

**CHRIST MADE SIN
NO. 3203**

**A SERMON
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*"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*

I DARESAY I have preached from this text several times in your hearing [See sermons #141-142 (a double number sermon), Substitution; #310, Christ—Our Substitute; #1124, God Beseeching Sinners by His Ministers, and #1910, The Heart of the Gospel]. If my life be spared, I hope to preach from it twice as many more. The doctrine it teaches, like salt upon the table, must never be left out, or like bread, which is the staff of life, it is proper at every meal.

See you here the foundation truth of Christianity, the rock on which our hopes are built. It is the only hope of a sinner, and the only true joy of the Christian—the great transaction, the great substitution, the great lifting of sin from the sinner to the sinner's Surety, the punishment of the Surety instead of the sinner, the pouring out of the vials of wrath, which were due to the transgressor, upon the head of his Substitute, the grandest transaction which ever took place on earth, the most wonderful sight that even hell ever beheld, and the most stupendous marvel that heaven itself ever executed—Jesus Christ made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!

You scarcely need that I should explain the words when the sense is so plain. A spotless Savior stands in the room of guilty sinners. God lays upon the spotless Savior the sin of the guilty, so that He becomes, in the expressive language of the text, *sin*. Then He takes off from the innocent Savior His righteousness, and puts that to the account of the once-guilty sinners, so that the sinners become *righteousness*—righteousness of the highest and divinest source—*the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus*.

Of this transaction I would have you think tonight. Think of it *adoringly*, think of it *lovingly*, think of it *joyfully*.

I. When you look at the great doctrine of substitution, you especially who are concerned in it, and can see your sins laid upon Christ, I want you to LOOK AT IT WITH DEVOUT ADORATION.

Lowly and reverently *adore the justice of God*. God set His heart upon saving your souls, but He would not be unjust, even to indulge His favorite attribute of mercy. He had purposed that you should be His, He had set His love upon you, unworthy as you are, before the foundation of the world. Yet to save you, He would not tarnish His justice. He had said, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and He would not recall the word because it was not too severe, but simply a just and righteous threatening.

Sooner than He would tarnish His justice, He bound His only begotten Son to the pillar, and scourged and bruised Him. Sooner than sin should go unpunished, He put that sin upon Christ, and punished it—oh, how tremendously, and with what terrific strokes! Christ can tell you, but probably, if He did tell you, you could not understand all that God thinks about sin, for God hates it, and loathes it, and must and will punish it, and upon His Son He laid a weight tremendous, incomprehensible, till the griefs of the dying Redeemer utterly surpassed all our imagination or comprehension.

Adore, then, the justice of God, and think how you might have had to adore it, not at the foot of the cross, but in the depths of hell! O my soul, if you had had your deserts, you would have been driven from the presence of God! Instead of looking into those languid eyes which wept for you, you would

have had to look into His face whose eyes are as a flame of fire. Instead of hearing Him say, “I have blotted out your sins,” I might have heard Him say, “Depart, thou cursed one, into everlasting fire.”

Will you not pay as much reverence to the justice of God exhibited on the cross as exhibited in hell? Let your reverence be deeper. It will not be that of a slave, or even of a servant, but let it be quite as humble. Bow low, bless the justice of God, marvel at its severity, adore its unlimited holiness, join with seraphs, who surely at the foot of the cross may sing, as well as before the throne, “Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts.”

While you admire the justice, also admire *the wisdom of God*. We ought to adore God’s wisdom in everything we see in creation. The physician with his scalpel should adore the wisdom of God in the anatomical skill by which the human body is formed and fashioned. The traveler, as he passes through the wonders of nature, should adore the wisdom of God in the creation of the world, with its towering mountains and with its unknown depths. Every student of the works of God should account the universe as a temple in which the gorgeous outline does not excel the beauty and the holiness of all its fittings, for in the temple everything speaks of JEHOVAH’S glory.

