

A SAVIOR SUCH AS YOU NEED NO. 714

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 7, 1866,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us: for after He had said before, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them,’ then He adds, ‘Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.’ Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.”
Hebrews 10:15-18.

WE have all heard of Utopia, that imaginary land where all things are such as one might desire. A man who would conceive a spiritual Utopia might well be supposed to say, “What a delightful thing it would be, if a man could, in this life, be completely saved! What a priceless gift would be bestowed upon a man if he could know by infallible authority that his every sin was pardoned as to the past, and that, as to his sins in the future, there is provided the certainty of pardon! And what if such a man should also possess the invaluable blessing of another nature, a nature which would be prone to good, just as his present nature is inclined to sin, a nature which would prompt him to every holy thing, and spur him forward to the loftiest aims! What a thrice happy man would he be who could feel that death itself would be gain to him, and that the trials of life will cause him no real loss! He would be blest indeed who could rest secure at all times, because whenever the messenger of doom might come he was ready to meet him, prepared with the absolute certainty that he would enter into immortal glories!”

A vision of such a supposable blessing as this has crossed the minds of many, but they have permitted it to melt into thin air, and have said, “The thing is impossible; but, if it could be attained, what a blessing it would be!”

Now, I have come here this morning to tell you that this priceless blessing is obtainable; no, more, that it has been obtained, and is now enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of persons now living upon the face of the earth, and that you, my dear hearers, shall every one of you enjoy it if you are led to put your trust in that Savior who came into this world on purpose to bring a perfect salvation to the sons of men. It is true that every man who has believed in Jesus is perfectly pardoned. There is against him no sin in God’s book, and God has blotted out all his transgressions. As for the sins which he may yet commit, the blood of Jesus has already been shed to make atonement for those possible sins, and they are already in God’s esteem carried away by the great Sin-bearer. As to his nature, the believer is a renewed man; albeit that his old nature is still inclined to that which is evil, yet he possesses within him an immortal principle, an incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever. And as to his dying or his living, these are but small matters to him. If he lives in the flesh he serves God, and if he dies he only falls asleep to wake up in Jesus Christ’s likeness to serve Him yet more perfectly above. Thus, what was held to be Utopian is but the common possession of every Christian, and this supposable good, which might have been thirsted after if it had not been obtainable, is actually in the possession and enjoyment of every believer in Christ Jesus.

I. I must not tarry, but conduct you at once to the text—IT IS THIS WHICH CONSTITUTES THE GLORY AND SUPERIORITY OF THE NEW COVENANT OF GRACE—NAMELY THAT IT GIVES TO ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN IT PERFECT SALVATION.

Under the old covenant, no one who rested in its many sacrifices ever was or could be perfected. The worshipper brought his turtledoves or his young pigeons, his bullock or his ram, and these were offered; he went away feeling that he had been obedient to a ceremonial command, and therefore he enjoyed some degree of short-lived content. After a time he sinned again, and he had to say to himself, “I must provide another victim; I must go once more up to the tabernacle, or to the temple, for I have further sin to be washed away.” And even when this was done, after awhile he must come again. He could never come to a point in his life in which he could say, “It is finished; there has been a sufficient sacrifice offered; the atonement is complete; I have no need from now on to bring another offering.” Such a state of mind was not supposable under the old Jewish law. There was always needed a renewal of sacrifice,

because it was always an imperfect thing, never finished, but always needing an additional sacrifice. It is true that the true saints under the old dispensation, did, I have no doubt, obtain peace and rest, but that was because they looked through and *beyond* the burnt offering upon the visible altar to the great Sin-offering upon the invisible altar of God's eternal purpose, and virtually entered into the new covenant. For instance, David, in the 51st Psalm, passed right through the veil of outward ordinances, and stood before the true mercy seat in the secret of God. He says, "You desire not sacrifice, You delight not in burnt offering." He gets away from the ceremonial to the evangelical, and he rested in the real and true power of the sacrifice which was to be presented in the later days. The mass of the Jewish people, the great multitude of the nation, rested content with that which was outward, and they found no solid peace, for their very worship gave them a remembrance of sin every year.

