

JESUS THE WAY**NO. 2938****A SERMON****PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 1905.****DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,****AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,****IN THE YEAR 1862.***“Jesus said unto him, I am the way.”**John 14:6.*

IT is coming on dark, and we are lost among the mountains. There is an awful precipice there, a quarter of a mile straight down. There is a bog over yonder, and if a man once gets into it, he will never get out again. There is a forest yonder, and if one should be lost in its tangled paths, he will certainly not find his way out till the rising of the sun. What do we need just now? Why, we need someone who will tell us the way. Our friend the philosopher, with whom we talked half-an-hour ago, was very valuable to us, then, and gave us a great deal of information; but, as he does not happen to know the way, we would sooner have the poorest peasant lad that feeds the sheep upon the hills for a companion than that man. The classic scholar, who has been repeating to us some admirable lines from Horace, and delighting us with an admirable quotation from Virgil, did very well indeed for us while we could see our path, and had hope of reaching our home by nightfall; but now the poorest lass with uncombed hair, who can just point the way to the cottage where we may rest tonight, will be of more value to us. What we need is to know the way.

This is just the case, dear friends, with poor fallen humanity. The need of mankind is not the refined reflection of the learned, nor the acute discussion of the polemic; we simply need someone, be it a lad or be it a lass, to show us the way, and the most precious person you and I have seen, or ever shall see, will be the person who shall be blessed and honored of God to us to say, “Behold the way to God, to life, to salvation and to heaven.” I shall not need, then, to offer any apology for coming out again to show the way. There are many here, who are lost, and there are some upon whom the shades of night are falling; their hair is grey, they pant as they walk, and rest upon their staff for the support of their tottering legs. Their case is dangerous; and when they cannot of themselves discover the pathway, surely they will heed any voice, however hoarse, from any person, however rough he may be, if they may but discover what the way to eternal life is.

Travelling some time ago, the coachman, when it was getting nearly dark, informed us that he had never been on that road before, and one can hardly tell how pleased we were to see a signpost. Now, a signpost is not a very interesting thing; there is nothing very poetical about it; it may be questionable whether it ornaments the road, as it sticks out an arm with only a word or two written on it; but, toward night, when neither the driver nor you know the way, it is about the most pleasant thing you can greet. I shall stand here tonight as a simple signpost. Prosy may be the words, but it shall be enough for you if they do but show you the way. Mr. Jay tells us that on one occasion, when riding on the mail-coach to Bath, he wanted to know a great many things of the coachman. He asked, “Whose seat is that? What squire owns that fine lawn? And what gentleman is the squire of yonder parish?” To all which questions the driver only answered. “I don’t know; I don’t know.” At last, Mr. Jay said to him, “Well, what do you know?” “Why,” he said, “I know how to drive you to Bath.” Well, now, I pretend to no greater knowledge than this; I do know the way to heaven, and I do hope I shall be able to tell it to you so plainly and so simply that some here who are lost as in a wild forest, may see the path, and by grace be enabled to run in it.

I. First of all, then, let us notice THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF OUR TEXT: “I am the way.”

Christ declares that He, and He only, is the way to peace with God, to pardon, to righteousness, and to heaven. Falsehood may tolerate falsehood, but truth never can. Two lies can live in the same house, and never quarrel; but truth cannot bear a lie even though it should be in the highest part of the attic. Truth has sworn war to the knife against falsehood, and hence it never knows what it is to admit that its contrary can

shake hands with itself. The Hindu meets the Muslim, and he says, "No doubt you are sincere as well as we are, and you and we shall at last meet in the right place." They would salute the Christian too, and say the same to him; but it is a necessity, if our religion is true, that it should denounce every other, and that it should say unto those who know not Christ, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;" yes, it goes still further, and pronounces its anathema upon those who pretend to any other way. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that which you have received, let him be accursed." I simply mention certain other ways to assure you, in God's name, that there are roads which lead to perdition, and that none of them can bring you to heaven, for there is only one way by which the soul can come to God, and find eternal life, and that way is Christ.