But oh! at the foot of the cross, wisdom is concentrated, all its rays are concentrated there as with a burning glass. We see God there reconciling contrary attributes as they appear to us. We see God there “glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders,” and yet “forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.” He smites as though He were cruel, He forgives as though He were not just, He is as generous in passing by sin as if He were not the Judge of all the earth, He is as severe to punish sin as if He were not the tender Father who can press the prodigal to His bosom.

Here you see love and justice embrace each other in such a wondrous way that I ask you to imitate the seraphs who, now that they see what they once desired to look into, veil their faces with their wings, adoring the only wise God.

Further, beloved, when you have thus thought of His justice and of His wisdom, bow your head again in reverence as you contemplate *the grace of God*. For what reason did God give His only begotten Son to bleed instead of us? We were worms for insignificance, we were vipers for iniquity, if He saved us, were we worth the saving? We were such infamous traitors that if He doomed us to the eternal fire, we might have been terrible examples of His wrath, but heaven’s darling bleeds that earth’s traitors may not bleed.

Tell it, tell it in heaven, and publish it in all the golden streets every hour of every glorious day, that such is the grace of God, “that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

And here, while I ask you to adore, I feel inclined to close the sermon, and to bow myself in silence before the grace of God in Christ Jesus. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!” Behold it in the sweat of blood which stained Gethsemane! Behold it in the scourging which has made the name of Gabbatha a terror! Behold it in “the pains, and groans, and dying strife” of Calvary! Bow, did I say? Prostrate your spirits now! Lift up your sweetest music, but let your soul feel the deepest abasement as you see this superabounding grace of God in the person of the only begotten of the Father, making him to be sin for us who knew no sin!

When you have thus thought of His justice, His wisdom, and His grace, like a silver thread running through the whole, I want you once more to adore *His sovereignty*. What sovereignty is this, that angels who fell should have no Redeemer, but that man, insignificant man, being fallen, should find a Savior in heaven’s only begotten!

See this sovereignty, too, that this precious blood should come to some of us and not to others! Millions in this world have never heard of it. Tens of thousands, who have heard of it, have rejected it. Ay, and in this little section of the world’s population encompassed now within these walls, how many there are who have had that precious blood preached in their hearing, and presented to them with loving invitations, only to reject it and despise it!

And if you and I have felt the power of it, and can see the blood cleansing us from sin, shall we not admire that discriminating, distinguishing grace which has made us to differ? But the part of sovereignty which astonishes me most is that God should have been pleased to make "*him* to be sin for us who knew no sin," that God should be pleased to ordain salvation by Christ as our Substitute. A great many persons rail at this plan of salvation, but if God has determined it, you and I ought to accept it with delight.

"Behold," says God, "I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious." The sovereignty of God has determined that no man can be saved except by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. If any man would be clean, JEHOVAH declares that he must wash in the fountain which Jesus filled from His veins. If God should put away sin, and accept the sinner, He declares that it should only be through that sinner putting his trust in the sacrifice offered once for all by the Lord Jesus Christ upon the tree.

Admire this sovereignty, and adore it by yielding to it. Cavil not at it. Down, rebellious will! Hush, you naughty reason, that would fain ask, "Why?" and "Wherefore? Is there no other method?" Yield, my heart! "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Oh, magnificent love! A way as splendid as the end! A plan as glorious as its design!

The design to save is not more resplendent than the method by which men are saved. Justice is magnified, wisdom extolled, grace resplendent, and every attribute of God glorified. Oh, let us, at the very mention of a dying Savior, bow down and adore!

II. Not to change the topic, but to vary the line of thought, let us endeavor to LOOK LOVINGLY at Jesus Christ made sin for His people.

Every word here may help our love. That word, "*Him*" may *remind us of His person*, "He hath made *him* to be sin for us"—*Him!*—the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with His Father, *Him!*—the son of Mary, born at Bethlehem, the spotless "Son of man." "He hath made *him* to be sin." I am not going to enlarge, I only want to bring His blessed person clearly before your mind. He who trod the billows, He who healed the sick, He who had compassion upon the multitudes and fed them, He who ever lives to make intercession for us—"He hath made *him* to be sin for us." Oh, love Him, sinner, and let your heart join in the words—

"His person fixes all my love."

