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THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING AND THE CHILDREN

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“Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.”

—Exodus

12:21-27

I WANTED, dear friends, earnestly wanted, to continue the subject of last Lord’s-day morning; for I felt it important that we should bear again and again our witness to the doctrine of the vicarious¹ sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord. But, at the same time, I promised that I would endeavor to keep “the feast of the children,” and have a sermon which should be specially addressed to Sunday-school teachers. I could not preach a school sermon at the appointed time, so as to open your children’s week, but thought a discourse might come in none the less suitably if I brought up the rear by closing your meetings. How am I to fulfill both my purposes? I think the subject before us will enable me to do so. We shall preach of the sprinkled blood, and of Jesus the great Sacrifice for sin; and then we shall press upon all who know the value of the great redemption that they teach the young in their earliest days what is meant by the death of Jesus and salvation through His blood.

The Paschal lamb² was a special type of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not left to gather this from the general fact that all the ancient sacrifices were shadows of the one true and real substance; but we are assured in the New Testament that “Christ our pass-

¹ **vicarious** – taking the place of another person.

² **Paschal lamb** – the lamb slaughtered and eaten on the eve of the Passover.

over is sacrificed for us “(1Co 5:7). As the Paschal lamb must be without blemish, so was our Lord, and its killing and roasting with fire were typical³ of His death and sufferings. Even as to time, our Lord fulfilled the type, for the time of His crucifixion was the passover. As the impression answers to the seal, so does the sacrifice of our Lord correspond with all the items of the passover ceremonial. We see Him “drawn out” from among men, and led as a lamb to the slaughter; we see His blood shed and sprinkled; we see Him roasted in the fire of anguish; by faith we eat of Him, and flavour the feast with the bitter herbs of penitence. We see Jesus and salvation where the carnal eye sees only a slaughtered lamb, and a people saved from death.

The Spirit of God in the passover ceremonial lays special emphasis upon *the sprinkling of the blood*. That which men so greatly oppose, He as diligently sets forth as the head and front of revelation. The blood of the chosen lamb was caught in a basin, and not spilled upon the ground in wastefulness; for the blood of Christ is most precious. Into this bowl of blood a bunch of hyssop was dipped. The sprays of that little shrub would hold the crimson drops, so that they could be easily sprinkled. Then the father of the family went outside, and struck with this hyssop the lintel⁴ and the two side posts of the door, and so the house was marked with three crimson streaks. No blood was put upon the threshold. Woe unto the man that tramples upon the blood of Christ, and treats it as an unholy thing! Alas! I fear that many are doing so at this hour, not only among the outside world, but among those who profess and call themselves Christians.

I shall endeavor to bring forward two things. First, *the importance attached to the sprinkled blood*; and, secondly, *the institution connected with it*, namely, that the children should be instructed in the meaning of sacrifice, so that they also may teach their children, and keep afire the memory of the Lord’s great deliverance.

I. The Importance Attached to the Blood of Sacrifice

First: *the importance attached to the blood of sacrifice* is here made very plain. Pains are taken to make the sacrifice observable, yea, to force it upon the notice of all the people.

The national mark

I note, first, that *it became and remained the national mark*. If you had traversed the streets of Memphis or Rameses on the night of the Passover, you could have told who were Israelites and who were Egyptians by one conspicuous token. There was no need to listen under the window to hear the speech of the people within the house, nor to wait till any came into the street so that you could observe their attire. This one thing alone would be a sufficient guide—the Israelite had the bloodmark upon his doorway, the Egyptian had it not. Mark you, this is still the great point of difference between the children of God and the children of the wicked one. There are, in truth, but two denominations upon this earth—the church and the world; those who are justified in Christ Jesus, and those who are condemned in their sins. This shall stand for a never-failing sign of the “Israelite indeed”: he has come to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel. He that believeth in the Son of God, as the one accepted Sacrifice for sin, hath salvation, and he that believe not in Him will die in his sins. The true Israel are trusting in the Sacrifice once offered for sin; it is their Rest, their Comfort, their Hope.