Let us rejoice that it is not so under the gospel system. The sacrifice *has* been offered once, offered in such a way that complete atonement has been made. Sin *has* been pardoned, and the sinner who has taken that one finished sacrifice to be the ground of his trust feels that there is nothing left for him to do; it is all done for him. He has not to add a single stone to the building, for the topmost pinnacle, the Lord Jesus, has brought forth with shouts of, "Grace, grace unto it," crying with His expiring breath, "It is finished!"

Our text tells us that in two points the old covenant was far behind the new—first, in the matter of sanctification the old covenant did not do what the new one accomplishes, for the new writes God's law upon our hearts and upon our minds, whereas the old covenant was only written out on tablets of stone; and secondly, the old covenant could not put away the guilt of sin, whereas the new covenant runs on this wise—"Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

1. To begin, then, with the first point, *he who came to the outward and visible rites of Jewish ceremony was not sanctified*. He might stand as long as he would at the altar, and watch the blood poured out in vast quantities, but he would go away and sin just as he had sinned before. There were, no doubt, tens of thousands of persons who were familiar with all the ceremonies of the Jewish law, but who had no holy thoughts excited by it. They were neither hindered from sin nor impelled to virtue by anything which they beheld, for they only looked upon the outward, and never gazed into the inward meaning, or felt the true spiritual power, and so they obtained no benefit as to the sanctification of their lives by all that they saw. I do not doubt that tens of thousands heard the law of Moses read, but were not led to keep it. Did not the people stand shivering around Mount Sinai to hear that law proclaimed as it never had been proclaimed since, and yet what effect had it upon them? A sort of stupid terror seized them, so that they desired the voice of the Lord to be hushed, for they could not endure to hear it; but a very few days afterwards they took their earrings from their ears and made them into a molten calf, and bowing down before it, they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt." All the quaking of the earth, all the moving of that smoking hill, all the thunder of the pealing trumpet, could not make Israel obedient. They knew the law, but they would not keep it. So far as its influence upon their lives was concerned, the law with all the ceremonies which clustered around it was a failure. It did not make them holy; it could not.

But *the gospel is no such failure*. Observe that those who come under the influence of the new covenant really are sanctified, and that by means calculated to so divine an end. The new covenant does not give me a law, it is content to tell me that "heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law shall fail." But what does the new covenant do? Instead of bringing me a law it says, "I will give you love instead of law; you shall not be under the principle of law any longer, but you shall be ruled by the principle of divine grace. Instead of saying to you, 'You shall do this, and you shall not do the other,' I will make you love your God; and when you love Him then you will say, 'What is my God's will shall be my will, and that which my God abhors I will abhor for His sake.'" Law is a principle of power with perfect beings, but it is not powerful enough to keep such wretched hearts as ours in subjection; it rather provokes hostility and excites rebellion—but when love comes in, this omnipotent Principle sweetly compels us. Let me give you an illustration of the difference between the old and the new covenants drawn from human affairs. There are two schoolmasters; one of them with many threats issues rules and laws for his pupils as to what they shall do and what they shall not do, and certain severe punishments are threatened for disobedience, the rod being the great governor of the school. Now, I can suppose these children to be mere hypocrites, obeying when the master was present, but utterly destitute of any principle of order or obedience; glad enough to run into riotous disorder at the first instant the master's back is turned. But the other master, by his kindness, his gentle reasoning, and loving instructions, has won the hearts of his pupils, and he has therefore no need to be always giving