I do delight to have you get a hold of Him as being verily a Person. Do not think of Him as a fiction now, ay, and never do so. Do not regard Him as a mere historical personage, who walked the stage of history, and now is gone. He is very near to you now. He is still living. We oftentimes sing—

"Crown Him Lord of all."

Well, this is that selfsame glorious One, "He hath made *him* to be sin for us." Think of Him, and let your love flow out towards Him.

Would you further excite your love? *Think of His character.* He knew no sin, there was none within Him, for He had none of our sinful desires and evil propensities. "Tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," think of that, and then read, "He hath made *him* to be sin for us." Do not fritter that away by putting in the word "offering," and saying "sin-offering." The word stands in apposition—what if I say opposition?—to the word "righteousness" in the other part of the text. He made Him to be as much sin as He makes us to be righteousness, that is to say He makes Him to be sin by imputation, as He makes us to be righteousness by imputation.

On Him, who was never a sinner, who never could be a sinner, our sin was laid. Consider how His holy soul must have shrunk back from being made sin, and yet, I pray you, do not fritter away the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He bore our transgressions, and carried our sins in His own body on the tree.

There was before the bar of justice an absolute transfer made of guilt from His elect to Himself. There He was made sin for us, though He knew no sin personally, "that we might be made the

righteousness of God in him." As you think of His pure, immaculate nature, and perfect life, love Him as you see Him bearing the burden of sins not His own, for which He came to atone.

Will not your love be excited when *you think of the difficulty of this imputation?* "He hath made him to be sin." None but God could have put sin upon Christ. It is well said that there is no lifting of sin from one person to another. There is no such thing as far as we are concerned, but things which are impossible with man are possible with God.

Do you know what it means for Christ to be made sin? You do not, but you can form some guess of what it involves, for when He was made sin, God treated Him as if He had been a sinner, which He never was, and never could be. God left Him as He would have left a sinner, till He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" God smote Him as He would have smitten a sinner, till His soul was "exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death."

That which was due from His people for sin, or an equivalent to that, was literally exacted at the hands of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was made a debtor for our debts, and He paid them. You may guess what it was to be a debtor for us by the smart which it cost to discharge our liabilities. He that is a surety shall smart for it, and Jesus found that proverb true. When justice came to smite the sinner, it found Him in the sinner's place, and smote Him without relenting, laying to the full the whole weight upon Him which had otherwise crushed all mankind forever into the lowermost hell. Let us love Jesus as we think He endured all this.

Beloved in the Lord, there is one more string of your harp I would like to touch, and it is *the thought of what you now are*, which the text speaks of. You are made the righteousness of God in Christ. God sees no sin in you, believer. He has put your sin, or that which was yours, to the account of Christ, and you are innocent before Him.

Moreover, He sees you to be righteous. You are not perfectly righteous, the work of His Spirit in you is incomplete as yet, but He looks upon you, not as you are in yourselves, but as you are in Christ Jesus, and you are "accepted in the Beloved," you are, in His sight without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. What Jesus did is set to your account. He sees His Son in you, and then He loves you as He loves His Son. He has put you into union with His Son, and you are now hid with Christ in God.

I trust you will endeavor to realize this position of yourselves as made the righteousness of God in Christ, and when you do, surely you will love the Savior who has done all this for you, undeserving, helpless, dying, guilty mortals.

Oh, that the Lord Jesus would now send fire into all your souls, and make you love Him, for surely, if you have but the sense of what He has done, and how He did it, and what it cost Him to do it, and who He is that has done it, and who you were for whom He has done it, you will surely say, "Oh, for a thousand hearts that I may love You as I would, and a thousand tongues that I may praise You as I should!"