As for those who are not trusting in the atoning Sacrifice, they have rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and thus have declared their true character and condition. Jesus said, “Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you”; and want of⁵ faith in that shedding of blood, without which there is no remission of sin, is the damning mark of one who is a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel. Let us make no question about it: “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God.” (See 2Jo 9, in the Revised Version.) He that will not accept the Propitiation⁶ which God hath set forth must bear his own iniquity. Nothing more just, and yet nothing more terrible, can happen to such a man than that his iniquity should not be purged by sacrifice nor offering for ever. I care not what your supposed righteousness may be, nor how you think to commend yourselves to God, if you reject His Son, He will reject you. If you come before God without the atoning blood, you have neither part nor lot in the matter of the covenant inheritance, and you are not numbered among the people of God. The sacrifice is the national mark of the spiritual Israel, and he that hath it not is an alien; he shall have no inheritance among them that are sanctified, neither shall he behold the Lord in glory.

The saving token

Secondly, as this was the national mark, *it was also the saving token*. That night the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast, and as he flew down the streets of Egypt he smote high and low, the firstborn of princes and the first-born of beasts, so that in every house and in every stall there was one dead. Where he saw the blood-mark he entered not to smite; but everywhere else the vengeance of the Lord fell on the rebellious. The words are very remarkable: “The Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.” What holds back the sword? Nothing but the blood-stain on the door. The lamb has been slain, and they have sprinkled their houses with the blood, and therefore are they secure. The sons of

³ **typical** – symbolic of.

⁴ **lintel** – the doorframe above the door.

⁵ **want of** – lack.

⁶ **propitiation** – satisfaction or appeasement, specifically towards God.

Jacob were not richer, nor wiser, nor stronger, nor more skilled than the sons of Ham;⁷ but they were redeemed by the blood, and therefore they lived, while those who knew not the redeeming token died. When Jericho fell down, the one house that stood was that which had the scarlet line in the window; and when the Lord visits for sin, the man that shall escape is he who knows Jesus, “in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of his grace.”

I call your very special attention, however, to the words that are used in the twenty-third verse: “The Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door.” What an instructive expression! “When *he* seeth the blood.” It is a very comforting thing for you and for me to behold the atonement; for thus we gain peace and enter into rest; but, after all, the grand reason of our salvation is that the Lord Himself looks upon the atonement, and is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake. In the thirteenth verse we hear the Lord Himself say: “When I see the blood I will pass over you.” Think of the holy eye of God being turned to Him that taketh away the sin of the world, and so fixed on Him that He passes over us. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but He looks upon the face of His Anointed and forgives the sin. He accepts us with our sacrifice. Well does our hymn-writer pray—

“Him and then the sinner see; Look through Jesu’s wounds on me.”

It is not *our* sight of the sprinkled blood which is the basis of salvation, but *God’s* sight of it. God’s acceptance of Christ is the sure guarantee of the salvation of those who accept His sacrifice. Beloved, when thine eye of faith is dim, when thine eye-balls swim in a flood of tears, when the darkness of sorrow hides much from thy vision, then Jehovah sees the blood of His Son, and spares thee. In the thick darkness, when thou canst not see at all, the Lord God never fails to see in Jesus that with which He is well pleased, and with which His law is honored. He will not suffer the destroyer to come near thee to harm thee, because He sees in Christ that which vindicates His justice and establishes the needful rule of law. The blood is the saving mark. At this moment this is the pressing question for each one in the company gathered in this house: Do you trust the divine Propitiation or do you not? Bring to me what you will to prove your own personal excellence. I believe in no virtue which insults the Savior’s blood, which alone cleanseth us from all sin. Rather confess your multiplied transgressions and shortcomings, and then take heart and hope; for there is forgiveness large and free for the very chief of sinners, through Him Who has made peace by the blood of His Cross.

O my hearer, guilty and self-condemned, if thou wilt now come and trust in Jesus Christ, thy sins, which are many, shall be all forgiven thee, and thou shalt love so much in return, that the whole bent and bias of thy mind shall be turned from sin to gracious obedience. The Atonement applied to the conscience saves from despair, and then acting upon the heart It saves from the love of evil. But the Atonement is the saving sign. The blood on the lintel and on the two side posts scoured⁸ the house of the poorest Israelite; but the proudest Egyptian, yea, even Pharaoh on the throne, could not escape the destroyer’s sword. Believe and live. Reject the Atonement and perish!

The mark of the blood was rendered conspicuously.