I think I see mankind lost as in a great wilderness. There are no track-ways, no paths, and there comes suddenly before the wistful eyes of the lost wayfarers a hag whose hand is blood-red, and with her eyes flashing fire she points and says, "Lost men, this is the way." And what is that before our eyes? I see the car of Juggernaut rolling through the streets, and crushing, at every revolution of its wheels, a poor man's flesh and bones, which, when the spirit has departed with a groan, lie there a monument of superstition. And having pointed there, this hag will tell the mother to take her child, and throw her dear one into the river Ganges. "This is the way," says the foul hag of *Superstition*, "by which you are to come to God." But we denounce her; in God's name, we denounce her as a demon escaped from hell. "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Ah, no; God abhors such a sacrifice. You cannot, in your reason, think that what is abhorrent to you can be acceptable to God, that what you yourselves would loathe to look upon can be delightful to Him. No, brethren; God asks no laceration of the flesh, no starving, no hair shirts, no cord about the loins—for all these He cares nothing, they are a weariness unto Him. If you would please God, speaking after the manner of men, you are more likely to do it by being happy than by being miserable. Do you think that a man would please other men by groans and sighs? I believe not: and how, then, should he please God by putting himself to torture if God is such a God as we find revealed to us in Holy Writ? Turn you, then, all you nations of the East, and oh, that all lands would turn from this cruel falsehood, for this is not the way to heaven.

In our own country, we have much more lovely deceivers than this old hag, false prophets, who are more likely to mislead you. Let me glance at some of the popular ways of going to heaven, which will surely lead to hell. There is *the way of good works*. I had thought that we had scattered so many millions of tracts, preached so much in the streets, and talked so long about men being saved by the blood of Christ, and not by themselves, that really, the old-fashioned heresy of self-righteousness would have been driven out of the field. But it still holds a firm position. When I get into conversation with people, I find, in all grades of society, there is still the same belief that men will go to heaven by what they do.

"Ah!" said one to me yesterday, "I suppose you sometimes feel cast down." "Yes," I said, "I do." "Why," said he, "I should think the best men at times can hardly look back upon their lives with pleasure, and therefore they must feel a little afraid for the future." "Oh," I said, "if I had to look on my past life as the ground of my expectations for the future, I would be cast down, indeed; but do you not know that all my good works will not save me, and that all the sins I have ever committed in the past will never damn me?" "No," he said, and he looked astonished at such strange doctrine as that. The gospel teaches, indeed, that when a man believes in Christ, the sin of the past is all blotted out, and Christ's righteousness is given to him, so the man is not saved by what he is, nor damned for who he was; but he is saved through Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ alone.

I sat in a boat, not a great while ago, and while the man was rowing me, I thought I would talk with him. He began to talk to me about sundry "new lights" that had sprung up in the village; people always take more notice of will-o'-the-wisps than they do of the sun itself. The question at length arose how he hoped to go to heaven himself. Well, he had brought up eight children, he had never had any help from the parish; he was an honest man, and always did his neighbors a good turn; when the cholera was rife, he was about the only man in the village that would get up at night, and run for the doctor, and he felt that if he did not go to heaven, it would fare very badly with most people. So, indeed, I am afraid it will, and with him, too, if that is all he rests on.

I tell these two stories, culled from two classes of society, because I know we have need to keep on repudiating this old lie of Satan's that men are to be saved by their works. Those fig leaves that Adam

wove together to cover his nakedness are still in favor with his descendants. They will not take the robe of Christ's righteousness; but will rather go about to save themselves. A word or two with you, my friend. Do you say you will go to heaven by keeping the law? Ah, you have heard the old proverb about locking the stable when the horse is gone; I am afraid it is very applicable to you! So you are going to keep the stable shut now, and you are sure the horse shall never get out? If you will kindly go and look, you will find it is out already! Why, how can you keep the law which you have already broken? If you would be saved, the law of God is like a chaste alabaster vase which must be presented to God without crack or spot; but do you not see that you have broken the vase? Why, there is a crack there. "Ah!" you say, "that was a long time ago." Yes, I know it was, but it is still a crack; and there is the black mark of your thumb just underneath there. Why, man, the vase is broken already, and you cannot go to heaven by your good works when you have none. No, you have broken all God's commands. Read the 20th chapter of Exodus: read it through, and see if there is a single command which you have not violated; and I think you will soon find that from the first to the very last, you will be obliged to cry, "I have sinned, O Lord, and am condemned in this thing." You have already broken the law already. But then you will tell me that you have not broken it in public, and that you cultivate an outward respect for it. Yes, but what matters this if inwardly the heart is wrong? Even if a man could keep the outward letter of the law without flaw or mistake, yet, inasmuch as by reason of the spirituality of the law it is utterly impossible that any of the fallen race of Adam can keep it, no man can be saved by it.

