

PUTTING THE HAND UPON THE HEAD OF THE SACRIFICE NO. 1771

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 16, 1884,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD.”
Leviticus 1:4, 5.*

NO doubt there are clear distinctions in the teaching of the burnt offering, the meat offering, the peace offering, and the sin offering. In those various sacrifices we have views of our Lord's atoning work taken from different standpoints. On another occasion it will be profitable to note these delightful lessons and lay them to heart, but at this time I am not about to enter into such matters. These instructive distinctions are the special property of those who by reason of years have had their senses exercised, and therefore can discern not only the great work of our Lord, but the details of it. I am not sufficiently strong in mind at this time to bring forth “butter in a lordly dish” for men of robust constitution, but I must be content to serve the little ones with a cup of milk. I cannot carry the great cluster from Eshcol, and therefore I will bring you a few grapes in my trembling hand. I desire to preach this morning so that I may fulfill the prayer of a little boy who, one Saturday evening before he went to bed, said in his prayer, “Lord, grant that our minister may say something tomorrow that I may understand.” I am very sorry that such a prayer should ever be necessary, but I am afraid it is not only necessary for children, but sometimes for grownup people to pray, “Lord, help our minister to say something that we can understand and that is worth understanding.” Some of my brethren appear to dwell on high Olympus among the clouds, it was better if they lived on Calvary. Little dew comes from the dark mountains of intellectual dreaminess, far more refreshing drops are found upon Mount Hermon of the gospel. I feel like Dr. Guthrie when he desired those around him to sing him a child's hymn, I would be a little child in preaching to you. Simple things are the most sublime, and to a sick man the most sweet. I wish to be plain as a walking stick in setting forth the way of expiation by the death of Jesus.

I have a reason also for preaching foundation truth today which, to myself is powerful, though you may smile at it. It is this, if I have but few shots to fire, I should like each time to hit the center of the target, that is to say, if I may only speak to you once today, after having been laid aside for three weeks, I desire to speak only upon topics which touch the vitals of godliness. I would plunge into the heart of the matter, and deal with the essence and soul of true religion. There are some things that may be or may not be, and yet no great evil will come either way. But there are other things that must be, or all goes wrong, of these “must-be's” I would now speak. Some things are important for the *well-being* of Christians, but certain other things are absolutely essential to the very being of Christians, and it is upon these urgent necessities that I shall now speak—namely, concerning the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and our faith in it, for these two things are of the highest importance, and they cannot too often be brought before our minds.

Two matters were essential in the sacrifices of the ceremonial law, and you have them both in our text, “He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering,” and “he shall kill the bullock before the Lord.” The appropriation by the offerer and the death of the offering are most fitly joined together, and must neither of them be overlooked.

For our immediate objective there was no need to have taken our present text, for there are many others of the same effect. Look at Leviticus 3:2, “And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle.” Glance at the eighth verse, “And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle.” Turn to chapter four, verse four, the second clause of the verse, “He shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the Lord.” As also at the fifteenth verse, “And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the Lord: and the bullock shall be killed before the Lord.” To the same effect is the

twenty-fourth verse, “And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering.” All through the book of Leviticus, the laying on of the hand and the killing of the victim are mentioned in immediate connection. These are each of them so important, and so full of meaning, that we must have a sermon upon each of them.

