

SERMONS BY C.H.  
SPURGEON ON  
JUSTIFICATION

*“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace  
with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1*



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CHAPTER I  
JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE, C.H.  
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"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is  
in Christ Jesus."

Rom. 3:24

**T**he hill of comfort is the hill of Calvary; the house of  
consolation is builded with the wood of the cross; the  
temple of heavenly cordials is founded upon the riven  
rock, riven by the spear which pierced its side. No scene in sacred  
history ever gladdens the soul like the scene on Calvary.

"Is it not strange, the darkest hour  
That ever dawn'd on sinful earth  
Should touch the heart with softer power  
For comfort, than an angel's mirth?  
That to the cross the mourner's eye should turn,  
Sooner than where the stars of Bethlehem burn?"

Nowhere does the soul ever find such consolation as on that very spot where misery reigned, where woe triumphed, where agony reached its climax. There grace hath dug a fountain, which ever gusheth with waters pure as crystal, each drop capable of alleviating the woes and the agonies of mankind. Ye have had your seasons of woe, my brethren and my sisters in Christ Jesus; and ye will confess it was not at Olivet that ye ever found comfort, not on the hill of Sinai, nor on Tabor; but Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha have been a means of comfort to you. The bitter herbs of Gethsemane have often taken away the bitters of your life; the scourge of Gabbatha hath often scourged away your cares, and the groans of Calvary have put all other groans to flight.

We have, this morning, then, a subject which I trust may be the means of comforting God's saints, seeing it takes its rise at the cross, and thence runs on in a rich stream of perennial blessing to all believers. You note, we have in our text, first of all, the redemption of Christ Jesus; secondly, the justification of sinners flowing from it; and then thirdly, the manner of the giving of this justification, "freely by his grace."

## I. FIRST, THEN, WE HAVE THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN OR BY CHRIST JESUS.

THE FIGURE OF REDEMPTION IS VERY SIMPLE, AND HAS BEEN very frequently used in Scripture. When a prisoner has been taken captive, and has been made a slave by some barbarous power, it has been usual, before he could be set free, that a ransom price should be paid down. Now, we being, by the fall of Adam, prone to guiltiness, and, indeed, virtually guilty, we were by the irreproachable judgment of God given up to the vengeance of the law; we were given into the hands of justice; justice claimed us to be his bond slaves for ever, unless we could pay a ransom, whereby our souls could be redeemed. We were, indeed, poor as owlets, we had not

wherewith to bless ourselves. We were, as our hymn hath worded it, "bankrupt debtors;" an execution was put into our house; all we had was sold; we were left naked, and poor, and miserable, and we could by no means find a ransom; it was just then that Christ stepped in, stood sponsor for us, and, in the room and stead of all believers, did pay the ransom price, that we might in that hour be delivered from the curse of the law and the vengeance of God, and go our way, clean, free, justified by his blood.

Let me just endeavour to show you some qualities of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. You will remember the multitude he has redeemed; not me alone, nor you alone, but "a multitude that no man can number," which shall as far exceed the stars of heaven for number, as they exceed all mortal reckoning. Christ hath bought for himself, some out of every kingdom, and nation, and tongue, under heaven; he hath redeemed from among men some of every rank, from the highest to the lowest; some of every colour—black and white; some of every standing in society, the best and the worst. For some of all sorts hath Jesus Christ given himself a ransom that they might be redeemed unto himself.

Now, concerning this ransom, we have to observe, that it was all paid, and all paid at once. When Christ redeemed his people, he did it thoroughly; he did not leave a single debt unpaid, nor yet one farthing for them to settle afterwards. God demanded of Christ the payment for the sins of all his people; Christ stood forward, and to the utmost farthing paid whate'er his people owed. The sacrifice of Calvary was not a part payment; it was not a partial exoneration, it was a complete and perfect payment, and it obtained a complete and perfect remittal of all the debts of all believers that have lived, do live, or shall live, to the very end of time. On that day when Christ hung on the cross, he did not leave a single farthing for us to pay as a satisfaction to God; he did not leave, from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, that he had not satisfied. The whole of the demands of the law were paid down there and then by Jehovah Jesus, the great high priest of all his people. And blessed be his name, he paid it all at once too. So priceless was the ransom, so princely and

munificent was the price demanded for our souls, one might have thought it would have been marvellous if Christ had paid it by instalments; some of it now, and some of it then. King's ransoms have sometimes been paid part at once, and part in dues afterwards, to run through years. But not so our Saviour: once for all he gave himself a sacrifice; at once he counted down the price, and said, "It is finished," leaving nothing for him to do, nor for us to accomplish. He did not drivel out a part-payment, and then declare that he would come again to die, or that he would again suffer, or that he would again obey; but down upon the nail, to the utmost farthing, the ransom of all people was paid, and a full receipt given to them, and Christ nailed that receipt to his cross, and said, "It is done, it is done; I have taken away the handwriting of ordinances, I have nailed it to the cross; who is he that shall condemn my people, or lay anything to their charge? for I have blotted out like a cloud their transgressions, and like a thick cloud their sins!"

And when Christ paid all this ransom, will you just notice, that he did it all himself! He was very particular about that. Simon, the Cyrenian, might bear the cross; but Simon, the Cyrenian, might not be nailed to it. That sacred circle of Calvary was kept for Christ alone. Two thieves were with him there; not righteous men, lest any should have said that the death of those two righteous men helped the Saviour. Two thieves hung there with him, that men might see that there was majesty in his misery, and that he could pardon men and show his sovereignty, even when he was dying. There were no righteous men to suffer; no disciples shared his death; Peter was not dragged there to be beheaded, John was not nailed to a cross side by side with him; he was left there alone. He says, "I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me." The whole of the tremendous debt was put upon his shoulders; the whole weight of the sins of all his people was placed upon him. Once he seemed to stagger under it: "Father, if it be possible." But again he stood upright: "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." The whole of the punishment of his people was distilled into one cup; no mortal lip might give it so much as a solitary sip. When

he put it to his own lips, it was so bitter, he well nigh spurned it—"Let this cup pass from me." But his love for his people was so strong, that he took the cup in both his hands, and

"At one tremendous draught of love  
He drank damnation dry,"

for all his people. He drank it all, he endured all, he suffered all; so that now for ever there are no flames of hell for them, no racks of torment; they have no eternal woes; Christ hath suffered all they ought to have suffered, and they must, they shall go free. The work was completely done by himself, without a helper.

And note, again, it was accepted. In truth, it was a goodly ransom. What could equal it? A soul "exceeding sorrowful even unto death;" a body torn with torture; a death of the most inhuman kind; and an agony of such a character, that tongue cannot speak of it, nor can even man's mind imagine its horror. It was a goodly price. But say, was it accepted? There have been prices paid sometimes, or rather offered, which never were accepted by the party to whom they were offered, and therefore the slave did not go free. But this was accepted. The evidence I will shew you. When Christ declared that he would pay the debt for all his people, God sent the officer to arrest him for it; he arrested him in the garden of Gethsemane, and seizing upon him, he dragged him to the bar of Pilate, to the bar of Herod, and to the judgment seat of Caiaphas; the payment was all made, and Christ was put into the grave. He was there, locked up in durance vile, until the acceptance should have been ratified in heaven. He slept there a portion of three days in his tomb. It was declared that the ratification was to be this: the surety was to go his way as soon as ever his suretyship engagements had been fulfilled. Now let your minds picture the buried Jesus. He is in the sepulchre. 'Tis true he has paid all the debt, but the receipt is not yet given; he slumbers in that narrow tomb. Fastened in with a

seal upon a giant stone, he sleeps still in his grave; not yet has the acceptance been given from God; the angels have not yet come from heaven to say, "The deed is done, God has accepted thy sacrifice." Now is the crisis of this world; it hangs trembling in the balance. Will God accept the ransom, or will he not? We shall see. An angel comes from heaven with exceeding brightness; he rolls away the stone; and forth comes the captive, with no manacles upon his hands, with the grave clothes left behind him; free, never more to suffer, never more to die. Now,

"If Jesus had not paid the debt,  
He ne'er had been at freedom set."

If God had not accepted his sacrifice, he would have been in his tomb at this moment; he never would have risen from his grave. But his resurrection was a pledge of God's accepting him. He said, "I have had a claim upon thee to this hour; that claim is paid now; go thy way." And death gave up his royal captive, the stone was rolled into the garden, and the conqueror came forth, leading captivity captive.

And, moreover, God gave a second proof of acceptance; for he took his only begotten Son to heaven, and set him at his right hand, far above all principalities and powers; and therein he meant to say to him, "Sit upon the throne, for thou hast done the mighty deed; all thy works and all thy miseries are accepted as the ransom of men." O my beloved, think what a grand sight it must have been when Christ ascended into glory; what a noble certificate it must have been of his Father's acceptance of him! Do you not think you see the scene on earth? It is very simple. A few disciples are standing upon a hill, and Christ mounts into the air in slow and solemn movement, as if an angel sped his way by gentle degrees, like mist or exhalation from the lake into the skies. Can you imagine what is going on up yonder? Can you for a moment



conceive how, when the mighty conqueror entered the gates of heaven, the angels met him,

"They brought his chariot from on high,  
To bear him to his throne;  
Clapp'd their triumphant wings, and cried,  
'The glorious work is done'"

Can you think how loud were the plaudits when he entered the gates of heaven? Can you conceive how they pressed on one another, to behold how he came conquering and red from the fight? Do you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the saints redeemed, come to behold the Saviour and the Lord? They had desired to see him, and now their eyes behold him in flesh and blood, the conqueror over death and hell! Do you think you see him, with hell at his chariot-wheels, with death dragged as a captive through the royal streets of heaven? Oh, what a spectacle was there that day! No Roman warrior ever had such a triumph; none ever saw such a majestic sight. The pomp of a whole universe, the royalty of entire creation, cherubim and seraphim and all powers create, did swell the show; and God himself, the Everlasting One, crowned all, when he pressed his Son to his bosom, and said, "Well done, well done; thou hast finished the work which I gave thee to do. Rest here for ever, mine accepted one." Ah, but he never would have had that triumph, if he had not paid all the debt. Unless his Father had accepted the ransom-price, the ransomer had never been so honoured; but because it was accepted, therefore did he so triumph. So far, then, concerning the ransom.

II. AND NOW, BY THE HELP OF GOD'S SPIRIT, LET ME ADDRESS myself to THE EFFECT OF THE RANSOM; being justified—"justified freely by his grace through the redemption."

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NOW, WHAT IS THE MEANING OF JUSTIFICATION? DIVINES will puzzle you, if you ask them. I must try the best I can to make justification plain and simple, even to the comprehension of a child. There is not such a thing as justification to be had on earth for mortal men, except in one way. Justification, you know, is a forensic term; it is employed always in a legal sense. A prisoner is brought to the bar of justice to be tried. There is only one way whereby that prisoner can be justified; that is, he must be found not guilty; and if he is found not guilty, then he is justified—that is, he is proved to be a just man. If you find that man guilty, you cannot justify him. The Queen may pardon him, but she cannot justify him. The deed is not a justifiable one, if he were guilty concerning it; and he cannot be justified on account of it. He may be pardoned; but not royalty itself can ever wash that man's character. He is as much a real criminal when he is pardoned as before. There is no means among men of justifying a man of an accusation which is laid against him, except by his being proved not guilty. Now, the wonder of wonders is, that we are proved guilty, and yet we are justified: the verdict has been brought in against us, guilty; and yet, notwithstanding, we are justified. Can any earthly tribunal do that? No; it remained for the ransom of Christ to effect that which is an impossibility to any tribunal upon earth. We are all guilty. Read the 23rd verse, immediately preceding the text—"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." There the verdict of guilty is brought in, and yet we are immediately afterwards said to be justified freely by his grace.

Now, allow me to explain the way whereby God justifies a sinner. I am about to suppose an impossible case. A prisoner has been tried, and condemned to death. He is a guilty man; he cannot be justified, because he is guilty. But now, suppose for a moment that such a thing as this could happen—that some second party could be introduced, who could take all that man's guilt upon himself, who could change places with that man, and by some

mysterious process, which of course is impossible with men, become that man; or take that man's character upon himself; he, the righteous man, putting the rebel in his place, and making the rebel a righteous man. We cannot do that in our courts. If I were to go before a judge, and he should agree that I should be committed for a year's imprisonment, instead of some wretch who was condemned yesterday to a year's imprisonment, I could not take his guilt. I might take his punishment, but not his guilt. Now, what flesh and blood cannot do, that Jesus Christ by his redemption did. Here I stand, the sinner. I mention myself as the representative of you all. I am condemned to die. God says, "I will condemn that man; I must, I will—I will punish him." Christ comes in, puts me aside, and stands himself in my stead. When the plea is demanded, Christ says, "Guilty;" takes my guilt to be his own guilt. When the punishment is to be executed, forth comes Christ. "Punish me," he says; "I have put my righteousness on that man, and I have taken that man's sins on me. Father, punish me, and consider that man to have been me. Let him reign in heaven; let me suffer misery. Let me endure his curse, and let him receive my blessing." This marvellous doctrine of the changing of places of Christ with poor sinners, is a doctrine of revelation, for it never could have been conceived by nature. Let me, lest I should have made a mistake, explain myself again. The way whereby God saves a sinner is not, as some say, by passing over the penalty. No; the penalty has been all paid. It is the putting of another person in the rebel's place. The rebel must die; God says he must. Christ says, "I will be substitute for the rebel. The rebel shall take my place; I will take his." God consents to it. No earthly monarch could have power to consent to such a change. But the God of heaven had a right to do as he pleased. In his infinite mercy he consented to the arrangement. "Son of my love," said he, "you must stand in the sinner's place; you must suffer what he ought to have suffered; you must be accounted guilty, just as he was accounted guilty; and then I will look upon the sinner in another light. I will look at him as if he were Christ; I will accept him as if he were my only-begotten Son, full of grace and truth. I will give

him a crown in heaven, and I will take him to my heart for ever and ever." This is the way we are saved, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

And now, let me further go on to explain some of the characteristics of this justification. As soon as a repenting sinner is justified, remember, he is justified for all his sins. Here stands a man all guilty. The moment he believes in Christ, his pardon at once he receives, and his sins are no longer his; they are cast into the depths of the sea. They were laid upon the shoulders of Christ, and they are gone. The man stands a guiltless man in the sight of God, accepted in the beloved. "What!" say you, "do you mean that literally?" Yes, I do, That is the doctrine of justification by faith. Man ceases to be regarded by divine justice as a guilty being; the moment he believes on Christ his guilt is all taken away. But I am going a step further. The moment the man believes in Christ, he ceases to be guilty in God's esteem; but what is more, he becomes righteous, he becomes meritorious; for, in the moment when Christ takes his sins he takes Christ's righteousness; so that, when God looks upon the sinner who but an hour ago was dead in sins, he looks upon him with as much love and affection as he ever looked upon his Son. He himself has said it—"As the Father loved me, so have I loved you." He loves us as much as his Father loved him. Can you believe such a doctrine as that? Does it not pass all thought? Well, it is a doctrine of the Holy Spirit; the doctrine whereby we must hope to be saved. Can I to any unenlightened person illustrate this thought better? I will give him the parable we have given to us in the prophets—the parable of Joshua the high-priest. Joshua comes in, clothed in filthy garments; those filthy garments representing his sins. Take away the filthy garments; that is pardon. Put a mitre on his head; clothe him in royal raiment; make him rich and fair; that is justification. But where do these garments come from? and where do those rags go to? Why, the rags that Joshua had on go to Christ, and the garments put on Joshua are the garments that Christ wore. The sinner and Christ do just what Jonathan and David did. Jonathan put his robes on David, David gave Jonathan

his garments; so Christ takes our sins, we take Christ's righteousness; and it is by a glorious substitution and interchange of places that sinners go free and are justified by his grace.

"But," says one, "no one is justified like that, till he dies." Believe me, he is.

"The moment a sinner believes,  
And trusts in his crucified God,  
His pardon at once he receives;  
Salvation in full, through his blood."

If that young man over there has really believed in Christ this morning, realizing by a spiritual experience what I have attempted to describe, he is as much justified in God's sight now as he will be when he stands before the throne. Not the glorified spirits above are more acceptable to God than the poor man below, who is once justified by grace. It is a perfect washing, it is perfect pardon, perfect imputation; we are fully, freely, and wholly accepted, through Christ our Lord. Just one more word here, and then I will leave this matter of justification. Those who are once justified are justified irreversibly. As soon as a sinner takes Christ's place, and Christ takes the sinner's place, there is no fear of a second change. If Christ has once paid the debt, the debt is paid, and it will never be asked for again; if you are pardoned, you are pardoned once for ever. God does not give man a free pardon under his own sign-manual, and then afterwards retract it and punish man: that be far from God so to do. He says, "I have punished Christ; you may go free." And after that, we may "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," that "being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." And now I hear one cry, "That is an extraordinary doctrine." Well, so some may think; but let me say to you, it is a doctrine professed by all protestant churches, though they may not preach it. It is the doctrine of the Church of England, it is the doctrine of Luther, it is the doctrine of the Presbyterian

church; it is professedly the doctrine of all Christian churches; and if it seems strange in your ears, it is because your ears are estranged, and not because the doctrine is a strange one. It is the doctrine of holy writ, that none can condemn whom God justifies, and that none can accuse those for whom Christ hath died; for they are totally free from sin. So that, as one of the prophets has it, God sees no sin in Jacob nor iniquity in Israel. In the moment they believe, their sins being imputed to Christ, they cease to be theirs, and Christ's righteousness is imputed to them and accounted theirs, so that they are accepted.

III. AND NOW I CLOSE UP WITH THE THIRD POINT, UPON which I shall be brief, and I hope very earnest: THE MANNER OF GIVING THIS JUSTIFICATION.

JOHN BUNYAN WOULD HAVE IT, THAT THERE ARE SOME WHOSE mouths are set a watering for this great gift of justification. Are there not some here who are saying, "Oh! if I could be justified! But, Sir, can I be justified? I have been a drunkard, I have been a swearer, I have been everything that is vile. Can I be justified? Will Christ take my black sins, and am I to take his white robes? Yes, poor soul, if thou desirest it; if God has made thee willing, if thou dost confess thy sins, Christ is willing to take thy rags, and give thee his righteousness, to be thine for ever. "Well, but how is it to be obtained?" says one "must I be a holy man for many years, and then get it?" Listen! "Freely by his grace;" "freely," because there is no price to be paid for it; "By his grace," because it is not of our deservings. "But, O Sir, I have been praying, and I do not think God will forgive me, unless I do something to deserve it." I tell you, Sir, if you bring in any of your deservings, you shall never have it. God gives away his justification freely; if you bring anything to pay for it, he will throw it in your face, and will not give his justification to you. He gives it away freely. Old Rowland Hill once went

preaching at a fair; he noticed the chapmen selling their wares by auction; so Rowland said, "I am going to hold an auction too, to sell wine and milk, without money and without price. My friends over there," said he "find a great difficulty to get you up to their price; my difficulty is to bring you down to mine." So it is with men. If I could preach justification to be bought by you at a sovereign a piece, who would go out of the place without being justified? If I could preach justification to you by walking a hundred miles, would we not be pilgrims tomorrow morning, every one of us? If I were to preach justification which would consist in whippings and torture, there are very few here who would not whip themselves, and that severely too. But when it is freely, freely, freely, men turn away. "What! am I to have it for nothing at all, without doing anything?" Yes, Sir, you are to have it for nothing, or else not at all; it is "freely." "But may I not go to Christ, lay some claim to his mercy, and say, Lord, justify me because I am not so bad as others?" It will not do, Sir, because it is "by his grace." "But may I not indulge a hope, because I go to church twice a day?" No, Sir; it is "by his grace." "But may I not offer this plea, I mean to be better?" No, sir; it is "by his grace." You insult God by bringing your counterfeit coin to pay for his treasures. Oh! what poor ideas men have of the value of Christ's gospel, if they think they can buy it! God will not have your rusty farthings to buy heaven with. A rich man once, when he was dying, had a notion that he could buy a place in heaven by building a row of almshouses. A good man stood by his bed-side, and said, "How much more are you going to leave?" "Twenty thousand pounds." Said he "That would not buy enough for your foot to stand on in heaven; for the streets are made of gold there, and therefore of what value can your gold be, it would be accounted nothing of, when the very streets are paved with it?" Nay, friends, we cannot buy heaven with gold nor good works, nor prayers, nor anything in the world. But how is it to be got? Why it is to be got for asking only. As many of us as know ourselves to be sinners may have Christ for asking for him. Do you know that you want Christ? You may have Christ! "Whosoever will, let him come

and take of the water of life freely." But if you cleave to your own notions, and say, "No, Sir, I mean to do a great many good things, and then I will believe in Christ."—Sir, you will be damned if you hold by such delusions. I earnestly warn you. You cannot be saved so. "Well, but are we not to do good works?" Certainly you are; but you are not to trust in them. You must trust in Christ wholly, and then do good works afterwards. "But," says one, "I think if I were to do a few good works, it would be a little recommendation when I came." It would not, sir; they would be no recommendation at all. Let a beggar come to your house in white kid gloves, and say he is very badly off, and wants some charity; would the white kid gloves recommend him to your charity? Would a good new hat that he has been buying this morning recommend him to your charity? "No," you would say, "you are a miserable impostor; you do not want anything, and you shall not have anything either! Out with you!"

The best livery for a beggar is rags, and the best livery for a sinner to go to Christ in, is for him to go just as he is, with nothing but sin about him. "But no;" say you, "I must be a little better, and then I think Christ will save me!" You cannot get any better, try as long as you please. And besides—to use a paradox—if you were to get better, you would be all the worse; for the worse you are, the better to come to Christ. If you are all unholy come to Christ; if you feel your sin, and renounce it, come to Christ; though you have been the most debased and abandoned soul, come to Christ; if you feel yourself to have nothing about you that can recommend you, come to Christ.

"Venture on him, venture wholly;  
Let no other trust intrude."

I do not say this to urge any man to continue in sin. God forbid! If you continue in sin, you must not come to Christ; you cannot; your sins will hamper you. You cannot be chained to your galley-oar—the oar of your sins—yet come to Christ, and be a free man.



No, sir, it is repentance; it is the immediate leaving off the sin. But mark thee, neither by repentance, nor by leaving off thy sin, can save thee. It is Christ, Christ, Christ—Christ only.

But I know you will go away, many of you, and try to build up your own Babel-tower, to get to heaven. Some of you will go one way to work, and some another. You will go the ceremony way: you will lay the foundation of the structure with infant baptism, build confirmation on it, and the Lord's supper. "I shall go to heaven," you say; "Do not I keep Good Friday and Christmas-day? I am a better man than those dissenters. I am a most extraordinary man. Do I not say more prayers than any one?" You will be a long while going up that treadmill, before you get an inch higher. That is not the way to get to the stars. One says, "I will go and study the Bible, and believe right doctrine; and I have no doubt that by believing right doctrine I shall be saved." Indeed you will not! You can be no more saved by believing right doctrine than you can by doing right actions. "There," says another, "I like that; I shall go and believe in Christ, and live as I like." Indeed you will not! For if you believe in Christ he will not let you live as your flesh liketh; by his Spirit he will constrain you to mortify its affections and lusts. If he gives you the grace to make you believe, he will give you the grace to live a holy life afterwards. If he gives you faith, he gives you good works afterwards. You cannot believe in Christ, unless you renounce every fault, and resolve to serve him with full purpose of heart. Methinks at last I hear a sinner say, "Is that the only door? And may I venture through it? Then I will. But I do not quite understand you; I am something like poor Tiff, in that remarkable book 'Dred.' They talk a great deal about a door, but I cannot see the door; they talk a great deal about the way, but I cannot see the way. For if poor Tiff could see the way, he would take these children away by it. They talk about fighting, but I do not see any one to fight, or else I would fight." Let me explain it then. I find in the Bible, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." What have you to do, but to believe this and trust in him? You will never be disappointed with

such a faith as that. Let me give you over again an illustration I have given hundreds of times, but I cannot find another so good, so I must give it again. Faith is something like this. There is a story told of a captain of a man-of-war, whose son—a young lad—was very fond of running up the rigging of the ship; and one time, running after a monkey, he ran up the mast, till at last he got on to the maintruck. Now, the maintruck, you are aware, is like a large round table put on to the mast, so that when the boy was on the maintruck there was plenty of room for him; but the difficulty was—to use the best explanation I can—that he could not reach the mast that was under the table; he was not tall enough to get down from this maintruck, reach the mast, and so descend. There he was on the maintruck; he managed to get up there, somehow or other, but down he never could get. His father saw that, and he looked up in horror; what was he to do? In a few moments his son would fall down, and be dashed to pieces! He was clinging to the main-truck with all his might, but in a little time he would fall down on the deck, and there he would be a mangled corpse. The captain called for a speaking trumpet; he put it to his mouth, and shouted, "Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea." It was, in truth, his only way of escape; he might be picked up out of the sea, but he could not be rescued if he fell on the deck. The poor boy looked down on the sea; it was a long way; he could not bear the idea of throwing himself into the roaring current beneath him; he thought it looked angry and dangerous. How could he cast himself down into it? So he clung to the main-truck with all his might, though there was no doubt that he must soon let go and perish. The father called for a gun, and pointing it up at him, said, "Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea, or I'll shoot you!" He knew his father would keep his word; the ship lunched on one side, over went the boy splash into the sea, and out went brawny arms after him; the sailors rescued him, and brought him on deck. Now, we, like the boy, are in a position of extraordinary danger, by nature, which neither you nor I can possibly escape of ourselves. Unfortunately, we have got some good works of our

own, like that maintruck, and we cling to them so fondly, that we never will give them up. Christ knows that unless we do give them up, we shall be dashed to pieces at the last, for that rotten trust must ruin us. He, therefore, says, "Sinner, let go thine own trust, and drop into the sea of my love." We look down, and say, "Can I be saved by trusting in God? He looks as if he were angry with me, and I could not trust him." Ah, will not mercy's tender cry persuade you?—"He that believeth shall be saved." Must the weapon of destruction be pointed directly at you? Must you hear the dreadful threat—"He that believeth not shall be damned?" It is with you now as with that boy—your position is one of imminent peril in itself, and your slighting the Father's counsel is a matter of more terrible alarm, it makes peril more perilous. You must do it, or else you perish! Let go your hold! That is faith when the poor sinner lets go his hold, drops down, and so is saved; and the very thing which looks as if it would destroy him, is the means of his being saved. Oh! believe on Christ, poor sinners; believe on Christ. Ye who know your guilt and misery come, cast yourselves upon him; come, and trust my Master, and as he lives, before whom I stand, you shall never trust him in vain; but you shall find yourselves forgiven, and go your way rejoicing in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER 2  
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AS  
ILLUSTRATED BY ABRAM'S  
RIGHTEOUSNESS, C. H.  
SPURGEON, DECEMBER 6, 1868



“And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for  
righteousness.”  
Genesis 15:6.

