

DEATH FOR SIN AND DEATH TO SIN

NO. 1143

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 16, 1873,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we,
being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness:
by whose stripes you were healed.”*
1 Peter 2:24.

PETER, in this chapter, exhorted Christians to holiness and dwelt upon that branch of holiness which consists in the patient endurance of wrong. He could find no better argument with which to plead with the saints than the life and example of their Lord, and, indeed, who could find a better? Since the Lord Jesus is all our salvation, He is also all our desire. And to be like He is, is the highest object of our ambition. If, therefore, we find Him patient under wrong, it is to us a conclusive argument that we should be patient, too. I admire the Apostle Peter, because in using so good an argument he selected from the life of his Lord that particular portion of it which must have been most vividly written upon his own soul.

Judge you, my Brothers and Sisters, if I am not correct in this. Which hour do you think, of the sufferings of the Lord, from Gethsemane to Golgotha, would be most deeply engraved upon the memory of Peter? Surely it would be that space of time in which He was mocked and buffeted in the hall of the High Priest, when Peter sat and warmed his hands at the fire—when he saw his Lord abused and he was afraid to admit that he was His disciple, and by-and-by became so terrified that, with profane language, he declared “I know not the Man.”

So long as life lingered, the Apostle would remember the meek and quiet bearing of his suffering Lord. He alluded to it in the 23rd verse, “When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously.” Many a tear had Peter to brush out of his eyes as he wrote that verse. He remembered having seen the Lord with his own eyes and so he mentioned, as an argument with others, that which was the most forcible upon his own mind—in the hope that whenever they were misjudged, or falsely accused—they might remember their Lord, and like He, be dumb as a sheep before her shearers, and silent as a lamb led to the slaughter.

Lest, however, we should think that the patience of our Lord was intended to be our example and nothing more, the Apostle goes on to speak expressly of the expiatory nature of the sufferings alluded to. He has held up the Savior in all His woes as our *example*, but knowing the evil tendency of skeptical minds, by any means, to becloud the Cross, he now puts aside the example, for a moment, and speaks of the Redeemer as the great Sacrifice for sin. The sacred writers are always very clear and distinct upon this Truth of God and so must we be. There is no preaching the Gospel if the Atonement is left out. No matter how well we speak of Jesus as a *pattern*, we have done nothing unless we point Him out as the Substitute and Sin-Bearer. We must, in fact, continually imitate the Apostle and speak plainly of Him, “Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”

It is to Christ, then, this morning, the Sin-Bearer, that I am about to direct your attention. It may not be many times longer that I may have the opportunity to preach the Gospel, for bodily pain reminds me of my mortality. How soon are the hale and the strong, as well as the sickly, carried off! So many, during the last few days, whom we knew, have been borne from among us to the silent tomb! We are reminded how feeble our life is—how short our time for service. Let us, then, Brothers and Sisters, deal always with the best things and attend to the most necessary works while yet our little oil suffices to feed the lamp of life.

Rising newly from the sick bed, I have felt that if any theme in the Scriptures has an importance far above all the rest, it is the subject of the atoning blood. And I have resolved to repeat that old, old story again and again. Though I may be guilty of needless repetition, I shall keep on sounding this silver trumpet, or ringing this golden bell again, and again, and again! And so, when I am dead and gone the way of all flesh, you will, perhaps, say, “His fault was that he dwelt too

much on his favorite subject, the Substitution of Christ.” Ah, may I have no other fault to account for, for that shall be accounted to be one of my highest virtues!

I would know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified! At the same time, we shall try to make our subject practical, because the second half of our text suggests the way by which the great Sacrifice for sin leads us to make a slaughter of sin and tells us that when Christ puts sin away *for* us, *we* are moved to put away sin *from* us. Two things this morning, then—first, Christ’s death for sin. Secondly, our death to sin.

I. First, then, we will consider OUR LORD’S DEATH FOR SIN. May the Holy Spirit help us to behold that wondrous sight of the Redeemer dying in our place, a Sacrifice for our sins. And here, before we approach to behold the great sight, let us take our shoes from off our feet and bow down in lowest reverence of repenting grief, for, remember, if Jesus had not died for sins, we must have died, and died eternally, too. The pangs of the Savior on the Cross surpassed all estimate. But, such as they were, they would have tormented us if they had not put Him to anguish.

