; nature takes quite a contrary course. " What!" Abraham's kindred might have said, " a stranger, a God we do not know, has told you to leave us all, and you are going forth in a mist, not knowing where He is going to take you?" God had spoken, and Abraham as an individual had to act on His word. It became a question whether Abraham could say, " I will put aside all the reasonings of my friends, and listen only to Thee."

When did his faith fail? When he came to a difficulty and stopped to consider for himself, and settle for himself, which way to get out of it. God had told him the way, but he got upon circumstances, and off faith. First, he had been told to leave all. If it came to that he must leave everything behind; but he did not leave all, he takes with him Terah and Lot, and the effect was that he had to stop till Terah died, and that he could not get on till Lot was separated from him. God will not give up with His people; He will have patience till they know it will not do to depart from His word. Not until after Terah died did Abraham come to Canaan. First, he had to get rid of Terah, and then of Lot. If I interrupt the word of the Lord in any one part, it lowers the tone of my whole soul unconsciously. There was Lot, and besides a famine came; there was corn in Egypt, and Abraham says, "I will go there." The littleness of faith carries him there, and he gets into the thick of the fight and loses Sarah. He is at his wits' end, and can do nothing. Departure from the Word has brought him into all this, and what was there to help him out of it? God's own word; and again he is sent forth in the power and presence of God.

Remark in the 8th verse, when called to go out, by faith Abraham obeyed, and went forth, not knowing whither he went. Nothing tries and searches human nature so much as uncertainty. We cannot bear suspense (there is relief in the worst certainty); but that is just God's principle of acting with us. He does not want you to know how to face famine. He does not want Abraham to know how His promises are to be made good. His seed was to be as the stars of heaven; how was this to be, seeing he had no child? God has given him everything but that, silver and gold, flocks and herds, and three hundred trained servants. He was a man most remarkable in his day, and all seemed to say to his heart, " Who is to inherit all this?" It ever seemed to be bringing to his heart the thought that he had no children; and poor Sarah tried to smuggle a child into the house, but that was not an Isaac. The question was continually raised, " Where is your city? where is your seed?" He had to wait a long time, and it came at last by a miracle wrought by God. The very prosperity of Abraham forced him to hang on God. Who is to be the heir-the manservant? No; wait, hang upon God.

Remark that in verse 9, we have the pilgrim and stranger character kept up: dwelling in tabernacles was the mark of a stranger and a pilgrim. Tents were made for Israel in the wilderness; they did not have houses till in the land of Canaan. God's dwelling in the wilderness is a tent, in the land a temple. Abraham dwelt in a tent. Lot did so, too, at first, but he did not keep up the pilgrim

character. First, he pitched his tent towards Sodom, then sat in the gate, and had a house in Sodom. Abraham kept his tent; for he looked for a city (he knew there was such a city), and the Holy Ghost adds, "whose builder and maker is God." Remark how this man's faith was sustained. He can look above everything, counting on the promised blessing. It was a faith sustained by God's word. As heavenly pilgrims we cannot yet say we have got what we hope for; but the time is coming when we shall go right into heaven, and cease to be strangers and pilgrims down here. Is our faith set above? If God and you are keeping company, do you think He will let you have a single need unsatisfied? Oh, what a jealous God He is! What a wall of fire round about us! When He separates anyone to Himself, He plants the blood of Christ right behind them. If He has spoken to us of His glory, and told us not to mind earthly things, should not our associations be, not of ties of nature down here, but of His company, His country, His interests -waiting as people that do want to keep up their character of strangership, plainly confessing, by their walk and ways, that they are pilgrims on their way to a better country?