You will remember that last Lord's-day morning we spoke upon the calling of Abram, and the faith by which he was enabled to enter upon that separated life at the bidding of the Most High. We shall today pass from the consideration of his calling to that of his justification, that being most remarkably next in order in his history, as it is in point of theology in the New Testament; for, “whom he called, them he also justified.”

Referring to the chapter before us for a preface to our subject, note that after Abram's calling his faith proved to be of the most practical kind. Being called to separate himself from his kindred and from his country, he did not therefore become a recluse, a man of ascetic habits, or a sentimentalist, unfit for the battles of ordinary life — no; but in the noblest style of true manli-

ness he showed himself able to endure the household trouble and the public trial which awaited him. Lot's herdsmen quarrelled with the servants of Abram, and Abram with great disinterestedness gave his younger and far inferior relative the choice of pasturage, and gave up the well-watered plain of Sodom, which was the best of the land. A little while after, the grand old man who trusted in his God showed that he could play the soldier, and fight right gloriously against terrible odds. He gathered together his own household servants, and accepted the help of his neighbours, and pursued the conquering hosts of the allied kings, and smote them with as heavy a hand as if from his youth up he had been a military man. Brethren, this every-day life faith is the faith of God's elect. There are persons who imagine saving faith to be a barren conviction of the truth of certain abstract propositions, leading only to a quiet contemplation upon certain delightful topics, or a separating ourselves from all sympathy with our fellow creatures; but it is not so. Faith, restricted merely to religious exercise, is not Christian faith, it must show itself in everything. A merely religious faith may be the choice of men whose heads are softer than their hearts, fitter for cloisters than markets; but the manly faith which God would have us cultivate, is a grand practical principle adapted for every day in the week, helping us to rule our household in the fear of God, and to enter upon life's rough conflicts in the warehouse, the farm, or the exchange. I mention this at the commencement of this discourse, because as this is the faith which came of Abram's calling, so also does it shine in his justification, and is, indeed, that which God counted unto him for righteousness.

Yet the first verse shows us that even such a believer as Abram needed comfort. The Lord said to him, "Fear not." Why did Abram fear? Partly because of the reaction which is always caused by excitement when it is over. He had fought boldly and conquered gloriously, and now he fears. Cowards tremble before the fight, and brave men after the victory. Elias slew the priests of Baal without fear, but after all was over, his spirit sank and he fled from the face of Jezebel. Abram's fear also originated in an overwhelming awe in

the presence of God. The word of Jehovah came to him with power, and he felt that same prostration of spirit which made the beloved John fall at the feet of his Lord in the Isle of Patmos, and made Daniel feel, on banks of Hiddekel that there was no strength in him. "Fear not," said the Lord to the patriarch. His spirit was too deeply bowed. God would uplift his beloved servant into the power of exercising sacred familiarity. Ah, brethren, this is a blessed fear — let us cultivate it; for until it shall be cast out by perfect love, which is better still, we may be content to let this good thing rule our hearts. Should not a man, conscious of great infirmities, sink low in his own esteem in proportion as he is honoured with communion with the glorious Lord?

When he was comforted, Abram received an open declaration of his justification. I take it, beloved friends, that our text does not intend to teach us that Abram was not justified before this time. Faith always justifies whenever it exists, and as soon as it is exercised; its result follows immediately, and is not an aftergrowth needing months of delay. The moment a man truly trusts his God he is justified. Yet many are justified who do not know their happy condition; to whom as yet the blessing of justification has not been opened up in its excellency and abundance of privilege. There may be some of you here to-day who have been called by grace from darkness into marvellous light; you have been led to look to Jesus, and you believe you have received pardon of your sin, and yet, for want of knowledge, you know little of the sweet meaning of such words as these, "Accepted in the Beloved," "Perfect in Christ Jesus," "Complete in him." You are doubtless justified, though you scarcely understand what justification means; and you are accepted, though you have not realised your acceptance; and you are complete in Jesus Christ, though you have to-day a far deeper sense of your personal incompleteness than of the all-sufficiency of Jesus. A man may be entitled to property though he cannot read the title-deeds, or has not as yet heard of their existence; the law recognises right and fact, not our apprehension thereof. But there will come a time, beloved, when you who are called will clearly realise your justifica-

tion, and will rejoice in it; it shall be intelligently understood by you, and shall become a matter of transporting delight, lifting you to a higher platform of experience, and enabling you to walk with a firmer step, sing with a merrier voice, and triumph with an enlarged heart.

I intend now, as God may help me, first to note the means of Abram's justification; then, secondly, the object of the faith which justified him; and then, thirdly, the attendants of his justification.

### I. FIRST, BRETHREN, HOW WAS ABRAM JUSTIFIED?

WE SEE IN THE TEXT THE GREAT TRUTH, WHICH PAUL SO CLEARLY brings out in the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, that Abram was not justified by his works. Many had been the good works of Abram. It was a good work to leave his country and his father's house at God's bidding; it was a good work to separate from Lot in so noble a spirit; it was a good work to follow after the robber-kings with undaunted courage; it was a grand work to refuse to take the spoils of Sodom, but to lift up his hand to God that he would not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet; it was a holy work to give to Melchisedec tithes of all that he possessed, and to worship the Most High God; yet none of these are mentioned in the text, nor is there a hint given of any other sacred duties as the ground or cause, or part cause of his justification before God. No, it is said, "He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Surely, brethren, if Abram, after years of holy living, is not justified by his works, but is accepted before God on account of his faith, much more must this be the case with the ungodly sinner who, having lived in unrighteousness, yet believeth on Jesus and is saved. If there be salvation for the dying thief, and others like him, it cannot be of debt, but of grace, seeing they have no good works. If Abram, when full of good works, is not justified by them, but by his faith, how much more we, being full of imperfections, must

come unto the throne of the heavenly grace and ask that we may be justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus, and saved by the free mercy of God!

Further, this justification came to Abram not by obedience to the ceremonial law any more than by conformity to the moral law. As the apostle has so plainly pointed out to us, Abram was justified before he was circumcised. The initiatory step into the outward and visible covenant, so far as it was ceremonial, had not yet been taken, and yet the man was perfectly justified. All that follows after cannot contribute to a thing which is already perfect. Abram, being already justified, cannot owe that justification to his subsequent circumcision — this is clear enough; and so, beloved, at this moment, if you and I are to be justified, these two things are certain: it cannot be by the works of the moral law; it cannot be by obedience to any ceremonial law, be it what it may — whether the sacred ritual given to Aaron, or the superstitious ritual which claims to have been ordained by gradual tradition in the Christian church. If we be indeed the children of faithful Abraham, and are to be justified in Abraham's way, it cannot be by submission to rites or ceremonies of any kind. Hearken to this carefully, ye who would be justified before God: baptism is in itself an excellent ordinance, but it cannot justify nor help to justify us; confirmation is a mere figment of men, and could not, even if commanded by God, assist in justification; and the Lord's-supper, albeit that it is a divine institution, cannot in any respect whatsoever minister to your acceptance or to your righteousness before God. Abram had no ceremonial in which to rest; he was righteous through his faith, and righteous only through his faith; and so must you and I be if we are ever to stand as righteous before God at all. Faith in Abram's case was the alone and unsupported cause of his being accounted righteous, for note, although in other cases Abram's faith produced works, and although in every case where faith is genuine it produces good works, yet the particular instance of faith recorded in this chapter was unattended by any works. For God brought him forth under the star-



lit heavens, and bade him look up. "So shall thy seed be," said the sacred voice. Abram did what? Believed the promise — that was all. It was before he had offered sacrifice, before he had said a holy word or performed a single action of any kind that the word immediately and instantly went forth, "He believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Always distinguish between the truth, that living faith always produces works; and the lie, that faith and works co-operate to justify the soul. We are made righteous only by an act of faith in the work of Jesus Christ. That faith, if true, always produces holiness of life, but our being righteous before God is not because of our holiness in life in any degree or respect, but simply because of our faith in the divine promise. Thus saith the inspired apostle: "His faith was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

I would have you note that the faith which justified Abram was still an imperfect faith, although it perfectly justified him. It was imperfect beforehand, for he had prevaricated as to his wife, and bidden Sarai, "Say thou art my sister." It was imperfect after it had justified him, for in the next chapter we find him taking Hagar, his wife's handmaid, in order to effect the divine purpose, and so showing a want of confidence in the working of the Lord. It is a blessing for you and for me that we do not need perfect faith to save us. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." If thou hast but the faith of a little child, it shall save thee. Though thy faith be not always at the same pitch as the patriarch's when he staggered not at the promise through unbelief, yet if it be simple and true, if it confide alone in the promise of God— it is an unhappy thing that it is no stronger, and thou oughtst daily to pray, "Lord, increase my faith" — but still it shall justify thee through Christ Jesus. A trembling hand may grasp the cup which bears a

healing draught to the lip — the weakness of the hand shall not lessen the power of the medicine.

So far, then, all is clear, Abram was not justified by works, nor by ceremonies, nor partly by works, and partly by faith, nor by the perfection of his faith — he is counted righteous simply because of his faith in the divine promise.

I must confess that, looking more closely into it, this text is too deep for me, and therefore I decline, at this present moment, to enter into the controversy which rages around it; but one thing is clear to me; that if faith be, as we are told, counted to us for righteousness, it is not because faith in itself has merit which may make it a fitting substitute for a perfect obedience to the law of God, nor can it be viewed as a substitute for such obedience. For, brethren, all good acts are a duty: to trust God is our duty, and he that hath believed to his utmost hath done no more than it was his duty to have done. He who should believe without imperfection, if this were possible, would even then have only given to God a part of the obedience due; and if he should have failed, in love, or reverence, or aught beside, his faith, as a virtue and a work, could not stand him in any stead. In fact, according to the great principle of the New Testament, even faith, as a work, does not justify the soul. We are not saved by works at all or in any sense, but alone by grace, and the way in which faith saves us is not by itself as a work, but in some other way directly opposite thereto.

Faith cannot be its own righteousness, for it is of the very nature of faith to look out of self to Christ. If any man should say, "My faith is my righteousness," then it is evident that he is confiding in his faith; but this is just the thing of all others which it would be unsafe to do, for we must look altogether away from ourselves to Christ alone, or we have no true faith at all. Faith must look to the atonement and work of Jesus, or else she is not the faith of Scripture. Therefore to say that faith in and of itself becomes our righteousness, is, it seems to me, to tear out the very bowels of the gospel, and to deny the faith which has been once delivered to the saints. Paul declares, contrary to certain sectaries who rail

against imputed righteousness — that we are justified and made righteous by the righteousness of Christ; on this he is plain and positive. He tells us (Romans v. 19) that, “as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” The Old Testament verse before us as a text this morning, gives us but as it were the outward aspect of justification; it is brought to us by faith, and the fact that a man has faith entitles him to be set down as a righteous man; in this sense God accounts faith to a man as righteousness, but the underlying and secret truth which the Old Testament does not so clearly give us is found in the New Testament declaration, that we are accepted in the Beloved, and justified because of the obedience of Christ. Faith justifies, but not in and by itself, but because it grasps the obedience of Christ. “As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” To the same effect is that verse in the second epistle general of Peter (first chapter, first verse), which runs in our version as follows: “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Now, everybody who is at all familiar with the original knows that the correct translation is “through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” The righteousness which belongs to the Christian is the righteousness of our God and Saviour, who is “made of God unto us righteousness.” Hence the beauty of the old prophetic title of the Messiah, “The Lord our Righteousness.” I do not wish to enter into controversy as to imputed righteousness this morning, we may discuss that doctrine another time; but we feel confident that this text cannot mean that faith in itself, as a grace or a virtue, becomes the righteousness of any man. The fact is, that faith is counted to us for righteousness because she has Christ in her hand; she comes to God resting upon what Christ has done, depending alone upon the propitiation which God has set forth; and God, therefore, writes down every believing man as being a righteous man, not because of

what he is in himself, but for what he is in Christ. He may have a thousand sins, yet shall he be righteous if he have faith. He may painfully transgress like Samson, he may be as much in the dark as Jephtha, he may fall as David, he may slip like Noah; but, for all that, if he have a true and living faith, he is written down among the justified, and God accepteth him. While there be some who gloat over the faults of believers, God spieth out the pure gem of faith gleaming on their breast; he takes them for what they want to be, for what they are in heart, for what they would be if they could; and covering their sins with the atoning blood, and adorning their persons with the righteousness of the Beloved, he accepts them, seeing he beholds in them the faith which is the mark of the righteous man wherever it may be.

## II. LET US PASS ON TO CONSIDER THE PROMISE UPON WHICH HIS FAITH RELIED when Abram was justified.

ABRAM'S FAITH, LIKE OURS, RESTED UPON A PROMISE, RECEIVED direct from God. "This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." Had this promise been spoken by any other, it would have been a subject of ridicule to the patriarch; but, taking it as from the lip of God, he accepts it, and relies upon it. Now, brethren, if you and I have true faith we accept the promise, "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved " as being altogether divine. If such a declaration were made to us by the priests of Rome, or by any human being on his own authority, we could not think it true; but, inasmuch as it comes to us written in the sacred word as having been spoken by Jesus Christ himself, we lean upon it as not the word of man, but the word of God. Beloved, it may be a very simple remark to make, but after all it is needful, that we must

be careful that our faith in the truth is fixed upon the fact that God has declared it to be true, and not upon the oratory or persuasion of any of our most honoured ministers or most respected acquaintances. If your faith standeth in the wisdom of man, it is probably a faith in man; it is only that faith which believes the promise because God spake it which is real faith in God. Note that and try your faith thereby.

In the next place, Abram's faith was faith in a promise concerning the seed. It was told him before that he should have a seed in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. He recognised in this the selfsame promise which was made to Eve at the gates of Paradise, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed." "Abraham saw my day," says our Lord, "he saw it and was glad." In this promise Abram saw the one seed, as saith the apostle in Galatians iii.16, "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." He saw Christ by the eye of faith, and then he saw the multitude that should believe in him, the seed of the father of the faithful. The faith which justifies the soul concerns itself about Christ and not concerning mere abstract truths. If your faith simply believeth this dogma and that, it saveth you not; but when your faith believes that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses; when your faith turns to God in human flesh and rests in him with its entire confidence, then it justifies you, for it is the faith of Abram. Dear hearer, have you such a faith as this? Is it faith in the promise of God? Is it faith that deals with Christ and looks alone to him?

Abram had faith in a promise which it seemed impossible could ever be fulfilled. A child was to be born of his own loins, but he was nearly a hundred years old, and Sarai also was said to be barren years before. His own body was now dead as it were, and Sarai, so far as childbearing was concerned, was equally so. The birth of a son could not happen unless the laws of nature were reversed; but he considered not these things, he put them all aside; he saw death written on the creature, but he accepted the power of

life in the Creator, and he believed without hesitation. Now, beloved, the faith that justifies us must be of the same kind. It seems impossible that I should ever be saved; I cannot save myself; I see absolute death written upon the best hopes that spring of my holiest resolutions; "In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing;" I can do nothing; I am slain under the law; I am corrupt through my natural depravity; but yet for all this I believe that through the life of Jesus I shall live, and inherit the promised blessing. It is small faith to believe that God will save you when graces flourish in your heart, and evidences of salvation abound, but it is a grand faith to trust in Jesus in the teeth of all your sins, and notwithstanding the accusations of conscience. To believe in him that justifieth not merely the godly but the ungodly. (Romans iv. 5.) To believe not in the Saviour of saints, but in the Saviour of sinners; and to believe that if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; this is precious, and is counted unto us for righteousness.

This justifying faith was faith which dealt with a wonderful promise, vast and sublime. I imagine the patriarch standing beneath the starry sky, looking up to those innumerable orbs. He cannot count them. To his outward eye, long accustomed in the land of the Chaldees to midnight observation, the stars appeared more numerous than they would to an ordinary observer. He looked and looked again with elevated gaze, and the voice said, "So shall thy seed be." Now he did not say, 'Lord, if I may be the father of a clan, the progenitor of a tribe, I shall be well content; but it is not credible that countless hosts can ever come of my barren body.' No, he believed the promise; he believed it just as it stood. I do not hear him saying, "It is too good to be true." No; God hath said it — and nothing is too good for God to do. The greater the grace of the promise, the more likely it is to have come from him, for good and perfect gifts come from the Father of Lights. Beloved, does your faith take the promise as it stands in its vastness, in its height, and depth, and length, and breadth? Canst thou believe that thou, a sinner, art nevertheless a child, a son, an heir, an heir of God, joint-

heir with Christ Jesus? Canst thou believe that heaven is thine, with all its ecstasies of joy, eternity with its infinity of bliss, God with all his attributes of glory? Oh! this is the faith that justifies, far-reaching, wide-grasping faith, that diminishes not the word of promise, but accepts it as it stands. May we have more and more of this large-handed faith!

Once more, Abram showed faith in the promise as made to himself. Out of his own bowels a seed should come, and it was in him and in his seed that the whole world should be blessed. I can believe all the promises in regard to other people. I find faith in regard to my dear friend to be a very easy matter, but oh! when it comes to close grips, and to laying hold for yourself, here is the difficulty. I could see my friend in ten troubles, and believe that the Lord would not forsake him. I could read a saintly biography, and finding that the Lord never failed his servant when he went through fire and through water, I do not wonder at it; but when it comes to one's own self, the wonder begins. Our heart cries, "Whence is this to me? What am I, and what my father's house, that such mercy should be mine? I washed in blood and made whiter than snow to-day! Is it so? Can it be? I made righteous, through my faith in Jesus Christ, perfectly righteous! O can it be? What! For me the everlasting love of God, streaming from its perennial fountain? For me the protection of a special providence in this life, and the provision of a prepared heaven in the life to come? For me a harp, a crown, a palm branch, a throne! For me the bliss of for ever beholding the face of Jesus, and being made like to him, and reigning with him! It seems impossible. And yet this is the faith that we must have, the faith which lays on Christ Jesus for itself, saying with the apostle, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." This is the faith which justifies; let us seek more and more of it, and God shall have glory through it.



III. IN THE THIRD PLACE, LET US NOTICE THE ATTENDANTS OF ABRAM'S JUSTIFICATION.

WITH YOUR BIBLES OPEN, KINDLY OBSERVE THAT AFTER IT IS written his faith was counted to him for righteousness, it is recorded that the Lord said to him, "I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." When the soul is graciously enabled to perceive its complete justification by faith, then it more distinctly discerns its calling. Now, the believer perceives his privileged separation and discerns why he was convinced of sin, why he was led away from self-righteousness and the pleasures of this world, to live the life of faith; now he sees his high calling and the prize of it, and from the one blessing of justification he argues the blessedness of all the inheritance to which he is called. The more clear a man is about his justification the more will he prize his calling, and the more earnestly will he seek to make it sure by perfecting his separation from the world and his conformity to his Lord. Am I a justified man? Then will I not go back to that bondage in which I once was held. Am I now accepted of God through faith? Then will I live no longer by sight, as I once did as a carnal man, when I understood not the power of trusting in the unseen God. One Christian grace helps another, and one act of divine grace casts a refulgence upon another. Calling gleams with double glory side by side with the twin star of justification.

Justifying faith receives more vividly the promises. "I have brought thee," said the Lord, "into this land to inherit it." He was reminded again of the promise God made him years before. Beloved, no man reads the promises of God with such delight and with such a clear understanding as the man who is justified by faith in Christ Jesus. "For now," saith he, "this promise is mine, and made to me. I have the pledge of its fulfilment in the fact that I walk in the favour of God. I am no longer obnoxious to his wrath; none can lay anything to my charge, for I am absolved through Jesus Christ; and, therefore, if when I was a sinner he justified me, much more,



being justified, will he keep his promise to me. If when I was a rebel condemned, he nevertheless in his eternal mercy called me and brought me into this state of acceptance, much more will he preserve me from all my enemies, and give me the heritage which he has promised by his covenant of grace. A clear view of justification helps you much in grasping the promise, therefore seek it earnestly for your soul's comfort.

Abram, after being justified by faith, was led more distinctly to behold the power of sacrifice. By God's command he killed three bullocks, three goats, three sheep, with turtle doves and pigeons, being all the creatures ordained for sacrifice. The patriarch's hands are stained with blood; he handles the butcher's knife, he divides the beasts, he kills the birds he places them in an order revealed to him by God's Spirit at the time; there they are. Abram learns that there is no meeting with God except through sacrifice. God has shut every door except that over which the blood is sprinkled. All acceptable approaches to God must be through an atoning sacrifice, and Abram sees this. While the promise is still in his ears, while the ink is yet wet in the pen of the Holy Spirit, writing him down as justified, he must see a sacrifice, and see it, too, in emblems which comprehend all the revelation of sacrifice made to Aaron. So, brethren, it is a blessed thing when your faith justifies you, if it helps you to obtain more complete and vivid views of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The purest and most bracing air for faith to breathe is on Calvary. I do not wonder that your faith grows weak when you fail to consider well the tremendous sacrifice which Jesus made for his people. Turn to the annals of the Redeemer's sufferings given us in the Evangelists ; bow yourself in prayer before the Lamb of God, blush to think you should have forgotten his death, which is the centre of all history; contemplate the wondrous transaction of substitution once again, and you will find your faith revived. It is not the study of theology, it is not reading books upon points of controversy, it is not searching into mysterious prophecy which will bless your soul, it is looking to Jesus crucified. That is the essential nutriment of the life of faith, and mind that you keep

to it. As a man already justified, Abram looked at the sacrifice, all day long and till the sun went down, chasing away the birds of prey as you must drive off all disturbing thoughts. So must you also study the Lord Jesus, and view him in all his characters and offices, be not satisfied except you grow in grace and in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Perhaps even more important was the next lesson which Abram had to learn. He was led to behold the covenant. I suppose that these pieces of the bullock, the lamb, the ram, and the goat, were so placed that Abram stood in the midst with a part on this side and a part on that. So he stood as a worshipper all through the day, and towards nightfall, when a horror of great darkness came over him, he fell into a deep sleep. Who would not feel a horror passing over him as he sees the great sacrifice for sin, and sees himself involved therein? There in the midst of the sacrifice he saw, moving with solemn motion, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, answering to the pillar of cloud and fire, which manifested the presence in later days to Israel in the wilderness. In these emblems the Lord passed between the pieces of the sacrifice to meet his servant, and enter into covenant with him. This has always been the most solemn of all modes of covenanting; and has even been adopted in heathen nations on occasions of unusual solemnity. The sacrifice is divided and the covenanting parties meet between the divided pieces. The profane interpretation was, that they imprecated upon each other the curse that if they broke the covenant they might be cut in pieces as these beasts had been; but this is not the interpretation which our hearts delight in. It is this. It is only in the midst of the sacrifice that God can enter into a covenant relationship with sinful man. God cometh in his glory like a flame of fire, but subdued and tempered to us as with a cloud of smoke in the person of Jesus Christ; and he comes through the bloody sacrifice which has been offered once for all through Jesus Christ on the tree. Man meets with God in the midst of the sacrifice of Christ. Now, beloved, you who are justified, try this morning to reach this privilege which particularly belongs to you at this junc-

ture of your spiritual history. Know and understand that God is in covenant bonds with you. He has made a covenant of grace with you which never can be broken: the sure mercies of David are your portion. After this sort does that covenant run, "A new heart also will I give them, and a right spirit will I put within them. They shall be my people, and I will be their God." That covenant is made with you over the slaughtered body of the Son of God. God and you cross hands over him who sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. The Lord accepts us, and we enter with him into sacred league and amity, over the victim whose wounds and death ratify the compact. Can God forget a covenant with such sanctions? Can such a federal bond so solemnly sealed be ever broken? Impossible. Man is sometimes faithful to his oath, but God is always so; and when that oath is confirmed for the strengthening of our faith by the blood of the Only-begotten, to doubt is treason and blasphemy. God help us, being justified, to have faith in the covenant which is sealed and ratified with blood.

