

The Offering of the High Priest.

by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Christ, as a high priest, must have something to offer, and he offered himself without spot to God as a sacrifice to take away sin.

Scripture: Hebrews 8:3

Topics: "The Role of Christ as High Priest", "Salvation through Sacrifice"

Description

Robert Murray M'Cheyne emphasizes the vital role of the high priest in bridging the gap between sinful humanity and a holy God, explaining that before sin, there was no need for a high priest. He illustrates that Christ, as the ultimate high priest, must have something to offer, which is His own sacrifice, made out of love and necessity. M'Cheyne warns that neglecting this high priest is a grave sin, as it leads to separation from salvation. He urges listeners to recognize their need for Christ and to approach Him without hesitation, as He is the only mediator between them and God. The sermon concludes with a call to action, encouraging all to come to Christ for redemption.

Transcript

Hebrews viii. 3-6--"For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

I am afraid that many of you are heartily tired of hearing about this high priest. If you do not have him to stand between your soul and God--if you do not know him--I am sure that my speaking to you about him is like telling a story to a deaf man, or like showing a picture to one who is blind--"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Are they not foolishness to you ?--I am just as sure, that to every one of you who feel that in yourself you cannot come into the presence of a heart-searching God, that to you it is the sum of the Bible - the sum of your belief--the sum of your duty--to hear about this high priest.

I come to-day to discourse a little farther about this high priest. There are four things in these verses which we would consider. We shall just take them in order ; and

I. Consider what was the use of a high priest at all. Verse 3 --"For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices," &c. This is the use of every high priest. Before there was any sin in the world there was no use for a high priest. Before Adam and Eve fell they needed no high priest--there was no sin in their prayers, and their praises were as pure as the hymns of seraphs. It is the same with the holy angels--they have no blood on their snow-white garments--their holy hymns of praise come out of a burning heart of love up to the throne of God. But when man sinned, there was a chasm made between him and a holy God. Some of you will say, "What was the reason of this ?"--It is what is mentioned in the 1st Psalm-- "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." The reason that there was such a chasm is, that fire and water cannot agree. Man was altogether unholy--God was altogether holy. How could he then come over to God ? It is impossible. There has never been a case in which one has come uncovered to a holy God, in himself. Cain tried it : He brought of the fruti of the ground an offering unto the Lord ; but God did not accept his offering. There have been many that have tried it besides him ; but have they succeeded ?--Never ! Now, brtehren, here came the need of a high priest. A high priest is ordained of God to offer gifts and sacrifices. God, out of love to sinners, appointed one to stand in this chasm, to offer up sacrifices for sin, and then to receive the gifts of sinners. This was the use of the high priest. Any of you who have read the Old Testament will have seen that there never were any who came to God without the high priest : It was he that offered up all their gifts and sacrifices. I would show you, first, that the high priest offered up sacrifices, and then that he offered up gifts.

1st. Sacrifices. You have an example of this in the 1st chapter of Leviticus, from the 2d to the 9th verse - "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord." (Observe the place--he did not take it into the Tabernacle, but offered it at the door). "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering;" &c. Now, dear brethren, if you have been attending to this, you will see, that if any man brought an offering, he brought it no farther than the door of the Tabernacle, and killed it there, and then the priests took the blood, and sprinkled it on the altar. The same thing is taught you more disticntly in the 16th chapter, 15th to 17th verses--"Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil," &c You will notice here that the high priest went in alone.

2d. But I said that every high priest is ordained to offer gifts also. Gifts are without blood, For example,--when any Israelite wanted to offer a meat-offering, he did not present it to the Lord himself, but he brought it to the priest. You will see this in Leviticus ii. 1,2--"And when any will offer a meat offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon: and he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord."

Observe, that even the pardoned Israelite, when he was bringing an offering of thanks, could not bring it to God himslef--he had to bring it to the priest. In the same way, when a farmer had cut down his crops, and was to present a sheaf offering unto the Lord, he had to bring it to the priest. You will see this in Leviticus xxiii. 10--"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your

harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you."

When he brought a sheaf to the Lord, he had to bring it to the priest, and the priest was to wave it as a wave-offering unto the Lord., You will observe he could not wave it in his own hand, for it was a sinful hand. The same thing is shown you in the burning of incense. You will see this in 2d Chronicles xxvi. 16-20--" But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar.

And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land." Now, dear friends, I trust that you now understand, from these examples, what was the use of the high priest.

II. I come now to show that Christ must also of necessity have somewhat to offer.--Verse 3--"For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." Now some of you will say, "Why was it necessary for Christ to have something to offer ?" God sent him into the world to be a high priest. Now, if he is to be a high priest, he must have something to offer. It was typified very early in the world that Christ would be a high priest. Abel stood and offered up to God a lamb, and Melchisedec was a king and a priest. Again, God raised up the Jewish priesthood to be types of Christ ; and God said to David, "Thou art a priest." Therefore, it became him to have somewhat to offer when he came into the world. It was absolutley necessary, if he was to be a priest, that he must offer up something : He must offer up gifts and sacrifices. Some of you will say, "What was the offering that he offered ?" It is answered by the Apostle, "He, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." That was the sacrifice he must offer to take away sin. His necessity was a necessity of love. It was love that made him stand and offer up the Lamb--that was himself. It was love that made him stand at Gethsemane, and prepare the wood, and lay it in order for the sacrifice. "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." There was another necessity--that was truth. He had lifted up his hand to his Father and said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O, God !" Now, when he came to bind the Lamb with cords to the altar, he would say, "I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back." And the he would say, "I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed"--Isaiah L. 7. Ah, brethren ! have you made use of this high priest ? Observe, you do not need to keep back from this high priest on any account : It is his character to be a high priest. When you go to the door of a physician and knock, you do not need to make an apology : It is his business to be a physician. So it is with Christ. We may go to him as we would to a physician, and tell our wants and our diseases.

My dear friends, I had other two points to go over, but will not have time now. I shall reserve them for another occasion, and would only say, if you have had nothing to do with this high priest, if you were to die this moment, you would not be saved. There is a second thing : If you have had no dealings with this high priest, you are despisers of him. You are not only over hell for your past sins, but you are over hell for neglecting God's high priest. All the angels cannot tell how great your sin is. O, sinner! how shall you escape who neglect so great salvation ! There is a time coming when he shall come again. What will you do when you hear his voice, like the sound of many waters, saying, "I died for sinners ; but they would not come to me?" O, brethren ! come to this high priest. You know that you have not come. O ! go, then, to him, for he is the only high priest--there is none other. May the Lord bless the preaching of his own word ! Amen.

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