minute regulations, because the lads themselves knowing in their own consciences what is right to him, and having affection for him, would be unwilling to grieve him. Men will do far more from love than we might dare to ask as a matter of duty. Napoleon's soldiers frequently achieved exploits under the influence of fervid attachment for him which no law could have required them to attempt. Had there been cold-blooded orders issued by some domineering officer, who said, "You shall do this and you shall do that," they would have mutinied against such tyranny, and yet when the favorite little corporal seizes the standard, and cries, "Come on," they will rush even to the cannon's mouth out of love to their gallant leader. This is the difference between the law and the gospel. The law says, "You shall or you shall be punished." But the gospel says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have forgiven all your trespasses; now My love shall sweetly influence you, and the influence of inward principle shall guide you in My ways, My law shall be written not upon stone but upon the fleshy tablets of your hearts." The old covenant, in all that it did, only provided precepts; but the gospel provides the power to keep the precept. The old law appealed to the selfishness of our corrupt nature; the gospel appeals to the nobler instincts of a heaven-born life. The law drove us, but the gospel draws us. The law came behind us with its dog and stick as our drovers do from the cattle markets; but the gospel goes before us as the Eastern shepherd before his sheep, and we cheerfully follow where the gospel leads the way. This is the difference then between the old law and its inability to sanctify us, and the gospel and its wonderful power to purify.

Beloved brothers and sisters upon whom the gospel has exercised its power, you know that the love of Christ constrains you. Before your conversion you used to hear moral essays, and to yield your assent to the excellence of virtue, but when temptation attacked you, what help could mere moral essays afford you? What strength to resist sin did you find in your belief in the excellence of virtue? Did you not resign yourself to the energy of evil as the snow melts in the fierce heat of the sun? But now since you have been converted, you are not kept from sin by fear but by love, and you are not impelled to holiness because you are afraid of hell, but because, being saved from the wrath to come and loved with an everlasting love, you cannot be so faithless to your heart's love and to every hallowed impulse of gratitude as to turn back to the beggarly elements from which you have been delivered. What the law could not do with its iron fetters, the gospel has done with its silken bonds. If God had thundered at you, you would have grown proud like Pharaoh, when he said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?" But when the Lord Jesus spoke softly to you, you bowed before Him, and said, "He is my Lord and my God." The blustering wind of the law made you bind about yourself the cloak of your sins, but the genial warmth of the sun of the gospel constrained you to cast away the garments of your sin, and fly to the Savior. Melted and influenced by His love, the icy bosom flows in streams of devout affection and sacred love where the glorious summer of heavenly grace pours its full influence upon it, while all the howling winds of winter did but lock it in more iron bonds. Yes, there is a sanctifying power in the principle of the gospel which is not to be found in the principle of the law.

2. The second point concerns *pardon of sin*. The law, as we have observed, could never put away sin. There was always a fresh offering needed, because the stain still remained. But it is not so with the gospel. Brothers and sisters, if you and I were now living as Jews under that old dispensation, when we came home from offering our sin-offering we could not be sure that we were pardoned. We should gravely question it, for our understanding would say to us, "What connection is there between the killing of a lamb or a bullock and the pardon of sin?" And the conviction would force itself upon our understanding, that the blood of bulls or of goats could not take away sin. We would, therefore, feel uncertain as to whether any pardon was received; moreover, we would never feel safe, for, albeit that yesterday we offered the sin-offering, and did feel secure, yet we have sinned since yesterday, and in what state are we now? Suppose we die before we present another lamb, or suppose we expire just at the point when we had nearly completed a sufficient sacrifice, but yet some portion of sin is left—what then? Why, as a Jew, I could never have felt safe. I might have felt hopeful, but that would have been all; for there would always have been the dark thought, "Perhaps I have not been fully obedient," and if I have failed in one point, I hear the rumbling of that curse in my ears, "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." But, beloved, the gospel yields us something solid to rest upon, for under the gospel we have offered for us not a typical, but a *real sacrifice for sin*. This is an old story, but the Christian cannot hear it too often. Once in the world God Himself descended from the skies and was veiled in our inferior clay. Here on earth God's eternal Son lived and dwelt like one of us, and in the fullness of time, when the sins of all His people had been laid upon Him, He was seized by the officers of justice, and was taken away as having our sins upon His