Immediately after, God made to Abram (and here the analogy still holds) a discovery, that all the blessing that was promised, though it was surely his, would not come without an interval of trouble. "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." When a man is first of all brought to Christ he often is so ignorant as to think, "Now my troubles are all over; I have come to Christ and I am saved: from this day forward I shall have nothing to do but to sing the praises of God." Alas! a conflict remains. We must know of a surety that the battle now begins. How often does it happen that the Lord, in order to educate his child for future trouble, makes the occasion when his justification is most clear to him the season of informing him that he may expect to meet with trouble! I was struck with that fact when I was reading for my own comfort the other night the fifth chapter of Romans; it runs thus — "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in

hope of the glory of God.” See how softly it flows, a justification sheds the oil of joy upon the believer’s head. But what is the next verse — “and not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience,” and so on. Justification ensures tribulation. Oh! yes, the covenant is yours; you shall possess the goodly land and Lebanon, but, like all the seed of Abraham, you must go down into Egypt and groan, being burdened. All the saints must smart before they sing; they must carry the cross before they wear the crown. You are a justified man, but you are not freed from trouble. Your sins were laid on Christ, but you still have Christ’s cross to carry. The Lord has exempted you from the curse, but he has not exempted you from the chastisement. Learn that you enter on the children’s discipline on the very day in which you enter upon their accepted condition.

To close the whole, the Lord gave to Abram an assurance of ultimate success. He would bring his seed into the promised land, and the people who had oppressed them he would judge. So let it come as a sweet revelation to every believing man this morning, that at the end he shall triumph, and those evils which now oppress him shall be cast beneath his feet. The Lord shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly. We may be slaves in Egypt for awhile, but we shall come up out of it with great abundance of true riches, better than silver or gold. We shall be prospered by our tribulations, and enriched by our trials. Therefore, let us be of good cheer. If sin be pardoned, we may well bear affliction. “Strike, Lord,” said Luther, “now my sins are gone; strike as hard as thou wilt if transgression be covered.” These light afflictions which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Let us make it the first point of our care to be justified with Abraham’s seed, and then whether we sojourn in Egypt or enjoy the peace of Canaan,, it little matters: we are all safe if we are only justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Dear friends, this last word, and I send you home. Have you believed in God? Have you trusted Christ? O that you would do so to-day! To believe that God speaks truth ought not to be hard; and

if we were not very wicked this would never need to be urged upon us, we should do it naturally. To believe that Christ is able to save us seems to me to be easy enough, and it would be if our hearts were not so hard. Believe thy God, man, and think it no little thing to do so. May the Holy Ghost lead thee to a true trust. This is the work of God, that ye believe on Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. Believe that the Son of God can save, and confide thyself alone in him, and he will save thee. He asks nothing but faith, and even this he gives thee; and if thou hast it, all thy doubts and sins, thy trials and troubles put together, shall not shut thee out of heaven. God shall fulfil his promise, and surely bring thee in to possess the land which floweth with milk and honey.

CHAPTER 3  
BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH  
ALONE, C.H. SPURGEON, APRIL  
28, 1867



"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God,  
through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Rom.5:1

**W**E DESIRE this evening not to preach upon this text as a mere matter of doctrine. You all believe and understand the gospel of justification by faith, but we want to preach upon it tonight as a matter of experience, as a thing realized, felt, enjoyed, and understood in the soul. I trust there are many here who not only know that men may be saved and justified by faith, but who can say in their own experience, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," and who are now at the present moment walking and living in the actual enjoyment of that peace.

Wishing to speak of the text, then, in this sense, I shall ask you to accompany me, not only with your ears, and with the attention which you usually give so generously, but also with the eye of your self-examination, asking yourselves, as we proceed step by step, "Do I know that? Have I received that? Have I been taught of God in this matter? Have I been led into that truth?" And our hope will

be that some person to whom these things have hitherto been merely external, and therefore valueless, may be led by God to get hold of them, so that they may be matters of soul, and heart, and conscience, so that they may enjoy them, and find themselves where once they feared they would never be, namely, in a state of reconciliation with God, happily enjoying peace with the Most High.

Our first few thoughts shall be some plain, earnest talk concerning:

## I. A FEW PRELIMINARY DISCOVERIES WHICH A MAN MAKES BEFORE HE GETS PEACE WITH GOD.

THESE, I DO NOT THINK, ARE BY ANY MEANS FOREIGN TO THE text, or merely imported to it, but belong rightfully to it. You see that Paul, before he came to this justification by faith, had been *speaking about sin*. It would not have been possible for him to have given an intelligible definition of justification without mentioning that men are sinners, without informing them that they had broken God's holy law, and that the law, by and of itself, could never restore them to the favour of God. Now, some of these things of which I am going to speak are absolutely necessary, if not to my sermon, yet certainly to your spiritually understanding even so much as one jot or tittle of what it is to be justified by faith.

Well, then, what are these things? The first discovery that a man is led by the Spirit of God to make before he is justified is, that *it is important to be justified in the sight of God*. Many people do not know this. You shall step into a shop this evening, and find a man at the counter, and you say to him, "Well, do you never go to a place of worship?" "No," he would say, "but I am quite as good as those who do." "How so?" "Well, I am a great deal better than some of them." "How is that?" "Well, I never failed in business; I never duped people in a limited liability company; I never told lies; I am no

thief; I am not a drunkard; I am as honest as the days are long in the middle of June; and that is more than you can say of some of your religious people." Now, that man has got a hold of one part of a good man's character. There are two parts, but he can only see one, namely, that man is to be just to man. He sees that, but he does not see that man is to be also just to God. And yet if that man were really to think a little while, he would see that the highest obligations of a creature must be, not to his fellow-creatures, but to his Creator, and that, however just a man may be to another man, yet if he be altogether unjust to God, he cannot escape without the severest penalty. But oh! the most of men think that so long as they keep the laws of the land, so long as they give to their fellow-men their due, it matters not though God's day should be a subject of scorn, God's will be used as men will, and God's law trodden under their feet. Now, I think that everyone here who will but put his fingers to his brow for a moment and think, that he will see that, even though a man may go before the bar of his country, and say before any judge or jury, "I have in nothing injured my fellow-man; I am just before men," yet it does not make the man's character perfect. Unless he is also able to say, "And I am also just before the presence of the God who made me, and whose servant I am," he has only kept one half, and that the less important, of God's law for him.

It cannot help being, it must be, important to the highest degree that you and I should stand on good terms with the great God unto whom we shall so soon return in the great day when he shall say, "Return ye children of men." We must then render up our souls to him who created us. Well, you can surely go as far as that with me—that it is necessary. You do feel, do you not, a desire in your heart to be just before your Maker? I am thankful that you can go so far.

The next thing is this. A man, when the Spirit of God is bringing him to Christ, discovers that *his past life has been marred badly, by serious offences against the law of God*. Before the Spirit of God comes into our soul, we are like being in a room in the dark:



we cannot see in it. We cannot discover the cobwebs, the spiders, the foul and loathsome things that may be lurking there. But when the Spirit of God comes streaming into the soul, the man is astonished to find that he is what he is, and especially if he sits down and opens the book of the law, and, in the light of the divine Spirit, reads that perfect law, and compares with it his own imperfect heart and life. He will then grow sick of himself, even to loathing and, sometimes, despair. Take but one command. Perhaps there are some here who will say, "I know I have been very chaste all my life, for the command saith, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' and I have never broken it; I am clean there." Ay, but now hear Christ explain the command, "He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Now, then, who amongst us can say that we have not done that? Who is there upon earth, if that be the meaning of the command, who can say, "I am innocent?" If the law of God, as we are told by Scripture, has to deal, not with our outward actions alone, but with our words, and with our thoughts, and with our imaginations-if it is so exceeding broad that it applies to the most secret part of a man, then who of us can plead guiltless before the throne? No, dear brethren, this must be understood by you, and by me, before we can be justified, that we are full of sin. What if I say that we are as full of sin as an egg is full of meat? We are all sin. The imagination and the thought of our heart is evil, and only evil, and that continually. If some of you plume yourselves with the notion that you are righteous, I pray God to pluck those fine feathers off you and make you see yourselves, for if you never see your own nothingness, you will never understand Christ's all-sufficiency. Unless you are pulled down, Christ will never lift you up. Unless you know yourselves to be lost, you will never care for that Saviour who came "to seek and to save the lost." That is a second discovery, then; that it is important to be just before God, but that on account of the spirituality of God's moral law, and our consequent inability to keep it perfectly, we are very far from standing in that position.

Then there comes another discovery, namely, that consequently

*it is utterly impossible for us to hope that we ever can be just before God, on the footing of our own doing.* We must give it up now, as an utterly lost case. The past is past: that can never be by us blotted out, and the present, inasmuch as we are weak through the flesh, is not much better than the past; and the future, notwithstanding all our fond hopes of improvement, will probably be none the better, and so salvation by the works of the law becomes to us a dreary impossibility. The law said, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." I was conversing on one occasion with one of our most illustrious Jewish noblemen, and when I put to him the question—he believed himself to be perfectly righteous, and I believe if any man could be so by his moral conduct, he might have fairly laid claim to it; but when I said to him, "Now, there is your own law for it, 'Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them': have you continued in all things?" he said, "I have not." "Then," I said, "the curse is upon you: how do you hope to escape from it?" and I found that to be a question for which he, at any rate, had no answer; and it is a question which, when properly understood, no man can answer, except by pointing to the cross of Christ and saying, "He was made a curse for us that we might be made a blessing." Unless you and I keep the law of God perfectly, it matters little how near we get to perfection. It is as though God had committed to our trust a perfect crystal vase, and had said, "If you keep that whole, and present it to me, you shall have a reward." But we have cracked it, chipped it; ah! my brethren, the most of us have broken it and smashed it to pieces. But we will suppose that we have only cracked it a little. Yes, but even then we have lost the reward, for the condition was that it should be perfectly whole, and the slightest chip is a violation of the condition upon which the reward would have been given. Never you say that you will not break it farther. Nay, but you have broken it. You have thrown yourselves now out of the list. It sometimes seems hard when you tell people that if they have violated the law in one point, they have broken the whole of it; but it is not so hard as it looks to be, for if I

tell a man who is going down a coal-mine on a long chain that, if he shall break one link of the chain, it does not matter, though all the other hundreds or thousands of links may be sound; if there is only one link that is broken, down will descend the basket, and the poor miner be dashed to pieces. Nobody thinks that hard. Everybody recognizes that as being a matter of mechanical law, that the strength of a chain must be measured by its weakest part. And so the strength of our obedience must be gauged by the very point in which it fails. Alas! our obedience has failed, and, through it, no one of us can ever be just before God.

Now, I want to stop a minute, and put the question round the galleries, and below stairs. Have you all got as far as that? It is important to be just before God: we see that we are not so: do we see that we cannot be so? Are we quite convinced that by our own obedience to the law of God, it is hopeless for us to think of standing accepted before the Most High? I pray the Eternal Spirit to convince you all of this, or you will keep on knocking at the door until you are quite sure that God has nailed it up for ever, and you will go scrambling over that Alp, and tumbling down this precipice, until you are convinced that it is impossible for you to climb it, and then you will give up your desperate endeavour and come to God in God's way, which is quite another way from your own. I trust that we are all convinced of this.

Let us notice one more preliminary discovery. A man, having found out all this, suddenly discovers that, inasmuch as he is not just before God, and cannot be, *he is at the present moment under condemnation*. God is never indifferent towards sin. If, therefore, a man be not in a state in which God can justify him, he is in a state in which God must condemn him. If you are not just before God, you are condemned at this very moment. You are not executed, it is true, but the condemnation has gone forth against you, and the sign that it is so is your unbelief, for "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Son of God." How some of you would spring up from your seats tonight if all on a sudden you got the information that you had been

condemned by the courts of your country; but when I say that you have been condemned by the Court of Heaven, this glides across your conscience like drops of water or oil over a marble slab. And yet, my hearers, if thou didst but know the meaning of what I am saying-and I pray God the Holy Ghost to make thee know it-it would make thy very bones to quiver! God has condemned thee. Thou art out of Christ. Thou hast broken his law. God has lifted his hand to smite thee, and, though his mercy tarries for awhile, yet days and hours will soon be gone, and then the condemnation shall take the shape of execution, and where will thy soul be then? Now, you must have the sentence of condemnation passed in your own soul, or else you will never be justified, for until we are condemned by ourselves we are not acquitted by God. Again, I pause and say, Dost thou feel this, my dear hearer? If thou dost, instead of despairing, be hopeful. If thou hast the sentence of death within thee, be thankful for it, for now shall life be given thee from the hand of God's grace.

Having occupied, perhaps, too much time over that, we now come more immediately into the text to:

## II. SHOW THE GOSPEL LEARNING WHICH IS TAUGHT TO US BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

THAT GOSPEL LEARNING I MAY GIVE YOU IN A FEW SENTENCES, namely, these: that, inasmuch as through man's sin, the way of obedience is for ever closed, so that we-none of us-can ever pass by it to a true righteousness, God has now determined to deal with men in a way of mercy, to forgive them all their offences, to bestow upon them his love, to receive them graciously, and to love them freely. He has been pleased, in his infinite wisdom, to devise a way by which without injury to his justice, he can yet receive the most undeserving sons of men into his heart, and make them his children, and can bless them with all the blessings which would have

been theirs had they perfectly kept God's law, but which now shall come to them as a matter of gift and undeserved grace from himself.

I trust we have learned that; that there is a plan of salvation by grace, and by grace alone; and it is a great thing to know that where grace is, there are no works.

It is a blessed thing never to muddle in your head the doctrine of working, and the doctrine of receiving by grace, for there is an essential and eternal difference between the two. I hope you all know that there can be no mixing of the two. If we are saved by grace, it cannot be by our own merits, but if we depend upon our own merits, then we cannot appeal to the grace of God, since the two things can never be mingled together. It must be all works or else all grace. Now, God's plan of salvation excludes all our works. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." It comes to us upon the footing of grace, pure grace alone. And this is God's plan, namely, that, inasmuch as we cannot be saved by our own obedience, we should be saved by Christ's obedience. Jesus, the Son of God, has appeared in the flesh, has lived a life of obedience to God's law, and in consequence of that obedience, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and our Saviour's life and death make up a complete keeping and honouring of that law which we have broken and dishonoured, and God's plan is this: "I cannot bless you for your own sakes, but I will bless you for his sake; and now, looking at you through him, I can bless you though you deserve it not; I can pass by your undeserving; I can blot out your sins like a cloud, and cast your iniquities into the depths of the sea through what he has done; you have no merits, but he has boundless merits; you are full of sin and must be punished, but he has been punished instead of you, and now I can deal with you." This is the language of God, put into human words, "I can deal with you upon terms of mercy through the merits of my dear Son." This is the way in which the gospel comes to you, then. If you believe in Jesus, that is to say, if you trust him, all the merits of Jesus are your merits, are imputed to

you: all the sufferings of Jesus are your sufferings. Everyone of his merits is imputed to you. You stand before God as if you were Christ, because Christ stood before God as if he were you—he in your stead, you in his stead. Substitution! that is the word! Christ the Substitute for sinners: Christ standing for men, and bearing the thunderbolts of the divine opposition to all sin, he "being made sin for us who knew no sin." Man standing in Christ's place, and receiving the sunlight of divine favour, instead of Christ.

And this, I say, is through trusting, or believing. God's way of your getting connection with Christ is through your reliance upon him. "Therefore, being justified"—how? Not by works; that is not the link, but—"being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Christ offers to God the substitution: through faith we accept it: and from that moment God accepts us.

Now, I want to come to this, dear friends. Do you know this? Have you been taught this by the Spirit of God? Perhaps you learned it in the Assembly's Catechism when you were but children: you have learned it in the various classes since then, but do you know it in your own soul, and do you know that God's way of salvation is through a simple dependence upon his dear Son? Do you so know it that you have accepted it, and that you are now resting upon Jesus? If so, then thrice happy are you!

But, going further, I have now to dwell for a minute or two upon:

### III. THE GLORIOUS PRIVILEGE OF THE TEXT.

WE HAVE LED YOU, AND I HOPE THE SPIRIT OF GOD HAS LED you, too, through the preliminary discoveries, and through the great discovery that God can save us through the merits of another, and now let us notice this glorious privilege word by word.

*"Being justified."* The text tells us that every believing man is at

the present moment perfectly justified before God. You know what Adam was in naked innocence in Paradise. Such is every believer. Ay, and more than that. Adam could talk with God because he was pure from sin, and we also have access with boldness unto God our Father because, through Jesus' blood, we are clean. Now, I do not say that this is the privilege of a few eminent saints, but here I look around these pews and see my brethren and sisters—scores and hundreds of them—all of whom are tonight just before God—perfectly so; completely so; so just that they never can be otherwise than just; so just that even in heaven they will be no more acceptable to God than they are here tonight. That is the state into which faith brings a poor, lost, guilty, helpless, good-for-nothing sinner. The man may have been everything that was bad before he believed in Jesus, but as soon as he trusted Christ, the merits of Christ became his merits, and he stands before God as though he were perfect, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," through the righteousness of Christ.

Note, however, as we have noticed the state of justification, the means whereby we reach it. "Being justified *by faith*." The way of reaching this state of justification is not by tears, nor prayers, nor humblings, nor working, nor Bible-reading, nor church-going, nor chapel-going, nor sacraments, nor priestly absolution, but by *faith*, which faith is a simple and utter dependence and believing in the faithfulness of God, a dependence upon the promise of God, because it is God's promise, and is worthy of dependence. It is a reliance with all our might upon what God has said. This is faith, and every man who possesses this faith is perfectly justified tonight.

I know what the devil will say to you. He will say to you, "You are a sinner!" Tell him you know you are, but that for all that you are justified. He will tell you of the greatness of your sin. Tell him of the greatness of Christ's righteousness. He will tell you of all your mishaps and your backslidings, of your offences and your wanderings. Tell him, and tell your own conscience, that you know all that, but that Jesus Christ came to save sinners, and that, although your sin be great, Christ is quite able to put it all away. Some of you, it

seems to me, do not trust in Christ as sinners. You get a mangle kind of faith. You trust in Christ as though you thought Christ could do something for you, and you could do the rest. I tell you that while you look to yourselves, you do not know what faith means. You must be convinced that there is nothing good in yourselves; you must know that you are sinners, and that in your hearts you are as big and as black sinners as the very worst and vilest, and you must come to Jesus, and leave your fancied righteousnesses, and your pretended goodnesses behind you, and you must take him for everything, and trust in him. Oh! to feel your sin, and yet to know your righteousness-to have the two together-repentance on account of sin, and yet a glorious confidence in the all-atoning sacrifice! Oh! if you could understand that saying of the spouse, "I am black, but comely"-for that is where we must come-black in myself, as black as hell, and yet comely, fair, lovely, inexpressibly glorious through the righteousness of Jesus.

My dear brethren and sisters, can you feel this? If you cannot feel it, do you believe it? And do you sing in the words of Joseph Hart?:

"In thy surety thou art free,  
His dear hands were pierced for thee;  
With thy Saviour's vesture on,  
Holy as the holy one."

For so it is: you stand before God as accepted as Christ is accepted: and notwithstanding the inbred sin and corruption of your heart, you are as dear to God as Christ is dear, and as accepted in the righteousness of Christ as Christ is accepted in his own obedience.

Have we got so far? That is the point on which I want to enquire this evening. Have you got as far as to know at this moment that it is through faith we are justified? If so, I shall conduct you just one step farther, namely, to observe-and this is coming back, whilst it is also going forward-that "we are justified by



faith *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" There is the foundation: there is the mainspring. There is the tree that bears the fruit. We are justified by faith, but not by faith of itself. Faith in itself is a precious grace, but it cannot in itself justify us. It is *"through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Simple as the observation is, I must venture to repeat it tonight, because it is hard for us to keep it in mind. But remember that faith is not the work of the Spirit within, but the work of Christ upon the tree. That upon which I must rest as my meritorious hope is not the blessed fact that I am now an heir of heaven, but the still more blessed fact that the Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me. My dear brethren, when all is fair weather within, there is such a temptation to say, "Well, now, it is all right with me, for I see this, and I feel that." Very good these evidences are in their places, but evidences, you get equally clear evidences that you are not perfect; when you have to say, "Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" you will find that, instead of your beautiful evidences, you will have to fly to the cross. There was a time when I, too, could take a great deal of comfort in what I believe is the Spirit of God's work in my soul I do thank God for it, and bless him for it now but I trust I have learned to walk where poor Jack the huckster walked:

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

BRETHREN, IT IS DOWN ON THE GROUND THAT WE MUST LIVE. WE must build upon the rock itself. On the top of some mountains men sometimes build heaps of timber, so as to get a little higher. Well, now, some of these rickety platforms, you know, get shaky, but when you get right down on the mountain itself, that never shakes, and you are perfectly secure there. So sometimes we get building up our rickety platforms of our experience and our good works—all very well in their way, but then they shake in the storm. Depend upon it, that the soul that clings to the rock, notwithstanding all

that the Holy Spirit has done for it, and having nothing then to depend upon, more than the poor dying robber had when, without a single good work, he had to hang on the dying Christ alone-oh! believe me, that soul is in the safest place to live in, Jesus, for a poor sinner when he is torn from his cups and his sins, and none but Jesus for the aged saint when he stays himself upon his bed to bear his last testimony:

"Nothing in my hands I bring;  
Simply to thy cross I cling."

"THEREFORE, BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

And now, to crown all, there is here the precious, precious privilege which such men enjoy-"we have *peace with God*." I know that this may seem a trifle to thoughtless people, but not to those who think. I cannot say that I sympathize with those people who shut their eyes to the beauties of nature. I have heard of good men travelling through fine scenery, and shutting their eyes for fear they should see. I always open mine as wide as ever I can, because I think I can see God in all the works of his hands, and what God has taken the trouble to make I think I ought to take the trouble to look at. Surely there must be something to see in a man's works if he be a wise man; and there must be something worth seeing in the works of God, who is all-wise. Now, it is a delightful thing to say, when you look upon a landscape, lit up with sunlight and shaded with cloud, "Well, my Father made all this; I never saw him, but I do delight in the work of his hands; he made all this, and I am perfectly at peace with him." Then as you are standing there, a storm comes on. Big drops begin to fall. There is thunder in the distance. It begins to peal louder and louder. Presently there comes a lightning's flash. Now, those who are not at peace with God may go and flee away, but those who are perfectly at peace with him may stand there and say, "Well, it is my Father

who is doing all this; that is his voice; the voice of the Lord, which is full of majesty." I love to hear my Father's voice. I never am so happy as in a tremendous storm, and when the lightning flash comes, I think-well, it is only the flashing of my Father's eye: now, God is abroad: he seemed as if he had left the world before, but now he comes riding on the wings of the wind; let me go and meet him. I am not afraid! Suppose you are out at sea in a storm. You are justified by faith, and you say, "Well, let the waves roar; let them clap their hands: my Father holds the waters in the hollow of his hand, why should I be afraid?" Let me say to you that it is worth something to believe that God can put us in a calm state of mind when "earth is all in arms abroad." It is just so with the believer when temporal troubles come. There comes crash after crash until it seems as though every house of business would come down. Nothing is certain. Man has lost confidence and reliance in his fellow-man. Everything is going to the bad. But the Christian says, "God is at the helm; the whole business of business is managed by the great King: let the sons of earth do as they will, but:

"He everywhere hath sway,  
And all things serve his might."

IT IS SOMETHING TO FEEL THAT MY FATHER CANNOT DO ME A BAD turn. Even if he should use his rod upon me, it will do me good, and I will thank him for it, for I am at perfect peace with him.

And then to come to die, and to feel, "I am going to God, and I am glad to go, for I am not going like a prisoner to a judge, but like a wife espoused goes to her husband, like a child home from school to the parents' arms. Oh! it is something to die with a sense of peace with God! Surely every thoughtful man will feel that. Now, if you trust Christ, you shall be justified by faith. Being justified, your heart shall feel that perfect peace is brought into it, so that you shall meet your Father's will with perfect equanimity, let it be what

it may. Come life, come death, it shall not matter to you, for all is right between God and your souls.

Oh! I wish it were so with all present! It may be so if God the Spirit bring you to rest in Jesus. Nay, it shall be so, my dear friend; it shall be so with you tonight; though you never thought it would be when you came in here, yet you see it all now. It is simply believing, simply trusting. Oh! believe him! Trust him, and it shall be the joy of your soul to have a peace with God which, as the world did not give you, so the world shall never take away, but you shall have it for ever and ever. God grant it to each one of us! Amen.

CHAPTER 4  
JUSTIFICATION AND GLORY, C. H.  
SPURGEON, APRIL 30, 1865



“Whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Rom. 8:30

WELL said the apostle in another place, “All things are of God;” for here in this passage all works of grace are evidently so. The pronoun “he” is repeated yet again and again, as if to set the Lord always before us. “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” “Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” It is of God all the way through. There is not an inch of ground left to be covered by the creature’s foot. The eternal Creator worketh all things in the covenant of grace, according to the counsel of his own will. Haldane has an admirable note on this passage, which we will quote in full. “In looking back on this passage, we should observe, that in all that is stated, man acts no part, but is passive, and all is done by God. He is elected, and predestinated, and called, and justified, and glorified by God. The apostle was here concluding all that he had said before, in enumerating topics of consolation to believers; and is now going on

to show that God is “for us,” or on the part of his people. Could anything, then, be more consolatory to those who love God, than to be in this manner assured that the great concern of their salvation is not left in their own keeping? God, even their covenant God, hath taken the whole upon himself. He hath undertaken for them. There is no room, then, for chance or change, he will perfect that which concerneth them.” Does not this account for the majestic manner in which these covenant mercies follow one another as in a triumphal procession. Foreknowledge leads the van with eyes beaming with love, then come predestination, calling, justification, glorification, all in their proper order. Not one of these gigantic mercies limps along the road, but marching with stately tread, adorned in robes of glory, each one keeping its place, they make up a magnificent procession to the praise of the glory of his grace, who has set them all in order, and written his own name upon them all. Observe, there is no “if,” no “but,” no “may be,” no “peradventure” here. He foreknows, he predestinates. No creature lifts up its puny voice to object to the predestinating decree. Having predestinated, he calls, and it is such an effectual calling, that we hear of no resistance. Having called, he justifies, and “who is he that condemneth?” Having justified without let or hindrance, he achieves his eternal purpose without impediment, and brings forth the top-stone of the temple of his grace with shoutings, as it is written, “Whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Let our souls be glad, as we clearly see the mighty presence of our God in every work of grace, and let us understand whence the force, the certainty, the immutability, the majesty of the whole matter comes; namely, from the fact that “he ordered all things according to the counsel of his own will;” and “who shall stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?”