That cup which made Him sweat in the garden was bitter beyond imagination, but to your lips and to mine it must have been placed and unable as we would have been to drain it dry, we would have continued to drink thereof forever and forever! “In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die” is the great sentence against sin and for a soul to die is a terrible doom, indeed. Our great father, Adam, felt the first drops of the dreadful shower of death in the moment that he ate of the forbidden fruit. He died to God, holiness, virtue and true happiness in that same hour—and stood aghast before his God—before that very God whom at other times he had met with rapture, and adored with delight.

We, his children, share in his spiritual death in our depraved natures. And we would soon have passed away from the present death of this time state to that corruption which naturally follows upon death in the world to come when restraining and preserving influences are removed and the worm begins its work—“where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched.” Yes, were it not for Him “who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree,” we should not have been here to speak to one another, or look each other in the face.

Or if the forbearance of God had allowed us a brief existence on earth, I might have stood here compelled to tell you that there remained nothing for any of us but to die and to endure the wrath of God in body and soul, world without end! Oh, the bitterness of our souls had we been in such a state! With my hands upon my loins this morning, in anguish of spirit, I might have been compelled to utter more woes than ever fell from the lips of Jeremiah, from whom all joy was gone, while I declared to you, and to your children, that there was no hope here or hereafter—that we had offended God and He had given us over to utter destruction! Blessed be His name, we have another message to deliver! We may rather imitate Isaiah, today, than Jeremiah, and tell of redeeming Grace and dying love instead of having to sound the dreadful knell of every hope and to proclaim the birth of legions of sorrows.

With this fact upon our minds, let us come lovingly to the blessed place of Calvary, once cursed on our account. Jesus died for me, that is the uppermost feeling of each one. There was a Substitution for our sins and by that Substitution Believers are saved. There was a Substitution! “He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” A Substitute intervened—the sins which would have crushed us were borne by Another—actually and literally borne by Another! “He His own self bore our sins.” The sentence means that He bore the *punishment* which was due to our sins—we are sure it means that.

But surely it means more! I cannot divest myself of the conviction that it means more, for it does not say, “He bore the punishment of our sins,” which would be the most natural expression if that were the meaning intended, but, “He bore our sins.” In that wonderful Gospel chapter of Isaiah we are told, “The Lord has made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all.” And again, “He bore the sin of many.” It does seem as if the bearing of the punishment, great as that is, would not exhaust the meaning of such phrases. The expression is so compact, so concise, so definite—it must mean what it says.

At any rate, I am content to believe that God knows how to speak and to express His own meaning and that the less we twist the Scriptures, or get away from the simple sense which they would suggest to a child, the more likely we are to understand them. “He His own self bore our sins.” In some wondrous sense He bore the sin, as well as the punishment. I know not how. This I know—He was never a sinner, for, “in Him was no sin.” This I know—He never was defiled. It could not be—reject the blasphemy with indignation! He, the Son of God, the Immaculate Man, stained with sin? Never! We abhor the thought! And yet, “He bore our sins” is still a Truth of God and we must not flinch from it.

Does it not mean that He was a representative Person? He was the Second Adam and therefore He stood for His people. And therefore the Lord dealt with Him as if the sins of all He represented had been His own sins. He was the Shepherd and the Lord bade Him give an account for the flock—and all the wanderings of all the sheep and all their transgressions. Divine Justice visited upon the Shepherd's head, because He was, by office and by Nature, the Representative of all those for whom He died, and so could justly be called to account for all that they had done. Sin was laid upon the Lord Jesus, for He was forsaken of His God.

The Lord did not merely chasten Him and scourge Him, and put Him to grief by the use of agencies which were suitable for such a purpose in an innocent Person. He went further and hid His face from Him, which was a sorrow fitting only for One upon whom sin was laid. Why should God forsake Him, unless He had first laid sin upon Him? When Jesus asked, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" there was no answer to that inquiry except this one, (at least I cannot imagine another), "I have laid sin upon You, and therefore I must forsake You." If He were merely suffering *for* others in the sense of doing others good by His sufferings, the Father might surely have looked upon Him with complacency, and even, if possible, with increased delight and have encouraged Him in the benevolent disinterestedness which made Him stoop to such sufferings.