Let us on the present occasion look at THE LEADING ACT OF THE OFFERER, “*He shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering.*” All that goes before is important, but this is the real sacrificial act so far as the offerer is concerned. Before he reached this point, the person who presented the offering had to make a selection of the animal to be brought before the Lord. It must be of a certain age, and it must be without blemish, and for this latter reason a careful examination had to be made, for the Lord would not accept a sacrifice that was lame, or broken, or bruised, or deficient in any of its parts or in any way blemished. He required an offering “without spot.” Now I invite all those who seek reconciliation with God to look about them, and consider whether the Lord Jesus Christ is such an atoning sacrifice as they need and as God will accept. If you know of any other atonement for sin, examine it well, and I am persuaded that you will find many a fault and flaw in it. But concerning the Lamb of God, I have no question, you may search, and test, and try, but you shall find no blemish in Him. If there were any fault in Him, either of excess or deficiency, you might well refuse Him, but since there is nothing of the kind, I pray you joyfully to accept Him at once. Come now and look at the Lord Jesus Christ, both at His Godhead and His manhood, at His life and His death, His acts and His sufferings, and see if there is any iniquity in Him. He knew no sin, He had no acquaintance or dealing with it, “He was holy, harmless, undefiled.” After you have well examined His blessed person and His spotless character, if you arrive at the conclusion that He is a fit and acceptable sacrifice for you to present before the Lord, then I long that you may take the much more practical step, and accept the Lord Jesus to be your representative, your sin offering, your burnt offering, your substitute, and your sacrifice. I long that every unsaved person here may at once, receive the Lord Jesus as his atonement, for this is the main part of that which the sinner must do in order to be cleansed from sin and accepted by God. Happily you have not to find a sacrifice as the Jew had to supply a bullock, God has provided Himself with a perfect sacrifice, that which you have to bring to God, God first brings to you. Happily, there is no need for you to repeat the examination through which the Lord Jesus passed both at the hands of men, and of devils, and of God, when He was tested and tried and examined, and even the prince of this world found nothing of his own in Him. You have to attend to this one thing, namely, the laying of your hands upon the sacrifice provided for you. To the Jew it was a sacrifice to be slain, to you it is a sacrifice already offered, and this you are to accept and recognize as your own. It is not a hard duty, you sang of it just now—

*“My faith does lay her hand
On that dear head of Yours.
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.”*

If you have already attended to this, do so again this morning, if you have never done so, I pray from my inmost soul that you may immediately do that which was meant by laying the hand upon the victim’s head.

I. To our work, then, at once. What did that mean? It meant four things, and the first was, CONFESION. He that laid his hand upon the head of the offering made *confession of sin*. I do not care what offering it was that was brought by a believing Israelite, there was always a mention of sin in it, either implied or expressed. “But,” says one, “the burnt offering was a sweet-savor offering, and how could there be any reference to iniquity therein?” I know that the burnt offering was a sacrifice of sweet smell, and that it sets forth our Lord as accepted of the Father. But let me ask you, “Why did the Israelite bring a sweet-savor offering?” It was because he felt that in and of himself he was not a sweet savor unto God, for if he had been so he would not have needed to have brought another sweet savor. When I accept the Lord Jesus to be my righteousness it is a confession of sin, for I should not need His righteousness if I had any of my own. The very fact of presenting a sacrifice at all contains within it a confession of the need of a sacrifice, which is the confession of personal shortcomings, and a need of personal acceptableness. This is true of the burnt offering, but in other sacrifices, especially in the trespass offering, where the hands were laid upon the victim’s head, the offerer was charged to “confess that he has sinned in that thing” wherein he had trespassed. There was a detailed confession of sin joined with the laying on of hands in the case of the scapegoat. Let us read the passage in Leviticus 16:21—“And Aaron shall lay

both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness.”

See then that if you would have Him to be your atonement whom God has appointed to be His sacrifice, you must come to Him confessing your sin. Your touch of Jesus must be the touch of one who is consciously guilty. He belongs not to you unless you are a sinner.

Ah, Lord, confession of sin is no hard duty to some of us, for we can do no other than acknowledge and bemoan our guilt! Here we stand before You self-condemned, and with aching hearts we each one cry, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness.” Do any of you refuse to make confession of guilt? Then, do not think it hard if, since according to your own proud notions you are not sinners, the Lord should provide you no Savior! Should medicine be prepared for those who are not sick? Why should the righteous be invited to partake of pardon? Why should righteousness be provided for the innocent? You are the rich and you are sent away empty, the hungry shall be filled with good things. Go away, you that say, “I am clean; I am not defiled.” I tell you that you have no part in the great sacrifice for sin. For the blackest sinner out of hell that will confess his sin there is mercy, but there is none for you, your pride excludes you from pity. It bars the gate of hope against you. You sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon the threshold and trample on it in your arrogant self-conceit, by making yourself out to have no need of its cleansing power. O self-righteous man, you make God out to be a fool, since He gave His only-begotten Son to die, when according to you there was no necessity for His death. In your case at any rate there is no need of a sacrifice by blood, no need of atonement through the Son of God laying down His life for men. By your refusal to trust in the Lord Jesus you charge God with folly, and therefore into His holy place, where His glory shines forth in its excellence, you can never come. Many of us come most readily at this time and lay our hand upon the head of the appointed sacrifice, even our Lord Jesus Christ, because we have sin to confess, and we feel that we need a Savior, even a Savior for the guilty. We are unworthy and undeserving. We dare not say otherwise. The stones of the street would cry out against us if we should say that we have no sin, the beams of every chamber in our house would upbraid us if we dared to assert that we are without transgression. Our true place is that of sinners, we plead guilty to the dread indictment of God’s holy law, and therefore we are glad to lay our hand upon the head of the sinner’s Savior and sacrifice.