This morning, God the Holy Ghost, I trust, will make it to your profit to weigh these two precious gems of lovingkindness, to count over these priceless treasures of mercy, to swim in these two seas of love, justification and glorification; and then we shall need time carefully to search after the connection between them both,

for they are rivetted together by rivets of diamond; they are fastened together so fast and firmly, that neither death nor hell can separate them. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified."

I. LET US BEGIN, THEN, BY CONSIDERING WHAT IT IS TO BE JUSTIFIED.

IF YOU WISH FOR AN ANSWER IN A FEW WORDS, ASK YOUR children who have learned our catechism, and you have it: \* "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepted us as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." Perhaps, however, I had better unfold the truth in detail. You will perceive by reading the connection and by a moment's reflection, that the justification here meant is an act of God passed upon a person needing it, consequently passed upon a person who could not justify himself; a person naturally guilty of sin, being in a state of condemnation naturally, and needing to be lifted out of it by an act of justification of a divine order. It is not possible that God should have devised a plan of justification for those who were already justified by their own actions. We do not talk with any wonder, or speak with any astonishment of a justification which a man achieves for himself. The guiltless need no justification; they have it already. If any man hath kept the law of God and made it honourable he is in himself just, and needs not to be made just—he is so already. Justification is an act of grace passed upon a sinner, upon one who has transgressed the law and cannot be justified by it, and who, therefore, needs to be made just in another way, a way out of his own reach, above his own doings, and coming, as in the text, from God himself; for it says, "He justifies." This, though it is a very common-place observation, is a very sweet truth to begin with. Oh, sinner! however black thy sins may have been, thou mayest yet be justified. Though thy sins be as scarlet, they may yet

be as wool; and though thou be red like crimson thou mayest be white as snow. It is written that "he justifieth the ungodly," yes, the ungodly, such as thou hast been. Christ came not into the world as a physician for those who are whole, but for those who are sick. Justification is an act of grace which looks out for a sinner upon whom to exercise itself. May the eyes of grace find thee out this morning, poor transgressor, and make thee just.

In the next place, justification is the result of sovereign grace, and of sovereign grace alone. We are told that "by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified." And yet again, "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." I cannot earn justification. Nothing which I can ever do can merit justification at the hands of God. I have so offended that all which is due to me is God's wrath and that for ever. If I shall ever be accounted just it must be because God wills to make me just; it must be, because out of his divine compassion, and for no other reason whatever, he looks upon me in my sin and misery, lifts me up from the dunghill of my rain, and determines to wrap me about with the royal apparel of a righteousness which he has prepared. There is no justification then, as an act of merit; the day for that was past when Adam fell, and when we fell in him. Justification now comes as a priceless boon from the liberal hand of God's grace.

Justification has for its matter and means the righteousness of Jesus Christ, set forth in his vicarious obedience, both in life and death. Certain modern heretics, who ought to have known better, have denied this, and there were some in older times who, by reason of ignorance, said that there was no such thing as the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. He who denies this, perhaps unconsciously, cuts at the root of the gospel system. I believe that this doctrine is involved in the whole system of substitution and satisfaction; and we all know that substitution and a vicarious sacrifice are the very marrow of the gospel of Christ. The law, like the God from whom it came, is absolutely immutable, and can be satisfied by nothing else than a complete and perfect righteousness, at once suffering the penalty for guilt incurred already, and working



out obedience to the precept which still binds those upon whom penalty has passed. This was rendered by the Lord Jesus as the representative of his chosen, and is the sole legal ground for the justification of the elect. As for me, I can never doubt that Christ's righteousness is mine, when I find that Christ himself and all that he has belongs to me; if I find that he gives me everything, surely he gives me his righteousness among the rest. And what am I to do with that if not to wear it? Am I to lay it by in a wardrobe and not put it on? Well, sirs, let others wear what they will; my soul rejoices in the royal apparel. For me, the term "the Lord our righteousness" is significant and has a weight of meaning. Jesus Christ shall be my righteousness so long as I read the language of the apostle, "he is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." My dear brethren, do not doubt the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, whatever cavillers may say. Remember that you must have a righteousness. It is this which the law requires. I do not read that the law made with our first parents required suffering; it did demand it as a penalty after its breach; but the righteousness of the law required not suffering, but obedience. Suffering would not release us from the duty of obeying. Lost souls in hell are still under the law, and their woes and pangs if completely endured would never justify them. Obedience, and obedience alone, can justify, and where can we have it but in Jesus our Substitute? Christ comes to magnify the law: how does he do it but by obedience? If I am to enter into life by the keeping of the commandments, as the Lord tells me in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew, and the seventeenth verse, how can I except by Christ having kept them? and how can he have kept the law except by obedience to its commands? The promises in the Word of God are not made to suffering; they are made to obedience: consequently Christ's sufferings, though they may remove the penalty, do not alone make me the inheritor of the promise. "If thou wilt enter into life," said Christ, "keep the commandments." It is only Christ's keeping the commandments that entitles me to enter life. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and

make it honourable.” I do not enter into life by virtue of his sufferings— those deliver me from death, those purge me from filthiness, but, entering the enjoyments of the life eternal must be the result of obedience; and as it cannot be the result of mine, it is the result of his which is imputed to me. We find the apostle Paul putting Christ’s obedience in contrast to the disobedience of Adam: “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Now this is not Christ’s death merely, but Christ’s active obedience, which is here meant, and it is by this that we are made righteous. Beloved, you need not sing with stammering tongues that blessed verse of our hymn,

“Jesus, thy perfect righteousness,  
My beauty is, my glorious dress.”

FOR DESPITE ALL THE OUTCRY OF MODERN TIMES AGAINST THAT doctrine, it is written in heaven and is a sure and precious truth to be received by all the faithful, that we are justified by faith through the righteousness of Christ Jesus imputed to us. See what Christ has done in his living and in his dying, his acts becoming our acts and his righteousness being imputed to us, so that we are rewarded as if we were righteous, while he was punished as though he had been guilty.

This justification then comes to sinners as an act of pure grace, the foundation of it being Christ’s righteousness. The practical way of its application is by faith. The sinner believeth God, and believeth that Christ is sent of God, and takes Christ Jesus to be his only confidence and trust, and by that act he becomes a justified soul. It is not by repenting that we are justified, but by believing; it is not by deep experience of the guilt of sin; it is not by bitter pangs and throes under the temptations of Satan; it is not by mortification of the body, nor by the renunciation of self; all these are good, but the act which justifieth is a look at Christ. We, having nothing, being nothing, boasting of nothing, but being utterly

emptied, do look to him whose wounds stream with the life-giving blood, and as we look to him, we live and are justified by his life. There is life in a look at the crucified One, and life in the sense of justification. He who a minute before was in himself a condemned criminal fit only to be taken to the place from whence he came, and to suffer divine wrath, is at once, by an act of faith made an heir of God, joint heir with Jesus Christ, taken from the place of condemnation and put into the place of acceptance, so that now he dreads no more the wrath of God; the curse of God cannot touch him, for Christ was made a curse for him, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

Now concerning this great mercy of justification let us say that it is instantaneous. Sanctification needs a whole life, justification is the work of a second, perhaps it needs no appreciable time. The sinner looks to Christ, it is all done, his sin is gone in a moment. The righteousness of Christ is, as in an instant, imputed to the believing sinner. Sanctification, moreover, progresses or declines; it is a thing of changes; the work of the Holy Spirit sometimes ripens swiftly, and at other times, by reason of temptation or trial within, it is but slow in its advance; but justification is complete in a moment. The dying thief was as clean one moment after he had trusted in Christ as he was when he was with Christ in Paradise. Justification in heaven is not more complete than it is on earth. Nay, listen to me, child of God. When thy soul seems to be a very pandemonium through the blasphemies of Satan, when thy doubts and fears leap upon thee like so many lions, when thy sins prevail against thee so that thou canst not look up, yet, if thou be a believer thou art even then, in thy worst moments, as completely and perfectly justified as in those happy days when on Tabor's summit thou wert apt to say, "Let us build three tabernacles, and here abide." Justification never alters in a child of God. God pronounces him guiltless, and guiltless he is. Jehovah justifies him, and neither his holiness can improve his righteousness, nor his sins diminish it. He stands in Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, as accepted one moment as at another moment, as

sure of eternal life at one instant as at another. Oh, how blessed is this truth: justified in a moment, and justified completely!

And observe, my dear brethren, that he who is thus justified is justified infallibly. There is no mistake concerning the transaction. "It is God that justifieth;" where, then, can there be a mistake? If I justify myself, I am a fool, and I make God a liar; but if God justifies me, who is he that condemneth? I, a poor sinner, black as night, fly to the shelter of the great shield stained with blood which God holds over my head, and there I stand at all times; and though I know that every lightning of justice might well dart its force upon me, as I am in myself, yet as I see my shield, the Lord's Anointed, I am not afraid; but, standing under that shield, I defy heaven, and earth, and hell; crying in the language of Paul, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" There is a prisoner at the bar, and the jury have just brought in a verdict of "Not guilty." The judge bids him go free. There are people in the court who gnash their teeth at him; there are persons in the street who hate him; what cares he? "I have been pronounced 'not guilty,' by the proper tribunal; the Judge himself tells me that I am acquitted; not a law-officer can touch me; not the fiercest enemy in the world can drag me into court again; I have been tried, and found 'not guilty;' and who is he that condemneth?" It is just so with the Christian. Christ's righteousness is put upon him, Christ takes his sins, and when he stands before God's bar, the eternal voice seems to say, "I see no sin in that man." How can he? All that man's sins Christ took away. The eternal voice sounds forth again, "I can see righteousness there;" and well it may see it, for Christ's righteousness is there, and therefore the man is infallibly, upon grounds of justice which are not disputable; infallibly, upon grounds which he himself may realize as being certain, justified through Christ Jesus.

Do remember, dear brethren, and I will not occupy you much longer over a theme where we might be tempted to stay, that this justification is irreversible. Once justified you shall never be condemned. Jehovah never plays fast and loose with men. He does

not look upon a sinner and say, "I forgive thee," and then afterwards say, "Depart ye cursed." Arminians may think so, but the God of believers will not do so. The God of Christians says, "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Having taken the prodigal into the house and put the ring on his finger and the shoes on his feet, he never turns that prodigal out of doors. Being married to his people he never sues out a divorce, for the Lord the God of Israel saith he hateth putting away. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thine iniquities for my name's sake, and will not remember them against thee any more for ever." "I have cast thine iniquities into the depths of the sea." Pardon and justification are irreversible, and consequently the blessings which justification brings to us, belong to us by an entail that can never be broken for ever and ever. If I am justified, then I have peace with God, and that peace shall be like a river, never dried up, because my righteousness is like the waves of the sea, never exhausted. If I am justified I can claim Jehovah's protection; and I shall have it, for he will not suffer the just man to perish. If I am justified I may come before God and ask for heaven as my right, as a reward of righteousness imputed to me, and I shall have it, for he will never deny to a justified person the fulness of joy which is at his right hand for evermore. Oh, what a blessing to be justified!

Once more, before I leave this point, I must ask you to be kind enough to question yourselves as to whether you have been justified. "Well," says one, "perhaps I have been, and do not know it." My dear friend, I do not think so. The work of justification is generally attended with such a flood of joy, that I think you must know it. Bunyan's pilgrim did not lose the burden off his back, and not know it; but as soon as it was gone, he gave three great leaps for joy, and went on his way singing. You may have doubts about whether you are justified; I hope you will not be easy under them, but will seek after an assured interest in Christ. My dear brother, if thou hast any doubt, go to Christ again. If thou art not justified, go to him to be justified; just as you are, with nothing but the plea of his blood in your mouth, go to him, for he casts out none that come

unto God by him. Do still know that the act of faith justifies, and be not thou afraid to exercise that act of faith, notwithstanding all thy shortcomings and thy sins. "Hear me, Jesus! If I never was a saint, I am a sinner, and thou didst come to save sinners, and I cast myself on thee. Thy promise is, that thou wilt cast out none that come. Oh, cast me not out; even me do thou receive and accept for thy love's sake."

II. THUS MUCH UPON JUSTIFICATION. AND NOW A LITTLE upon GLORY.

HOW THAT GOLDEN WORD HAS BEEN DEBASED IN THE COINAGE of human speech. It has come to mean the glitter of war's helmet, and the noise of the crowd's hurrahs. Smollet called it "the fair child of peril." Johnson wrote—

"Glory, the casual gift of thoughtless crowds,  
Glory, the bride of avaricious virtue!"

IT IS A FAR OTHER AND HIGHER GLORY OF WHICH WE SPEAK to-day. As high as the heaven is above the earth is God's glory from all the poor stuff which mortals dignify with that fair name.

"Whom he justified, them he also glorified." They follow close together you see. A little stream divides them, but the apostle says nothing about it, and you and I need not say much. It is a narrow stream called Death: there is no glory without passing through that, or through the great change when the Lord comes; but there is nothing said about it, and so we will not say anything. It is not worth thinking of, it is swallowed up in victory. It may be an enemy, but it is an enemy that is to be destroyed. Now, while speaking of glory, I think I must divide the glory which God gives to the justified into three parts. There is, first of all, the glory which disem-

bodied spirits are enjoying even now; there is, secondly, the resurrection glory, which they will enjoy when the soul and body shall be re-united, and when, through the millennium, they shall be “for ever with the Lord;” and, then there is “the eternal weight of glory,” which is to be revealed both in body and soul, in the never-ending state of bliss which God has prepared for his people.

Let us raise our thoughts a little while to the state of disembodied spirits. The moment that the soul leaves the body, the believing soul, the justified soul is in glory. We know that there is no preparatory process for it to pass through. Romanism holds that some of the best saints go to heaven when they die; but that the great mass of inferior saints are not qualified for heaven and must undergo a purgation for a series of years till they are prepared to enter glory; that the saints who died under the Old Testament, or at least the most of them, went to the *limbus patrum*, which some wicked Protestants call *limbo*, where they remained without the beatific vision until the Lord Jesus went and preached to the spirits in prison, and led them up afterwards to heaven with him. As for the grossly wicked who have by mortal sin lost the grace of baptism, they go to hell at once; but the better sort of partially sanctified Christians must suffer more or less intensely till their sins are atoned for, and purged away. It was well said by Hugh Latimer, that the key of purgatory hangs in the pope’s larder, for, said he, it had helped to keep it pretty full, and I have no doubt it has. It has been a very profitable invention; more money has been paid, I suppose, for getting souls out of purgatory than people have been tempted to pay in order to keep them out of hell. However, we are not deceived in this matter, let the Council of Trent say what it may. The case of the dying thief is to the point. He was no eminent saint. He had not for many years performed works of supererogation by which he reached perfection, and could claim that the gates should be opened to him. He was a sinner up to the very last moment, and the only good deed that we ever read of his doing, was, when he claimed Christ as Lord, and rebuked his fellow-thief for slandering the

Saviour. Yet, hear the words: — “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

Nor is this the only instance. We find, when Lazarus died, according to the parable, that he was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom, a place of unspeakable rest and delight which the rich man greatly envied. Stephen expected the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit, and the apostle Paul was in a strait betwixt two, being willing “to depart and to be with Christ.” He evidently did not anticipate any delay between earth and heaven, for he says, “knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” He puts the two as an alternative. We are not in trouble about them that sleep; we know that they sleep in Jesus, and that he will bring them with him. In Eph. iii. 15, the apostle mentions the whole family as being in heaven and earth, but he speaks of none of the Lord’s people being in limbo. Those whom we are bidden to follow, in Heb. vi.12, are now inheriting the promises. Let the voice of God decide the case for ever. Rev. xiv. 13. “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

Perhaps that word “Paradise” which Christ uses to describe the state of disembodied spirits may be a help to us in judging of the condition of the blessed. Paradise was a place of perfect peace, of sinlessness, of rest, of enjoyment, and freedom from evil. Eden! oh, how shall we talk of its glories long since faded? Let us, however, remember its winding walks among trees loaded with luscious fruits. Let us remember the glory of its rising and its setting sun; the immortality, the peace, the joy, the love, the brightness which our first parents enjoyed in their naked innocence.

That happy garden is a faint picture of the naked spirits, unclothed with bodies, who are now before the eternal throne; they have no pain, nor weariness, no evil, nor fear of death. They possess everything that can make them blessed, except the resurrection body.



“There fruits that never fade,  
On trees immortal grow;  
There, rocks, and hills, and floods, and vales,  
With milk and honey flow.  
Methinks, Dr. Watts was right when he said—  
“There everlasting spring abides,  
And never-withering flowers.”

THEY ARE IN A BLESSED STATE OF TRANQUILLITY AND perfection; but the Saviour added, what was the beauty of all, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The glory of paradise was, that God walked there in the cool of the evening with his creatures; and the glory of heaven is, that “they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light,” and the days of their mourning shall be ended. God wipes away all tears from their eyes, and the Lamb leads them to the living fountains of waters. God is with them to be their God, and they are with him to be his happy people at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. This is the state of disembodied spirits now.

If I read the word aright, and it is honest to admit that there is much room for difference of opinion here, the day will come, when the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel and the voice of God. Some think that this descent of the Lord will be post-millennial— that is, after the thousand years of his reign. I cannot think so. I conceive that the advent will be pre-millennial; that he will come first; and then will come the millennium as the result of his personal reign upon earth. But whether or no, this much is the fact, that Christ will suddenly come, come to reign, and come to judge the earth in righteousness. Now, at that time those of us who are alive and remain, shall have no preference over them that sleep. It is true “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Christ will bring with him those who sleep in him. They are now in that state which is

called sleep; that is, a state of hallowed rest, tranquillity, and enjoyment: but they shall come with him. Lo, he comes with ten thousand times ten thousand of his saints. Then, from beds of dust and silent clay their bodies shall wake up; the very bodies that were put into the tomb shall rise instinct with life. I say the very bodies; and it is not necessary to that, that there should be the very same particles of matter. My body is the same body that it was ten years ago; yet I am told, and I believe it, that there is not a particle of matter in my body now that was in it ten years ago; and yet its identity is not disturbed thereby. Protect the germ, as God doubtless will, the life-germ of the seed corn which you sow in the earth—protect that, and you have protected identity; and though when we rise it will not be as flesh and blood, “for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption;” yet it shall be the same body, for all bodies are not the same bodies, for there are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial; and the glory is not the same; for there is the glory of the sun, the glory of the moon, and of the stars. So I may have the same body, the same for identity, and yet as to its constituent elements, and especially as to its qualities of weakness, mortality and corruption, it may be as distinct and changed as light is distinct and changed from darkness.

Oh, my brethren, let this be an assured truth to us that we do not put the body into the grave to lose it. Watts is right when he says,

“Corruption, earth and worms  
Do but refine this flesh.”

We put the body there as the chemist puts gold into the furnace; it shall come out the same as to its gold, but the dross shall be left behind. All that was precious in the fabric shall remain; that which was corruptible, defiled, sinful, shall have passed away.

According to our belief the soul will then return to the body. There will be a joyful meeting. Soul and body often quarrel here;

but they are always loath to part, which proves how true is the wedlock between them: but what a happy meeting it will be, when there will be no more jars between this husband and wife, when the soul and body shall be merged together in the perfection of union. Then, whatever may be the splendour of Christ will be the splendour of his people. Our bodies shall be like unto his glorious body, and we ourselves shall be like him.

“It doth not yet appear  
How great we must be made;  
But when we see our Saviour here.  
We shall be like our Head.”

WILL HE REIGN? WE SHALL REIGN WITH HIM. WILL HE JUDGE the earth? “Know ye not that ye shall judge angels.” “The saints shall judge the world.” Will he be ruler over cities? He will make us ruler over many cities. All the splendour and triumph, and victory and shouting, we shall have a share in; and when the grand Hallel! shall go up from earth, and land, and sea, and from the depths that are under the earth, our tongue shall swell the tremendous chorus, and our ear shall be a partaker of the ever-blessed harmony. Let us not fear. “Whom he justified, them he also glorified;” both in the sense of giving their disembodied spirits joy, and giving the soul and body power to reign with him.

Well, and what then? Then cometh the end; when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when the mediatorial dispensation shall be finished, what then? Will the earth be renovated and fitted up anew as a new heaven and a new earth? Will that new Jerusalem that is to come down at the coming of Christ, be the future abode of saints? We do not know, and we do not care one whit. This much we know, that we shall be for ever with the Lord. With Christ shall be the heaven of believers for ever, according to the Lord’s own prayer, “Father, I will that they also

whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.”

If I might very hastily divide this glory into its constituent elements, I think I should say it means perfect rest. “There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God;” life in its fullest sense; life with emphasis; eternal life; nearness to God; closeness to the Divine heart; a sense of his love shed abroad in all its fulness; likeness to Christ; fulness of communion with him; abundance of the Spirit of God, being filled with all the fulness of God; an excess of joy; a perpetual influx of delight; perfection of holiness; no stain nor thought of sin; perfect submission to the divine will; a delight and acquiescence in, and conformity to that will; absorption as it were into God, the creature still the creature, but filled with the Creator to the brim; serenity caused by a sense of safety; continuance of heavenly service; an intense satisfaction in serving God day and night; bliss in the society of perfect spirits and glorified angels; delight in the retrospect of the past, delight in the enjoyment of the present, and in the prospect of the future; something ever new and evermore the same; a delightful variety of satisfaction, and a heavenly sameness of delight; clear knowledge; absence of all clouds; ripeness of understanding; excellence of judgment; and, above all, an intense vigour of heart, and the whole of that heart set upon Him whom our eye shall see to be altogether lovely!

I have looked at the crests of a few of the waves as I see them breaking over the sea of immortality. I have tried to give you the names of a few of the peaks of the long alpine range of glory. But, ah! where are my words, and where are my thoughts? “Eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Our only satisfaction in thinking of it is, that “he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” May his Spirit dwell in you, and give you foretastes of the rest which remaineth; antepasts of the eternal banquet, where Christ will drink the wine new with us in his heavenly Father’s kingdom.

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### III. BRIEFLY ON THE LAST POINT— THE BOND OF INTIMATE CONNECTION BETWEEN JUSTIFICATION AND GLORY.

“WHOM HE JUSTIFIED, THEM HE GLORIFIED.” LET ME SHOW you why it must be: in the first place, a justified person has in him the bud of glory. What is glory? It is a state of perfect peace: “Therefore, being justified, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” What is glory? It is a state of rest: “We, which have believed, do enter into rest.” What is glory? It is a state of safety. When sin is pardoned I am secure. I am safe— safe now, through being justified. What is heaven? It is a place of nearness to God; but he hath made us nigh by the blood of his Son having justified us. What is heaven? It is communion with Christ: But, beloved, we have already boldness and access with boldness unto our Lord Jesus, seeing he hath made us accepted in himself. If you will but look carefully into justification you may see heaven hidden within it. They tell us that inside the acorn there is the whole oak, with all its branches and roots. And, certainly, within justification, there is heaven, with all its light, and life, and love, and joy, perpetual serenity and security. If you are justified, my dear brother, you are already in a sense glorified. You notice how the text puts it. It does not say, “Whom he justified, them he will glorify,” but “them he also glorified,” as if the thing came at the same time. Certainly it does in embryo, in the germ, in the essence of the thing. He that is justified, is in a certain sense glorified, for “he hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.” Even this day, the life that we live is “not I that live, but Christ that liveth in me.” Heaven is begun, glory is begun below.

Note again, justification is a claim to glorification. I speak with great reverence here, and caution, I hope; but it does not strike me that it could be consistent with the justice of God, to deny eternal glory to a justified person. Certainly, justification has its rights. I am now speaking forensically, using forensic or legal

terms. Justification is a legal term, signifying that the person is right in the eye of the law. Now, he that is right in the eye of the law, has a claim to the protection and smile of the law; and if I have a righteousness to which a promise is appended, I have a right to the promise appended to the righteousness which I possess. The promise is, "He that doeth these things, shall live by them;" and I claim to live by them; I claim to live by virtue of what Christ has done for me. I come before God with his Son's righteousness in my hands; and I claim as a matter of justice to his own dear Son, that he should give to me what his Son has merited, because the merits of his dear Son have been by him willed over in his dying breath to me. Oh, Christian, God cannot condemn thee, unless he should cease to be just. He will not, for he cannot cease to be gracious.

Justification would be but a very sorry gift of God, if it did not involve glory. Oh, to be justified, and then cast into hell! Brethren, can you suppose such a thing? If you can so pervert your imaginations, and make your judgments play the acrobat as to conceive a justified soul damned, then I ask you what greater curse could the infernal fiend himself confer upon a mortal than this so-called justification. A spirit pronounced just, and then sent down to hell, accursed of God, accursed by the same lips that justified it, — blasphemous thought! To lie in those flames, and to remember that I once had the righteousness of Christ, that I once was washed in his precious blood— oh, impossible! It shall not, must not, cannot be, while the Deity is immutable, and while the strong hand of God will not suffer the

righteousness of Christ thus to be covered with disgrace. He did not begin to build, and then fail to finish. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." Where a man has done the greater, he does not fail to do the less. Now, it is a greater thing to justify a man than it is to glorify him. I mean this— that justification cost the Saviour's life, and the Saviour's death; but to glorify a man who is already justified costs God nothing. The expense is already laid out in the justification of the soul; and to take a man to heaven is only to take him to a prepared place, for which he is himself prepared.