Note, next, that *the mark of the blood was rendered as conspicuous as possible*. The Israelites, though they ate the Paschal lamb in the quiet of their own families, yet made no secret of the sacrifice. They did not make the distinctive mark upon the wall of some inner chamber, or in some place where they could cover it with hangings, that no man might perceive it; but they smote the upper part of the doorway and the two side posts of the door, so that all who passed by the house must see that it was marked in a peculiar manner, and marked with blood. The Lord’s people were not ashamed to have the blood thus put in the forefront of every dwelling; and those that are saved by the great sacrifice are not to treat the doctrine of substitution as a hole-and-corner⁹ creed, to be secretly held, but not openly avowed. The death of Jesus in our room and place and stead is not a redemption of which we are ashamed to speak in any place. Call it old-fashioned and out of date, our critics may; but we are not ashamed to publish it to the four winds of heaven, and to avow our confidence in it. He that is ashamed of Christ in this generation, of him will Christ be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father, and all His holy angels with Him.

There is a theology abroad in the world which admits the death of Christ to a certain indefinable place in its system, but that place is very much in the rear: I claim for the atonement the front and the center, the Lamb must be in the midst of the throne. Atonement is not a mystery scarcely to be spoken of, or if spoken of at all, to be whispered. No, no, it is a sublime simplicity, a fact for a child to know, a truth for the common people to rejoice in! We must preach Christ crucified whatever else we do not preach. Brethren, I do not think a man ought to hear a minister preach three sermons without learning the doctrine of atonement. I give wide latitude when I say this, for I would desire never to preach at all without setting forth salvation by faith in the blood of Jesus. Across my pulpit and my tabernacle shall be the mark of the blood; it will disgust the enemy, but it will delight the faithful. Substitution seems to me to be the soul of the Gospel, the life of the Gospel, the essence of the Gospel; therefore must it be ever in the front. Jesus, as the Lamb of God, is the Alpha, and we must keep Him first and before all others. I charge you, Christian people, do not make this a secondary doctrine. Keep your perspective right, and have this always in the foreground. Other truths are valuable, and may most worthily be placed in the distance; but this is always to be in the foreground. The center of Christianity is the Cross, and the meaning of the Cross is substitution.

⁷ **sons of Ham** – an expression used to refer to the enemies of Israel.

⁸ **scoured** – to clear or rid of what is undesirable.

⁹ **hole-and-corner** – secretive, clandestine, furtive.

"We may not know, we cannot tell, What pains our Jesus bare, But we believe it was for us He hung and suffered there."

The great sacrifice is the place of gathering for the chosen seed: we meet at the Cross, even as every family in Israel met around the table whereon was placed the lamb, and met within a house which was marked with blood. Instead of looking upon the vicarious sacrifice as placed somewhere in the remote distance, we find it in the center of the church. Nay, more; it is so much the vital, all-essential center, that to remove it is to tear out the heart of the church. A congregation which has rejected the sacrifice of Christ is not a church, but an assembly of unbelievers. Of the church I may truly say, "The blood is the life thereof." Like the doctrine of justification by faith, the doctrine of a vicarious sacrifice is the article of standing or falling to each church: atonement by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ means spiritual life, and the rejection of it is the reverse. Wherefore, we must never be ashamed of this all-important truth, but make it as conspicuous as possible. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

The people trusted in it

Further, the sprinkled blood was not only most conspicuous, but *it was made very dear to the people themselves by the fact that they trusted in it in the most implicit manner.* After the door-posts had been smeared the people went inside into their houses, and they shut the door, never to open it again till the morning. They were busy inside: there was the roasting of the lamb, the preparing of the bitter herbs, the girding of their loins, the getting ready for their march, and so forth; but this was done without fear of danger, though they knew that the destroyer was abroad.

The command of the Lord was, "None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning." What is going on in the street? You must not go to see. The midnight hour has come. Did you not hear it? Hark, that dreadful cry! Again a piercing shriek! What is it? The anxious mother asks, "What can it be?" "There was a great cry in Egypt." The Israelites must not heed that cry so as to break the divine word which shut them in for a little moment, till the tempest was overpass.

Perhaps persons of doubtful mind, during that dread night, may have said, "Something awful is happening. Hear those cries! Listen to the tramping of the people in the streets, as they hurry to and fro! It may be there is a conspiracy to slay us at dead of night." "None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning" was sufficient for all who truly believed. They were safe, and they knew it, and so, like the chicks beneath the wings of the hen, they rested in safety.