In this act there was also a confession of *self-impotence*. The believer who brought the bullock did as good as say, “I cannot of myself keep the law of God, or make atonement for my past breaches of the commandments, neither can I hope through future obedience to become acceptable with God, therefore I bring this sacrifice because I myself cannot become acceptable without it.” This is a truth which you and I must also confess if we would be partakers of Christ, and become “accepted in the Beloved.” Oh, brethren, what can we do without Christ? I like what was said by a child in Sunday school, when the teacher said, “You have been reading that Christ is precious: what does that mean?” The children were quiet a little while, till at last one boy replied, “Father said the other day that Mother was precious, for ‘whatever would we do without her?’” This is a capital explanation of the word “precious.” You and I can truly say of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is precious to us, for what would we do, what could we do without Him? We come and take Him now to be ours because if He is not ours we are utterly undone. I for one am lost forever if Jesus cannot save. There is in us no merit and no strength, but in the Lord Jesus Christ we find both righteousness and strength, and we accept Him this day for that reason. Because we are so deeply conscious of our own self-impotence we lean hard upon His all-sufficiency.

If you could read the text in the Hebrew you would find it runs thus, “He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make a cover for him”—to make atonement for him. The word is *copher* in the Hebrew—a cover. Why, then, do we hide behind the Lord Jesus; because we feel our need of something to cover us, and to act as an interposition between us and the righteous Judge of all the earth. If the Holy One of Israel shall look upon us as we are He would be displeased. But when He sees us in Christ Jesus He is well pleased for His Righteousness’ sake. When the Lord looks this way we hide behind the veil, and the eyes of the Lord behold the exceeding glories of the veil, to wit the person of His own dear Son, and He is so pleased with the cover that He refuses to remember the defilement and deformity of those whom it covers. God will never strike a soul through the veil of His Son’s sacrifice. He accepts us because He cannot but accept His Son, who has become

our covering. With regard to God, when I am a conscious sinner I long to hide away from Him, and lo, the Lord Jesus is our shield and hiding place, the cover, the sacred atonement within which we conceal ourselves from justice. Even the all seeing eye of God see no sin in a sinner that is hidden in Christ. Oh, what a blessing it is, dear friends, when our sense of self-impotence is so great that we have no desire to make a show of ourselves, but on the contrary long to be out of sight, and therefore we enter into Christ to be hidden in Him, covered in the sacrifice which God has prepared. That is the second confession, and thus we have a confession of sin and of need of covering.

There was a further confession of *the desert of punishment*. When a man brought his bullock, or his goat, or his lamb, he put his hand on it, and as he knew that the poor creature must die he thus acknowledged that he himself deserved death. The victim fell in the dust, struggling, bleeding, dying. The offerer confessed that this was what *he* deserved. He acknowledged that death from the Almighty hand was due *to him*. And oh, when a man comes to that, when he acknowledges that God will be justified when He speaks in anger, and clear when He judges and pronounces sentence in justice, when he confesses that he cannot deliver himself, but has so sinned as to deserve to be cursed of God, and judged to feel the horrors of the second death, then is he brought into a condition in which the great sacrifice will be precious to him. Then will he lean hard upon Christ, and with broken heart acknowledge that the chastisement which fell upon Jesus was such as he deserved, and he will wonder that he has not been called upon to bear it. For my own part I deserve eternal damnation, but I trust in the Lord Jesus, and believe that He was punished in my place. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." If you can thus confess sin, and bare your neck to punishment, and then lay hold upon the Lord Jesus, you are a saved man. Can your heart truly confess, "I am guilty, I cannot save myself. I deserve to be cast into the deepest hell, but I now take Jesus to stand in my place"? Then be of good cheer, "Your faith has saved you: go in peace." May the Spirit of God bless this first point!