Shall he do the greater, and then neglect the less. “He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.”

The only question is, am I justified? I would say in closing, do not let that be a question, dear hearer. But look thou to him who freely justifies every believing soul, and trust thyself now in his hand. May the Spirit of God bring thee graciously to do it, and thou shalt find it true, “Whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

CHAPTER 5  
BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS  
GRACE, C.H. SPURGEON, OCTOBER  
9, 1870



“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Romans 3:24-26

I think, dear friends, some of you will be saying, “There is that same old doctrine again that we are so continually hearing,” and I am sure if you do say it I shall not be surprised. Nor, on the other hand, shall I make any sort of excuse. The doctrine of justification by faith through the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ is very much to my ministry what bread and salt are to the table. As often as ever the table is set, there are those necessary things.

I regard that doctrine as being one that is to be preached continually, to be mixed up with all our discoursings, even as, under the law it was said, “With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.” This is the very salt of the Gospel. Indeed, it is impossible to bring it forward too often. It is the soul-saving doctrine—it is the founda-



tion doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is that by which God is pleased to bring many into reconciliation with Himself.

As the schoolmaster takes care to ground his scholars well in grammar, that they may get hold of the very roots of the language, so must we be rooted and grounded in this fundamental and cardinal truth of justification through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Martin Luther, who used to preach this doctrine very vehemently and forcibly, yet declared that he felt as if he could knock the Bible about the peoples' heads if he could by any means get this doctrine into them—for as soon after they had learnt it did they forget it.

Over and over, and over again must the Christian minister continue to insist upon this truth—that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And forever and ever, as long as the world stands, must he continue to repeat the truth, that we are justified through the righteousness of our Redeemer and not by any righteousness of our own.

I do not intend at this time to try and preach a sermon, but rather give an “outline exposition” again of this doctrine. And if you turn to the text, I think we can very well divide it, and very properly, too, into three parts, and head it with three words of, justification, propitiation, declaration. Justification—“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Propitiation—“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation though faith in his blood to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins.” And then we come to the third—the Declaration—to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

First, then, here is something about—

## I. JUSTIFICATION.

THE SENSE OF THIS TERM IS, IN THIS PLACE, AND IN MOST OTHERS, to declare a person to be just. A person is

put on trial, he is brought before the judge. One of two things will happen—he will either be acquitted or justified, or else he will be condemned. You and I are all virtually before the judge and we are at this moment either acquitted or condemned, either justified or under condemnation.

It is not possible that any one of us should be acquitted on the ground of our not being guilty, for we must all confess that we have broken the law of God ten thousand times. It is not possible for any of us to be declared just on the ground of our own personal obedience to the law, for to be just through our own obedience we must have been perfect—but perfect we have not been.

We have broken the law, we continue still to break it, and by the works of the law, it is clear we cannot be just, cannot be justified. The Lord, even the God of heaven and earth, has planned and promulgated a way by which He can be just, and yet can declare the guilty to be just—a way by which, to use the words of our text, He can be just and yet the justifier of him that believes.

That way is simply this, a way of substitution and imputation. Our sins are taken off of us and laid upon Christ Jesus, the innocent Substitute, “For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin.” Then, when this is effected, the righteousness which was wrought out by Jesus Christ is taken from Him and imputed, reckoned unto us, so that the rest of the text comes true, “That we may be made the righteousness of God in him.”

We are found in Him not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith. You see, we did not keep the law, but broke it. We were, therefore, condemned. Jesus came and stood in our stead, headed up the whole race that He had chosen, became their representative, kept for them completely all the law, suffered also the punishment due for all their breaches of the law, becoming a substitute actively and passively obeying the law, and suffering its penalty too.

And now what He did is imputed to us, while what we did by

way of sin was of old imputed to Him, and He was made a curse for us—as it is written, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” If you ask me how this can be a just thing to do, I reply, God has determined it and it is not possible that He should have determined anything that was not just.

But moreover, there was an original reason for it, for our first ruin came upon us through our first parent, Adam. Our first fall was not our doing, but the doing of the man who stood as our representative. Perhaps had we, each one of us, at the first separately and distinctly sinned, without any connection with him, redemption might have been as impossible to us as we have reason to believe it is to fallen angels.

But inasmuch as the first sin was in connection with the federal headship of the first Adam, it became possible and right that there should be a salvation through a second federal headship, even Jesus Christ, the second Adam. “As by man came death, so by man also comes the resurrection from the dead.”

As by man sin came into the world and the race perished, so by the second glorious man, Christ Jesus, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. But you need not question the justice of the plan. The Sovereign against whom you have offended deigns to accept it—and what God accepts we need not hesitate to rely upon. If the offended One be satisfied to proclaim us just, we may be perfectly satisfied with what He shall do toward us, for if He justifies, who can condemn? If He acquits, who dare accuse? We may boldly say, if once we are acquitted, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

Now notice what the text says of this plan of justification. It tells us that, as far as we are concerned, it is given to us freely. Being justified freely, God forgives the sinner’s sins gratis, freely—not on account of any repentance of his meritoriously considered—not on the ground of any resolutions of his which might bribe the Eternal mind—not on account of penance, or suffering endured or to be endured, but He puts sins away freely because He chooses to do it—for nothing. Without money, without merit, without anything that

could move Him but His own grand nature, for He delights in mercy—"Being justified freely."

And then to make it clearer still, it is added, by his grace, which is not a tautology, though it is a repetition. We are justified, not by any debt due to us, not because God was bound to justify, but because out of His own abundant love and rich compassion He freely makes the guilty to be pardoned and the unrighteous to be justified by the righteousness of Christ.

I know it has been said by some that we make out that there is no such thing as free pardon and free justification, because we set the righteousness of Christ in, as the procuring cause of both. I grant you we do, but we equally strenuously hold the pardon to be free, and the justification to be free, though it is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus—free to us, free so far as the heart and mercy of God is concerned, and only through redemption, because God must be just, He must be righteous, He cannot separate sin from the penalty.

He is a Sovereign, but He never, in His sovereignty, violates righteousness. And it would be a sovereign act of unrighteousness if He passed by sin without awarding to it the punishment which He threatened should follow it—an act which it is not possible for God to do, for He must be just and He has Himself declared He will by no means clear the guilty. Still, the justification is free to you, free to every soul that will have it, free to every man that believes in Jesus.

Now note this justification is put before you as being through the redemption, which is in Christ Jesus. There is a price paid—it is through the redemption. There is an intervening suffering and an intervening obedience. We are not justified freely without redemption, nor justified by His grace without the intervention of the atoning sacrifice.

Oh! how men labor to get rid of this. There are certain persons who think themselves philosophic, who will do all they can to throw dirt into the face of this doctrine of substitution, but it is the very soul, head, foundation, corner, and keystone of the entire

Gospel. If it be left out, I hesitate not to say that the Gospel preached is another gospel, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you.

“In vain the guilty conscience seeks Some solid ground to rest upon;  
 With vain desire the spirit breaks, Till we apply to Christ alone.  
 Till God in human flesh I see,  
 My thoughts no comfort find; The holy, just, and sacred Three Are  
 terrors to my mind.  
 But if Emmanuel’s face appear, My hope, my joy, begins;  
 His grace forbids my slavish fear, His love removes my sins.”

WE CANNOT GIVE UP THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION, THE redemption which is in Christ Jesus. This is it, soul—listen to it—you are justified freely, but it cost the Savior dearly. It cost Him a life of obedience. It cost Him a death of shame, of agony, of suffering—all immeasurable. There was your cup of wrath which you must drink forever, and which you could never drain to the bottom. It must be drunk by someone.

Jesus drinks it, sets the cup to His lips, and the very first drop of it makes Him sweat great drops of blood falling to the ground. But He drinks right on, though head, and hands, and feet are all suffering— drinks right on, though He cries, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Drinks right on, I say, until not one black drop or dreg could be found within that cup and turning it upside down, He cries, “It is finished. It is finished,” as He gives up the ghost.

At one tremendous draught of love, the Lord has drunk condemnation dry for every one of His people for whom He shed His blood. “Justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.” There was a redemption by substitutionary suffering, a redemption by vicarious obedience, a redemption by interposition of Christ on our behalf—

“To bear, that we might never bear His Father’s righteous ire.”

UNDERSTAND YOU THIS, SINNER? UNDERSTAND YOU THIS? IF YOU do not, then God help you to grasp it now, for it is a thing of the present—is it not here a present participle?—being justified freely, that is, now, now justified. O sinner, you are now condemned, but if you now will look to Jesus standing as the victim in your stead, if you will now trust in Jesus dying in your room—you shall be now just, your sins shall be now forgiven—the righteousness shall be yours now, and you shall know the meaning of that text, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” See you, then, what justification means? Oh! may you enjoy it. It will make you leap for joy if you do. And now the second word is—

II. PROPITIATION—A REFERENCE HERE TO THE MERCY SEAT, the covering in—in our own words it is a reconciliation, a something by which God is propitiated—an at-one-ment by which God and man are made one, a propitiation—a something which vindicates the injured honor of God, which comes in to make amends to the divine law for human offenses.

NOW CONCERNING THIS PROPITIATION, LET US SPEAK, AND MAY the Holy Spirit give us utterance. You say, O sinner, “Wherewithal shall I come before God? How shall I draw near to the Most High God?” What would you give to be saved? All that you have, you would freely present—if you had bullocks and sheep upon a thousand hills and their blood could cleanse you—you would pour it out in rivers. You ask again, “What is the propitiation I can bring?”

God tells you. Here He tells you that He has provided a propitiation in the person of His dear Son. And I would have you notice first of all who it was that provided it—whom God had set forth. Admire the love of this—that the God who was angered, is the God

who finds the propitiation. Against God the sin was leveled. God Himself finds the way of being gracious towards sinners. How safe it must be to accept a propitiation which God, the offended one, Himself proposes.

Notice next that it is said that God has set this forth. The margin has it, "Has fore-ordained it." The atonement of Christ is not a new idea—it is an old determination of the Most High and it is no close secret. God has published it—set it forth. By His prophets in His Word—by His preachers in all your streets—God has set forth Christ to be the propitiation for human sin. It is His own arranging, His own ordaining—and the publication to you tonight is by His own authority. Oh! regard you this and you that seek His mercy leap to think that it comes to you certified in such a way.

But then notice that the main point in this propitiation is the blood. "Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Some cannot bear to hear about the blood of Jesus and yet, under the old law it was written, "It is the blood which shall make atonement for sin." And again, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission," and again, "The blood is the life thereof," and again, "When I see the blood I will pass over you," that is to say, that which makes atonement for human sin is not the life of Christ as an example—nor the actions of Christ as a vindication of righteousness—but the suffering of Christ—the death of Christ.

Everyone knows that this is what is meant by the blood. In the blood-shedding, Jesus suffered—His body suffered—inwardly His soul bled, His spirit suffered—His soul-sufferings were the soul of His sufferings. Then came death. Death was the penalty of sin. Jesus died, literally died—and the heart's blood came forth, mingled with water, from His pierced side.

God is pleased to pardon us because Jesus suffered, and the main point of comfort is the cross—the cross of the crucified, the dying Savior. Do not let your minds wander away from this, you that are seeking peace with God. Your hope is not so much at Beth-

lehem as at Calvary. Your consolation is not to be found in the second advent, but in the first advent—and the death that closed it. You are not to look to Christ in His glory for your comfort, but to Christ in His humiliation. Christ in His expiatory sufferings as your only hope. The blood, the blood, the blood—it is there the propitiation lies—and to that our faith must turn our eye. It is so. Yes, it is so.

“My sins deserve Thy wrath, my God; Thy wrath has fallen on Thy Son.”

MY SINS TURNED AWAY YOUR FACE—YOU HAVE TURNED AWAY Your face from Him. My sins deserved death—He has died. My sins deserved to be spit upon—to be mocked—to be cast out as felons. All this He has endured as if He were my sin, and is it not so? “He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Brethren, I do protest my conscience never knew any peace until I understood this truth, and ever since then I have no rock I build on but this—Christ in my stead, and I in Christ’s place, safe in Him, and He was chastened, bruised, wounded, slain, instead of me. He it is. Propitiation through the blood.

But the text says, “Through faith in his blood.” So, then, this shows you that no propitiation has had any effect with regard to us until we have faith in the blood. I can never know that God has blotted out my sin until I have faith. And what is faith but trust? And then, when I trust the blood of Jesus, my sin is all forgiven me in one moment. When I humbly rely upon my Savior’s finished work, “Though my sins were as scarlet, they become as wool; though they were red like crimson, they are whiter than snow.”

Do you know—I hardly know how to talk about this propitiation truth. It makes my heart so leap for joy that I cannot find words to tell you. I do know that I, and that you, and that every believer under heaven, is as clear before God of every sin as if he



had never sinned, and is before God as accepted as if his whole life had been perfect obedience—and all because that propitiation blood and the dear merits of our once crucified, but now glorified Redeemer stands in our place.

If I might have a perfect righteousness of my own, I would not—I would sooner have my Lord's, for my righteousness, were it perfect, were but the righteousness of a man—but His is the righteousness of God and man, God-Man. Oh! it is not merely immaculate and complete—it overflows with merit. Truly I say again, could we have a righteousness of our own, it were wise to leave it and to have the righteousness of Jesus Christ wrapped about us by an act of faith, that we might forever stand accepted, but “accepted in the Beloved.” Why, it is the very glory of the acceptance that the acceptance comes to us in Christ.

THUS HAVE I DWELT AS WELL AS OUR SHORT TIME ALLOWS UPON the propitiation. And now a word about— III. THE DECLARATION.

THE GREAT OBJECT, IT APPEARS, OF THE REDEMPTION, AND OF THE Gospel, is to show how God is just, and

yet the justifier of such as believe. And Paul very properly divides the effect of Christ's death into two parts. First, he says that that death declared God's righteousness as to the sins that were past, through the forbearance of God.

Before our Savior came into the world, there had passed over the world some thousands of years. Our chronology talks about four thousand years. I do not know that. I never did believe in the chronology which is appended by human judgment to our Bibles. It may be, or it may not be correct. However, it may be four thousand years.

During that time a very large number of sinners lived and a large number of sinners were saved. The transgressions of the patriarchs,

the transgressions of Israel under the law, were remitted, and these persons were justified by faith, and accepted—but how? There had been no offering of blood. True, the bullocks and the lambs were offered, but these could never put away sin. These were brought often, as if to show that the work was not done. The text tells us that this was through the forbearance of God.

In the foresight of the atonement to be offered, God remitted—passed over, as the word is—the sins of those of His children who lived before Christ was sent—before the penalty was endured by the Substitute. It is a glorious thought, this atonement of Christ acting forward, before it was finished, before it was presented—and multitudes entering heaven and enjoying felicity as Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the saints did, when, as yet not a drop of that blood which saved them had been shed, not a pang of the agony which made up the atonement had yet been endured.

Now had God passed over all this sin, and no atonement been after all presented, His justice would not have been declared, but our Savior ultimately coming and suffering all was a declaration of the righteousness of God concerning the sins that were past. It was proven that He had in His mind's eye this great sacrifice when He passed by sin—that He had not unjustly remitted it without demanding the penalty.

But then the apostle gives us the other half of the great result of Christ's death. He says, "To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness." That is, today—while we read this passage. "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that still as for us who live after the Passion, He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." The atoning sacrifice of Christ looks forward, and will look all down the ages till He comes.

"His precious blood shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed  
church of God Be saved, to sin no more."

ALL THE SINS OF HIS PEOPLE, BOTH PAST AND PRESENT AND TO come, were laid on Christ—the whole mighty mass of all the sin of all His people that ever have believed, or ever shall believe on Him—all were transferred to His head and laid on Him, and He suffered for them all, and made an end of all their transgressions, and brought in everlasting righteousness for them all. Here is the grand truth, the grandest truth of inspiration.

Now I shall spend the last few minutes of our time in reminding you that I have not, beloved, been beating about the bush, nor preaching to you a doctrine that may or may not be true. I have not been holding up to you some angle of an eccentric creed. Behold before you that which will be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. Not with words of man's wisdom, but in simplicity have I tried to tell you God's way of pardoning and justifying men. At your peril reject it.

As you shall answer for it before my Master's bar in that day when He shall summon you to give an account, oh! I beseech you by the living God—accept the propitiation which God sets forth. Here are no hard terms. Here are no rigorous conditions. There stand the words, "Believe and live." As it is written, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be damned."

I have told you what this believing is. It is an unfeigned act of reliance upon the Incarnate God, suffering in your room, and place, and stead. If you believe on Him, or trust Him, that is the indisputable evidence that He was a substitute for you—that the load of your guilt is gone—that the stone that lay at the door is removed and you are saved.

Go not about, I pray you, to seek another righteousness. All the righteousness you want Christ presents you freely with. Do not say that you are guilty—it is true you are—but this mode of salvation was meant for the guilty. Demur not because you feel unfit. All the fitness that is wanted is that you do but confess you are unfit and take freely what God presents you. No sin of yours shall ruin you if

you believe, but no righteousness of yours shall save you if you will not believe.

This is God's way to save men. Will you set up another? Will you dare play Antichrist with Christ? He has declared His righteousness in the substitution of the Savior. Do you fail to see that righteousness, or seeing it, will you not admire it? Will you not adopt the plan which manifests it? Accept it, sinner! It is all a brother's heart and voice can say, accept it.

Oh! if you knew the joy it would bring you, you would accept it now. I bear my witness personally. Burdened with sin, lost utterly, as much as you, I heard this gladsome news. I heard the message which said, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." I did look. I was as unfit as you—as undeserving as you—but the moment my eye caught sight of the great surety on the ground of Gethsemane, bleeding for me, and on the cross dying for me—I saw that if God had punished Him for me, He could be just, and yet never punish me.

Nay, that if Christ were punished in my stead, to punish me after Christ had died for me would be injustice altogether. And I hide myself tonight beneath the wings of Jesus, the great Surety, and my only shelter in the storm—

"Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee."

IN HIS RIVEN SIDE MY SOUL DOES FIND A SHELTER FROM THE blast of divine wrath. It is peace now. It is joy now. It is salvation now with me. Why should not it be so with you? You did not come here to find Him. No! but God brought you hither to find you. Is it not written, "I will call them a people who were not a people, and her beloved that was not beloved."

"I am found," says He, "of them that sought me not." Oh! may He be found by you tonight. You did not know the way to be saved—you do know it now. Do not add to your guilt by knowing what

you don't practice, but now, now trust Him. Oh! may the Holy Ghost work faith in you.

"Tis but a little faith," says one. Little faith will save you, but Christ deserves great faith. Oh! He is a true Christ—He cannot lie. Oh! can you not lay hold of Him? Do you see but the hem of His garment? Is it but a raveled thread that hangs out? Touch it, touch it with your finger and you shall be made whole.

What if you cannot believe as you would? Believe as you can. Say with him of old, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Lift up the cry of the publican, "God be merciful—be propitiated—towards me, a sinner. Jesus, I will have Thee. Have Thou me."

The Lord grant it, and may many in this place be saved tonight, to the praise and the glory of His grace wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved. Amen and amen!

CHAPTER 6  
JEHOVAH TSIDENU: THE LORD  
OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, C.H.  
SPURGEON, JUNE 2, 1861



"This is his name whereby he shall be called,  
The Lord our Righteousness"  
Jeremiah 23:6.

**M**AN BY THE FALL sustained an infinite loss in the matter of righteousness. He suffered the loss of a righteous nature, and then a two-fold loss of legal righteousness in the sight of God. Man sinned; he was therefore no longer innocent of transgression. Man did not keep the command; he therefore was guilty of the sin of omission. In that which he *committed*, and in that which he *omitted*, his original character for uprightness was completely wrecked. Jesus Christ came to undo the mischief of the fall for his people. So far as their sin concerned their breach of the command, that he has removed by his precious blood. His agony and bloody sweat have for ever taken away the consequences of sin from believers, seeing Christ did by his one sacrifice bear the penalty of that sin in his flesh. He, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree. Still it is not enough for a man to be pardoned. He, of course, is then in the eye of God without sin. But it was required of man that he should actually keep

the command. It was not enough that he did not break it, or that he is regarded through the blood as though he did not break it. He must keep it, he must continue in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. How is this necessity supplied? Man must have a righteousness, or God cannot accept him. Man must have a perfect obedience, or else God cannot reward him. Should He give heaven to a soul that has not perfectly kept the law; that were to give the reward where the service is not done, and that before God would be an act which might impeach his justice. Where, then, is the righteousness with which the pardoned man shall be completely covered, so that God can regard him as having kept the law, and reward him for so doing? Surely, my brethren, none of you are so besotted as to think that this righteousness can be wrought out by yourselves. You must despair of ever being able to keep the law perfectly. Each day you sin. Since you have passed from death unto life, the old Adam still struggles for dominion within you. And by the force of the lusts of the flesh you are brought into captivity to the law of sin which is in your members. The good you would do, you do not, and the evil you would not, that you too often do. Some have thought the works of the Holy Spirit in us would give us a righteousness in which we might stand. I am sure, my brethren, we would not say a word derogatory to the work of the Holy Spirit. It is divine. But we hold it to be a great cardinal point in divinity that the work of the Spirit never meant to supplant the merits of the Son. We could not depreciate the Lord Jesus Christ in order to exalt the office of the Holy Spirit of God. We know that each particular branch of the divine salvation which was espoused by the persons of the Trinity has been carried out by each one to perfection. Now as we are accepted in the Beloved, it must be by a something that the Beloved did; as we are justified in Christ it must be by a something not that the Spirit has done, but which Christ has done. We must believe, then,—for there is no other alternative—that the righteousness in which we must be clothed, and through which we must be accepted, and by which we are made meet to inherit eternal life, can be no other than the work

of Jesus Christ. We, therefore, assert, believing that Scripture fully warrants us, that the life of Christ constitutes the righteousness in which his people are to be clothed. His death washed away their sins, his life covered them from head to foot; his death the sneaky to God, his life was the gift to man, by which man satisfies the demands of the law. Herein the law is honored and the soul is accepted. I find that many young Christians who are very clear about being saved by the merits of Christ's death, do not seem to understand the merits of his life. Remember, young believers, that from the first moment when Christ did lie in the cradle until the time when he ascended up on high, he was at work for his people; and from the moment when he was seen in Mary's arms, till the instant when in the arms of death he "bowed his head and gave up the ghost," he was at work for your salvation and mine. He completed the work of obedience in his life, and said to his Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Then he completed the work of atonement in his death, and knowing that all things were accomplished, he cried, "It is finished." He was through his life spinning the web for making the royal garment, and in his death he dipped that garment in his blood. In his life he was gathering together the precious gold, in his death he hammered it out to make for us a garment which is of wrought gold. You have as much to thank Christ for loving as for dying, and you should be as reverently and devoutly grateful for his spotless life as for his terrible and fearful death. The text speaking of Christ, the son of David, the branch out of the root of Jesse, styles him THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Having introduced the doctrine of imputed righteousness, I proofed to map out my subject. First, by way of *affirmation*; we say of the text—it is so—Christ is the Lord or righteousness; secondly, I shall exhort you to do him *homage*; let us call him so: for this is the name whereby he shall be called; and thirdly, I shall appeal to your *gratitude*; let us wonder at the reigning grace, which has caused us to fulfill the promise, for have been sweetly compelled to call him the Lord our righteousness.

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FIRST, THEN, *HE IS SO*. JESUS CHRIST IS THE LORD *OUR* righteousness. There are but three words, "JEHOVAH"—for so it is in the original,—"*OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*."

HE IS JEHOVAH. READ THAT VERSE, AND YOU WILL CLEARLY perceive that the Messiah of the Jews, Jesus of Nazareth the Saviour of the Gentiles, is certainly Jehovah. He hath the incommunicable title of the Most High God. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Oh, ye Arians and Socinians, who monstrously deny the Lord who bought you and put him to open shame by denying his divinity, read you that verse and let your blasphemous tongues be silent, and let your obdurate hearts melt in penitence because ye have so foully sinned against him. He *is* Jehovah, or, mark you, the whole of God's word is false, and there is no noun for a sinner's hope. We know, and this day we testify in his name, that the very Christ who did lie in the manger as an infant was infinite even then; that he who cried, cried for very pain as a child, was nevertheless saluted at that very moment as God by the songs of the creatures that his hands had made. He who walked in pain over the flinty acres of Palestine, was at the same time possessor of heaven and earth. He who had not where to lay his head, and was despised and rejected of men, was at the same instant God over all, blessed for evermore. He that sweat great drops of blood did bear the earth upon his shoulders. He who was flagellated in Pilate's hall was adored by spirits of the just made perfect. He who did hang upon the tree had the oration hanging upon him. He who died on the cross was the ever living, the everlasting One. As a man he died, as God he lives. As Mary's son he bled, as the son of the Eternal God he had the sway and the dominion over all the world. In nature Christ proves himself to be universal God.

Without him was not anything made that was made. By him all things consist. Who less than God could make the heavens and the earth? Bow before him, bow before him, for he made you, and should not the creatures acknowledge their Creator?