Beloved, let us do the same. Let us honor the precious blood of Christ not only by speaking of it boldly to others, but by a calm and happy trust in it for ourselves. In full assurance let us rest. Do you believe that Jesus died for you? Then be at peace. Let no man's heart fail him now that he knows that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Let the Cross be the pillar of our confidence, unmoved and immovable. Do not be agitated about what has been or what is to be: we are housed in safety in Christ Jesus both from the sins of the past and the dangers of the future. All is well, since love's atoning work is done. In holy peacefulness let us proceed with our household work, purging out the old leaven and keeping the feast; but let no fear or doubt disturb us for an instant.

We pity those who die without Christ, but we cannot quit¹⁰ our Lord under the pretence of saving them: that would be folly. I know there are terrible cries outside in the streets—who has not heard them? Oh, that the people would but shelter beneath the blood-mark! It pierces our heart to think of the doom of the ungodly when they perish in their sins; but, as Noah did not quit the ark, nor Israel leave her abode, so our hope is not larger than the Cross will warrant. All who shelter beneath the blood of the Atonement are secure, and as for those who reject this great Salvation, how shall they escape? There are great and sad mysteries in this long night, but in the morning we shall know as much of God's dealings with men as it will be good for us to know.

Meanwhile, let us labor to bring our fellows within the pale¹¹ of safety, but yet let us be ourselves peaceful, composed, restful, and joyful. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Possess ye your souls in patience. Oh, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. Feed upon the Lamb, for His flesh is meat indeed. That same Jesus Who has preserved your life from destruction will be the sustenance of that life evermore. Be happy beneath the saving blood-mark. Make a feast of your passover. Though there be death outside, let your joy within be undisturbed.

Perpetual remembrance

I cannot stay long on any one point, and therefore notice, next, that *the Paschal bloodshedding was to be had in perpetual remembrance.* "Ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever." As long as Israel remained a people, they were to keep the passover: so long as there is a Christian upon earth the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus must be kept in memory. No progress of years or advance of thought could take away the memory of the Paschal sacrifice from Israel. Truly it was a night to be remembered when the Lord brought out His people from under the iron yoke of Egypt. It was such a wonderful deliverance, as to the plagues which preceded it, and the miracle at the Red Sea which followed it, that no event could possibly excel it in interest and glory. It was such a triumph of God's power over the pride of Pharaoh, and such a manifestation of God's love to His own people, that they were not merely to be glad for one night, nor for one year, nor even for a century; but they were to remember it for ever. Might there not come a time when Israel would have achieved further history? Might not some grander event

¹⁰ **quit** – depart from, leave.

¹¹ **pale** – limits, bounds.

eclipse the glory of Egypt's overthrow? Never! The death of Egypt's firstborn, and the song of Moses at the Red Sea must remain for ever woven into the tapestry of Hebrew history. Evermore did Jehovah say, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Beloved, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be declared and showed by us until he come. No truth can ever be discovered which can put His sacrificial death into the shade. Whatever shall occur, even though he cometh in the clouds of heaven, yet our song shall be for ever, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Amid the splendor of his endless reign he shall be "the Lamb in the midst of the throne." Christ as the sacrifice for sin shall ever be the subject of our hallelujahs: "For thou wast slain." Certain vainglorious¹² minds are advancing—advancing from the rock to the abyss. They are making progress from truth to falsehood. They are thinking, but their thoughts are not God's thoughts, neither are their ways His ways. They are leaving the Gospel, they are going away from Christ, and they know not whither. In quitting the substitutionary sacrifice they are quitting the sole Hope of man. As for us, we hear the Lord saying to us, "Ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever," and so will we do. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," is our boast and glory. Let others wander where they will, we abide with Him Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

Remembrance even when in the Promised Land

Notice next, dear friends, that *when the people came into the land where no Egyptian ever entered they were still to remember the passover*. "It shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service." In the land that flowed with milk and honey there was still to be the memorial of the sprinkled blood. Our Lord Jesus is not for the first day of our repentance only, but for all the days of our lives: we remember Him as well amid our highest spiritual joys as in our deepest spiritual griefs. The Paschal lamb is for Canaan, as well as for Egypt, and the sacrifice for sin is for our full assurance as well as for our trembling hope. You and I will never attain to such a state of grace that we can do without the blood which cleanseth from sin. If we should ever reach perfection, then would Christ be even more precious than He is to-day; or, if we did not find Him so, we might be sure that our pretended attainment was a wretched delusion. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, and have constant fellowship with Him, yet still the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