own person, and on the tree was He fastened that He might die, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. Christ stood in the place of His people, and when God's wrath fell upon sin it fell upon Him, and spent itself upon His person. There is no wrath left in God's heart now against those for whom the Savior died. Christ has suffered all. The penalty which was due to our guilt has not been remitted, but has been paid to the utmost farthing by God Himself in the person of His own dear Son. That death of Jesus Christ on Calvary has a sublimity about it which language fails to convey to the human mind, for He who there as man was made an offering for sin was none other than God Himself. Is it not written, "The flock of God which He has purchased with His own blood"? (Acts 20:28). He who died upon the tree was not mere man, but, "Very God of very God," and hence there is an infinite efficacy in the pangs which He endured, and in the death to which He became obedient, by which the sin of man is put away from the presence of God.

My brothers and sisters, when you and I have been by faith to the cross, we do not ask with the ancient Israelites what connection there can be between the sacrifice and pardon; on the contrary, we can clearly see a very distinct and logical connection between the sacrifice of Jesus and the pardon of sin, for if Christ died for me I *must* be pardoned. How can it be possible that if Christ has suffered in my place I should suffer too? Would this be just? How can it be consistent with justice to punish the Substitute and those also for whom He stood? A man employs a substitute for himself to serve in the army; is he to be called upon to serve in person, too? A man finds another person to pay his debts for him; is he to pay his own debts after that himself? Surely not, for the thing is done and done with. I say it, not fearing to be misunderstood in the connection in which I say it, that the sin of God's people is *non est*, has ceased to be, for Christ Jesus destroyed it by burying it in His tomb. The prophet has said, "The Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all," and since Jesus has taken upon Himself that sin, and has been punished for that sin, there remains nothing now for which God's people can be punished, for their sins God has punished already, and it is according to neither justice nor mercy that sin should be atoned for twice, that first the bleeding sufferer should endure, and then those for whom He suffered. Surely God is not unjust to forget the Savior's work and labor of love. Now there was no connection you see between the blood of a bull and the putting away of sin, but there is a great connection between the blood of Christ and the putting away of sin, because that was shed instead of *our* blood. He died in the place of the multitude of men of Adam born who put their trust in Him; He was their substitute and their complete salvation.

You know this doctrine well enough, for you have heard it hundreds of times. Do you all believe it? Are you all resting on it? That is the point, to rest on this is to build on a rock which will not be shaken, even when earth's old columns bow, and the stars fall like fig leaves from the tree.

Further, not only has a real sacrifice been offered, but *sin is therefore really atoned for*. I want to bring every believer and every unbeliever, too, to face this truth of God. What sin is that which I have committed? Do I trust Christ? If I unfeignedly trust Him, then the punishment due to my sin has been exacted already. Have I been a swearer? My blasphemy was laid on Christ before I was born, and I cannot be punished at God's bar for that blasphemy because Christ has been punished for it. Have I been a thief; have I been a liar; have I been a drunkard? Or, have my sins, instead of that, been merely sins of the heart rather than of the life? Have I been an unbeliever, hard-hearted, callous, and careless? Whatever my sins may have been, they were numbered on Christ's head of old when He was the scapegoat for my sins, and all the wrath of God which was due to all the sins which I have committed, or ever shall commit, if I am a believer, was borne by my Redeemer, and He received for my debts a full receipt from the hand of everlasting justice, and my sins are forever put away by Him. What does the Scripture say? "He finished transgression, and made an end of sin." What a wonderful word—"made an end of sin"! And then, again, "Once in the end of the world has Christ appeared to put away sin." You know what that means: to put it right away so that you cannot find it any more. He has made an end, then, of His people's sin and put it away. Christ by suffering what was due to God on account of sin has lifted up sin from His people and destroyed it, stamping it out as men stamp out sparks of fire, casting it right into the depths of the sea as men cast away that which they wish never to see again. Surely this gives us solid ground for comfort if we now are resting upon Him. It appears from the text yet further, that since a real sacrifice has been offered, and sin has been really atoned for, *all the sin of those who are in the covenant is gone*. No, do not think I speak too boldly; what does the text say? "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." They are gone then. Every believer in Christ is as clear before God as though he had never sinned. If he had not sinned he would have worn the innocence of a creature, but now though he has sinned he has been washed in the blood of Jesus, and clothed with the righteousness of Christ he wears the righteousness of the Creator Himself. If I had been a perfectly innocent creature I