II. Secondly, the laying on of hands meant ACCEPTANCE. The offerer by laying his hand upon the victim's head signified that he acknowledged the offering to be for himself.

He accepted, first of all, *the principle and the plan*. Far too many kick against the idea of our being saved by substitution or representation. Why do they rebel against it? For my part, if God will but graciously save me in any way I will be far enough from raising any objection. Why should I complain of that which is to deliver me from destruction? If the Lord does not object to the way, why should I? Moreover, as to this salvation by the merit of another, I do remember that my first ruin did not come by myself. I am not speaking to excuse my personal sin, but yet it is true that I was ruined before I committed any actual sin by the disobedience of the first father of the race who was my representative. How this was just I do not know, but I am sure it must be right, or God would not so reveal it. In Adam we fell, "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom 5:19). If then, the fall began by the sin of another, why should not our rising be caused by the righteousness and the atonement of another? What says the apostle? "For if through the offense of one many are dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many." At any rate, it is not for you and for me to raise objections against ourselves, but to feel that if God sees that this is a proper way of salvation, He knows best and we cheerfully accept what He approves. Who is there among you that will not do so? God grant that no one may hold out against a method of grace so simple, so sure, so available!

But then, remember. After you have accepted the plan and the way, you must not stop there, but you must go on to accept *the sacred person whom God provides*. It would have been a very foolish thing if the offerer had stood at the altar and said, "Good Lord, I accept the plan of sacrifice, be it burnt offering or sin offering, I agree thereto." He did much more than that, he accepted that very bullock as his offering, and in token thereof placed his hand upon it. I pray you beware of resting satisfied with understanding and approving the plan of salvation. I heard of one who anxiously desired to be the means of the conversion of a young man, and one said to him, "You may go to him, and talk to him, but you will get him no further, for he is exceedingly well acquainted with the plan of salvation." When the friend began to speak with the young man, he received for an answer, "I am much obliged to you, but I do not know that you can tell me much, for I have long known and admired the plan of salvation by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ." Alas, he was resting in the plan, but he had not believed in the person. The plan of salvation is most blessed, but it can avail us nothing unless we believe. What is the comfort of a plan

of a house if you do not enter the house itself? What is the good of a plan of clothing if you have not a rag to cover you? Have you never heard of the Arab chief at Cairo who was very ill and went to the missionary, and the missionary said he could give him a prescription? He did so, and a week later he found the Arab none the better. "Did you take my prescription?" he asked. "Yes, I ate every morsel of the paper." He dreamed that he was going to be cured by the plan of the medicine. He should have gone to the chemist and had the prescription filled, and then it might have worked him some good. So is it with salvation, it is not the plan, it is the carrying out of that plan by the Lord Jesus in His death on our behalf. The offerer laid his hands literally upon the bullock. He found something substantial there, something which he could handle and touch, even so do we lean upon the real and true work of Jesus, the most substantial thing under heaven. Brethren, we come to the Lord Jesus by faith and say, "God has provided atonement here, and I accept it. I believe it to be a fact accomplished on the cross that sin was put away by Christ, and I rest on Him." Yes, you must get beyond the acceptance of plans and doctrines to a resting in the divine person and finished work of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and a casting of yourself entirely upon Him.

III. But thirdly, this laying of the hand upon the sacrifice meant not only acceptance, but also TRANSFERENCE. The offerer had confessed his sin, and had accepted the victim then presented to be his sacrifice, and now he mentally realizes that his guilt is by divine appointment to pass over from himself to the sacrifice. Of course this was only done in type and figure at the door of the Tabernacle, but in our case the Lord Jesus Christ as a matter of literal fact has borne the sin of His people. "The Lord has made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all." "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."

But do we by faith pass our sins from ourselves to Christ? I answer, no, in some senses, *no*. But by faith he that accepts Christ as his Savior *agrees with what the Lord did ages ago*, for we read in the book of Isaiah the prophet, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." That was Jehovah's own act in the ages past, and it was complete when Jesus stood as the great sin-bearer, and redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. All the transgressions of His people were laid on Him when He poured out His soul unto death, and "was numbered with the transgressors, and bore the sin of many." Then and there He expiated all the guilt of all His people, for He "finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness." By His death He cast the whole tremendous load of human guilt, which was laid upon Him, into the depth of the sea, never to be found again. When we believe in Him we agree to what the Lord has done, and so we may sing—

*"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us
From the accursed load."*

There are two ruling religions around us at this day, and they mainly differ in tense. The general religion of mankind is "*Do*," but the religion of a true Christian is "*Done*." "It is finished" is the believer's conquering word. Christ has made atonement, and we accept it as done. So in that respect we do lay our sins on Jesus, the holy Lamb of God, because we set our humble seal to that grand transaction which was the confirming of the covenant of old.