All-pervading memory

Moreover, brethren, I want you to notice carefully that this sprinkling of the blood was to be *an all-pervading memory*. Catch this thought: the children of Israel could not go out of their houses, and they could not come in, without the remembrance of the sprinkled blood. It was over their heads; they must come under it. It was on the right hand and on the left: they must be surrounded by it. They might almost say of it, "Whither shall we go from thy presence?" Whether they looked on their own doors, or on those of their neighbors, there was the same threefold streak, and it was there both by day and by night.

Nor was this all; when two of Israel married, and the foundation of a family was laid, there was another memorial. The young husband and wife had the joy of looking upon their firstborn child, and then they called to mind that the Lord had said, "Sanctify to me all the firstborn." As an Israelite he explained this to his son, and said, "By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: and it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem."

The commencement of every family that made up the Israelitish nation was thus a time of special remembrance of the sprinkling of the blood; for then the redemption money must be paid, and thus an acknowledgment made that they were the Lord's, having been bought with a price. In ways many, and everywhere present, the people were reminded of the need of sacrifice. To the thoughtful, every going down of the sun reminded him of the night to be remembered; while the beginning of each year in the month Abib brought home to him the fact that the beginning of his nation dated from the time of the killing of the lamb. The Lord took means to keep this matter before the people; for they were wayward, and seemed bent upon forgetting, even like this present age.

In the thirteenth chapter, in verse 9, we read: "It shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes." And again, in verse 16, we read: "And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt." By this is meant that they were henceforth to do everything with regard to redemption, and they were henceforth to see everything in connection with redemption. Redemption by blood was to consecrate each man's hand, so that he could not use it for evil, but must employ it for the Lord. He could not take his food, or his tool, in his hand, without remembrance of the sprinkled blood which had made his food and his labor a blessing. All his acts were to be under the influence of atoning blood.

Oh, what service you and I would render if it was always redeemed labor that we gave! If we went to our Sunday-school class, for instance, feeling, "I am bought with a price," and if we preached with redeemed lips the Gospel of our own salvation, how lovingly and lovingly we should speak! What an effect this would have on our lives! You would not dare, some of you, to do what you now do, if you remembered that Jesus died for you. Many a thing which you have left undone would at once be minded if you had a clearer consciousness of redeeming love. The Jews became superstitious, and were content with the letter of their law, and so they wrote out certain verses upon little strips of parchment called "tephillin," which they enclosed in a box, and then strapped upon

¹² **vainglorious** – filled with pride over one's own abilities.

their wrists. The true meaning of the passage did not lie in any such childish action; but it taught them that they were to labor and to act with holy hands, as men under overwhelming obligations to the Lord's redeeming grace. Redemption is to be our impulse for holy service, our check when we are tempted to sin. They were also to wear the memory of the passover as frontlets between their eyes, and you know how certain Jews actually wore phylacteries¹³ upon their foreheads. That could be no more than the mere shell of the thing; the essence of the command was that they were to look on everything in reference to redemption by blood.

Brethren, we should view everything in this world by the light of redemption, and then we shall view it aright. It makes a wonderful change whether you view providence from the standpoint of human merit or from the foot of the Cross. We see nothing truly till Jesus is our light. Everything is seen in its reality when you look through the glass, the ruby glass of the atoning sacrifice. Use this telescope of the Cross, and you shall see far and clear; look at sinners through the Cross; look at saints through the Cross; look at sin through the Cross; look at the world's joys and sorrows through the Cross; look at heaven and hell through the Cross. See how conspicuous the blood of the passover was meant to be, and then learn from all this to make much of the sacrifice of Jesus, yea, to make everything of it, for Christ is all.