could have gone up to heaven on the footing of mortal merit. Yet as I am, sinner, I rest in Jesus, and now I shall enter heaven on the footing of immortal merit. I could have gone there had I never sinned, enrobed in a white garment, but I shall go there with a garment quite as white now, only I shall have to sing, "I have washed my robe, and made it white in the blood of the Lamb." Christian, let not your past sin lead you into despair. Hate it, repent of it, but do not let it depress your spirit, or destroy your joy, for your sin is forgiven. "I have blotted out like a cloud your iniquities, and like a thick cloud your transgressions." The Lord has cast your sins into the depths of the sea. "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they are red like crimson, they shall be white as snow."

All the believer's sins are gone, and what is more, *they are gone on the highest authority*, for what does the text say?—"Thus says the Lord, their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Now, if the Jew received pardon from the lips of a priest he might not be quite sure that the priest had any right to give it, and I am sure if I received absolution from any priest on earth I should feel as if it was not worth the shilling which I paid for it. What right has he to pardon me? I never offended him. If I have offended him he can pardon me for the offense as it stands against himself; but it is clear that nobody can pardon except the person offended. If anybody insulted me and one of you forgave him for it, I should say, "Well, much good may it do him." Who can forgive but he who has been injured? Now, the pardon of our sin is no good except it comes from God Himself, and the text says, "Thus says the Lord, their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." God himself speaks here, not through the mediate interposition of some earth-born priest, but He speaks directly Himself, "I forgive them, I pardon them, I cleanse them, their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

And then observe *this pardon is forever*. It is not, "Their sins and iniquities I will forgive for the present," but, "I will remember them no more." Sin once pardoned can never be imputed to a man again. God never plays fast and loose with us. He does not say today, "I absolve you," and then the next day accuse us. The apostle Paul used this as an argument. He says, "Who is he who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" And, as if nobody could, he answers triumphantly, "It is God who justifies." He gives as a reason why none can condemn that fact that Christ has died and risen again. Sin forgiven comes not back to us. Let none of you labor under fear of that. Your old sins are buried and they shall never have a resurrection.

Then there comes in, to complete the whole, *the sweet satisfaction that our sins are gone in the most complete sense*. God says He will remember them no more. It is possible for God to forget, then? Can infinite wisdom cease to remember? Can the eternal mind cast a thing completely out of itself? Beloved, He speaks after the manner of men, and you know what a man means when he says he will never remember a thing. I have heard some say, "Well, I can forgive it, but I will never forget it," which being interpreted, means, "I never will forgive it." But God when He forgives forgets too; that is to say, He will make no difference in His future dealings with us on account of our past sins. He will treat His children as though they had always been obedient children, and had never revolted. When the prodigal is received and forgiven, he is not put at the end of the table, below the salt, or sent into the kitchen with the servants, as if his faults were forgiven but yet remembered. He is invited to the table, and he feasts there upon the best the house affords—the fatted calf is killed, the ring is on his finger, and there are music and dancing for him, as sweet music and as joyous dancing as for the constantly obedient elder son; no more, for there is more joy over him than over the son who went not astray. Brothers and sisters, God in this sense forgets His people's sins. Why is it then that you and I sometimes are desponding in spirit concerning past sin? It is right of us to hate it, to sorrow over it, but it is not right for us to get to fearing and trembling as to the punishment of that sin. Why do we? I will tell you. It is because we forget the cross. That repentance which does not look to the cross is a legal repentance, and it will breed misery. True repentance looks to Jesus bleeding on the tree and she weeps, but as she weeps she says, "Lord, I do not weep for this sin because I believe I shall ever be punished for it; I know I never shall, for I see my sin punished in the person of my Savior; I hear the whip that ought to have fallen on my back falling cruelly on Jesus; I see the wounds that ought to have been made in my soul and body made in my Lord's person; the bitter cry of anguish which ought to have come from a soul like mine I hear coming from Him as He cries, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' and I mourn for my sin because it made the Savior bleed; I mourn to think I should have been so guilty as to need that He should suffer in order that I might be delivered from my guilt."