But inasmuch as He was not only enduring for others, but enduring *in the place* of others and bearing their sins, it became necessary that, despite the love of the Father and the admiration which glowed in His bosom towards His dear Son who was, then, above all things magnifying the Nature of God, the Father, regarding Him as bearing sin—I say the Father must hide His face from Him, and smite Him with the blows of a cruel one till He cried out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani." Yes, there was a Substitution, and that Substitution went mysteriously far! It was not merely a transfer of punishment from one to Another, but there was a transfer of *sin* in some deep sense, or else the Scripture speaks not what it means—"He bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

Now, I want you to pause a minute, again, having noted the fact of Substitution, to consider the Substitute. "He His own self bore our sins." And who was "He"? Beloved, I want you to feel a personal love to our dear Lord and Master. I want your souls, at this moment, to realize the actual Character of His existence and His true Personality. He is not here, this morning, in Person, to show Himself to you, else might I very well withhold my words, for His Presence would have an infinitely superior power over you. But remember that He lives and is as real as you are—and at this moment bears in His body the scars of His sufferings for you. Think, then, who He was, and let your spirits kiss His feet in humble contrite love.

He who bore our sins in His own body on the tree was God over all, blessed forever, of whom and through whom and by whom are all things! Without whom was not anything made that was made. Less than God could not have borne your sins so as to put them away. But the infinitely glorious Son of God did actually stoop to become a Sin-Bearer! I wonder how I can talk of it as I do. It is a Truth of God scarcely to be declared in words. It needs flame and blood and tears with which to tell this story of an offended God—the Heaven-Maker and the Earth-Creator—stooping from His Glory that He might save the reptiles which had dared to insult His honor and to rebel against His Glory! And, becoming one of them, to suffer for them, that without violation of His Law He might have pity upon the offending things—things so inconsiderable that if He had stamped them all out, as men burn a nest of wasps, there had been no loss to the universe!

But He had pity on them and became one of them, and bore their sins. Oh, love Him! Adore Him! Let your souls climb up to the right hand of the Majesty above, this morning, and there bow down in lowest reverence and adoring affection, that He, the God over all, whom you had offended, should, His own self, bear our sins! Though God over all, He became a Man like unto ourselves! A body was prepared for Him and that body, mark you, not prepared, alone, and made *like* man but *of* man. No, He was not otherwise fashioned than ourselves. He came into the world as we come—born of a woman, a Child of a mother—to hang upon a woman's breast! Not merely *like* man, but *Man*, born in the pedigree of manhood, and so bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, yet without a taint of sin.

And He, in that double Nature but united Person, was Jesus, Son of God and Son of the Virgin. He it was who "bore our sins in His own body on the tree." Here we call to your remembrance the fact stated in the text so positively—that the Substitution of Christ was carried out by Him, Personally—not by proxy. "He His own self bore our sins in His own body." The priest of old brought a substitution, but it was a lamb. He struck the knife and the warm blood flowed down it. But our Lord Jesus Christ had no substitute for Himself! He, "His own self bore our sins in His own body."

O Priest of God! The pangs are to be Your own pangs! The knife must reach Your own heart! No lamb for You, You are, Yourself, the Lamb! The blood which streams at Your feet must be Your own blood. There must be wounds, but they must be wounds in Your own flesh. Oh, turn your loving eyes to your Lord, and remember that everything He did for you He did Himself! You sometimes say that another voice may speak for Jesus—you are often willing to serve God through the energy of another—and I will not chide you. But oh, remember His personal sacrifice for you! Remember the griefs which Jesus bore put His own soul into a tempest of grief—and made His own heart to boil like a cauldron within Him. The heart which was broken for our sins was His own heart! And the life given up was His own life! Not by another, though he were an angel, could Christ have redeemed mankind, but He, “His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”

Notice, also, that the Substitution of Christ is described in our text in a way which suggests consciousness, willingness and great pain. “He His own self bore our sins.” They were upon Him. They pressed Him. The Greek word for “bore” suggests the idea of a great weight, “He bore our sins”—stooped under them, as it were—they were a load to Him. There are men in the world who may be bearing in their bodies the result of the sin of their parents, but they are not aware of it. And even if they were, they are voluntary bearers, just the same. But our Lord assumed our sins as one takes a weight upon his shoulders—and when the sins were there He knew that He was carrying our burdens—and still consented to do so.