The Law also written near

One thing more: we read in Deuteronomy, in the sixth chapter, and the eighth verse, concerning the commandments of the Lord, as follows: "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." See, then, that *the law is to be written hard by*¹⁴ *the memorials of the blood*. In Switzerland, in the Protestant villages, you have seen texts of Scripture upon the doorposts. I half wish we had that custom in England. How much of Gospel might be preached to wayfarers if texts of Scripture were over Christian people's doors! It might be ridiculed as Pharisaical, but we could get over that. Few are liable to that charge in these days through being religious overmuch. I like to see texts of Scripture in our houses, in all the rooms, on the cornices, and on the walls; but outside on the door—what a capital advertisement the Gospel might get at a cheap rate! But note, that when the Jew wrote upon his door-posts a promise, or a precept, or a doctrine, he had to write upon a surface stained with blood, and when the next year's passover came round he had to sprinkle the blood with the hyssop right over the writing. It seems to me so delightful to think of the law of God in connection with that atoning sacrifice which has magnified it and made it honorable. God's commands come to me as a redeemed man; His promises are to me as a blood-bought man; His teaching instructs me as one for whom atonement has been made. The law in the hand of Christ is not a sword to slay us, but a jewel to enrich us. All truth taken in connection with the Cross is greatly enhanced in value. Holy Scripture itself becomes dear to a sevenfold degree when we see that it comes to us as the redeemed of the Lord, and bears upon its every page marks of those dear hands which were nailed to the tree for us.

Beloved, you now see how everything was done that could well be thought of to bring the blood of the Paschal lamb into a high position in the esteem of the people whom the Lord brought out of Egypt; and you and I must do everything we can think of to bring forward, and keep before men for ever the precious doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. He was made sin for us though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

II. The Institution Connected with the Passover

And now I will spend a short time in reminding you of *the institution that was connected with the remembrance of the passover*. "It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover."

Inquiry should be excited in the minds of our children. Oh, that we could get them to ask questions about the things of God! Some of them enquire very early, others of them seem diseased with much the same indifference as older folks. With both orders of mind we have to deal. It is well to explain to children the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, for this shows forth the death of Christ in symbol. I regret that children do not oftener see this ordinance. Baptism and the Lord's Supper should troth¹⁵ be placed in view of the rising generation, that they may then ask us, "What mean ye by this?" Now, the Lord's Supper is a perennial Gospel sermon, and it turns mainly upon the sacrifice for sin. You may banish the doctrine of the atonement from the pulpit, but it will always live in the church through the Lord's Supper. You cannot explain that broken bread and that cup filled with the fruit of the vine, without reference to our Lord's atoning death. You cannot explain "the communion of the body of Christ" without bringing in, in some form or other, the death of Jesus in our place and stead. Let your little ones, then, see the Lord's Supper, and let them be told most clearly what it sets forth. And if not the Lord's Supper—for that is not the thing itself, but only the shadow of the glorious fact—dwell much and often in their presence upon the sufferings and death of our Redeemer. Let them think of Gethsemane,¹⁶ and Gabbatha,¹⁷ and Golgotha,¹⁸ and let them learn to sing in plaintive tones of Him Who laid down His life for us. Tell them Who it was that suffered, and why. Yes, though the hymn is hardly to my taste in some of its expressions, I would have the children sing—

¹³ **phylacteries** – the small boxes that contained the verses mentioned above.

¹⁴ **hard by** – close to, nearby.

¹⁵ **troth** – surely and truly

¹⁶ **Gethsemane** – the garden where Jesus agonized prior to the crucifixion.

¹⁷ **Gabbatha** – the place of Jesus' trial before Pontius Pilate.

¹⁸ **Golgotha** – the hill on which Jesus was crucified.

“There is a green hill far away, Without a city wall.”

And I would have them learn such lines as these:

*“He knew how wicked we had been, And knew that God must punish sin;
So out of pity Jesus said, He’d bear the punishment instead.”*

And when attention is excited upon the best of themes, let us be ready to explain the great transaction by which God is just, and yet sinners are justified. Children can well understand the doctrine of the expiatory¹⁹ Sacrifice; it was meant to be a Gospel for the youngest. The Gospel of substitution is a simplicity, though it is a mystery. We ought not to be content until our little ones know and trust in their finished Sacrifice. This is essential knowledge, and the key to all other spiritual teaching. May our dear children know the Cross, and they will have begun well. With all their gettings may they get an understanding of this, and they will have the foundation rightly laid.