Brothers and sisters, beware of an unbelieving repentance, for God does not accept it. Seek to get repentance at the foot of the cross. If you have an eye to sin, take care to have an eye to the atonement, too. Let your eyes be full of tears, but let those tears act like magnifying glasses to your eyes to make the

cross appear a grander and a dearer thing than ever. Never let your sin shake your confidence in Christ, for if you are a great sinner, glorify Him by believing Him to be a great Savior. Do not diminish the value of the blood while you magnify the intensity of your sin. Think as badly of sin as you can, but think right gloriously of Christ, for there is no sin, however hellish or devilish, which the blood of Jesus cannot take away; and if the concentrated essence of everything that is diabolical in iniquity is found in yourself, yet “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin,” and herein we must, yes, and will, rejoice!

This, then, is the superiority of the covenant of grace. It really does sanctify a man, supplying him with motives for holiness, and really does justify and pardon a man, actually and really taking away his sin, so that it is said of him, “His sins and iniquities I will remember no more.”

We must now, very briefly, glance at the second point.

II. Secondly, THERE IS A DOCTRINE TAUGHT BY THIS, which is to be found in the 18th verse, “Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.” We have tried to show from the words of the text that Christ is sufficient to purify us by supplying us with holy motives, and to pardon us by His having Himself atoned for sin. The doctrine, then, is, that THERE IS NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SIN, BECAUSE CHRIST SUPPLIES ALL THAT IS NEEDED.

Just see what a broom this doctrine is to sweep this country from Popery, and to sweep all nations of it. Think, in the first place, of what is called, “*the unbloody sacrifice of the mass, for the quick and the dead.*” What becomes of that? The apostle says, “Where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.” Where, then, did the “mass” come from, and of what good is it? The Lord’s Supper was intended to be the remembrance to us of our Lord’s sufferings, instead of which it has been prostituted by the Church of Rome into the blasphemy of a pretended continual offering up of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ—a *continual* sacrifice. According to the Romish doctrine the offering upon Calvary is not enough; the atonement for sin is not finished; it has to be performed every day, and many times a day, in the many churches of Christendom, by certain appointed persons, so that that sacrifice is always being offered. Do you notice how strongly the apostle speaks in this matter? He says Christ offered a sacrifice for sin *ONCE*. He declares that while other priests stood ministering at the altar, this man, the Lord Jesus, offered a sacrifice *ONCE*, and has by that *ONE* offering perfected forever His elect ones! Oh, brothers and sisters, the “mass” is a mass of abominations, a mass of hell’s own concocting, a crying insult against the Lord of glory! It is not to be spoken of in any terms but those of horror and detestation! Whenever I think of another sacrifice for sin being offered, by whomever it may be presented, I can only regard it as an infamous insult to the perfection of the Savior’s work.

Then, again, *what becomes of penance?* Is not penance in its essence an offering for sin? I do not care who it is who prescribes the penance, nor what it is, whether it is licking the pavement with your tongues, or wearing a hair-shirt, or laying on the whip; if it is supposed that by the mortification of the flesh men can take away my sin, this text is like a two-edged sword to pierce the inmost heart of such teaching. “Where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.” Take off your hair shirt, poor fool! Wash the stones with a dishcloth, and keep your tongue clean. There is no need for these fooleries; Christ has completed the atonement, you need not suffer thus; you need not, like Luther, go up and down the staircase of Pilate, and think that your poor sore knees will find favor with God. Christ has suffered, God exacts no more! Do not try to supplement His gold with your dross. Do not try to add to His matchless robes the rags of your poor penance. “There is no more sacrifice for sin.”