There was not a moment in Christ’s life in which the pressure of our sin was unfelt. Though the wrath of God, on account of sin, was more especially felt by Him at Gethsemane, and up to the tree, yet at all times He was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. What a weight was this! The solid earth cannot bear the weight of sin! It groans and travails in pain together, even now, like a creaking chariot whose axles are unable to bear up under the stupendous weight. Yet on Jesus was the burden laid—a far weightier one than the fabled Atlas bore—and He sustained it *to* the tree. The text, in our English version, might seem to teach that our Lord bore our sins only *on* the tree—and that erroneous dogma has been drawn from it.

No inference could have been more feebly sustained, for the original does not necessarily set forth anything of the kind. The word translated “on” is precisely the same word which in the next verse is translated “to,” or, “unto”—“We are now returned ‘unto’ ”—and might have been just as correctly read, “unto,” in this case. I have not the slightest doubt that the meaning of the text is, “He His own self bore our sins in His own body *to* the tree,” so that when He reached the tree He left our sins there, condemned and crucified forever and ever. Instead of the doctrine being deduced that Christ was a Substitute only *on* the tree, the fact is He always was a Substitute up to the tree, and then and there that Substitution culminated in His dying as a Sin-Offering. Let us, this morning, know that consciously, from the time He was a babe in Bethlehem till the moment when He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, “He His own self bore our sins in His own body” *to* the tree.

And, Brothers and Sisters, He bore those sins manifestly. I think that is the mind of the Spirit—when He says, “in His own body,” He means to give vividness to the thought. We are so constituted that we do not think so forcibly of mental and spiritual things as we do of *bodily* things. But our Lord bore our sins “in His own body.” If you had looked at Him, had you been instructed by the Spirit, you would have seen in His body that He was a Sin-Bearer. Listen to this verse—“As many were astonished at you, so His visage was more marked than that of any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” Remember another text—“Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God.”

Think of that! Those who looked into the Savior’s face thought Him “smitten of God.” First they thought Him stricken or demented, like one who has passed through such an awful sorrow that the mind has quailed beneath it. And then they looked at Him as smitten of God! Even the Jews judged Him to be near to 50 when He was scarcely 30 years of age, so worn and haggard did He look, that “Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He smiled and He cheered others. He wore a cheerful countenance among the sons of men that He might not make those who saw Him, sorrowful, and deep down in His heart there glowed a secret fire—a wondrous joy that He was redeeming His own chosen—but still imponderable, incomprehensible infinite griefs perpetually rolled over Him, so that all His lifetime He might have said, “All Your waves and Your billows have gone over Me.”

“Who His own self bore our sins in His own body,” so that His visage seemed to tell of it. And when He came to the tree, oh, how His body bore our sins, then, in communion with His sinless soul! I do not care who it is that speaks against

descriptions of the Crucifixion, or who would have us keep in the background the bodily sufferings of Jesus—I am persuaded that the highest, most intense and forceful piety that ever existed among men has arisen out of contemplations of the agony of Gethsemane and the death throes of Calvary.

The Romish Church, with all her errors, and they are countless, has always had in her midst a band of loving, adoring spirits who have entered into the Redeemer's passion and whose meat and drink have been the flesh and blood of Christ in their silent contemplations. And if Protestant Christians ever fall into the idea that we must not think too much of the blood and wounds of Jesus, they will lose the richest spiritual sustenance and we shall cease to have eminent saints among us. I shall not be ashamed at any time to talk to you of the bodily griefs of Jesus, when I remember that Peter, or rather the Holy Spirit by Peter, puts it so in the text—"Who His own self bore our sins in His own body to the tree."