III. And now, let us VIEW THE GLORIOUS FACT OF SUBSTITUTION JOYFULLY.

And here I will commence with the observation that *till your sin as a believer is gone, and till, as a believer, Christ's righteousness is at present your glorious dress, your salvation is in no sense realized by yourselves.* It is not dependent upon your frames and feelings. Your sins are not put away through your repentance. That repentance becomes to you the token of the pardon of sin, but the true cleansing is found, not in the eyes of the penitent, but in the wounds of Jesus.

Your sins were virtually discharged upon the accursed tree. You stand this day accepted, not for anything you are, or can be, or shall be, but entirely and wholly through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. We cannot state this truth, it seems to me, too boldly. This is the very doctrine of the Reformation—justification by faith, or rather the basis doctrine upon which it rests, and I am persuaded the more plainly it is preached the better, for it is the Gospel of salvation to a lost and ruined world.

Beloved, your case is something similar to this. You are in debt, and according to the old laws, you must be cast into prison. You are brought up before the court, you cannot plead that you are not in debt, you are compelled to stand there and say, "Each one of these charges I must admit, these liabilities I

have incurred, and I have not a single penny with which to meet them.” A friend in court, wealthy and generous, pays the debt.

Now, the only reason why you go out of court clear lies in the payment made by your friend. You do not leave the court because you never incurred the debt, nay, you did incur the debt, and you must admit that you did not leave the court because you pleaded not guilty, or because you promised never to get into debt again. Not so, all that would not have answered your purpose. Your creditor would still have cast you into prison. You did not leave the court because your character is excellent, or you hope to make it so.

The only ground of your liberation from your liabilities is found in the fact that another person has discharged them for you, and that will not be affected by any act you may have committed or shall commit. You may have felt ill today, you might have labored under twenty diseases, but those diseases will not imprison you, neither will they help to set you free. Your freedom hinges upon the fact that the debt was paid for you by another.

Now, Christian, here your hope and comfort hang. This is the diamond rivet which rivets your salvation firmly. Jesus died for you, and those for whom Jesus died, in the sense in which we now use the language, are and must be saved. Unless eternal justice can punish two persons for one offense, unless eternal justice can demand payment twice for the same debt—first from the bleeding Surety, and then from those for whom the Surety stood—they must be clear for whom Jesus died. This is the Gospel which we preach.

Oh, happy they who have received it, for it is their joy to know it, sinners though they have been, guilty and ruined, and sinners though they are still, yet, since they have believed, Christ is theirs, Christ took their sins, and paid their debts, and God Himself can bring no charge against the man who is justified by Christ. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Now, Christian, I want you to come tonight, and enjoy this. Why, man, *it ought to make your soul dance for joy within you to think that sin is pardoned, and righteousness is imputed to you.* This is an unchanging fact, that Christ has saved you. If it was ever a fact, it is always a fact. If it was ever true, it is always true, and always alike true, as true now that you are depressed, as yesterday when you were rejoicing. Jesus’ blood does not change like your poor heart. It does not go up and down in value, like the markets, and fluctuate like your faith.

If you are saved, you are saved. If you are resting in the blood, you are as safe today as you were yesterday, and you are as safe forever. Remember that this is true of all the saints alike. It is true to great saints, but equally so to little ones. They all stand under this crimson canopy, and are alike protected by its blessed shadow from the beams of divine justice.

It is true to you *now*. O beloved, try to live up to it! Say, “Away, my doubts, away, my fears, I trust a Savior slain, and I am saved! Away, my questionings, away, my carnal reasonings! I hate my sins, but I cannot doubt my Savior. It is true I have not lived as a Christian should live, but I will still cast myself into His arms.”

It is not faith to trust God as a saint when you feel you are a saint. Faith is to trust Christ as a sinner, while you are conscious that you are a sinner. To come to Jesus, and to think yourselves pure, is a sorry coming to Him, but to come with all your impurity, this is true coming.