How this, again, *shuts the gates of “purgatory”!* It is held that there are some who die who are believers, but who are not quite purified from sin, that in an after state they must undergo a purgatorial quarantine to be purged by fire, so that they may become quite complete. But, says the text, “Where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.” Beloved, when the thief died on the cross he had but just believed, and had never done a single good work, but where did he go? Well, he ought to have gone to “purgatory” by rights if ever anybody did, but instead of that, the Savior said to him, “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.” Why? Because the ground of the man’s admission into Paradise was perfect; the grounds of his admission there was Christ’s work, and that is how you and I will get into heaven, because Christ’s work is finished! The thief did not go down to “purgatory,” nor, blessed be His name, neither shall you nor I if we trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus!

“Ah!” you will say, “this is meant for Catholics.” Well, then, a little for yourselves. There are some of you who are quite as bad; you receive the same doctrine only in another shape. There are some here who think they cannot be saved by Christ *because they have not had enough terrors of conscience.* “Oh,” say some, “if I could dream horrible dreams, if I could feel as if I could kill myself, if I were

afraid that Satan would surely have me; then I could come to Christ!" Oh, you simpleton, do you think that this can be an offering for sin? Do you suppose that your frights, your dreams, your terrors, your unbelief, your distress of mind can help to make you fit for Christ? Come, poor soul, without any terrors! Come as you are. Christ is enough for you. If you cannot bring a penny, come. If you are ever so empty-handed, Christ died for empty-handed sinners. He delights to meet with poor miserable beggars who have nothing of their own, that He may say, and say truly, "I have saved them completely, and I shall have all the glory for it."

Some others of you think *that you must get your hearts softened before you can trust in Christ*. When we preach the gospel to you, you say, "I do not feel such tenderness as I should like to feel." No, dear friend, and you never will while you talk so, for true tenderness of heart is not obtained by shutting your eyes to the cross. If you will not trust Christ, your heart will grow harder instead of softer, and if you set up the softness of your own heart in the place of Christ's sufferings, you will find that this unbelief of yours will make you grow more stubborn still.

"Oh," you say, "*but I cannot pray as I would wish.*" Very likely, but then do you think that your prayers are to make up for Christ's work? I tell you that your prayer is a most precious thing, and that a broken heart is a precious thing, and yet your prayer and your broken heart are good for nothing if you put them in the place of Christ! You are not saved by your prayers or your brokenness of spirit, but by what Jesus did upon the cross, and you must rest there and there only. Will you, sinner? Will you do this, or will you still put away the comfort of the cross and say, "No, I will not trust Christ till I can trust my own prayers"? You will never be saved while you talk so. May the Holy Spirit cure you of your unbelief!

"Ah!" says another, "*but then I cannot realize this.*" Oh, I see, then is your realizing it that is to do it, is it? Not Christ's sufferings? You will have a finger in this pie, and think that surely my Master cannot do the work without your help. Oh, poor sinner, you talk about humility, but this is the rankest pride in the world—to want to do something to save yourself! Come now, may the Holy Spirit help you to come now, as you are! Give up these dreams, these notions, these proud fancies, and come as you are, and say, "If God Himself became man to die for sin, there must be merit enough in His death to remove my sin. Does God himself say that if I trust Christ my sins and my iniquities He will remember no more? Then I will trust Christ, I cannot help it; I *must* cast myself on Him." Oh, my dear hearers, depend upon it you may spin, and spin, and spin, but all that you ever spin God will undo as fast as you spin it. You will think, "Now I am in a fair way of going to heaven." I tell you, you are in a fair way of going to hell when you talk so. You are never on the road to heaven unless you stand self-condemned; when you are convicted in yourselves, then God acquits you, but when you say, "Lord, I thank You that I am not as other men are," you are a poor condemned Pharisee, and your portion will be the flames! If you will come all unworthy and undeserving as you are, altogether lost and ruined, all hopeless and helpless, fit for nothing but to be swept out of God's universe; if you will acknowledge yourself to be an undutiful child, a wandering sheep and a sinner deserving His anger, then He will meet you, when you are yet a long way off He will meet you, and will fall upon your neck and kiss you, and say, "Take off his rags and clothe him." My Savior loves sinners; my heavenly Father loves His prodigal children, but He does not love those who bring Him their own works, and their own righteousness. Away with these things, away with them! They are a stench in the nostrils of God! Your very prayers, and tears, and repentings, and humbling, if you put them in the place of the cross of Christ, are only so much dogs' meat to be cast into the fire of hell. He will not have you and your good works, but He will have you and your sins. He will not have you and your riches, but He will have you and your poverty. He will not have you and your fullness, but He will have you and your emptiness. He will have you as you are, just as you are. Only trust Him; trust Him, and you shall find that this new covenant will do for you what the old covenant of "Do, do, do," could never do—it will sanctify you and justify you.

