

# The Perfection of the Gospel Covenant.

by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

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*Robert Murray M'Cheyne's sermon emphasizes the perfection of the Gospel covenant through Christ as the ultimate high priest and the fulfillment of atonement and redemption.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 9:11

**Topics:** "The Perfection of Christ", "Eternal Redemption"

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## Description

Robert Murray M'Cheyne emphasizes the perfection of the Gospel covenant in contrast to the Mosaic covenant, highlighting Christ as the ultimate high priest who offers eternal redemption through His own blood. He explains that while the Mosaic sacrifices were merely shadows and could not perfect the conscience, Christ's sacrifice is complete and provides true peace and acceptance. M'Cheyne elaborates on the significance of Christ's body as the perfect tabernacle and His unique ability to intercede for believers, offering them a new heart and boldness to enter the presence of God. He concludes by urging listeners to embrace the eternal redemption offered through Christ, warning of the consequences of neglecting this gift.

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## Transcript

Hebrews ix. 11,12.--"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,--that is to say, not of this building,--neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

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IN our last lecture on this chapter, we saw the imperfection of the Mosaic covenant. We saw its imperfection in three things. 1st. We saw that the Tabernacle and all its services was only a figure for the time then present. We saw that the ark, and the mercy-seat, and the table and the shew-bread, and the living priest himself, were only a figure--a shadow of good things to come. We saw this imperfection, 2dly, from this, that the gifts and sacrifices under the Mosaic covenant could not make the conscience perfect. You remember I entered at some length into the subject of the conscience. I showed you that it is not till we come to the blood of Christ that we have a pacified conscience. Now, all the Mosaic services could not pacify the conscience. It is true that they did attain to peace of conscience. It is said, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon thee." And we find Isaiah singing, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God ; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem ; and cry unto her, that here warfare is

accomplished--that her iniquity is pardoned ; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." And you find David singing, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." It is quite true that they did attain a peace of conscience ; but they did not attain it through the Mosaic sacrifices ; but they looked past them to the substance--to Christ ; but this only proves the imperfection of it. 3d. I showed you this in another way,--That the Mosaic covenant was only a shadow, because it was imposed on them. I showed you, that Peter says it was a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear,--there were so many services of meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances. God intended it to be a yoke. This, then, was the imperfection of the Mosaic covenant.

Now, I proceed to-day to notice the perfection of the Gospel covenant. We have just three things in these words which we would consider,--the high priest, the Tabernacle where the offering was made, and his entrance into the holiest of all.

1. First of all, the high priest. Verse 11. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come." You will remember, I dare say, some of you, when we were lecturing on the 5th chapter of this wonderful book, that we saw the high priest was taken from among men. God did not send an angel, to wear the breastplate, and the golden ephod, and the priestly robes ; but God took a Jew--"Aaron, thy brother." And I showed you the reasons of this. There were especially two reasons. The first was, that they might come to him. We could not have come to an angel. And then any Jew who had any guilt on his conscience might come to Aaron, his brother. When he thought that he was his brother, of the same nature with him, this would give him boldness to come. And another reason was, that he might have perfect sympathy. You know an angel could not have this--he was not encompassed with our infirmities ; but Aaron felt them : Therefore, he could sympathize with them in their sorrows ; but, brethren, there is one point we should notice. Now, though all this was very gracious in God, yet the high priest could do nothing for any that came to him : He could not pardon him--he could not roll away the burden of guilt, or the wrath of God. What could he do for him ? "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,--that is to say, not of this building,--neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Here is the contrast. He is the perfect high priest, "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come,"--that is, a high priest of Gospel blessings. Just as, you remember, Christ is called, "He that was to come," so here he is called "An high priest of good things to come." Let us consider what these blessings are. The

1st. Is complete atonement. The Jewish high priest could not make complete atonement. It is true that he offered an atonement once a year ; but that only proves that it was imperfect. The Jewish high priest never made atonement for a single soul--it was only a shadow. "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come," &c., made complete atonement. It is written, "He made intercession for the transgressors." "He hath borne our sins in his own body on the tree." O, brethren ! this is a "good thing to come." This is one of the Gospel blessings. Have you got this thing ? Have you come to get all your sins made white as snow. ?

2d. Another good thing that Christ, as the high priest, does, is, to make continual intercession. You know the high priest among the Jews made intercession. He had a breastplate, on which were engraved the names of the children of Israel ; and I have no doubt that he offered up strong cries and tears when he went in before the Lord ; but how could he know all the names of Israel ? or, even if he did, how could he know all the cases of the children of Israel ? or, even if he did, how could he have such a bosom of sympathy as feel for them all ? "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come." He has got

a deep memory--"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." And not only has he got a deep memory : but he has an omniscient eye, and he has got a bosom that can sympathize for all his people.--"We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

3d. Let me mention another of the good things : It is acceptance. You know the Jewish high priest was allowed to go in once a year into the holiest of all ; but he could not take any one with him--not even one of the priests. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come," not only enters himself, but takes us along with him--"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." With the blood of Jesus, all have boldness to enter in, and there is a day coming when he will take us all into the holiest of all--into the presence of his Father.