Even poor Jacob could not help being a pilgrim. How came Jacob to be in a condition to receive wages of Laban? Because he got off the ground of a pilgrim. He had a deal to say at the end of how long and how dreary his life had been; whilst Abraham's whole pathway is strewn with blessings, having God with him all the way through. Jacob, too, dwelt in a tent. If God has revealed Himself to your heart, and spoken to you of future glory, separating you unto Himself, He would not like you to be passing through the wilderness " hardly bestead;" not with Jacob's experience, talking of the great things you have to give up. He does not like that. He wants you to be like Abraham, saying, " Look at all my blessings; look how close God has set me to Himself; and see how He is going to fill all my circumstances to make me rise over all my difficulties, and make His own presence so sweet to me, that I would rather be in difficulties with Him than out of them without Him." We learn what God is by Abraham's walk.

Look, too, at Paul when moved out of everything, when in difficulties of all kinds he always had a song to the praise of God's grace. What a difference between God saying, " Here is something good for you," and your holding out your hand and taking it, and your saying that you are not good enough for what God gives you. Christ would not give Himself to us in resurrection till He had ascended to His Father. He must come down to us as the Father's gift. We can say to everything else, " That is not good enough for me." Did God's people lack power in His company to feel that He was their portion? What you must be looking out for is His gift at the present time. If anything bright offers itself (not God's gift) do not take it; it will not have sweetness; you will not find God in it. Let Him be first, and you keep behind Him. If a pilgrim, you will not be thinking of settling in houses; you will hang all your hopes on the place where the Son is. But do not take anything but God's gift to you at a moment like this. If God has prepared a city for me, should I like my mind to be absorbed by anything else down here?

Abraham refuses to touch a single thing, and the moment after God says, " I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." We never read of His being the God of Lot. He promised to be Abraham's God to Lot, and fetched him out of Sodom; but Lot was not in the way to talk of Him as " my God." What the God of a man settled in Sodom? No; but the God of pilgrims and strangers. The same unerring grace and love; but God could not blazon it abroad that He was the God of Lot in Sodom. There was no planning with Abraham. When we deal with God we cannot make a plan; we get our feet entangled. You and God must go together; there can be no planning if with God. The trial God puts Abraham to in regard to offering up Isaac is very remarkable. God tries hearts often in the same way. I do not know anything more heart-searching than this that Abraham had put before him, but he left it all with God to settle all his difficulty. It was just the test whether he was hanging on God or not. Yes, he was, and he gives up Isaac. His hand was stretched out to slay him, but God came in. It was not in the heart of the Father to let that father slay his son. Oh! what a feeling must there have been in Abraham, the feeling of all blessing, from first to

last, being in the approbation of God Himself. Now God does try our faith in many ways. Do you know what suspense is? Do you know what it is not to see your way, and if you put forth a single thing to help yourself, does He not move it out of His way? are kept in suspense that we may be content to wait upon God; to look to, to hang upon Him, to be so satisfied with God as to leave all to Him. To be in suspense is to be a pilgrim and a stranger, not to take anything, but to wait till God gives it. Oh a man walking with God will have a happy, a blessed experience; otherwise there will be only sorrow and disappointment, as Lot and Jacob found.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Qualifications for Worship (9:24-28)

Heb. 9:24 to 10:23

These two chapters bring out in a very simple way true worship. The Lord said to the woman of Samaria, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father," &c. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." At first sight it may appear as if this merely applied to the children of God; but not so, for in the question of worship, the question of the standing of the soul of him who would worship, and the question whether the conscience has been purged and purified, is involved.

There is a strong contrast between the epistle to the Hebrews and that to the Romans. In that to the Romans (the book about man down here on earth), man is taken up as a creature against whom the wrath of God from heaven is revealed. The Spirit passes the mind of the apostle through the whole condition of man from the day of creation, without law, under law, the effect of which was that every mouth is stopped, and all brought in guilty before God. Then he shows God in heaven, having arranged that the Son, who was sitting at His right hand, should give light in the world, and contain in Himself the answer to the ruin down here, and so on, but it is always man down here, and how the evil in man is to be met.