III. Lastly, does not this doctrine ANSWER A QUESTION that has often been asked of me, namely, HOW IS IT THAT THERE ARE SO MANY HEARTS WHICH CAN FIND NO PEACE?

Some people are always learning, but never coming to the truth of God. They are good people in many senses, and you are very hopeful that there is a work of divine grace in them, but they cannot be happy. They are always dissatisfied and discontented, and they are not only miserable themselves but they make other people miserable, and so do mischief to others' souls by their unhappiness. Now, what do you think is the reason? I am sure it is this, *they will not agree that Christ shall be all in all to them*. I tell you in God's name that I am sure in this thing I speak God's very mind; if you will have Christ to be all, you may have peace and joy, no, you SHALL have it. But there is a secret something which you are

clinging to. You want to share the glory with Christ. Your mind is not brought down to this, that Christ must be altogether your Savior. Remember—

*“Tis perfect poverty alone
That sets the soul at large,
While we can call one mite our own
We find no full discharge.”*

When we get down to perfect poverty and have nothing to depend upon but Christ, if such a soul is not saved God must have reversed His plans and changed His nature. He never did cast out a needy sinner yet, and He said, “He who comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” But oh, the stubbornness of the human will that it will not come to Christ! We may preach; we may continue to do so till we are dumb in death; good books may be read; the Bible may be well known; but oh, you will not come and trust my Master. It is such a simple thing too, and apparently so easy, and yet your proud heart kicks against it. Oh, you must come down to it, my hearers; you must come down to it. You shall never have peace—you shall only get worse and worse with all your striving—you shall never have peace till you trust Christ. It is in this matter as it is with a man in the water; we are told that if a man who has fallen into the water kicks and plunges he is sure to be drowned, but if he throws himself back and floats he cannot sink; so it is with you. Now, leave off your kicking and your plunging, and throw yourselves back in simple confidence upon the mercy of our good God in the person of His dear Son, and you shall never perish.

Now, Christians, do you not see the reason why you also sink into this state of heart sometimes? Why, brothers and sisters, it is the same with you as it is with sinners—if you do not keep close to the cross you will soon become unhappy. I know you doubting professors, you who have been singing—

“Tis a point I long to know,”

you would not sing that if you lived close to the cross and sung—

*“My faith looks up to Thee,
You Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine.”*

And you backsliders, you would never backslide if you lived where the blood continually flows, for that which pardons us sanctifies us. I believe that when you and I begin to think we are fine saints, and forget that we are only just filthy sinners washed in the blood, we begin to backslide. There is nothing like living every day as we lived the first day of our conversion. Does not Paul say, “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk you in Him”? That is, live every day as you lived at first, being nothing in yourself, but Jesus being all in all to you. Away with self; let Jesus be glorified! We must not have so much as a shadow of dependence upon anything that we can do or feel, or promise, but we must depend alone upon that dear that blessed Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us!

I feel this morning as if I could come afresh to that dear cross, and rest there on Christ. I feel as if I could put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, and say, “My Lord and my God!” Oh, cannot some poor soul do this who never did it before? I pray God he may; and if it is done by you, and you trust in Jesus, then—let heaven rejoice, let earth be glad, and praise surround the throne of God, because such a one is saved, for is it not written, “Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more”?

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—HEBREWS 8:6-13; 10:1-22.

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