I heard a story, the other day, which just illustrates the way in which people make a distinction between inward and outward sin. A certain Sunday school superintendent happened to hear a girl at the end of the school crying very bitterly after the other scholars had gone. He went to her, and asked her what she was crying about, and she said, "The lady superintendent has kept me, and has been talking to me about my dress; she says I ought not to dress so fine; I pay for it, sir, and I have a right to wear it." The lady was called, and after some little conversation with the superintendent, who was wise and prudent, the girl was sent home. Now the lady herself was noted for the fineness of her dress; she was most elaborately dressed at all times; so, after the girl was gone, our friend put this question to her, "Miss So-and-So, you will excuse me, but did it never suggest itself to you that your own dress is rather fine?" "Yes," she said, "but, then, that girl has flowers in her bonnet." "Well," he said, "excuse me"—and he looked at her—"I think you have flowers in yours." "Ah! yes," she replied; "but do you not see, mine are inside my bonnet, and hers are outside?" Now, this is just how some people speak about sin. You condemn a man because he is such a sinner; you would not associate with such a great sinner. If you would but look at yourselves, you would see that you are as great a sinner as he is; only here is the difference, you have the blotches of character inside and he has them outside. In truth, sometimes, the outside sinner is the less discreditable of the two. Do you really think that God makes such vain and empty distinctions as this? No, verily. If sin is in you or on you, whether it is inward or outward sin, it destroys you; and since you cannot keep the law in your inward parts, why go about to strain and break yourselves with impossibilities?

This is not the way to heaven. Since Adam fell, no man has ever passed through this gate into everlasting life. Besides, even supposing that the past were blotted out, you cannot keep the law in the future, for what is your nature? It is such a base one that it is sure to violate the law. You have heard of the women who were ordered to fill a large vessel with water, and were told to bring the water in buckets that were full of holes. This is just your toil; you have to fill the tremendous ocean of the law, and your buckets are full of holes. Your nature, mend it all you may, and repair it as you will, is still full of holes; and your pretended goodness will ooze out drop by drop, and, more than that, your labors shall be like water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up. O sirs! I pray you, do not seek to enter heaven by the works of the law, for thus says the Spirit, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

There is another guide, however, that is quite as popular, or rather more so. He calls himself *Sincere Obedience*. This is how he puts it—"Well, if I cannot keep the whole of the law, yet I will trust to the mercy of God to make up for the rest; I have no doubt that what I do may go some considerable way, and then the Lord Jesus Christ will make up the weight; I may be a little deficient, perhaps an ounce or two, but then the atonement will come in, and so the scale will be turned in my favor." Ah! And do you think

that Jesus Christ will ever yoke Himself with you to work out your salvation? “I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with Me.” This is the triumphant shout of the Warrior as He comes back from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; and do you think that after that peerless speech, your puny voice will be heard saying, “But I was there; I did my part and my portion”? No, verily; you sin in indulging the thought, and you do but doubly curse yourself in imagining that Christ will ever do part of the work, and will allow you to be His helper. Like the work of creation, so is that of salvation, of the Lord alone. From the beginning to the end it is not of man, neither by man.