Hebrews does not take up man only down here, but the question rather whether it is possible for man, acting under law, ever to be able to worship God in spirit and in truth; and shows that so far from this being the case, that even the Hebrews had to have the gospel of Christ preached to them, and a new tabernacle had to be pitched in heaven. And in connection with this new tabernacle we get a High Priest, the Lord Jesus in heaven, and in Him eternal redemption, and eternal salvation. And if any person can really have a conscience fit for God, and enter into what the soul wants, the heart must rise from earth to heaven, and know what has taken place there, and become one who dwells in heaven, where the Lord Jesus is.

In Romans we get the light shining down, not man going in. In Hebrews it is not only the throne of God in heaven, and light shining down on earth, but it is the veil rent; and people that have faith can go in boldly and simply into the holiest of all, meet God, and become connected with all the wondrous worship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the true tabernacle.

One more striking contrast I would look at between the feasts of the law, and the feasts, as it were, of Christianity. The first feast in Judaism was the Passover; the second, the feast of Pentecost; the third, the great day of Atonement. In the Passover there was no service for the priest; it rested on the head of the family. And the two truths taught in this feast were the blood of ransom, and the blood of association; but not the blood of propitiation. God said, When I see the blood, I will pass over you. "The people have got the blood, marking subjection and obedience to Me in My ordinances. As My people they are in association with Me, and the destroying angel shall not enter." And there was the blood of ransom; but there was no connection with the dwelling-place of God. In the blood of atonement it began with the presence of God on the mercy-seat. Association with God we get in the supper, and the ransom in 1 Peter: "Ye are redeemed ... with the precious blood of Christ."

Then Pentecost was a very peculiar feast. When the high priest was actually waving the sheaf, the Lord Jesus was getting up from the grave; and as, after so many days had intervened, two loaves with leaven in them were presented before the Lord, and then they might be eaten, so after the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2) was the Church brought out; and by the Holy Ghost dwelling down here all the riches of Christ could be displayed.

At the end of the year came the great day of Atonement. Then we get the joy of the camp, and two things connected with this joy; the blood was taken into the holiest as marking the way to God, and was put on the mercy-seat in His presence. There was everything to mark feebleness in connection with this feast. It was only for the circle of twelve months; they began to sin again next day. If the scapegoat carried off the sins into a land of forgetfulness, they would want another next year. The priest was a man who could sin like Aaron. The man set up over them, Moses, was a man who could be cut off before entering the land.

All were beggarly elements, and only temporal, and upon earth.

Just see the contrast in connection with the feasts of Christianity. We begin at the other end, and at the other end of the last of them. We are not to believe that Christ has gone into heaven, and will make atonement. If I say, "He is gone in, and there is a Person in heaven who is able to accomplish all," it is not Christianity. The basis of Christianity is, that He has by one offering

perfected forever them that are sanctified. That is the starting-point. If Christ was crucified, is risen, and gone to take His place at God's right hand, it is most natural for me to believe, that though I have nothing, yet in the power of what Christ did I am presented before God perfected. It is most natural if I say, "My conscience is fit for God Himself, He has bought me with a price; I will only live to Him who died for me."

Now we turn to the portion here before us. The first thing we notice (as being that which has priority of importance in Scripture) is, that the work brought before us in connection with our faith is a work with which man had nothing whatever to do. The Father wrought by the Son, and proved it by the Holy Ghost. For me to look up and see that God has done something, is very different to looking inside myself. The work

of the Spirit in us, is in proportion to our understanding the work of Christ for us.