4th. Another of the good things is, a change of heart. You know the Jewish high priest could sympathize with his brother ; but he could not give him a new heart. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come," he can give the sinner a new heart and put within him a right spirit. He is a high priest of good things to come. Ah, brethren ! have you made use of this high priest ? Have you received these good things to come ? Have you taken them ? Ah ! how strange is it that you would have all the good things of this life, without the good things of Christ ?

II. I now hasten to the tabernacle where Christ made his offering. "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,--that is to say, not of this building." At the beginning of this chapter, we considered the Jewish Tabernacle, where was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread, &c., in which the priests offered sacrifice. But we now come to consider the tabernacles where Christ offered up his sacrifice ; and I think that this tabernacle is his body. You remember he told the Jews that his body was the tabernacle, and he said to his disciples, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again ; but he spake of the temple of his body." So I believe, dear friends, that the tabernacle spoken of was just the holy human nature of Christ. This was the tabernacle in which he offered up his sacrifice, and it is the tabernacle in which he offers up his sweet incense within the vail. And you will notice that it is said to be "a greater,"--not greater in dimension, but in value. We saw that the Jewish Tabernacle was very glorious : Its golden altar, its golden candlestick, its boards of shittim-wood, its curtains of blue and purple and scarlet, and its fine-twined linen, made it a glorious Tabernacle ; and it is called "a perfect Tabernacle." You know the old Tabernacle was very perfect ; but, ah ! it is not like this. And it is said, it is "without hands." You know the old Tabernacle was made with hands ; but this is one without hands. The Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary, and formed him in the Virgin's womb. I believe, dear brethren, that this is intended by the greater and more perfect tabernacle. And I would just leave with you three things in which it excelled the old Tabernacle.

1st. It was intrinsically holy.--The old Tabernacle was extrinsically holy ; but you know the golden altar, and the boards of shittim-wood, and the curtains, and the fine-twined linen, cannot be holy in themselves ; but Christ was intrinsically holy. His holy mind was a perfect transcript of the mind of God.

2d. There is a second particular in which the human body of Christ excelled the old Tabernacle : It is, that he dwelt in it by the Godhead bodily. You know, that in the Tabernacle, God's glory was seen ; but, O ! in the body of Jesus, the Godhead dwells. The omniscience of God is there--the love of God is there. Ah, brethren ! it is sweet to think about him now when he is in heaven.

3d. There is a third thing ; and that is, this tabernacle was never to be taken down. You know the old Tabernacle is taken down : What has become of its boards and its curtains we do not know : But this

tabernacle is never to be taken down : It is a tabernacle that the Lord pitched, and not man--"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Ah ! we may gaze for ever on that pure majestic eye that wept at the grave of Lazarus--it is a tabernacle that will never be taken down. Ah, brethren ! it will be the employment of heaven to study this tabernacle. It was a greater tabernacle--one made perfect through suffering.

III. I come now to the third and last point--The entrance into the holiest of all. In like manner as the Jewish high priest entered into the holiest of all below, so has our high priest entered into the holiest of all above. It is explained, verse 24--"Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." The Jewish high priest drew aside the curtain, and entered into the holy place, even where his foot could not stand unless on blood ; but Christ has gone into the holiest of all--into heaven for us. And then notice the time : We saw that the Jewish high priest entered in once a year ; but Christ has entered in once for all. Now, this shows the perfection of Christ's sacrifice. When the high priest entered in once and then again, that showed that he was not perfect ; but Christ has gone in once for all. It was the perfection of Christ's priesthood that it was once and no more.

And then notice farther, the blood by which he entered in--"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place." I showed you that the Jewish high priest had to take with him blood when he entered into the holiest of all. Now, dear friends, observe that the Lord Jesus did not take the blood of bulls or calves, because it is not possible that they could take away sin ; but he entered in with his own blood. At Gethsemane and Calvary, he shed his blood ; and then, with the marks of the nails in his hands and feet, and the mark of the spear in his side, he entered into the holiest of all. Christ could not enter in within the holiest of all without his own blood.

Now, last of all, notice what he obtained : He obtained eternal redemption for us. He obtained this before he entered in. The Jewish high priest did not obtain redemption by all his sacrifices ; but Christ, by his own blood, hath obtained eternal redemption for us. What is this eternal redemption ? Brethren, we were under bondage to Satan--under the cords of our lusts, and Christ came to pay a price for our redemption--"We were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." When he laid down his blood as the price of our redemption, God accepted of it. The redemption out of the land of Egypt was only a temporary redemption ; but this is eternal redemption.

Dear friends, what think ye of Christ ? What think ye of this high priest of good things to come, who has obtained eternal redemption for us ? Have you got this eternal redemption ? Ah, friends ! of not, then you will be under eternal bondage. O ! the misery of this bondage to one who has heard of redemption. O, brethren ! think of this : It is not long that you will be offered eternal redemption. Remember He is coming again, but not to offer eternal redemption, but to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that have not obeyed the Gospel. O ! that you were wise ! O ! that you would consider this--that you would remember your latter end ! Amen.

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