The laying of the hand upon the head of the sacrifice meant transference of guilt to the victim, and furthermore, *a confidence in the efficacy of the sacrifice* then and there presented. The believing Jew said, "This bullock represents to me the sacrifice which God has provided, and I rejoice in it because it is the symbol of a sacrifice which does in very deed take away sin." Brethren, there are a great number of people who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ after a fashion, but it is not in deed and in truth, for they do not believe in the actual pardon of their own sin. They hope that they may one day be forgiven, but they have no confidence that the Lord Jesus has already put away their sin by His death. "I am a great sinner," says one, "therefore, I cannot be saved." Man alive, did Christ die for those who are not sinners? What was the need of a Savior except for sinners? Has Jesus actually borne sin, or has He not? If He has borne our sin, it is gone, if He has not borne it, our sin will never depart. What does the Scripture say? "He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." If, then, Christ did take the sinner's sin, it remains not upon the sinner that believes. Assuredly, you my hearer, if you are a believer, cannot have sin if Jesus has taken it away. You are made clean in the sight of God because your uncleanness has been washed away in the blood of the great sac-

rifice. Can't you see this way of salvation? If you do see it, will you not accept it now? Do you not already feel a joy springing up within your soul that there should be such a blessed way of deliverance? At any rate, I tell you where I stand today, I stand guilty, and without a hope in anything I have ever done or ever hope to do, but I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ bore my sin in His own body on the tree, and I am at this moment putting my hands on Him in the sense in which the Hebrew has it, leaning with all my weight upon Him. If Jesus cannot save me I must be damned, for I cannot help Him, neither can I see anyone else who can do so much as a hand's turn in that direction. If there is not virtue enough in the blood of Jesus to cleanse me from all sin, then I must die in my sins. And if there is not sufficient merit in His righteousness to save me apart from any righteousness of my own, then I am a castaway, a spirit shipwrecked on the ironbound coast of despair. But I have no fears, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that day. Now I pray you, dear people of God, to lean on Jesus and keep on leaning on Him. Oh, that you who as yet do not know Jesus may be brought to touch Him by faith and to lean upon Him by full reliance. In times of sharp pain, or great depression of spirit, or in seasons when death is near, you are forced to look around you to see where your foundation is, and what it is, and believe me, there is no groundwork that can bear the weight of a guilty conscience and a trembling, tortured body, except this foundation—"the precious blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin." Jesus is the atonement, He is the covering He is the refuge, in fact, He is our all in all.

IV. Once more, this laying of the hand upon the head of the victim meant IDENTIFICATION. The worshipper who laid his hand on the bullock said, "Be pleased, O great Lord, to identify me with this bullock, and this bullock with me. There has been a transferring of my sin, now I beseech You let me be judged as being in the victim, and represented thereby." Now consider that which happened to the sacrifice. The knife was unsheathed, and the victim was slain. He was not merely bound, but killed, and the man stood there and said, "That is me. That is the fate which I deserve." The poor creature struggled, it wallowed in the sand in its dying agonies, and if the worshipper was a right-minded person, and not a mere formalist, he stood with tears in his eyes, and felt in his heart, "That death is mine." I beseech you when you think of our blessed Lord to identify yourselves with Him. See the bloody sweat trickling down His face; that is for you. He groans, He cries, for you. Your sins deserved that you should sweat great drops of blood, and Jesus sweats instead. The Lord is taken prisoner and scourged; see how the red streams of gore flow down those blessed shoulders! He bears the chastisement of our peace. He is nailed to the cross, and we are crucified with Him. By and by He dies, and we die in Him, "We thus judge that if one died for all, then all died." Believer, you died there in Christ. When your substitute rendered to the law of God the penalty which it demanded, you virtually rendered it. "The soul that sins, it shall die," and you have died, believer, you have paid the debt in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ whom by the laying on of your hands you have accepted to be your substitute. You know that story—it is a capital one, well worth telling a thousand times. In the great French war a person was drawn for a conscript, but as he could not leave his family, he paid a very heavy sum for a substitute. That substitute went to the war and was killed. After a time Napoleon called out the rest of the conscription and the man was summoned because he had been formerly drawn, but he refused to serve. He said, "No, by my substitute I have served, and I am dead and buried. I cannot be made to serve again." It is said that the question was carried up to the highest court, and laid before the Emperor himself, and the Emperor decided that the man's claim of exemption was a just one. He had fulfilled the conscription by a substitute, that substitute had served for life, and could not be called upon to do more, and therefore the person for whom he was the substitute could not further be summoned under that conscription. This sets forth our joy and glory, we are identified with Christ, and we are crucified with Him, buried with Him, and in Him raised to newness of life. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." "You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