Chap. 10:5. There are two things in connection with this, as bearing on the subject of the divine work connected with God dwelling in heaven. The apostle had been proving the impossibility of a Jew, by the Jewish ordinances, getting his guilt blotted out. Here he takes up the Lord Himself, who comes forward, saying, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not." "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." From the time that man sinned, the death of a victim was brought in, and prophet after prophet vindicated God's word in favor of Abel's sacrifice in preference to Cain's. At last a system was set up—God in the tabernacle where everything turned on sacrifice. He would dwell among them; but not only were there certain sacrifices offered daily, but there was a great day of Atonement linking all together, and the whole ritual of sacrifices in connection with it. A Man comes on the scene, and He looked upon as a carpenter's son, and He never spoke against the services of the temple; but when the Holy Ghost comes to explain His mind, it was that the whole ritual of services was now discovered to be all in vain, and He had come to set them all aside. And who was He? The One who was the Word of God. And what His thoughts were before He came into the world is here set before us: "I conic to do Thy will; I set aside all sacrifices and establish Thy will." Did the prophets ever speak like this? No; they prophesied by fragments. When the Son came, He said, "I am in the scene, and everything turns round Me as the center. I will set all aside, and establish Thy will." All was done by the Son, but all was done according to the Father's mind. Here we have attributed by the Spirit of God to the Son all that was in His mind—the accomplishment of the expression of that which had been in the mind of God.

The second thing to be remarked as to the work, we get in verse 15. When it is done, the Holy Ghost is witness to it. Another covenant is to be brought in that will stand and be efficacious. Really everything, when God was dealing with man merely as a ruined creature, brought out sin. When the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to witness of the work done by the Son according to the Father's mind, it is not bringing sin to remembrance, but "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." There is only one other thing presented in connection with that, and that is what is said of the blessed Lord as to His coming again—"He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation"—and as to the people looking for Him. He was a holy, harmless, undefiled Man, but He had a baptism to accomplish. When He comes again it will be, "My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation." When the will is done in connection with the heavenly people, He will appear "without sin unto salvation."

Can you understand that the grand doctrine of Christianity is the question of what were the hidden counsels of God in the wicked act of man. Man-Jew and Gentile were connected in putting the Lord Jesus to death. God let them do their worst, but had in His mind the blood whereby the conscience of the poor sinner could draw near.

Christ is upon the throne. I am clean. It is eternal salvation, not temporal as to Israel in Egypt—eternal redemption, not temporal as promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There is a work done by the Son according to the Father's mind, witnessed to by the Holy Ghost, and not a work inside us. Is the Lamb as the accepted sacrifice on the throne of God? Is it the testimony of the Holy Ghost at the day of Pentecost, according to the mind of God, that any Jew who had dipped his hand in the blood of the Lord Jesus, believing in that blood, might be saved? That is the gospel! And no soul that looks up at the Lord Jesus on the throne of God, but will see how God in His own eternity has a testimony. The One that is filling heaven, and the Light from heaven breaking through the midst of things down here, and testifying to the heart—He says: "Go with boldness right through the veil into the holiest of all, the place where God dwells, where God has expressed in His Son, sitting at His right hand, what His thoughts are of the children of men, and how only man can honor Him." He is showing out how He has met the ruined creature.

Are you walking according to God's present plan? Are you answering God's present mind, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy"? Are you of God's mind about it, that the only thing you can give to God is your sins? The only connection that man had with the cross of Christ was his sin in crucifying Him. If I am a ruined creature, one of whom God has said, "dead in trespasses and sins," one whom Satan had in the vortex in which he turns the world, with lusts working in my heart, what can such a creature give to God? The last thing that in nature the heart is willing to give to God—his sins. Oh, give God your sins! Go in before Him, and give all that self so anxious, so restless to be doing something. Give it up to God, and do not let yourself be your center, but God Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! The throne of God is the mercy-seat; if you do not want mercy you will not go there. If God's present plan is to show Himself out, and His eternal redemption, the riches of His stores, go in for it just as you are, right into the holiest of all. And if you ever get there, I can assure you, you will find that nobody shines there but the Lord Jesus Christ! You will not shine, not a thought, not a desire of your own; you will leave all the shining to the Lord Jesus, and you will be bright in His light.