There is the Cross and there is the body—there are the visible things, as well as the spiritual and the unseen. We will not forget the second, but we will, by no means ever despise the first! We will speak lovingly and tenderly of the Body and of the bodily sufferings of the Lord. Oh, see, then, the Lord of Life and Glory taken outside the city gate of old Jerusalem and there, amidst a ribald throng, treated as a common criminal! It was the Tyburn, the Old Bailey of the city, where felons were usually executed—and they took our Master, malefactors being with Him, and treated Him as a felon! They nailed His hands! Look! The cruel iron is driven through His feet!

They lift Him up, a spectacle of shame! They have stripped Him! They have gambled over the few garments which He had—and there He hangs. They gather round Him and they mock Him, as if the Cross were a pillory as well as a gallows! They insult Him with studied sarcasm and He has no reply to make except to bless them with His prayers and to appeal to His God! All His friends have fled and when they timidly return they can only share His sorrow, but they cannot alleviate it. He must die—die in extreme pain of body—and die with unknown inward agonies, the veil of which we will not attempt to lift. "He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." Blessed are You, O Savior, and blessed are the eyes that have seen You and have looked to You by faith.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, let it be remembered, never ceased to bear our sins till He had taken them right up to the tree. And when He had taken them to the tree, there He hung them forever as a spectacle of eternal scorn. He, Himself, dying while He made our sins die. Himself crucified while He crucified our sins once and for all. O you who use a cross as an ornament, why do you do it? It is a gallows whereon our sins were hung up in shame! Will you wear a gallows around your neck? Will you make an adornment of that which was your Master's death! I had as soon wear about my neck a butcher's knife which had killed my mother, as a cross on which my Savior was murdered!

It looks as if you had sided with His murderers and gloried in the instrument of His torture! It was a shameful thing to die the death of the cross—and the Lord knew it to be so—and yet He "His own self bore our sins in His own body to the tree." Mark the tree of the Cross for a moment with much attention. It was the place of pain. No death could be more full of agony than that of crucifixion. When the headsman's axe falls on the neck the head is severed and the pain is over—even to stand burning at the stake is a shorter, if at the time a sharper, way to Heaven. But the pains of crucifixion may last for days!

Cases have been known in which men have actually lived after a three days' nailing to a cross. The pain, itself, is inconceivably great. The most tender parts of the hands and feet, where they are most liable to bring on lockjaw, being torn by the nails—and the strain of the body continued tearing at the wounds. Yet our Savior bore that pain. Ah, it is not till you suffer pain that you begin to know the love of Christ to the fullest. You may thank Him, you sons of sorrow and daughters of suffering, for all your pangs, for now you have fellowship with Him. Blessed be Your love, O Jesus, that You could bear pain and death for us!

But the cross was not the place of pain merely, it was the place of scorn. To be fastened to the cross! Why they would not put the meanest Roman there though he committed murder—it was a death for slaves and menials. When scorn mingles with pain you know what a compound of grief it makes. To be laughed at when you suffer is to suffer seven-fold. But more, it was the place of the *curse*, for, "cursed is everyone that hangs on the tree," and the Word of God has told us, "He was made a curse for us." Last of all, it was the place of death, for Jesus must not merely bleed, but bleed to death. He must not only suffer, but suffer till life, itself, was gone. O dying Savior, Your love to me was wonderful, for death, itself, could not turn it aside, and therefore blessed, forever blessed, be Your name!

Before we leave the Cross, let the Believer sit down and see on the Cross his sins hanging up as dead. Christ carried them up to the Cross and slew them. The Law comes to me and says, "I arrest you for sin," but I reply, "I have no sin. What would you do with my sins if I had any?" "I would put them to a shameful death." "Lo, they are yonder, executed upon the accursed tree by Jesus Christ." Look, then, at your sins hanged up on the gallows—abhor and loathe them—but rejoice that, loathsome as they are, they are dead! The Lord put them all to death and put sin away forever by His death upon the tree. The death of Jesus is the death of our sins.

I fear I am addressing some who never knew what it was to have sin pardoned. Dear Hearer, all your hope of pardon lies in what I have been telling you this morning. You cannot make recompense to God for your sin either by repentance or by future reformation. Your only hope is to look to Jesus Christ, who bore the sins of His people in His own body on the tree. And if you will come and put your trust in Jesus, your sin shall be put away from you and you shall be accepted. Oh, I pray that at this hour you may be enabled to believe in Jesus and find peace through the Cross, and to Him shall be all the Glory!