Providence attests his Godhead. He upholdeth all things by the word of his power. Creatures that are animate have their breath from his nostrils; inanimate creatures that are strong and mighty stand only by his strength. He can say concerning the earth, "I bear the pillars thereof." In the deep foundations of the sea his power is felt, and in the towering arches of the starry heavens his might is recognized to the full. And as for Grace, we claim for Christ that he is Jehovah in the great kingdom of his grace. Who less than God could have carried your sins and mine and cast them all away? Who less than God could have interposed to deliver us from the jaws of hell's lions, and bring us up from the pit, having found a ransom? On whom less than God could we rely to keep us from the innumerable temptations that beset us? How can he be less than God, when he says, "Lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world?" How could he be omnipresent if he were not God! How could he hear our prayers, the prayers of millions, scattered through the leagues of earth, and attend to them all, and give acceptance to all, if he were not infinite in understanding and infinite in merit? How were this if he were less than God? Let Atheists scoff, let Deists sneer, let the vain Socinian boast, let the Arian lift up his puny voice, but we will glory in this fact, that he that bought us with his blood is Jehovah—very God of very God. At his footstool we bow and pay him the very homage that we pay to his Father and to the Spirit.

"Blessings more than we can give,  
Be Lord for ever thine."

BUT THE TEXT SPEAKS ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS TOO—"JEHOVAH our righteousness." And he is so. Christ in his life was so righteous,

that we may say of the life, taken as a vehicle, that it is righteousness itself. Christ is the law incarnate Understand me. He lived out the law of God to the very full, and while you see God's precepts written in fire on Sinai's brow, you see them written in flesh in the person of Christ.

"My dear Redeemer and my Lord,  
 I read my duty in thy word,  
 But in thy life the law appears  
 Drawn out in living characters."

HE NEVER OFFENDED AGAINST THE COMMANDS OF THE JUST ONE. From his eye there never flashed the fire of unhallowed anger. On his lip there did never hang the unjust or licentious word. His heart was never stirred by the breath of sin or the taint of iniquity. In the secret of his reins no fault was hidden. In his understanding was no defect; in his judgment no error. In his miracles there was no ostentation. In him there was indeed no guile. His powers being ruled by his understanding, all of them acted and co-acted to perfection's very self, so that never was there any flaw of omission or stain of commission. The law consists in this first, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." He did so. It was his meat and his drink to do the will of him that sent him. Never man spent himself as he did. Hunger and thirst and nakedness were nothing to him, nor death itself if he might so be baptised with the baptism where-with he must be baptized, and drink the cup which his Father had set before him. The law consists also in this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In all he did, and in all he suffered he more than fulfilled the precept, for "he saved others himself he could not save." He exhausted the utmost resources of love in the deep devotion and self-sacrifice of loving. He loved man better than his own life. He would sooner be spit upon than that man should be cast into the flames of hell and sooner yield up the ghost in agonies that cannot be described than that the souls his Father gave him should

be cast away. He carried out the law, then, I say to the very letter he spelt out its mystic syllables, and verily he magnified it, and made it honorable. He loved the Lord his God, with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and he loved his neighbors as himself. Jesus Christ was righteousness impersonated. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" he might well say. One thousand eight hundred years have passed since then, and blasphemy itself has not been able to charge him with a fault. Strange as it may appear, the most perverted judges have nevertheless acknowledged the awful dignity of his character. They have railed at his miracles; they have denied his Godhead; but his righteous character I know not that they have dared to impugn. They have hatched jokes about his generation; they have made his poverty a jest, and his death has been the theme of ribald song; but his life has staggered even the most unbelieving, and made the careless wonder how such a character could have been conceived even if it be a fiction, and much more, how it could have been executed if it be a fact. No one that I know of has dared to charge Christ with unrighteousness to man, or with a want of devotedness to God. See then, it is so. We do not stay to prove his righteousness any more than we did to prove his Godhead. The day is coming when men shall acknowledge him to be Jehovah, and when looking upon all his life while he was incarnate here, they shall be compelled to say that his life was righteousness itself. The pith, however, of the title, lies in the little word "our,"—"Jehovah *our* righteousness." This is the grappling iron with which we get a hold on him—this is the anchor which dives into the bottom of this great deep of his immaculate righteousness. This is the saved rivet by which our souls are joined to him. This is the blessed hand with which our soul toucheth him, and he becometh to us all in all, "Jehovah *our* Righteousness"

You will now observe that there is a most precious *doctrine* unfolded in this title of our Lord and Saviour. I think we may take it thus: When we believe in Christ, by faith we receive our justification. As the merit of his blood takes away our sin, so the merit of his obedience is imputed to us for righteousness. We are considered, as soon as we believe, as though the works of Christ here our

works. God looks upon us as though that perfect obedience, of which I have just now spoken, had been performed by ourselves,—as though our hands had been bony at the loom, and though the fabric and the stuff which have been worked up into the fine linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, had been grown in our own fields. God considers us as though we were Christ—looks upon us as though *his* life had been *our* life—and accepts, blesses, and rewards us as though all that he did had been done by us, his believing people. Accordingly, if you will turn to the thirty-third chapter of this same prophet Jeremiah, and look at the sixteenth verse, you will see it written, "This is the name wherewith *she* shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." I know that Socinus in his day used to call this an execrable, detectable, and licentious doctrine: probably it was, because he was an execrable, detectable, and licentious man. Many men use their own names when they are applying names to other persons; they are so well acquainted with their own characters, and so suspicious of themselves, that they think it best, before another can express the suspicion, to attach the very same accusation to someone else. Now we hold, you know, that this doctrine is not execrable, but most delightful, that it is not abominable, but Godlike, that it is not licentious, but holy: and let others say what they will of it, we will repeat the praise which we have been singing,—

"Jesus, thy perfect righteousness  
My beauty is, my glorious dress;"

and we will day when all things shall be tried by fire, for we feel confident that—

"Bold shall we stand in that great day,  
For who ought to our charge shall lay,"

when we are clothed with the righteousness divine? Imputation, so far from being an exceptional case with regard to the right-

eousness of Christ, lies at the very bottom of the entire teaching of Scripture. How did we fall, my brethren? We fell by the imputation of Adam's sin to us. Adam was our federal head; he represented us; and when he sinned, we sinned representatively in him, and what he did was imputed to us. You say that you never agreed to the imputation. Nay, but I would not have you say thus, for as by representation we fell, it is by the representative system that we rise. The angels fell personally and individually, and they never rise, but we fell in another, and we have therefore the power given by divine grace to rise in another. The root of the fall is found in the federal relationship of Adam to his seed; thus we fell by imputation. Is it any wonder that we should rise by imputation? Deny this doctrine, and I ask you—How are men pardoned at all? Are they not pardoned because satisfaction has been offered for sin by Christ? Very well then, but that satisfaction must be imputed to them, or else how is God just in giving to them the results of the death of another, unless that death of the other be fire? of all imputed to them? When we say that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to an believing souls, we do not hold forth an exceptional theory, but we expound a grand truth, which is so consistent with the theory of the fall and the plan of pardon, that it must be maintained in order to make the gospel clear. I think it was this doctrine which Martin Luther called the article of standing or falling of the Church. I find a passage in his works which seems to me to refer to this doctrine rather than to justification by faith. He ought certainly to have said, "Justification by faith is *the* doctrine of standing or falling of the Church." But in Luther's mind, imputed righteousness we, so interwoven with justification by faith, that he could not see any distinction between the two. And I must confess, in trying to observe a difference, I do not see much. I must give up justification by faith if I give up imputed righteousness. True justification by faith is the surface soil, but then imputed righteousness is the granite rock which lies underneath it; and if you dig down through the great truth of a sinners being justified by faith in Christ, you must, as I believe, inevitably come to the doctrine of the imputed right-

eousness of Christ as the basis and foundation on which that simple doctrine rests.

And now let us stop a moment and think over this whole title—"The Lord our righteousness." Brethren, the Law-giver has himself obeyed the law Do you not think that his obedience will be sufficient? Jehovah has himself become man that so he may do man's work: think you that he has done it imperfectly? Jehovah—he who girds the angels that excel in strength—has taken upon him the form of a servant that he may become obedient: think you that his service will be incomplete? Let the fact that the Saviour is Jehovah strengthen your confidence. Be ye bold. Be ye very courageous. Face heaven, and earth, and hell with the challenge of the apostle. "Who shall say anything to the charge of God's elect? "Look back upon your past sins, look upon your present infirmities, and all your future errors, and while you weep the tears of repentance, let no fear of damnation blanch your cheek. You stand before God to-day robed in your Saviour's garments, "with his spotless vestments on, holy as the Holy One." Not Adam when he walked in Eden's bowers was more accepted than you are,—not more pleasing to the eye of the all-judging, the sin-hating God than you are if clothed in Jesus' righteousness and sprinkled with his blood. You have a better righteousness than Adam had. He had a human righteousness; your garments are divine. He had a robe complete, it is true, but the earth had woven it. You have a garment as complete, but *heaven* has made it for you to wear. Go up and down in the strength of this great truth and boast exceedingly, and glory in your God; and let this be on the top and summit of your heart and soul: "Jehovah, the Lord our righteousness."

You will remember that in Scripture, Christ's righteousness is compared to fair white linen; then I am, if I wear it, without spot. It is compared to wrought gold; then I am, if I wear it, dignified and beautiful, and worthy to sit at the wedding feast of the King of kings. It is compared, in the parable of the prodigal son, to the best robe; then I wear a better robe than angels have, full they have not the best; but I, poor prodigal, once clothed in rage, companion to

the nobility of the stye,—I, fresh from the husks that swine do eat, am nevertheless clothed in the best robe, and am so accepted in the Beloved.

Moreover, it is also everlasting righteousness. Oh! this is, perhaps, the fairest point of it—that the robe be shall never be worn out; no thread of it shall ever give way. It shall never hang in tatters upon the sinner's back. He shall live, and even though it were a Methusaleh's life, the robe shall be as if it were woven yesterday. He shall pass through the stream of death, and the black stream shall not foul it. He shall climb the hills of heaven, and the angels shall wonder what this whiteness is which the sinner wears, and think that some new star is coming up from earth to thine in heaven. He shall wear it among principalities and powers, and find himself no whit inferior to them all. Cherubic garments and seraphic mantles shall not be so lordly so priestly, so divine, as this robe of righteousness this everlasting perfection which Christ has wrought out, and brought in and given to all his people. Glory unto thee, O Jesus, glory unto thee! Unto thee be hallels for ever; Hallelujah! Thou art you—"Jehovah, the Lord our righteousness."

II. HAVING THUS EXPOUNDED AND VINDICATED THIS TITLE OF our Saviour, I would now APPEAL TO YOUR FAITH.

LET US CALL HIM SO. "THIS IS THE NAME WHEREBY HE SHALL BE *called*, the Lord our righteousness." Let us call him by this great name, which the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath named. Let us call him—poor sinners!—even we, who are today smitten down with grief on account of sin. I want this text to be fulfilled in your ears and in your case to-day. You are guilty. Your own conscience acknowledges that the law condemns you, and you dread the penalty. Soul! he that trusteth Christ Jesus is saved, and he that believeth on him is not condemned. To every trustful spirit Christ is "the Lord our righteousness." Call him so, I pray thee. "I have no



good thing of my own," sayest thou? Here is every good thing in him. "I have broken the law," sayest thou? There is his blood for thee. Believe in him, he will wash thee. "But then I have not kept the law. There is his keeping of the law for thee. Take it, sinner, take it. Believe on him. "Oh, but I dare not," saith one. Do him the honor to dare it. "Oh, but it seems impossible." Honour him by believing the impossibility then. "Oh, but how can he save such a wretch as I am?" Soul! Christ is glorified in saving wretches. As I told you the other day, Christ cures incurable sinners; so I say now he accepts unacceptable sinners. He receives sinners that think they are not fit to be received. Only do thou trust him and say, "He shall be *my* righteousness to-day." "But suppose I should do it and be presumptuous? It is impossible. He bids you, he commands you. Let that be your warrant. "This is *the* commandment, that ye believe on Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." If you cannot say it with a loud voice, yet with the trembling silence of your soul let heaven hear it. Yes, Jesus, "All unholy and unclean, I am nothing else but sin, yet I dare with fervent venture of these quivering lips to call thee, and to call upon thee now, as the Lord my righteousness."

And you who have passed from a state of trembling hope into that of lively faith, I beseech you call him so. Let your faith say, as you see him suffering, bleeding, dying, "Thus my sins were washed away." But let not your faith stay there. As you see him sweating, toiling, living a self-denying laborious life, say, "Thus the law was kept for me." Come up to the foot of Sinai now, and if you see its lightnings flash, and hear its thunders roar, be brave, and say like Moses, "I will ascend above those thunders, I will stand enwrapped within the storm-cloud, and I will talk with God, for I have no cause for fear, there are no thunderbolts for me; for me no lightning flash can spend its arrow, I am perfectly, completely justified in the sight of God, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ." Say that, child of God! Does yesterday's sin make thee stammer? In the teeth of all thy sins believe that he is thy righteousness still. Thy good works do not improve his righteousness; thy bad works do not sully

it. This is a robe which thy best deeds cannot mend and thy worst deeds cannot mar. Thou standest in him, not in thyself. Whatever, then, thy doubts and fears may have been, do now, poor troubled, distressed, distracted believer, say again, "Yes, he *is* the Lord my righteousness."

And some of us can say it yet better than that: for we can say it not merely by faith, but by fruition. We remember well the day when we first called him "the Lord our righteousness." Oh, the peace it brought, the joy, the gladness, the transport! Since then we have proved it to be true, for we have had privileges we could not have had if he had not been our righteousness. We have had the privilege of reconciliation with God; and He could not be reconciled to one that had not a perfect righteousness, we have had access with boldness to God himself, and He would never have suffered us to have access if we had not worn our brother's garments. We have had adoption into the family, and the Spirit of adoption, and God could not have adopted into his family any but righteous ones. How should the righteous Father be God of an unrighteous family? Our prayers have been heard, and we have had gracious answers, and that could not have been—for he could not heal the prayer of the wicked; he could not have heard us—if it had not been that he seemed to hear Christ crying through us, and to have seen Christ's merits in us. And therefore granted the desire of our hearts. We have had in daily rich and sweet experience such manifestations of fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, that to us it is a matter of fact as well as a matter of faith, a matter of praise as well as a matter of profession, that Jesus Christ is "the Lord our righteousness."

Brethren, your divinity must be experimental or it will not profit you. I would not give a straw for your theology if you learned it merely out of a pollee, or out of a system of man's teaching. No, no, we must prove these things to be true in our lives. I can say it, and I must say it—the testimony is not egotistical—I *know* there is a comfort in the faith of Christ's imputed righteousness which no other doctrine can yield. There is something that a man can sleep

on and wake on, can live on and die on, in the firm conviction that he is received by God as though the deeds of Christ were his deeds, and the righteousness of Christ his righteousness. Take away his filthy garments from him, set a fair mitre on his head, array him in fine linen. O, Joshua, priest of the Most High, thou man greatly beloved, come thou forth now in thy garments and offer acceptable sacrifice, seeing, thou wearest the garments of Jesus, our great High Priest." Let *us*, then, call upon his name and extol him in our worship as "the Lord *our* righteousness."

And now let the whole universal Church of Christ, in one glad song, call Jesus Christ the Lord their righteousness. Wake up, ye isles of the sea; shout, thou wilderness that Kedar doth inhabit; ye people of God, scattered and peeled, banished among the heathen, vexed with the filthy conversation of the idolaters, from your huts, from the destitute places that ye inhabit, sing, "The Lord our righteousness!" Let no heir of heaven be silent at this hour; let every soul be stirred. Though tempest-tossed and half a wreck, yet, mariner in Christ, say, "Thou art the Lord my righteousness." Though cast down into the deep dungeon, thou despairing soul, yet say, "The Lord my righteousness." Let no one of the entire believing family keel; back his song but together let us sing, "The Lord our righteousness." And you, ye spirits that walk in white, ye glorious ones that "day without night circle his throne rejoicing," ye saints that ere his day beheld him, and died, not having received the promise, but having beheld it afar off,—Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and Samuel, and Jephthah, and David, and Solomon, and all the mighty host, sing ye, sing ye, sing ye unto him to-day; and let this be the summit of your song, "The Lord our righteousness." Our spirit bows before him now. Sweet fellowship beyond the stream! Me clasp our hands with those that went before; and while the cherubim can only say, "Holy, holy, holy; he is righteous," we lift up a higher note, and say, "yes, thrice holy, but the Lord our righteousness is he." Let none, then, of all his saints in heaven and in earth, refuse to call him "the Lord our righteousness"

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III. I NOW CONCLUDE, IN THE THIRD PLACE, BY APPEALING TO your GRATITUDE. Let us admire that wonderful and reigning grace which has led you and me to call him, "The Lord our righteousness."

WHEN I LOOK BACK SOME TEN OR TWELVE YEARS UPON A FOOLISH boy, who cared little for the things of God, who was burdened with an awful sense of sin, and thought that he never could be pardoned—clad so often driven to the borders of despair that he was fain to make away with his own life, because he thought there was no happiness on earth for him—I can only say for my own self. O the riches of the grace of God in Christ, that ever *I* should stand not only conscious that he is the Lord my righteousness, but to preach him to you! O God, thou hast done wonderful things! Thou saidst by the mouth of Jeremy, "This is the name whereby he shall be called." I call him so this day from my inmost soul. Jesus of Nazareth! suffering man! glorious God! thou art the Lord my righteousness! If I were to pass this question round these galleries, and down below oh, what hundreds of responses would there be from such as joyously obey the summons of gratitude! And among those about to be added to the Church (I am sure they would permit me to tell, for the honor of the glorious grace of God), there are very many who are special instances of that grace which has sweetly constrained them to call Christ their righteousness. Some of them, according to their own concession before us at the Church meeting, were not only revelling in drunkenness, one until he had well nigh drank away his reason by thirty years of habitual intoxication; but others of them were unclean and unchaste, till they had rioted in debauchery, and gone to the utmost lengths of crime. There be many in this place to-day, who would not, though they would blush for the past, refuse to tell, to the honor of redeeming grace, that once they had committed every crime in the catalogue except murder; and if they have not committed that, it was nothing but the sovereign grace of God that restrained them. Some members of

this Church have sinned in every part of the world—have sinned in every quarter of the globe—have committed every form of lust and vice—and if you had asked them ten years ago whether they should ever be in a place of worship, they would have repelled with an oath what they would have thought an insult, and would have cursed you for supposing that they should so degrade themselves as to profess the faith of Christ. Brothers and sisters, I should not be surprised if you were to stand up now and say, "Yes, still Jehovah Jesus is the Lord our righteousness." Oh!—

"Wonders of grace to God belong;  
Repeat his mercies in your song."

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT THE LIP OF THE BLASPHEMER should fulfill that very prophecy—that the tongue that could scarce move without an oath should, nevertheless, glorify Christ,—that the heart that was black with accumulated lust,—the mouth which must have become a very sepulcher, breathing forth deadly miasma, has now become a place for song, and the heart a house for music, while heart and tongue say, "Yes, he is the Lord my righteousness this very day!"

It would be a wonder if God should vow that the devils should yet sing his praise; but I do not think it would be a greater wonder than when he makes some of us sing his glorious praise. Brethren, you and I know that there is nothing in freewill doctrine; for in our case, at any rate, it was not true. Left to ourselves, where should we have been? What could Arminianism have done for us? Oh, no! it was irresistible grace that brought us to call him "the Lord our righteousness." It was that divine *shall* that broke in pieces our *will*. It was that strong arm that broke the iron sinew of our proud neck, and made us bow, even us, who would not have this man to reign over us. It was his finger that opened the blind eye; for once we could see now beauty in him. It was his breath that thawed our icy heart; for once we felt no love to him;—

"But now, subdued by sovereign grace,  
Our spirit longs for his embrace;  
Our beauty this our glorious dress,  
Jesus the Lord our righteousness."

AND THIS SHALL BE OUR GLORY HERE, AND OUR SONG FOREVER  
—"The Lord our righteousness."

CHAPTER 7  
FOR HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE  
SIN FOR US, C.H. SPURGEON,  
APRIL 15, 1860



"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

2 Corinthians 5:21.

SOMETIME AGO an excellent lady sought an interview with me, with the object as she said, of enlisting my sympathy upon the question of "Anti-Capital Punishment." I heard the excellent reasons she urged against hanging men who had committed murder, and though they did not convince me, I did not seek to answer them. She proposed that when a man committed murder, he should be confined for life. My remark was, that a great many men who had been confined half their lives were not a bit the better for it, and as for her belief that they would necessarily be brought to repentance, I was afraid it was but a dream. "Ah," she said, good soul as she was, "that is because we have been all wrong about punishments. We punish people because we think they deserve to be punished. Now, we ought to show them," said she, "that we love them; that we only punish them to

make them better." "Indeed, madam," I said, "I have heard that theory a great many times, and I have seen much fine writing upon the matter, but I am no believer in it. The design of punishment should be amendment, but the ground of punishment lies in the positive guilt of the offender. I believe that when a man does wrong, he ought to be punished for it, and that there is a guilt in sin which justly merits punishment." "Oh no; she could not see that. Sin was a very wrong thing, but punishment was not a proper idea. She thought that people were treated too cruelly in prison, and that they ought to be taught that we love them. If they were treated kindly in prison, and tenderly dealt with, they would grow so much better, she was sure." With a view of interpreting her own theory, I said, "I suppose, then, you would give criminals all sorts of indulgences in prison. Some great vagabond who has committed burglary dozens of times—I suppose you would let him sit in an easy chair in the evening before a nice fire, and mix him a glass of spirits and water, and give him his pipe, and make him happy, to show him how much we love him." "Well, no, she would not give him the spirits, but, still, all the rest would do him good." I thought that was a delightful picture certainly. It seemed to me to be the most prolific method of cultivating rogues which ingenuity could invent. I imagine that you could grow any number of thieves in that way; for it would be a special means of propagating all manner of roguery and wickedness. These very delightful theories to such a simple mind as mine, were the source of much amusement, the idea of fondling villains, and treating their crimes as if they were the tumbles and falls of children, made me laugh heartily. I fancied I saw the government resigning its functions to these excellent persons, and the grand results of their marvellously kind experiments. The sword of the magistrate transformed into a gruel-spoon, and the jail become a sweet retreat for injured reputations.

Little however, did I think I should live to see this kind of stuff taught in pulpits; I had no idea that there would come out a divinity, which would bring down God's moral government from the solemn aspect in which Scripture reveals it, to a namby-pamby



sentimentalism, which adores a Deity destitute of every masculine virtue. But we never know to-day what may occur to-morrow. We have lived to see a certain sort of men—thank God they are not Baptists—though I am sorry to say there are a great many Baptists who are beginning to follow in their trail—who seek to teach now-a-days, that God is a universal Father, and that our ideas of his dealing with the impenitent as a Judge, and not as a Father, are remnants of antiquated error. Sin, according to these men, is a disorder rather than an offence, an error rather than a crime. Love is the only attribute they can discern, and the full-orbed Deity they have not known. Some of these men push their way very far into the bogs and mire of falsehood, until they inform us that eternal punishment is ridiculed as a dream. In fact, books now appear, which teach us that there is no such thing as the Vicarious Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. They use the word Atonement it is true, but in regard to its meaning, they have removed the ancient landmark. They acknowledge that the Father has shown his great love to poor sinful man by sending his Son, but not that God was inflexibly just in the exhibition of his mercy, not that he punished Christ on the behalf of his people, nor that indeed God ever will punish anybody in his wrath, or that there is such a thing as justice apart from discipline. Even *sin* and *hell* are but old words employed henceforth in a new and altered sense. Those are old-fashioned notions, and we poor souls who go on talking about election and imputed righteousness, are behind our time. Ay, and the gentlemen who bring out books on this subject applaud Mr. Maurice, and Professor Scott, and the like, but are too cowardly to follow them, and boldly propound these sentiments. These are the new men whom God has sent down from heaven, to tell us that the apostle Paul was all wrong, that our faith is vain, that we have been quite mistaken, that there was no need for propitiating blood to wash away our sins; that the fact was, our sins needed discipline, but penal vengeance and righteous wrath are quite out of the question. When I thus speak, I am free to confess that such ideas are not boldly taught by a certain individual whose volume excites these

remarks, but as he puffs the books of gross perverters of the truth, I am compelled to believe that he endorses such theology.

Well, brethren, I am happy to say that sort of stuff has not gained entrance into this pulpit. I dare say the worms will eat the wood before there will be anything of that sort sounded in his place; and may these bones be picked by vultures, and this flesh be rent in sunder by lions, and may every nerve in this body suffer pangs and tortures, ere these lips shall give utterance to any such doctrines or sentiments. We are content to remain among the vulgar souls who believe the old doctrines of grace. We are willing still to be behind in the great march of intellect, and stand by that unmoving cross, which, like the pole star, never advances, because it never stirs, but always abides in its place, the guide of the soul to heaven, the one foundation other than which no man can lay, and without building upon which, no man shall ever see the face of God and live.

Thus much have I said upon a matter which just now is exciting controversy. It has been my high privilege to be associated with six of our ablest brethren in the ministry, in a letter of protest against the countenance which a certain newspaper seemed willing to lend to this modern heresy. We trust it may be the means, in the hands of God, of helping to check that downward march—that wandering from truth which seems by some singular infatuation, to have unsettled the minds of some brethren in our denomination. Now I come to address you upon the topic which is most continually assailed by those who preach another gospel "which is not another—but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ," namely, the doctrine of the substitution of Christ on our behalf, his actual atonement for our sins, and our positive and actual justification through his sufferings and righteousness. It seems to me that until language can mean the very reverse of what it says, until by some strange logic, God's Word can be contradicted and can be made to belie itself, the doctrine of *substitution* can never be rooted out of the words which I have selected for my text "He hath made him to be sin for us,

who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

First, then, *the sinlessness of the substitute*; secondly, *the reality of the imputation of sin to him*; and thirdly, *the glorious reality of the imputation of righteousness to us*.