It ought to be remembered that we were identified with Christ in His passing under the wrath of God as a sin offering. If you read in this book you will find that the sin offering was burnt outside the camp as an unclean thing, and so you and I were put outside the camp long years ago as an unclean thing. That is over now, and we are at this hour no more cast out from the sight of God than Jesus is.

The burnt offering was consumed upon the altar as a sweet savor unto God, and in this also we are identified with Christ. We are now a sweet savor unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are accepted in

the Beloved. We are joined unto the Lord, and there is no separating our interests from His, or His from ours. Who shall separate us from the Christ of God forever and ever? That is what the laying on of hands upon the beast meant. I trust, dear friends, you have known all this for years, and if not, may you know it now.

If the Lord will enable me, I intend to enter into the second part of my text next Lord's-day morning, and for this time it will suffice for me to drive this one nail home. Oh, that the Spirit of God would fasten it in a sure place in your hearts! My soul's yearning desire is that each one of you may come at once and lay your hands on Christ by confession, acceptance, transference, and identification. Nothing short of such an act will suffice to give you salvation.

Now, suppose that the Jew, who went up to the tabernacle and to the altar, when he came there had been content to *talk about* the sacrifice without personally placing his hand on it. To talk of it would be a very proper thing to do, but suppose that he had spent all his time in merely discoursing about the plan of a sacrifice, the providing of a substitute, the shedding of blood, the clearance of the sinner through sacrificial death, it would have been a delightful theme, but what would have come of it? Suppose he had talked on and on, and had gone back home without joining in the offering. He would have found no ease to his conscience, he would, in fact, have done nothing by going to the house of the Lord. I am afraid that this is what many of you have done up to now. You are pleased to hear the gospel, you take pleasure in the doctrine of substitution, and you know true doctrine from the current falsehoods of the hour, for all of which I am very glad, but yet you are not saved because you have not taken Christ to be your own Savior. You are like persons who might say, "We are hungry, but we admit that bread is a very proper food for men, besides which we know what sort of food makes bone, and what makes muscle, and what makes flesh." They keep on talking all day long about the various qualities of food, do they feel refreshed? No. Is their hunger gone? No. I should suppose that, if they are at all healthy, their appetite is increased, and the more they talk about food the more hungry they become. Why, some of you here have been talking about the bread of heaven for years, and yet I am afraid you are no hungrier than you used to be. Do go beyond talking about Christ, and learn to feed upon Christ. Come, now, let us have done with talk, and come to deeds of faith. Lay hold on Jesus, who is set before you in the gospel, otherwise, dear friend, I fear you will perish in the midst of plenty, and die unpardoned, with mercy at your gate.