II. And, now I hope I shall not strain your attention while I bid you consider the second part of the text—OUR DEATH TO SIN. "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed." Now, observe right well that we are dead to the condemning power of sin. No sin can condemn a Believer in Jesus Christ. For what reason? Because Christ has suffered what we ought to have suffered on account of sin—He has rendered a full recompense to Divine Justice.

You bring me a large file full of bills and you say to me, "Are not these bills against you?" I answer, "No doubt they are all correct in every item, and they might take me many a month to examine." You ask me, "Can you pay them?" "No, and I do not need to try." "But do they not trouble you?" "No. I can make a pillow of them if that is all, and sleep, notwithstanding their number and greatness." You are wonder-struck to think that I should have such a mass of bills and take the matter so coolly. I ask you to take off these bills from the file one by one, and as you do so you see that they are all paid for—there is a red mark at the bottom of every one. Who troubles himself about a bill when it is paid?

"But did you pay those debts?" "No, not I. I have not paid a penny." "Did you not pay part of them?" "Not I. I never contributed a rusty farthing towards them." "Did you not offer a composition?" "No, not a farthing in the pound." "Yet you are perfectly easy?" "Yes, because He who bore my sins in His own body on the tree, took all my debts and paid them for me, and now I am dead to those debts—they have no power over me. I am dead to my sins. Christ suffered instead of me. I have nothing to do with them. They are gone as much as if they had never been committed—

*"Now freed from sin, I walk at large;
My Savior's blood's my full discharge."*

From now on I have nothing to do but to live as a righteous man, accepted in the Beloved—to live by His righteousness and rejoice in it—blessing and magnifying His holy name!

Beloved, hear the text again! As many of you as have looked to Jesus Christ bearing your sins in His own body on the tree, you are dead to sin as to its reigning power! Dead, first, because we have seen its detestable nature. The sin which was so base that it required the Son of God, Himself, to die before it could be pardoned, is too awful and desperate an evil for us to dally with any more. It had its charms, but now we have perceived its hypocrisies. The false Prophet Mokka, who wore the silver veil upon his brow, deceived many, for he said that should that veil be lifted, the light which would gleam from under it would strike men blind, the glory was so great.

But when one had once perceived that the man was leprous and that on his brow, instead of brightness, there were the white scales of a leper, nobody would become his disciple. And so, O Sin, at the Cross I see your silver veil removed and I mark the desperate leprosy that is on you! I am dead to you! Begone, you foul blood-stained traitor! I cannot harbor you in my heart. The death of Christ, then, is, to us, the death of sin. We are dead to sin, again, because another passion has absorbed all the forces of our life. Have you ever seen men dead to other things because some one passion has eaten them up? Look at the miser—ask him why he does not eat a full meal. He is dead to appetite. Tempt him with rich wines. Bring before him the dainties of the season.

They will cost him money and he wants them not. He tells you he has no taste nor love for such things. But you tell him that there is sweet music to be heard and there are pleasures to be enjoyed. Yes, but there must be money doled out for them and therefore he has no ear and no eye. His own dear gold is everything! He is dead to all else. But there is rent

due from a poor widow with many children and he will pounce upon her and turn her out upon the cold stones of the street. Tell him of the widow and her tears, of the orphans and their woes—what does he care? He asks you whether you ever had any house property and assures you that if you had, you would soon have as hard a heart as he has. But has the man no heart at all? No, Sir, he has no *life* except that which pulsates to the chink of his money bags. The zeal of his gold has eaten him up!

Now, it is just so with us as to Christ. We have no eyes or ears for anything but for our dear Lord who bled and died, and who is gone up into His Glory. Now sin may charm, but we have the adder's ear. Sin may put on all its allurements, but we are blind as bats to its beauty and wish to be. We are *dead* to sin—so says the text. Another passion has sucked up our life—and our life for sin is all dried up. And yet again, sin appears to us now to be too mean and trivial a thing for us to care about. Picture Paul going along the Appian way towards Rome. He is met by some of the Christians far away at Puteoli, and afterwards by others at the Three Taverns.