## I. FIRST, THE SINLESSNESS OF THE SUBSTITUTE.

THE DOCTRINE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE IS THIS, THAT INASMUCH AS man could not keep God's law, having fallen in Adam, Christ came and fulfilled the law on the behalf of his people; and that inasmuch as man had already broken the divine law and incurred the penalty of the wrath of God, Christ came and suffered in the room, place, and stead of his elect ones, that so by his enduring the full vials of wrath, they might be emptied out and not a drop might ever fall upon the heads of his blood-bought people. Now, you will readily perceive that if one is to be a substitute for another before God, either to work out a righteousness or to suffer a penalty, that substitute must himself be free from sin. If he hath sin of his own, all that he can suffer will but be the due reward of his own iniquity. If he hath himself transgressed, he cannot suffer for another, because all his sufferings are already due on his own personal account. On the other and, it is quite clear that none but a perfect man could ever work out a spotless righteousness for us, and keep the law in our stead, for if he hath dishonoured the commandment in his thought, there must be a corresponding flaw in his service. If the warp and woof be speckled, how shall he bring forth the robe of milk-white purity, and wrap it about our loins? He must be a spotless one who shall become the representative of his people, either to give them a passive or active righteousness, either to offer a satisfaction as the penalty of their sins, or a righteousness as the fulfilment of God's demand.

It is satisfactory for us to know, and to believe beyond a doubt,

that our Lord Jesus was without sin. Of course, in his divine nature he could not know iniquity; and as for his human nature, it never knew the original taint of depravity. He was of the seed of the woman, but not of the tainted and infected seed of Adam. Overshadowed as was the virgin by the Holy Ghost, no corruption entered into his nativity. That holy thing which was born of her was neither conceived in sin nor shapen in iniquity. He was brought into this world immaculate. He was immaculately conceived and immaculately born. In him that natural black blood which we have inherited from Adam never dwelt. His heart was upright within him; his soul was without any bias to evil; his imagination had never been darkened. He had no infatuated mind. There was no tendency whatever in him that to do that which was good, holy, and honourable. And as he did not share in the original depravity, so he did not share in the imputed sin of Adam which we have inherited—not, I mean, in himself personally, though he took the consequences of that, as he stood as our representative. The sin of Adam had never passed over the head of the second Adam. All that were in the loins of Adam sinned in him when he touched the fruit; but Jesus was not in the loins of Adam. Though he might be conceived of as being in the womb of the woman—"a new thing which the Lord created in the earth,"—he lay not in Adam when he sinned, and consequently no guilt from Adam, either of depravity of nature, or of distance from God, ever fell upon Jesus as the result of anything that Adam did. I mean upon Jesus as considered *in himself* though he certainly took the sin of Adam as he was the representative of his people.

Again, as in his nature he was free from the corruption and condemnation of the sin of Adam, so also in his life, no sin ever corrupted his way. His eye never flashed with unhallowed anger; his lip never uttered a treacherous or deceitful word; his heart never harboured an evil imagination. Never did he wander after lust; no covetousness ever so much as glanced into his soul. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." From the beginning of his life to the end, you cannot put your finger even upon a mistake,

much less upon a wilful error. So perfect was he, that no virtue seems to preponderate, or by an opposing quality give a bias to the scale of absolute rectitude. John is distinguished for his love, Peter for his courage; but Jesus Christ is distinguished for neither one above the another, because he possesses all in such sublime unison, such heavenly harmony, that no one virtue stands out above the rest. He is meek, but he is courageous. He is loving, but he is decided; he is bold as a lion, yet he is quiet and peaceful as a lamb. He was like that fine flour which was offered before God in the burnt offering; a flour without grit, so smooth, that when you rubbed it, it was soft and pure, no particles could be discerned: so was his character fully ground, fully compounded. There was not one feature in his moral countenance which had undue preponderance above the other; but he was replete in everything that was virtuous and good. Tempted he was, it is true, but sinned he never. The whirlwind came from the wilderness, and smote upon the four corners of that house, but it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. The rains descended, heaven afflicted him; the winds blew, the mysterious agency of hell assailed him; the floods came, all earth was in arms against him, but yet he stood firm in the midst of all. Never once did he even seem to bend before the tempest; but buffetting the fury of the blast, bearing all the temptations that could ever happen to man, which summed themselves up and consummated their fury on him, he stood to the end, without a single flaw in his life, or a stain upon his spotless robe. Let us rejoice, then, in this, my beloved brothers and sisters, that we have such a substitute—one who is fit and proper to stand in our place, and to suffer in our stead, seeing he has no need to offer a sacrifice for himself; no need to cry for himself, "Father, I have sinned;" no need to bend the knee of the penitent and confess his own iniquities, for he is without spot or blemish, the perfect lamb of God's passover.

I would have you carefully notice the particular expression of the text, for it struck me as being very beautiful and significant,—"*who knew* no sin." It does not merely say *did* none, but *knew*

none. Sin was no acquaintance of his; he was acquainted with grief, but no acquaintance of sin. He had to walk in the midst of its most frequented haunts, but did not know it; not that he was ignorant of its nature, or did not know its penalty, but he did not *know it*; he was a stranger to it, he never gave it the wink or nod of familiar recognition. Of course he knew what sin was, for he was very God, but with the sin he had no communion, no fellowship, no brotherhood. He was a perfect stranger in the presence of sin; he was a foreigner; he was not an inhabitant of that land where sin is acknowledge. He passed through the wilderness of suffering, but into the wilderness of sin he could never go. "He *knew* no sin;" mark that expression and treasure it up, and when you are thinking of your substitute, and see him hang bleeding upon the cross, think that you see written in those lines of blood written along his blessed body, "He knew no sin." Mingled with the redness of his blood—that Rose of Sharon; behold the purity of his nature, the Lily of the Valley—"He knew no sin."

II. LET US PASS ON TO NOTICE THE SECOND AND MOST IMPORTANT point; THE ACTUAL SUBSTITUTION OF CHRIST, AND THE REAL IMPUTATION OF SIN TO HIM. "He made him to be sin for us."

HERE BE CAREFUL TO OBSERVE WHO TRANSFERRED THE SIN. GOD the Father laid on Jesus the iniquities of us all. Man could not make Christ sin. Man could not transfer his guilt to another. It is not for us to say whether Christ could or could not have made himself sin for us; that certain it is, he did not take this priesthood upon himself, but he was called of God, as was Aaron. The Redeemer's vicarious position is warranted, nay ordained by divine authority. "He hath made him to be sin for us." I must now beg you to notice how very explicit the term is. Some of our expositors will have it that the word here used must mean "sin-offering." "He made him to

be a sin-offering for us." I thought it well to look to my Greek Testament to see whether it could be so. Of course we all know that the word here translated "sin," is very often translated "sin-offering," but it is always useful, when you have a disputed passage, to look it through, and see whether in this case the word would bear such a meaning. These commentators say it means a sin-offering,—well, I will read it: "He hath made him to be a sin-offering for us who knew no *sin-offering*." Does not that strike you as being ridiculous? But they are precisely the same words; and if it be fair to translate it "sin-offering" in one place, it must, in all reason, be fair to translate it so in the other. The fact it, while in some passages it may be rendered "sin-offering," in this passage it cannot be so, because it would be to run counter to all honesty to translate the same word in the same sentence two different ways. No; we must take hem as they stand. "He hath made him to be sin for us," not merely an offering, but *sin* for us.

My predecessor, Dr. Gill, edited the works of Tobias Crisp, but Tobias Crisp went further than Dr. Gill or any of us can approve; for in one place Crisp calls Christ *a sinner*, though he does not mean that he ever sinned himself. He actually calls Christ a transgressor, and justifies himself by that passage, "He was numbered with the transgressors." Martin Luther is reputed to have broadly said that, although Jesus Christ was sinless, yet he was the greatest sinner that ever lived, because all the sins of his people lay upon him. Now, such expressions I think to be unguarded, if not profane. Certainly Christian men should take care that they use not language which, by the ignorant and uninstructed, may be translated to mean what they never intended to teach. The fact is, brethren, that in no sense whatever—take that as I say it—in no sense whatever can Jesus Christ ever be conceived of as having been guilty. *He knew no sin.*" Not only was he not guilty of any sin which he committed himself, but he was not guilty of our sins. No guilt can possibly attach to a man who has not been guilty. He must have had complicity in the deed itself, or else no *guilt* can possibly be laid on him. Jesus Christ stands in the midst of all the divine thunders, and suffers all the

punishment, but not a drop of sin ever stained him. In no sense is he ever a guilty man, but always is he an accepted and a holy one. What, then, is the meaning of that very forcible expression of my text? We must interpret Scriptural modes of expression by the verbage of the speakers. We know that our Master once said himself, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood;" he did not mean that the cup was the covenant. He said, "Take, eat, this is my body"—no one of us conceives that the bread is the literal flesh and blood of Christ. We take that bread as if it were the body, and it actually represents it. Now, we are to read a passage like this, according to the analogy of faith. Jesus Christ was made by his Father sin for us, that is, he was treated as if he had himself been sin. He was not sin; he was not sinful; he was not guilty; but, he was treated by his Father, as if he had not only been sinful, but as if he had been *sin itself*. That is a strong expression used here. Not only hath he made him to be the substitute for sin, but to be sin. God looked on Christ as if Christ had been sin; not as if he had taken up the sins of his people, or as if they were laid on him, though that were true, but as if he himself had positively been that noxious—that God-hating—that soul-damning thing, called sin. When the Judge of all the earth said, "Where is Sin?" Christ presented himself. He stood before his Father as if he had been the accumulation of all human guilt; as if he himself were that thing which God cannot endure, but which he must drive from his presence for ever. And now see how this making of Jesus to be sin was enacted to the fullest extent. The righteous Lord looked on Christ as being sin, and therefore Christ must be taken without the camp. Sin cannot be borne in God's Zion, cannot be allowed to dwell in God's Jerusalem; it must be taken without the camp, it is a leprous thing, put it away. Cast out from fellowship, from love, from pity, sin must ever be. Take him away, take him away, ye crowd! Hurry him through the streets and bear him to Calvary. Take him without the camp—as was the beast which was offered for sin without the camp, so must Christ be, who was made sin for us. And now, God looks on him as being sin, and sin must bear punishment. Christ is



punished. The most fearful of deaths is exacted at his hand, and God has no pity for him. How should he have pity on sin? God hates it. No tongue can tell, no soul can divine the terrible hatred of God to that which is evil, and he treats Christ as if he were sin. He prays, but heaven shuts out his prayer; he cries for water, but heaven and earth refuse to wet his lips except with vinegar. He turns his eye to heaven, he sees nothing there. How should he? God cannot look on sin, and sin can have no claim on God: "My God, my God," he cries, "why hast thou forsaken me?" O solemn necessity, how could God do anything with sin but forsake it? How could iniquity have fellowship with God? Shall divine smiles rest on sin? Nay, nay, it must not be. Therefore is it that he who is made sin must bemoan desertion and terror. God cannot touch him, cannot dwell with him, cannot come near him. He is abhorred, cast away; it hath pleased the Father to bruise him; he hath put him to grief. At last he dies. God will not keep him in life—how should he? Is it not the meetest thing in the world that sin should be buried? "Bury it out of my sight, hide this corruption," and lo! Jesus, as if he were sin, is put away out of the sight of God and man as a thing obnoxious. I do not know whether I have clearly uttered what I want to state, but what a rim picture that is, to conceive of sin gathered up into one mass—murder, lust and rapine, and adultery, and all manner of crime, all piled together in one hideous heap. We ourselves, brethren, impure though we be, could not bear this; how much less should God with his pure and holy eyes bear with that mass of sin, and yet there it is, and God looked upon Christ as if he were that mass of sin. He was not sin, but he looked upon him as made sin for us. He stands in our place, assumes our guilt, takes on him our iniquity, and God treats him as if he had been sin. Now, my dear brothers and sisters, let us just lift up our hearts with gratitude for a few moments. Here we are to-night; we know that we are guilty, but our sins have all been punished years ago. Before my soul believed in Christ, the punishment of my sin had all been endured. We are not to think that Christ's blood derives its efficacy from our faith. Fact precedes faith. Christ hath redeemed us; faith discovers

his; but it was a fact of that finished sacrifice. Though still defiled by sin, yet who can lay anything to the charge of the man whose guilt is gone, lifted bodily from off him, and put upon Christ? How can any punishment fall on that man who ceases to possess sins, because his sin has eighteen hundred years ago been cast upon Christ, and Christ has suffered in his place and stead? Oh, glorious triumph of faith to be able to say, whenever I feel the guilt of sin, whenever conscience pricks me, "Yes, it is true, but my Lord is answerable for it all, for he has taken it all upon himself, and suffered in my room, and place, and stead." How precious when I see my debts, to be able to say, "Yes, but the blood of Christ, God's dear Son, hath cleansed me from all sin!" How precious, not only to see my sin dying when I believe, but to know that it was dead, it was gone, it ceased to be, eighteen hundred years ago. All the sins that you and I have ever committed, or ever shall commit, if we be heirs of mercy, and children of God, are all dead things.

"Our Jesus nailed them to his cross,  
And sung the triumph when he rose."

These cannot rise in judgment to condemn us; they have all been slain, shrouded, buried; they are removed from us as far as the east is from the west, because "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin."

III. YOU SEE THEN THE REALITY OF THE IMPUTATION OF SIN TO Christ from the amazing doctrine that Christ is made sin for us. But now notice the concluding thought, upon which I must dwell a moment, but it must be very briefly, for two reasons, my time has gone, and my strength has gone too. "THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM."

. . .

NOW, HERE I BEG YOU TO NOTICE, THAT IT DOES NOT SIMPLY SAY that we might be made *righteous*, but "that we might be made *the righteousness* of God in him;" as if righteousness, that lovely, glorious, God-honouring, God-delighting thing—as if we were actually made *that*. God looks on his people as being abstract righteousness, not nly righteous, but righteousness. To be righteous, is as if a man should have a box covered with gold, the box would then be golden; but to be *righteousness* is to have a box of solid gold. To be a righteous man is to have righteousness cast over me; but to be made righteousness, that is to be made solid essential righteousness in the sight of God. Well now, this is a glorious fact and a most wonderful privilege, that we poor sinners are made "the righteousness of God in him." God sees no sin in any one of his people, no iniquity in Jacob, when he looks upon them in Christ. In themselves he sees nothing but filth and abomination, in Christ nothing but purity and righteousness. Is it not, and must it not ever be to the Christian, one of his most delightful privileges to know that altogether apart from anything that we have ever done, or can do, God looks upon his people as being righteous, nay, as being righteousness, and that despite all of the sins they have ever committed, they are accepted in him as if they had been Christ, while Christ was punished for hem as if he had been sin. Why, when I stand in my own place, I am lost and ruined; my place is the place where Judas stood, the place where the devil lies in everlasting shame. But when I stand in Christ's place—and I fail to stand where faith has put me till I stand there—when I stand in Christ's place, the Father's everlastingly beloved one, the Father's accepted one, him whom the Father delighteth to honour—when I stand there, I stand where faith hath a right to put me, and I am in the most joyous spot that a creature of God can occupy. Oh, Christian, get thee up, get thee up into the high mountain, and stand where thy Saviour stands, for that is thy place. Lie not there on the dunghill of fallen humanity, that is not thy place now; Christ has once taken it on thy behoof. "He made him to be sin for us." Thy place is yonder there, above the starry hosts, where he hath raised us up together, and made us sit together

in heavenly places in him. Not there, at the day of judgment, where the wicked shriek for shelter, and beg for the hills to cover hem, but there, where Jesus sits upon his throne—there is thy place, my soul. He will make thee to sit upon his throne, even as he has overcome, and has sat down with his Father upon his throne. Oh! That I could mount to the heights of this argument to-night; it needs a seraphic preacher to picture the saint in Christ, robed in Christ's righteousness, wearing Christ's nature, bearing Christ's palm of victory, sitting on Christ's throne, wearing Christ's crown. And yet this is our privilege! He wore my crown, the crown of thorns; I wear his crown, the crown of glory. He wore my dress, nay, rather, he wore my nakedness when he died upon the cross; I wear his robes, the royal robes of the King of kings. He bore my shame; I bear his honour. He endured my sufferings to this end that my joy may be full, and that his joy may be fulfilled in me. He laid in the grave that I might rise from the dead and that I may dwell in him, and all this he comes again to give me, to make it sure to me and to all that love his appearing, to show that all his people shall enter into their inheritance.

Now, my brothers and sisters, Mr. Maurice, McLeod, Campbell, and their great admirer, Mr. Brown, may go on with their preaching as long as they like, but they will never make a convert of a man who knows what the vitality of religion is; for he who knows what substitution means, he who knows what it is to stand where Christ stands, will never care to occupy the ground on which Mr. Maurice stands. He who has ever been made to sit together with Christ, and once to enjoy the real preciousness of a transfer of Christ's righteousness to him and his sin to Christ, that man has eaten the bread of heaven, and will never renounce it for husks. No, my brethren, we could lay down our lives for this truth rather than give it up. No, we cannot by any means turn aside from this glorious stability of faith, and for this good reason, that there is nothing for us in the doctrine which these men teach. It may suit intellectual gentleness, I dare say it does; but it will not suit us. We are poor sinners and nothing at all, and if Christ is not our all in all, there is nothing for

us. I have often thought the best answer for all these new ideas is, that the true gospel was always preached to the poor;—"The poor have the gospel preached to hem."—I am sure that the poor will never learn *the gospel* of these new divines, for they cannot make head or tail of it, nor the rich either; for after you have read through one of their volumes, you have not the least idea of what the book is about, until you have read it through eight or nine times, and then you begin to think you are a very stupid being for ever having read such inflated heresy, for it sours your temper and makes you feel angry, to see the precious truths of God trodden under foot. Some of us must stand out against these attacks on truth, although we love not controversy. We rejoice in the liberty of our fellow-men, and would have them proclaim their convictions; but if they touch these precious things, they touch the apple of our eye. We can allow a thousand opinions in the world, but that which infringes upon the precious doctrine of a covenant salvation, through the imputed righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ,—against that we must, and will, enter our hearty and solemn protest, as long as God spares us. Take away once from us those glorious doctrines, and where are we brethren? We may lay us down and die, for nothing remains that is worth living for. We have come to the valley of the shadow of death, when we find these doctrines to be untrue. If these things which I speak to you to-night be not the verities of Christ; if they be not true, there is no comfort left for any poor man under God's sky, and it were better for us never to have been born. I may say what Jonathan Edwards says at the end of his book, "If any man could disprove the doctrines of the gospel, he should then sit down and weep to think they were not true, for," says he, "it would be the most dreadful calamity that could happen to the world, to have a glimpse of such truths, and then for them to melt away in the thin air of fiction, as having no substantiality in them." Stand up for the truth of Christ; I would not have you be bigotted, but I would have you be decided. Do not give countenance to any of this trash and error, which is going abroad, but stand firm. Be not turned away from your stedfastness by any

pretence of intellectuality and high philosophy, but earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard of us, and have been taught, even as ye have read in this sacred Book, which is the way of everlasting life.

Thus then, beloved, without gathering up my strength for the fray, or attempting to analyse the subtleties of those who would pervert the simple gospel, I speak out my mind and utter the kindlings of my heart among you. Little enough will ye reckon, over whom the Holy Ghost hath given me the oversight, what the grievous wolves may design, if ye keep within the fold. Break not the sacred bounds wherein God hath enclosed his Church. He hath encircled us in the arms of covenant love. He hath united us in indissoluble bonds to the Lord Jesus. He hath fortified us with the assurance that the Holy Spirit shall guide us into all truth. God grant that those beyond the pale of visible fellowship with us in this eternal gospel may see their danger and escape from the fowler's snare!

CHAPTER 8  
CHRIST OUR ADVOCATE,  
C.H.SPURGEON, JUNE 21, 1863



“My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not.  
And if any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus  
Christ the righteous.”

John 2:1

**T**HE APOSTLE JOHN presents us with a very clear and emphatic testimony to the doctrine of full and free forgiveness of sin. He declares that the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanses us from all sin, and that if any man sins, we have an advocate. It is most evident that he is not afraid of doing mischief by stating this truth of God too broadly; on the contrary, he makes this statement with the view of promoting the sanctity of his “little children.” The objective of this bold declaration of the love of the Father to His sinning children is, “that you sin not.” This is a triumphant answer to that grossly untruthful objection which is so often urged by the adversaries of the gospel against the doctrines of free grace—that they lead men to licentiousness. It does not appear that the Apostle John thought so, for in order that these “little children” should not sin, he actually declares unto them the very doctrine which our opponents call

licentious. Those men who think that God's grace, when fully, fairly, and plainly preached, will lead men into sin, know not what they say, nor what they affirm! It is neither according to nature nor to grace for men to find an argument for sin in the goodness of God. Human nature is bad enough—and far be it from me to flatter that leprous criminal, that reeking mass of corruption—even a natural conscience revolts at the baseness of sinning because divine grace abounds! Shall I hate God because He is kind to me? Shall I curse Him because He blesses me? I venture to affirm that very few men reason thus. Man has found out many inventions, but such arguments are so transparently abominable that few consciences are so dead as to tolerate them. Bad as human nature is, it seldom turns the goodness of God into an argument for rebelling against Him; as for souls renewed by divine grace, they can never be guilty of such infamy.

The believer in Jesus reasons in quite another fashion. Is God so good?—then I will not grieve Him. Is He so ready to forgive my transgressions?—then I will love Him, by His grace, and offend no more. Gratitude has bands which are stronger than iron, although softer than silk. Think not, sirs, that the Christian needs to be flogged to virtue by the whip of the law! Dream not that we hate sin merely because of the hell which follows it! If there were no heaven for the righteous, the sons of God would follow after goodness because their regenerated spirit pants for it; and if there were no hell for the wicked, from the necessity of his newborn nature, the true Christian would strive to escape from all iniquity. Loved of God, we feel we must love Him in return. Richly, yes, divinely forgiven, we feel that we cannot live any longer in sin. Since Jesus died to rid us from all uncleanness, we feel that we cannot crucify our Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame. We need no nobler or more cogent arguments to lead a man to thorough consecration to God's cause, and detestation of all evil than those fetched from the free grace of God! And what if some men do pervert the doctrine? Do not wicked minds corrupt everything? What truth is there in Scripture with which a man may not ruin



himself if he wills? Did not the prophetic eye of our Lord anticipate this when it was written that to some the Word of God is, “a savor of death unto death?” Have there not been in all ages men who hold the truth of God in licentiousness? When were there not evil men to wrest Scripture to their own destruction? Shall we keep back the children’s bread lest the dogs should steal the crumbs? Shall we destroy health-restoring drugs because fools may poison themselves with them? Shall all the trees be cut down for fear the owls should build their nests in them? Shall the sea be dried up because sharks swim in it? Shall the pure virgin truth of God be condemned because gross villains have forged her name and abused her character? God forbid! Let us never blush to preach the whole gospel, and to preach its full forgiveness of sin in the boldest and baldest manner, believing that the naked breasts of truth are her best armor, and that she is least protected when she is encumbered with a coat of mail of human reasoning and prudence!

As God shall help me, then, believing that the doctrine of free grace and of God’s infinite love to His people is a doctrine which will lead the “little children of God” to avoid all sin, I intend, this morning, to preach that doctrine. May God grant that the result may be according to His mind and will!

I. WE COMMENCE OUR EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT WITH THE remark that THE SAINT IS STILL A SINNER.

OUR APOSTLE SAYS—“IF ANY MAN SINS.” THE “IF’ MAY BE written in as small letters as you will, for the supposition is a matter of certainty. “If any man sins”? Although the gentle hand of the beloved disciple uses such mild and tender terms, putting it as a supposition—as though it were an astonishing thing after so much love, and mercy, and kindness, that we should sin—yet, John very well knew that all the saints do sin, for he has himself declared that, if any man says that he does not sin, he is a liar, and the truth is not

in him! Saints are, without exception, still sinners! Far be it from us to deny that divine grace has worked a wondrous change—it were not grace at all if it had not. It will be well to note this change. The Christian no longer loves sin; it is the object of his sternest horror. He no longer regards it as a mere trifle, plays with it, or talks of it with unconcern. He looks upon it as a deadly serpent whose very shadow is to be avoided; he would no more venture voluntarily to put its cup to his lips than a man would drink poison who had once almost lost his life through it. Sin is dejected in the Christian's heart, though it is not ejected. Sin may enter the heart, and fight for dominion, but it cannot sit upon the throne! It haunts the town of Mansoul, and lurks in dens and corners to do mischief, but it is no longer honored in the streets, nor pampered in the palace. The head and the hands of Dagon are broken, although the stump remains.

The Christian never sins with that enormity of boasting of which the unregenerate are guilty. Others wallow in transgressions, and make their shame their glory, but if the believer falls, he is very quiet, mournful and vexed. Sinners go to their sins as children to their own father's orchard, but believers slink away like thieves when they have been stealing forbidden fruit. Shame and sin are always in close company in a Christian; if he is drunk with evil, he will be ashamed of himself, and go to his bed like a whipped cur. He cannot proclaim his transgressions as some do in the midst of a vulgar crowd, boasting of their exploits of evil. His heart is broken within him, and when he has sinned, he goes with sore bones for many and many a day.