Suppose, again, that the Israelite instead of talking with his friends had thought it wise to *consult with one of the priests*. "Might I speak with you, sir, a little? Have you a little room somewhere at the back where you could talk with me, and pray with me?" "Yes," says the priest, "what ails you?" "My sin lies heavy upon me." The priest replies, "You know that there is a sacrifice for sin, a sin offering lies at the door, and God will accept it at your hands." But he says, "I beg you to explain this matter more fully to me." The priest answers, "I will explain it as well as I can, but the whole of my explanation will end in this one thing—bring a sacrifice, and over its head confess your sin, and let an atonement be made. The sin offering is what God has ordained, and therefore God will receive it. Attend to His ordinance and live, there is no other way. Fetch your offering, I will kill it for you, and lay it on the altar and present it to God." Do you say to him, "I will call again tomorrow, and have a little more talk with you"? Do you again and again cry, "Tomorrow"? Do you go again and again into the inquiry room? O sir, what will become of you? You will perish in your sin, for God has not appointed salvation by inquiry rooms and talks with ministers, but by laying your own hand upon the sacrifice which He has appointed. If you will have Christ, you shall be saved; if you will not have Him, you must perish, all the talking to you in the world cannot help you one jot if you refuse your Savior. Sitting in your pew this morning, without speaking to me or any living man or woman, I exhort you to believe in Jesus. Stretch out your withered hand, God helping you, and lay it on the head of Christ, and say, "I believe in the merit of His precious blood. I look to the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." Why, man, you are saved as sure as you are alive, for he that lays the hand of faith upon this sacrifice is saved thereby.

But I see another Israelite, and he stands by his offering, and begins *to weep* and groan, and bewail himself. I am not sorry to see him weep, for I trust he is sincerely confessing his guilt, but why does he not place his hand on the sacrifice? He cries and he sighs, for he is such a sinner, but he does not touch the offering. The victim is presented, and in order that it may be of any use to him, he must lay his hand upon it, but this vital act he neglects and even refuses to perform. "Ah," he says, "I am in such trouble, I

am in such deep distress,” and he begins explaining a difficulty. You hunt that difficulty down, but there he stands, still groaning and moaning, and producing another difficulty, and yet another, world without end. The sacrifice is slain, but he has no part in it, for he has not laid his hand upon it, and he goes away with all the burden of his guilt upon him, though the sacrificial blood has reddened the ground on which he stood. That is what some of you do. You go about lamenting your sin, when your chief lament should be that you have not believed on the Son of God. If you looked to Jesus you might dry your eyes and bid all hopeless sorrows cease, for He gives remission of sins to all penitents. Your tears can never remove your sins; tears, though flowing like a river, can never wash away the stain of guilt. Your faith must lay her hand on the head of the Lord’s sacrifice, for there and there only is there hope for the guilty.

“But surely,” says one, “that cannot be everything.” I tell you it is so much everything that—

*“Could your tears forever flow,
Could your zeal no respite know,
All for sin could not atone,
Christ must save, and Christ alone.”*

Jesus will only save those who accept Him and desire to be identified with Him. I would to God that you would delay no longer, but come at once and freely accept what God has provided! I know the devil will tempt you to look for this and to look for that, but I pray you look at nothing but the sacrifice that is before you. Lean on Jesus with all your weight.

Observe that the Israelite had to put his hand upon a victim which was not slain as yet, but was killed afterwards. This was to remind him that the Messiah was not yet come. But you, beloved, have to trust in a Christ who has come, who has lived, who has died, who has finished the work of salvation, who has gone up into the glory, and who ever lives to make intercession for transgressors. Will you trust Him or will you not? I cannot waste words; I must come to the point. John Bunyan says that one Sunday when he was playing the game of tip-cat on Elstow Green, as he was about to strike the cat with the stick, he seemed to hear a voice saying to him, “Will you leave your sins and go to heaven, or will you keep your sins and go to hell?” This morning the voice from heaven sounds forth this question, “Will you trust in Christ and go to heaven, or will you keep apart from Him and go to hell, for there you must go unless Jesus becomes your Mediator and your atoning sacrifice. Will you have Christ or not?” I hear you say, “*But*”—O that I could thrust your “buts” aside. Will you have Christ or not? “*Oh, but*”—No, your “buts” ought to be thrown into limbo; I fear they will be your ruin. Will you trust Christ or not? If your answer is, “I trust Him with all my heart,” then you are saved. I say not you *shall* be saved, but you *are* saved. “He that believes in Him *has* everlasting life.” You know how our dear friend, Mr. Hill, put it the other night at the prayer meeting. “He that believes in Him has everlasting life.” “H-A-S”—that spells—“*Got it.*” Very good spelling too. If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you have eternal life in present possession. Go your way and sing for joy of heart, because the Lord has loved you. Mind you keep on singing until you join the choristers before the eternal throne. The Lord save every person that shall hear or read this sermon, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 51, LEVITICUS 1:1-9.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—395, 555, 51 (PART 2).**

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