This will necessitate ***your teaching the child his need of a Savior***. You must not hold back from this needful task. Do not flatter the child with delusive rubbish about his nature being good and needing to be developed. Tell him he must be born again. Don’t bolster him up with the fancy of his own innocence, but show him his sin. Mention the childish sins to which he is prone, and pray the Holy Spirit to work conviction in his heart and conscience. Deal with the young in much the same way as you would with the old. Be thorough and honest with them. Flimsy religion is neither good for young nor old. These boys and girls need pardon through the precious blood as surely as any of us. Do not hesitate to tell the child his ruin; he will not else desire the remedy. Tell him also of the punishment of sin, and warn him of its terror. Be tender, but be true. Do not hide from the youthful sinner the truth, however terrible it may be. Now that he has come to years of responsibility, if he believes not in Christ, it will go ill with him at the last great day. Set before him the judgment-seat, and remind him that he will have to give an account of things done in the body. Labour to arouse the conscience; and pray God the Holy Spirit to work by you till the heart becomes tender and the mind perceives the need of the great salvation.

Children need ***to learn the doctrine of the Cross*** that they may find immediate salvation. I thank God that in our Sabbath-school we believe in the salvation of children as children. How very many has it been my joy to see of boys and girls who have come forward to confess their faith in Christ! and I again wish to say that the best converts, the clearest converts, the most intelligent converts we have ever had have been the young ones; and, instead of there being any deficiency in their knowledge of the Word of God, and the doctrines of grace, we have usually found them to have a very delightful acquaintance with the great cardinal truths of Christ. Many of these dear children have been able to speak of the things of God with great pleasure of heart, and force of understanding. Go on, dear teachers, and believe that God will save your children. Be not content to sow principles in their minds which may possibly develop in after years; but be working for immediate conversion. Expect fruit in your children while they are children. Pray for them that they may not run into the world and fall into the evils of outward sin, and then come back with broken bones to the Good Shepherd; but that they may by God’s rich grace be kept from the paths of the destroyer, and grow up in the fold of Christ, first as lambs of His flock, and then as sheep of His hand.

One thing I am sure of, and that is, that if ***we teach the children the doctrine of the atonement*** in the most unmistakable terms, we shall be doing ourselves good. I sometimes hope that God will revive His church and restore her to her ancient faith by a gracious work among children. If He would bring into our churches a large influx of young people, how it would tend to quicken²⁰ the sluggish blood of the supine and sleepy! Child Christians tend to keep the house alive. Oh, for more of them! If the Lord will but help us to teach the children we shall be teaching ourselves. There is no way of learning like teaching, and you do not know a thing till you can teach it to another. You do not thoroughly know any truth till you can put it before a child so that he can see it. In trying to make a little child understand the doctrine of the atonement you will get clearer views of it yourselves, and therefore I commend the holy exercise to you.

What a mercy it will be if our children are thoroughly grounded in the doctrine of redemption by Christ! If they are warned against the false gospels of this evil age, and if they are taught to rest on the Eternal Rock of Christ’s finished work, we may hope to have a generation following us which will maintain the faith, and will be better than their fathers. Your Sunday-schools are admirable; but what is their purpose if you do not teach the Gospel in them? You get children together and keep them quiet for an hour-and-a-half, and then send them home; but what is the good of it? It may bring some quiet to their fathers and mothers, and that is, perhaps, why they send them to the school; but all the real good lies in what is taught the children. The most fundamental truth should be made most prominent, and what is this but the Cross? Some talk to children about being good boys and girls, and so on; that is to say, they preach the law to the children, though they would preach the Gospel to grown-up people! Is this honest? Is this wise? Children need the Gospel, the whole Gospel, the unadulterated Gospel; they ought to have it, and if they are taught of the Spirit of God they are as capable of receiving it as persons of ripe years. Teach the little ones that Jesus died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Very, very confidently do I leave this work in the hands of the teachers of this school. I never knew a nobler body of Christian men and women; for they are as earnest in their attachment to the old Gospel as they are eager for the winning of souls. Be encouraged, my brothers and sisters: the God Who has saved so many of your children is going to save very

¹⁹ **expiatory** – able to make atonement or reparation.

²⁰ **quicken** – stir up, rouse, stimulate.

many more of them, and we shall have great joy in this Tabernacle²¹ as we see hundreds brought to Christ. God grant it, for His Name's sake! Amen. ❧

²¹ **Tabernacle** – Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, where C.H. Spurgeon was pastor.