Nor does he sin with the fullness of deliberation that belongs to other men. The sinner can sit down by the months together and think over the iniquity that he means to perpetrate, till he gets his plans well organized and has matured his project; but the Christian cannot do this. He may put the sin into his mouth and swallow it in a moment, but he cannot continue to roll it under his tongue. He, who can carefully arrange and plot a transgression, is still a true child of the old serpent!

And again, the believer never chews the cud of his sin; for after he has sinned, however sweet it may have been in his mouth, it becomes bitterness in his heart—and glad enough is he to be rid of it altogether. The retrospect of sin to a converted man is nothing but blackness and darkness in his heart.

The Christian, unlike other men, never finds enjoyment in his sin; he is out of his element in it. Conscience pricks him; he cannot, even if he would, sin like others. There is a refined taste within him which all the while revolts at the apparently dainty morsel of sin. The finger of divine grace, with its secret and mysterious touch, turns all the honey into gall, and all the sweetness into wormwood. If the Christian shall sin, and sin I grant he will, yet, it shall always be with half-heartedness—still, he clings to the right—the evil that he would not, he does, while the good that he would do, he fails to perform.

You will notice, too, how different the Christian is as to the habit of sin. The ungodly man is frequent in overt deeds of rebellion, but the Christian, at least in open acts of crime and folly, rather falls into them rather than lives in them. The swallow dips with his wing the brook, and then, he is up again into the skies, soaring toward the sun; but the duck can swim in the pool or dive under the water—it is in its element. So the Christian just touches sometimes with his wing—alas, for him—the streams of earth, but then, he is up again where he should be; it is only the sinner who can swim in sin and delight therein. You may drive the swine and the sheep together side by side; they come to some mire and they both fall into it, and both stain themselves; but you soon detect the difference in nature between them—for while the swine lies and wallows with intense gusto—the sheep is up again, escaping as soon as possible from the filth! So with the Christian; he falls, God knows how many times, but by His grace, he rises up again—it is not his nature to lie in sin; he abhors himself that ever he should fall to the ground at all—while the ungodly goes on in his wicked way till sin becomes a habit, and habit, like an iron net, has entangled him in its meshes!

There are all these degrees of difference between the Christian and the ungodly man, and far more, for the believer is a new creature—he belongs to a holy generation and a peculiar people; the Spirit of God is in him, and in all respects, he is far removed from the natural man, but for all that, we must come back to that with which we started—that the Christian is still a sinner! He is so from the imperfection of his nature. His nature is such that he cannot but sin until the old Adam shall die in him—and that will not be till the funeral knell is tolled for himself! Sin, by reason of his imperfection, pollutes the best thing the believer does. Sin mars his repentance. There is filth in our tears, and unbelief in our faith. The best thing we ever did apart from the merit of Jesus only swelled the number of our sins, for when we have been most pure in our own sight, yet, like the heavens, we are not pure in God's sight, and as He charged His angels with folly, much more must He charge us with it, even in our most angelic frame of mind! The song that thrills to heaven, and seeks to emulate seraphic strains, has still mortal infirmity in it. The prayer which moves the arm of God is still a sinful prayer, and only moves that arm because the Sinless One, the great Mediator, has stepped in to take away the sin of our supplication! I dare to say it—the best faith or the highest degree of sanctification to which a Christian ever attained on earth, has still so much of the creature's infirmity in it as to be worthy of God's eternal wrath! In itself considered, there is so much sin about the highest and loftiest thing to which the creature can attain, that we mournfully confess—

“We are altogether as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses  
are but as filthy rags.”

AS THE CHRISTIAN THUS SINS IN HIS DEVOUT PERFORMANCES, so he constantly errs in the everyday tenor of his life. Sins of omission to wit—how many of these may be compressed into a single hour? Oh, what multitudes of things we have left undone! Remember that

these make up a very great part of the sins which bring the curse. "I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; sick and in prison and you visited Me not." Have we no sins of commission? Our thoughts, our imaginations, our words, and must I not say our deeds—have these been what they should be? If any man dares to tell me that he lives for a single day without a sinful deed, I will dare to tell him that he never knew himself! Do but look at your own chamber. If you disturb it, I see but little dust floating about in it, but if a stray sunbeam shall enter through the window, I see millions upon millions of little particles dancing up and down! And I discover that the whole of what I supposed to be clear, pure air is filled with innumerable atoms of all sorts of things, and that I am breathing these even in the purest atmosphere! So is it with our heart and life. When the Spirit shines into us, we see that the atmosphere of life is as full of sin as it can hold, and a man may sooner count the hairs of his head, or the sands upon the seashore, or the drops of the dew of the morning upon the grass, than count the sins of a single day! O Lord, You know us, but we know not ourselves; yet this much we know, that we are a people full of sin, and laden with iniquity. You will tell me these are little sins, but I remind you that a multitude of grains of sand may overload a vessel quite as surely as bars of iron — and therefore, these daily iniquities should be confessed with care, and repented of with sincerity. The Christian, then, from the imperfection of his nature, sins. The old unchanged fountain of Marah must send forth bitter water. The old Adam can do nothing else but sin. Fire can do nothing but burn; water can do nothing but quench fire; everything acts according to its nature. The new nature that is in us cannot sin, because it is born of God; it is so heavenly and divine that it never stoops to anything like sin. There is a spark of the celestial and of the perfect within every believer which never can be quenched; but the old Adam, that which made Paul cry out—"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—must sin, and as certainly as sparks fly upward, so certainly the old nature will commit iniquity!

Moreover, many Christian people sin from certain peculiar infir-

mities. You know, each of you, what your own infirmity may be, at least I hope you have been watchful enough to discover it. Some sin through shortness of temper; they are not long-winded in patience with their fellow creatures; they are vexed; they grow hot—perhaps they imagine some cause for anger where there is none—and they wax warm, and speak unadvisedly with their tongue. This gives much trouble to many of the most gracious of men. A hasty temper is a perpetual temptation. There are others who have a high and proud spirit, and if they fancy they are a little snubbed or put into the background, at once they feel inclined to resent it. There—listen to him—“I am not to be thus trod upon! Who dares to treat me thus?” Many who have done good service for Christ have had to carry that thorn in their flesh even down to their graves. Sensitive-ness, a high spirit, a suspicious temperament—these are like blisters to the feet of a pilgrim—he will always walk painfully, if not slowly. Some of us have to contend with sloth. Perhaps we are afflicted with an inactive liver, and the physician has never been able to touch the complaint. God help the man thus afflicted, for he will need to whip himself every day to his duty, and often he will feel so dull and sleepy, that he will wish for Cowper’s “lodge in a vast wilderness, some boundless connection of

shade,” that he might hide himself in quiet from the toil of the spiritual harvest. How many we know, dear friends, who have to contend with constant unbelief brought on through depression of spirits. Their nerves, perhaps, have experienced a great shock at some period in life and, constitutionally, they always look at the black side of affairs. If they see a grassy knoll, they suspect it to be an extinct volcano; and if they happen to be in a green valley where the mountains frown like the battlements of heaven, they are dreadfully afraid that an avalanche must certainly come down and destroy them. They cannot help it; it is a peculiarity of their constitution, but it leads them into much sin, and should cause them much repentance before the face of the living God.

So I might go on to mention the peculiarity of some who are suffering from bashfulness. They will often be tempted to hold back

where they ought to go forward—and if not to disown their Master—yet not to proclaim their love for Him as boldly as they should. The Christian, when he reads this verse, “If any man sins,” may well say—“Ah, indeed I do; through these infirmities I constantly commit iniquity.” And then, dear friends, we all sin from the assaults of evil. There are times when we are not watchful, and as Satan is always on his watchtower, he is sure to attack us just then. We wear our visor up, and then in flies the stone from the infernal sling! We have forgotten a piece of our armor, and the enemy spies our nakedness and cuts us deep, leaving a scar for years. The temptations of the world, when we are thrust into ungodly company, and the trials of business, and even of the household—all these in unguarded moments may take the Christian off his feet. Ah, my brothers and sisters, Paul, who was not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles, yet called himself the chief of sinners; and we with far inferior graces must take the lowest place, acknowledging that in us, that is in our flesh, there dwells no good thing. Sinner is my name, sinner my nature, but thanks be to Him who came to save sinners, I am a sinner saved by free grace!

II. I NOW LEAVE THAT POINT FOR A SECOND ONE FULL OF comfort. OUR SINS DO NOT DEPRIVE US OF OUR INTEREST IN CHRIST.

NOTE THE TEXT. “IF ANY MAN SINS WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE.” YES, we have Him though we sin! We have Him still. It does not say, “If any man sins he has forfeited his advocate,” but “we have an advocate.” sinners though we are, all the sin that a believer ever did or can be allowed to commit, cannot destroy his interest in the Lord Jesus Christ; into whatever he may be allowed to fall, yet none of these things can by any possibility touch his title deeds! Indeed, in some characters Jesus is only mine when I can claim the name of sinner; I cannot have an advocate unless I sin, otherwise I do not

need one! Who needs an advocate to plead his cause in a court of law if there is no suit against him? Sin is a charge against me; I am a sinner; I have an advocate. I have today a brother in Christ. "Go, tell my brethren," He said; and yet, they had all forsaken Him, and therefore were all sinners—but He was still their brother! I have a husband in Christ too, though I sin. "Israel has forsaken Me," says God, "and played the harlot. She has gone whoring from Me, but return, return, for I am married unto you." She is still His wife, you see, though she had gone into adultery. The Christian, even when he has stained and fouled himself, is still the spouse of Christ for all that; we are members of His body, and if so, the members cannot be removed or taken off and on—limbs are not so easily removed! Did not Christ wash Peter? Peter was a member of Christ's own body, and yet Peter needed washing. O blessed picture, the Head washing the feet! So at this day, stained though we are, we are claimants of Christ as Head of our body. And, beloved, we know that notwithstanding all our sin, we are perfectly justified in Christ, for He justifies the ungodly. We know, too, that we are perfectly accepted, for we are accepted in the beloved, and not in ourselves. Notwithstanding all our iniquities, we are pardoned, for the fountain is opened for sin, and for all uncleanness—not for righteousness and purity—but for sin and for uncleanness!

Therefore, we conclude that all our sins do not deprive us of that which Christ is to us, namely, the fountain of life, and light, and purity, and safety. Oh, my brothers and sisters, if our first title to Christ had depended on our good works, then it would fall when our works grew bad, but He loved us when we were as bad as we could be—

"He saw us ruined in the fall,  
Yet loved us notwithstanding all."

HE CHOSE US WHEN WE WERE SINNERS; HE BOUGHT US WHEN WE WERE SINNERS; HE LOVED US WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS;



and if we are as bad as that today, He still loves us. If our right to heaven rested on the covenant of works, that unstable tenure, it would soon fail us; but seeing it rests on the covenant of grace, which has no conditions in it, but which is of pure immutable grace from first to last, therefore be it known unto you, O sons of God, that notwithstanding all your faults and failings, wanderings and backslidings, He is your God, and you are His children! He will be your God to all eternity, and you shall be His children world without end. "What a bold thing to say!" says one. Yes, and did I not tell you that I meant to say it to the little children, that they sin not? I believe that the bold open statement of the fact that all the sin that a believer can commit cannot mar his interest in Christ, though it may mar his enjoyment of that interest for the present, believing, I say, that this doctrine, instead of driving men to sin, will draw them to love that gracious and immutable God, who notwithstanding all our sins and cares and woe, will never allow us to perish!

III. NOW LET US CHANGE THE NOTE A LITTLE. OUR THIRD POINT is THAT THE ADVOCATE IS PROVIDED ON PURPOSE TO MEET THE FACT THAT WE ARE STILL SINNERS.

IF I AM A SINNER, THEN THERE IS A COURT, AND THERE IS ONE who sits as Judge—the Father. There is a charge against me, otherwise I would not need an advocate to meet it—and this implies that I have sinned. There is an adversary to press his suit against me, and he would hardly venture to do this if there were no sin. There must be a right of reply on my part; I must have the right to put in a disclaimer in court, and to stand up and plead before the bar of justice. He who has a right to plead in court is the man who is accused—the man who has some offense. If I were neither accused nor had been a sinner, then I would have no right to occupy the time of the court; but being a sinner, and being brought up upon

that charge, and having one who presses the charge against me, I have a right to reply, and that reply, through God's good grace, I have a right to make through my advocate!

Let us say, concerning our advocate, that He is ordained with a special view to sinners. All His names and attributes prove Him to be a suitable advocate for such. You and I, who though saved, are still sinners, may safely put our case into His hands, for look who He is—"Jesus Christ the righteous."

"Jesus." Ah, then He is an advocate such as I want, for He loves me, and takes an interest in me! Jesus is the name of one who became man for my sake. He knows what sore temptations mean, He understands what trials mean, what afflictions mean. I am glad I have one who will be interested in my welfare, and will plead for me as a friend for a friend, and as a brother for a brother. I thank God, that though I sin, I still have Jesus who is my, "brother born for adversity," the friend of sinners, and will, therefore, plead the sinner's part! Is His name Jesus? Then, He is sure to succeed, because "They shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." His very name implies His success! Is His name Jesus? Then, if He does not succeed in my case, His honor is compromised. He is called Jesus because He does save sinners—if He does not save me—He is not Jesus! If I, a sinner, trusting in Him, give Him my cause to plead as my advocate, and I am tried, and the verdict is against me, He is not Jesus! He may lay down His claim to be Jesus, for He does not, and cannot save His people from their sins! Beloved friends, do you not see how the saint is regarded as a sinner because He who is his advocate is the appointed Savior of sinners? He is put down as their advocate, I say, because He is the sinner's friend. I never heard of His pleading for the righteous; I never dreamed of His being the friend of the sinless; I find Him always on the side of publicans and sinners—offenders, and those who have gone out of the way; and therefore I conclude, that sinner though I am, continually sinning as I am, I may leave my case with Jesus, for He is just the advocate the sinner needs!

Notice, next, it is "Jesus Christ"—Christos—the anointed. This

shows His authority to plead. There are only certain gentlemen who can plead in the Court of Chancery, and only certain others that can enter the Common Pleas, or the King's Bench. Jesus Christ has a right to plead, for He is the Father's own appointed, the Father's own anointed. My soul, you have a good pleader, one whom God Himself has chosen to plead the sinner's cause! If he were of your choosing, he might fail, but if God has laid help upon one who is mighty, feel safe to put your trouble where God has laid His help. He is Christ, and therefore authorized; but I add, He is Christ, and therefore qualified, for the anointing has also qualified Him for His work. He can plead better than Jacob pleaded when he spoke for Benjamin; He can plead so as to move the heart of God and prevail. What words of tenderness, what sentences of persuasion will He use when He stands up to plead for me! But more, He is Christ—that is, He is God's Messiah—therefore, God would not send Him unless He guaranteed Him! If God should send into this world a Savior who could not save, then God would have no mercy. God's appointing and sending Christ is a guarantee of Christ's success! Oh, my soul, you have one well-fitted to be your advocate, and one who cannot but succeed! Leave yourself entirely in His hands!

Notice next, it is "Jesus Christ the righteous." This is not only His character, but it is His plea. It is His character, and if my advocate is righteous, then I am sure He would not take up a bad cause. I do not know, it may be right for a lawyer to plead for a villain when he knows him to be a villain, but this I think, the greater villain the lawyer is, the better qualified would he be to do it. But my Lord and Master, the great advocate, would not plead a bad cause, for He is Jesus Christ the righteous; therefore if I sin, if I am put down among the many men that sin—if He pleads for me, my case must be good—for He would not take up a bad one! But how can He do this? Why, because He meets the charge of unrighteousness against me by this plea on His part—that He is righteous! He seems to say to the great Father in the day when the sinner stands arraigned—"Yes, My Father, that sinner was unrighteous, but remember that I was accepted as His substitute; I stood to keep

the law for him, and gave My active obedience; I went up to the cross and bled, and so gave My passive obedience; I have covered him from head to foot with My doing and My dying; I have so arrayed him that not even the angels are adorned as he is, for though they may be clothed with the perfect righteousness of a creature, I have given him the righteousness of God Himself! I am become unto My people the Lord, their righteousness; look, I have taken the jewels out of My crown to bedeck them; I have taken the garments from My own back to cover them, and the blood from My own veins to make the dye in which I have dipped their garments, till they are purpled with imperial glory." What can there be asked more for the sinner than this? Jesus Christ the righteous stands up to plead for me, and pleads His righteousness. And mark, He does this not if I do not sin, but if I do sin! There is the beauty of my text. It does not say, "If any man does not sin we have an advocate," but "if any man sins we have an advocate." So that when I have sinned, and come creeping up to my closet with a guilty conscience and an aching heart, and feel that I am not worthy to be called God's son, I still have an advocate, because I am one of the many men who sin. I sin and I have an advocate! Oh, I know not how to express the joy I feel in my soul to be able to put it so! It is not, "If any man is righteous, we have an advocate." It is not, "If any man is prayerful, and careful, and godly, and walks rightly, and in the light of God," and so on, but "If any man SINS we have an advocate." Oh, my soul, there is the music of God's heart in those words; music such as the prodigal heard at the festival which welcomed his return! "If any man sins we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

IV. AND NOW, WE TURN TO OUR FOURTH POINT, WHICH IS THAT THIS TRUTH, SO EVANGELICAL AND SO DIVINE, SHOULD BE PRACTICALLY REMEMBERED.

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IT SHOULD BE PRACTICALLY REMEMBERED, DEAR FRIENDS, AT ALL times. Every day I find it most healthy to my own soul to try and walk as a saint, but in order to do so, I must continually come to Christ as a sinner. I would seek to be perfect; I would strain after every virtue, and forsake every false way, but still, as to my standing before God, I find it happiest to sit where I sat when first I looked to Jesus, on the rock of His works, having nothing to do with my own righteousness, but only with His! Depend on it, dear friends, the happiest way of living is to live as a poor sinner, and as nothing at all—having Jesus Christ as all-in-all. You may have all your growths in sanctification, all your progress in graces, all the development of your virtues that you will; but still I do earnestly pray you never to put any of these where Christ should be. If you have begun in Christ, then finish in Christ; if you have begun in the flesh, and then go on in the flesh, we know what the sure result will be. But if you have begun with Jesus Christ as your Alpha, let Him be your Omega! I pray you never think you are rising when you get above this, for it is not rising, but slipping downwards to your ruin. Stand still to this—

“Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Your  
cross I cling.”

STILL A SINNER, BUT STILL HAVING AN ADVOCATE WITH THE Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous—let this be the spirit of your everyday life.

Make this essentially the rule of your life on particular occasions. Here let me say a word that may at once comfort and enlighten some here who are in darkness. When the Spirit of God gives you a clearer view of your own depravity, mind that you hold to this—“If any man sins we have an advocate with the Father.” Perhaps when you were first converted you did not suspect the depth of wickedness that lay in your heart; perhaps you did not believe that you could be as unutterably bad as you really were. But

lately the fountains of the great deep have been broken up, and you have been horrified; you are almost driven mad, or else into despondency and despair by this discovery of your innate corruption, until you flee to this—“sinner as I am, and never more consciously so than I am now that God’s Spirit has enlightened me, I yet know that if any man sins we have an advocate with the Father and I, black, foul and filthy—more foul and filthy than I ever thought myself to be—put my case into the hands of my advocate, and leave it there forever.” When after this you have fallen into sin, and oh, I may address some members of this church who have done this though the pastor knows it not—you have fallen into some sin that pricks your conscience; you carry about with you a something that will not let you sleep at night; there is a sin that disturbs you, and you wish you could forget that you had committed it; you have gone before God as David did; you have used the language of the 51st Psalm, but you cannot get rid of that sin; you believe you are a child of God sometimes, but that sin has got into your conscience and, like a cancer, is eating into your comfort. My brother, my sister, now is your time—“If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father.” Jesus Christ is of no use to you if He will only save you when you have no sin! Let me repeat it—now, you are a sinner; now, you are condemned by the verdict of your own conscience; now, you have sinned, sinned willfully and foully—and God forbid that I should extenuate your sin; yet, let your sin be as gross, and black, and hellish as it may be, if you believe in Jesus Christ you have an advocate with the Father, and through that advocate your cause shall rest, and your sin shall be put away! Perhaps you will tell me that your sin has had some gross aggravation about it. If you are a Christian it has, for a Christian always sins worse than other men; if the sin is not in itself as bad as other men’s, it is worse in you. For a king’s favorite to play the traitor is villainy, indeed. For one who has been highly favored, as you have been, with visits of love from Jesus—to be false to Him—oh, this is shame, double shame to Him! For you who have been washed in His blood to crucify Him afresh, what shall I say to that?

You deserve the hottest wrath of God and the deepest hell! But thus says the Lord unto you—"I have

blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities; return unto Me." "If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father." It does not say, "If some men sin we have no advocate." Or, "If some men sin in an aggravated way." No, it is not put so. It says, "If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father." So that, though you have heaped aggravations one upon another, and your crime has been as foul as any that could have been committed, still you can say, "We have an advocate." Fly with a humble, contrite heart and throw yourself at the feet of that advocate, and by His blood, and by His wounds, He will plead for you, and you shall prevail!

What if I add to all this that you have so sinned as to bring a scandal upon the name of God, upon His church, and upon His cause? Oh, my brothers and sisters, you may well weep in secret; you may weep tears of blood for having done this, but still, for all that, I cannot shut the gate where God sets it wide open! I have not a thunderbolt for you; if you are a child of God, mercy is still free, and still it is preached to you—"If any man sins," publicly, like David, so as to make God's enemies to blaspheme, yet still, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Oh, what splendid mercy is this! Archangel never dreamed of such mercy as this to sinners, to real sinners, to hugely vile sinners, to black, hellish sinners, to devilish sinners, to such as no adjective can be found to describe them! Yet, if they believe in Jesus, sin as they may, they still have, "an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

I wish I could meet the case of that brother yonder, who has long given up all hope of ever being restored. He has been excommunicated; he has been driven away from the society of the godly; he thinks, though he is in this house this morning, he has no business here; and sometimes the devil has tempted him to make away with himself, and he has said, "If I must be lost, I may as well be lost at once." Ah, but, my brother, you dare not do it with such a

text of Scripture as this before your eyes! The Lord still loves you, and if He ever loved you, all your sin cannot wean His heart from you! You may have gone to the utmost length of your tether, but He has so tied you that you can never go beyond it! You may have gotten to the very extremity and edge of the precipice, but over that edge you must not, and you shall not go! This day, He sends me to stop you. Return! Return! Return! A Father bids you return! You are feeding swine today, and all foul and filthy as you are, you would gladly fill your belly with their husks; but you cannot— you have a hunger that husks can never satisfy! Your Father waits to receive you. Come, He will meet you; He will fall upon your neck and kiss you; He will set you at His own table, and there shall be music and dancing for you. The best robe awaits you, prodigal! The fatted calf is killed for you! Come! O believe it! Believe that God is able to do this great thing for you. “As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are His thoughts above your thoughts, and His ways above your ways.”—

“What though your numerous sins exceed  
The stars that fill the  
skies, And, aiming at the eternal throne,  
Like pointed mountains rise,”

YET STILL THE RED SEA OF JESUS' BLOOD SHALL COVER THE TOPS of the mountains of your sins, till, like Noah's ark, that floated twenty cubits upwards, the tops of the mountains shall be covered! “If any man sins”— here, you see, there is nothing said about goodness, nothing about virtue, or tenderness of heart— it is only put, “If any man sins, we have an advocate.”

O you who believe in Jesus, pray for those who believe not, that they, too, may have an advocate! If you and I have come and put our trust in Him, and found a shelter in His wounds, let us never be satisfied till we see our children, our brothers, our sisters, our friends, our kinsfolk brought to this advocate! Go and tell it wherever your voices can be heard, that Jesus Christ receives SINNERS,



and that He eats with them. Go and say that He is the sinner's friend, and that He is willing to take them as they are, and wash them and make them whiter than snow. Since you have proved it yourself, and need to prove it every day, try and bring others to the conviction of it that they, with you, may sing to the praise of that divine love which has given the advocate to every believer, whatever his guilt and condemnation may have been! The Lord bless you now, for Jesus' sake. Amen.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-92) was known as the greatest baptist preacher in history. Born in England, he pastored in London for a significant portion of his ministry. His church, The Metropolitan Tabernacle, was also known as a “soul trap.” Many people visited Spurgeon’s church out of curiosity. And many of these same people left having been converted.

Spurgeon spent his childhood in Essex, where he was greatly influenced by his grandfather, who was also a preacher. It was at his grandfather’s home that he became acquainted with the writings of the Puritans. This exposure led the young Spurgeon into the doctrines of grace. These mighty doctrines formed the heart and soul of this great pulpit preacher and evangelist.

Spurgeon was converted in 1850 at the age of 15. The young preacher found his first pulpit assignment at a church in Waterbeach. At the age of 19, in 1854, he moved to the New Park Street church in London. When Spurgeon was just 21 years old, the newspapers claimed that he was the most popular preacher in all of the British Isles. This young man soon filled the church to overflowing, and by the age of 23, 23,654 people came to hear him preach at a service at the Crystal Palace in London. Eventually, Spurgeon oversaw the construction of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. C.H. Spurgeon preached the unsearchable riches of God’s grace at that pulpit until he died in 1892.

It is challenging to comprehend the amazing impact that Spurgeon had on the Christian world. Spurgeon's written sermons still

have a worldwide effect on the Christian church. If a person desires to have their heart melted by the gospel of Jesus and long for a deepening of the Spirit's work in their lives, all one needs to do is read the sermons of Spurgeon.