Can you imagine what was their conversation as Paul walked chained along the highway? Why, they would commune concerning *Jesus* and the *Resurrection* and the *Spirit*—and saints converted, and souls in Heaven! I can conceive that the soldiers and others who would come up with them along the Roman road, stopping at the taverns, and so on, would have many things to talk of. One of them would say, “There will be a grand fight at the amphitheatre next week.” And another would say, “Oh, but over at such a theater there is a splendid show—a hundred beasts are to be slain in a single night, and the famous German gladiator is to exhibit his prowess tomorrow evening.”

And others would say, “Who is to be commander in Spain next year?” “Who is appointed over the Praetorian Guard?” And the babble would be about a thousand things—but the Apostle would be supremely indifferent to it all. Not a topic that any one of those soldiers could bring before him, or any one of the people around him, could interest him. He was dead to the things to which they were alive and alive to the things to which they were dead. So is the Christian! The Cross has killed him and the Cross has quickened him! We are dead to sin that we should live unto righteousness—and now our very power to enjoy sin, if, indeed, we are resting in Christ, is gone from us!

We have lost, now, by God's Grace, the faculty which once was gratified with these things. They tell us we deny ourselves many pleasures. Oh, Sirs, there is a sense in which a Christian lives a self-denying life, but there is another sense in which he practices no self-denial at all, for he only denies himself what he does not need and what he would not have if he could! If you could force it upon him it would be misery to him, his views and tastes are now so changed. Have you ever looked at a green field and marked the sparkling dew drops, and thought how bright they are? Did you ever then turn your eyes on the sun and look at him and try to stare him out of countenance?

If you have, I know what has happened, for when you looked down upon the landscape again, you could not see it—you seemed to have lost your eyes—they had been put out by the brightness on which you gazed. So you may look on the world of sin and see some beauty in it till you look at HIM—and then the brightness of His Glory puts out your eyes! The world is dark and black, after that, and you wish it to be so. Let these eyes be forever sightless as the eyes of night, and let these ears be forever deaf as silence, rather than *sin* should have a charm for me, or anything should take up my spirit save the Lord of Love who bled Himself to death that He might redeem me unto Himself! This is the royal road to sanctification! The death of Christ becomes the death of sin. We see Him bleed for us and then we put our sin to death.

And it seems to me, Brothers and Sisters, and listen to it, as if the last sentence of our text told us this—“By His stripes you were healed.” It is as good as if the Spirit said, “*There* is the recipe for sanctification. If you want to know how to be dead to sin and alive unto righteousness, there it is—His stripes will heal you.” The welts, the blue marks of His scourging—these will take out the lines of sin. The wounds, the sweat, the death throes of the Savior—these will cure you of sin's disease. You go to a physician and ask him to heal you. He gives you what we commonly call a recipe. What does “recipe” mean? *Take*. Ah, *there* is the cure for sin! *We* think that the cure for sin is to *give* something out from ourselves and to *do* some good thing. But in truth the cure for sin is, “Take.”

Take what? Take your dear Lord's wounds and trust them! Take His griefs and rest in them! Take His death and believe in it! Take Himself and love Him! And by His stripes you are healed! Sanctification is by faith in Jesus Christ! We overcome through the blood of the Lamb. And oh, as the topmost stone is stained with the blood, so must the foundation be. And I say, in parting, to every man and woman to whom I have spoken—as you and I shall meet at the Great White

Throne at last, in the general assembly which shall be the last meeting of the sons of men, and the last parting—if you would be found at the *right hand* of God, believe the message I have brought you, for it is the very Truth of God!

Do not only hear it, but act upon it, and before you leave this house I do pray that the Spirit of God may show you what it is to believe in Him, alone, “who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” And if you do, though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall be as wool. Though you have been the most atrocious offender existing on the face of the earth, you shall be clean every whit from every sin! You may have come here as black as Hell, but you shall go out pure as the white-robed hosts in Heaven, if you will but believe in Jesus. This is the washing in the fountain, the Fountain which alone can make us clean.

God help us to wash immediately, lest the time for washing be past and the time for judgment be today. God bless you, for His name’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Peter 2.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.