Now to come down from the higher ground of the eternal salvation of God in heaven, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—of the light shining down—what as to one's self? "Christ died, then I am clean—not a spot within." The Lamb, the accepted sacrifice on the throne of God, where the heavenly hosts can behold Him, where the Father sees the Son in His accomplished work, and the Holy Ghost bears witness of Him. What can a poor sinner say to that? "God's mercy and love—not a cloud above!" That sacrifice has been accepted for me. Has God met all the claims of His throne in that way? It is humility to say it, not the arrogancy of the heart of man that will originate things for himself. God has done a work by the omnipotent power of the Son of His love, and I dare not call it in question. All His character is wrapped up in it. Many are occupied with the work of the Spirit in them, and not the work of Christ for them, and the result is, that they have no peace, no holiness. Instead of saying "God has done a work, and God calls my attention to it," they turn to themselves. Conscience is like the balance of a beam, without any certainty whatever. Brahmins, Jews, Saul of Tarsus, all act according to conscience. Conscience is a poor thing. Aye, but what will God do with one who presents himself before Him without a purged conscience? Nothing! Oh, how God is saving souls to enable them to say, "Christ died, I am clean!" But, on the other hand, He comes down in testimony to the conscience—the blood of cleanness.

There are three distinct things—to take away the sacrifices, to display the perfect work of God, and that the sinner may know the place He has made manifest. The presence of the blood is one thing, the appropriation of it another thing. What is the meaning of my being washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God, but that what is there in the work of Christ before God has come down on my heart and conscience? I speak of the work of the one sacrifice. A thousand persons might stand round a light, and the effect might be on each one. The whole work is done if the Holy Ghost has stirred the conscience about the blood. What an immense effect if faith be simple! "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." It is the value of the work brought, and not the value of the faith. It is either that the sacrifice of Christ has settled the whole question, or that it never can be settled. It is done; He has sat down.

Then the effect on the heart of a believer is that he says, " By one offering perfected forever." In what sense perfected? In what sense sanctified? People make great confusion between sanctification and purification. Sanctification is the setting apart of a thing, a person. We are put apart to walk as Christ walked, apart in body, soul, and spirit. Christ Himself was put apart, but we cannot apply " purifying" to Christ; but we are called to purify ourselves. The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is that in this epistle which separates unto God. When the Red Sea flowed between Egypt and Israel, Israel was cut off from Egypt; and when the blood is known by a person it separates him from the world. Did Christ die for you, " that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him"? And do you in the world live for yourself, and profess to be a Christian? Impossible. The Christian's complaint is, " I believe I am put apart; but I am not practically as apart as I should be."

Oh, the wonders connected with that expressed in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, the one sacrifice never to be repeated! It not only puts the conscience in peace with God, but it forms the conscience. If He is satisfied with the blood, I will be too. In every way it has lessons. It teaches the character of the whole system of iniquity out of which I have come-teaches the enormity sin, as none but God can. It shows another thing in connection with the journey through the wilderness-the imbecility of man, and the imbecility of Satan. When all their malice came out against God, God stands by quietly, having deep counsels in His own mind. They should slay the Lamb that was to atone for sin What profound wisdom! What a revelation of what man is! What does it tell about all connected with the scene where man is on earth? He whose blood speaks from the throne was here once. He is up there now, and His murder rests on the earth, and calls for vengeance from God.

Oh, the contrast between Him who has shed His blood and one's self! There is something marvelous in this. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. No other man is so. What gave its effect to the blood? The very God against whom man sinned in Eden, against whom all self-will and independence have been, was the very One who executed judgment when His Son was on the cross. Without a purged conscience it is impossible to worship God in spirit and in truth. A scene where all worship goes on is where God is, and the Lamb is. Can you say, " I am there, my conscience bearing witness "? Can you say, " Christ is the accepted sacrifice, and I have staked all on Him because He cannot fail "? It is perfect peace. God rests in love with Christ there before Him, and the soul of the sinner can therefore rest on Christ.

Now we are called to act worthily of what Christ has done. If God has purged our conscience with the blood of His dear Son, we must take care not to contract stain or soil as we go through this world.

Oh, that God would act on souls so to stand as reflectors down here of that work God has done,-really, practically separated from the world, reflecting the light we get up there in Him! We are not what Pentecostal Christians were-not as to gift, but should be as to moral character and individual devotedness to Him.

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