I say to you, sinner, I say to you, saint, I say to you all this one thing and I have done. When your souls are at the blackest, seek for nothing but the blood. When your souls are at the darkest, seek no light anywhere but in the cross. Do not cling to preparations, to humblings, to repentings. All these things are good in their way, but they cannot be a balsam to a wounded conscience. Christ and Christ crucified is what you want. Do not look within, look without.

I say, when you repent, it is a base repentance that will not let you trust Christ, for while repentance should have one eye on sin, it should have the other upon the cross. While repentance should make you

lie low, yet it is not repentance, but unbelief, that makes you doubt the power of Christ to save you. Christ never came to save the righteous, He came to save sinners.

I would have you magnify the grace of God by believing that when your sin stares you most in the face, when you are most conscious of it, and it seems to be worse than ever, Christ is the same to you and for you, your glorious Surety and your blessed satisfaction. Still believe, and still trust, and do not let go your confidence that Christ is able to save sinners, even the chief, and will save you without help from your doings or your feelings.

His own right arm will get Himself the victory, and having trodden the winepress of divine wrath alone, He will save you solely by the merit of His life and of His death. Oh, for grace to rest in the Savior, and to know the truth of this text, “He hath to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ROMANS 5:1-10, 2 CORINTHIANS 4 and 5

Romans Chapter 5. Verses 1-3. *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. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also:*

Faith has such wondrous power that it makes us rejoice even in trial, it helps Christians to be glad even in the midst of sorrow.

3. Knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

The more trial you have, the more spiritual education you receive. You cannot learn the virtue of patience without tribulation, any more than a man can learn to be a sailor if he stops on shore, “Tribulation worketh patience;”

4. And patience, experience;

If you bear the trial patiently, it leaves the mark of its graving tool upon your spirit, and you thus become fashioned into an experienced Christian.

4. And experience, hope:

What God has once done, He may do again, and as He has shown us so much favor we may reasonably hope that He will show us more, and that He who has given us grace will give us glory.

5. And hope maketh not ashamed;

Our hope brings us courage, no longer are we trembling and diffident, but we feel like children do towards a loving father, we are happily, restfully at home with our God. “Hope maketh not ashamed;”

5. Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. [See sermons #829, The Perfuming of the Heart, and #1904, The Personal Pentecost and the Glorious Hope].

When Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed the feet of Jesus with the very costly ointment of spikenard, “the house was filled with the odor” of it, and in a similar fashion the love of God perfumes every part of our nature.

6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. [See sermons #1191, For Whom did Christ Die? and #1345, For Whom is the Gospel Meant?].

What a wonderful statement! “Christ died for the ungodly.” Yet it was no slip of the pen, for the apostle takes up his own expression, and preaches the following little sermon upon it—

7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:

If a man is known to be sternly just, like Aristides, nobody would care enough for him to die for him.

7. Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

For a benevolent man, a true philanthropist, a lover of his race, there are some who might say that they would die for *him*. Yet the apostle only says, “Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.” It is not very likely, but it is just possible.

8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. [See sermon #104, Love’s Commendation].

Certainly we were not “good” men, we were not even “just” men, but we are included in this black description “sinners,” and “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” He died for us as sinners, He did not come to save saints, but to save sinners, and it was for sinners that He died.

9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

This is a fine piece of argument, and strictly logical. If, when we were sinners, Christ died for us, will He let us be condemned now that He has washed us in His precious blood? Is it possible that, after dying for us, He will let us fall from grace, and perish after all? That will never be. Notice the same kind of argument again—

10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. [See sermon #2587, “Much More”].

There is a threefold argument here. If Christ died for us when we were His enemies, will He not save us now that we are His friends? If He died to reconcile us to God, will He not completely save us now that this great work has been accomplished? And as we were reconciled to God by Christ’s death, shall we not much more be saved by His life? There are three arguments, and each one is sound and conclusive. The believer in Jesus must be eternally saved. If Christ died for sinners, what will He not do for believers, who are no longer enemies, but are reconciled unto God by the death of His Son?

2 Corinthians Chapter 4. Verse 1. Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

Stern was the labor of the apostles, but they felt that their work was so all-important, so divine, that they must not grow weary of it, though they were, doubtless, often weary in it.

2. But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commanding ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

It is no part of the business of Christ’s ministers to modify the truth which He has entrusted to them, or to put new meanings into it which God never meant, draining away the very life-blood of the Gospel, and leaving it dead and useless, but it is both our duty and our privilege to state it just as we find it, and to proclaim it in as plain a language as possible so that everybody may understand what the teaching of God really is.

3. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: [See sermon #1663, The True Gospel No Hidden Gospel].

It was not hidden under fine language and oratorical flourishes on the part of the apostles, there was a far more terrible barrier in the way of its entrance into the hearts of some who heard it.

4-7. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,—

There is nothing remarkable in us, we are in ourselves poor, frail, fragile creatures, like earthen vessels of no particular value, yet this we do not regret, for there is a good reason for it—

7-10. That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

He who wishes for an easy time of it must not become a minister of the gospel. If he is determined to preach it faithfully, fully, simply, straight from his heart, he will often find himself in such circumstances as the apostle describes in these verses.

11. *For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.*

The apostles were always to the front where the shots were flying the fastest, and with the deadliest aim, there they stood, the officers of the army of Christ, and Paul rejoiced that, for one, he was able thus to make himself to be nothing that Christ might be the great All in all.

12. *So then death worketh in us, but life in you.*

So long as Paul could be the means of the salvation of the souls of men, he did not mind what became of himself, though it should be death to him, he would count it as nothing so long as it should bring life to them.

13-14. *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.*

Note the assurance of apostolic preaching and writing. There is no “if” here, no hesitation, no doubt. The apostles knew what they believed, and knew why they believed it, and they spoke with the conviction, nobody was led into doubt by their hesitancy.

15-16. *For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not;*

Paul had said before that they did not faint, and now he reiterates it that though his ministry was enough to bear him down, and lay him prostrate in the dust, yet he did not faint.

16-18. *But though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

2 Corinthians Chapter 5. Verse 1. *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [See sermon #1719, The Tent Dissolved and the Mansion Entered].

Is not this grand courage on the part of the apostle? With all the world against him, and himself “alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake,” he looks at the new body, the new house that God is making for him, and he reckons that, to shuffle off this mortal coil will be no loss to him, since when he loses the tent in which he lives here, he will go to “a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

2-4. *For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed,*—

We are not impatient to enter the disembodied state,—

4-6. *But clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident,*—

Note the ground of the apostle’s confidence. He is quite sure that, inasmuch as Christ rose from the dead, so all His followers must, and though they die in the Lord’s service, yet shall they not be losers thereby, but they shall the more speedily ascend to their reward. “We are always confident,”—

6-9. *Knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.* [See sermons #413, To Die or Not to Die? and #1303, The Believer in the Body and Out of the Body].

To be well-pleasing to God everywhere, in everything that we do, should be the one aim of a Christian, whether he is in the body or out of the body.

10-13. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves,—*

And men said that these apostles had gone out of their minds. Festus said to Paul, “Thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad,” so Paul says, “Whether we are beside ourselves,—

13. *It is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.*

“In either case, we have but one objective, and that is, to glorify God through your salvation.”

14-15. *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.*

The life of the saved man must never be lived for himself, he is false to his profession if it is so. He must henceforth live as earnestly for God as, aforetime in his unregeneracy, he lived for himself, for he now has a new life which is not his own, to do with it as he pleases, but it belongs entirely to Him who purchased it with His own most precious blood.

16. *Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.*

We do not see Christ with our natural eyes, we do not hear His voice with our natural ears, He is to us now a spiritual personage, who communicates with our spirits through His own ever-blessed Spirit.

17. *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.* [See sermons #881, The Believer a New Creature, and #1328, Christ the Maker of All Things New].

There could not be a greater change than that which is wrought by regeneration, it is a new creation, the passing away of the old, and the making of all things new.

18-21. *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

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