There is another error, too, which is popular in certain quarters, and that is, *salvation by ceremonies*. We have it in the Church of Rome till this day; certain hocus-pocuses pronounced by the priest, and the thing is done. We have a similar sleight of hand, too, in that which is next door to the Church of Rome—the Puseyite community in our own land. We, truly, are nothing; we are not regularly ordained; we are laymen; we have no right to preach, and so forth; but they—the immediate descendants of the apostles—they are *the* men; one touch of their finger, one mark of the cross, and an heir of wrath becomes instantaneously “a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” ’Tis true, the child may afterwards come to be hanged; but we are told that we ought unfeignedly and devoutly to believe that it was, in holy sprinkling, there and then, made a part of the body of Christ! Do you believe it? Englishmen, do you believe it? Has the echo of Wycliffe’s voice so died out that these base-born hirelings of Rome are to come back, and usurp dominion over your consciences? Sons of the Covenanters, descendants of the glorious Puritans, will you ever tolerate this—worse than Romanism—this disguised Popery which endeavors to enter by stealth into your church? No, verily, let it be accursed! As said the apostle, so say we; and from Gerizim to Ebal let all Israel say, “Amen!” Oliver Cromwell once walked into the House of Commons while he was yet Mr. Cromwell, the member for Huntingdon, and, putting down his hat, he said, “I have just come from St. Paul’s Cross, and I have heard a man there preach flat Popery.” Indeed, if Mr. Cromwell were here now, he might go into many of our churches, and say, “I heard a man there preach flat Popery.” But I do trust, dear friends, that the honest protest of God’s ministers, and the earnest zeal of those blessed men of God, who are in the Established Church—I mean the Evangelical clergy—will still be able to keep down this very popular delusion. You might as well hope to be saved by the mumblings of a witch as by the doings of a priest; you might as well hope to enter heaven by blasphemies as by a priest mumbling over certain words which he thinks to have virtue in them!. God, even our God, has denounced again and again those who delight in these errors, and who keep back the blood of Jesus, and the power and merit of His righteousness. Do not, I pray you, any of you think that this is the way to heaven, for it is not. “Jesus said unto him, I am the way.”

I scarcely need to mention any more of these old roads, for each man seems to have one for himself. One man is subscribing so many pounds to charity, so it is well with him; another intends to build a row of almshouses, so it is well with him; another was always of a very respectable family, and hopes he shall not be sent with common folks down to perdition; and so, with one thing and another, all men have some sort of refuge; but I say to you again, if you have any refuge but that which is set forth in the text, it is a refuge of lies, and the hail shall sweep it away! May God sweep it away tonight, and leave you bare and without any shelter, that you may be led to accept Christ as the way, the only way, to heaven!

Understand us, then; we may seem intolerant, we may seem to speak very harshly, but it is as much as our soul is worth to have any mistake here. There is no way to heaven but one; that one way is Christ, and if you walk in it, you must simply, wholly, and only trust in what Jesus Christ did on the cross, and what He does today in His intercession in heaven; and he that comes not in by this door shall never come in at all. He that will not bend his back to this yoke shall not be accepted of God. Heaven has but this one gate, and if you will not enter this, there remains nothing for you but “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.”

II. We have now to notice THE PERSONALITY OF THE TEXT: “*I am the way.*”

We will suppose again that we have lost our way, and we meet a man, and ask him which is the way. He says, “I am the way.” What does he mean? If he had said, “I am the guide,” I could understand that; but he says he is the way! Suppose he has a horse and carriage, and I ask him the way, and he says, “I am the way”? No, you are the conveyance along the way, not the way; I cannot comprehend how you can be the way. But I will suppose that I am in a tract of country, something like that which is left bare by the

receding tide at the mouth of the Solway Firth. Young men and children sometimes go far out on those sands, and the tide may suddenly return before they are well aware of it, and so they may be left to drown. We are two children playing on the sands, and suddenly we perceive that the sea has shut us in all around, and there is no possibility for us to get to land. But here comes a man on a noble horse, and as we cry to him, "Sir, which is the way of escape?" he stoops down from his horse, steadily lifts us up, and then says, "My children, I am the way." Now here we can perfectly understand it, because he does the work so fully, so wholly, and so entirely himself, that it becomes common sense for him to say, "I am the way of escape for you." Or put it in another way. There is a fire yonder; there is a child up at the window, and he inquires the way of escape. A strong man lifts up his arms; all he wants the child to do is just drop down, and let him catch him, so he answers, "I am the way, my child; if you would be delivered from the burning house, I am the way of deliverance."

You see, if He only showed us the way in which we should go, Christ could not say, "I am the way;" but when He does it all from first to last, when He takes it altogether out of our hands, and makes it His own business, from the Alpha to the Omega, then it becomes no straining of human speech for the Master to say, "I am the way." Let us put it plainly. You are in debt to God, sinner; you say, "How can I pay Him? Can I lie in the flames of hell? If I do, even if I should abide with eternal burnings, I cannot pay the debt; I must lie there forever." Christ replies, "I am the way," and He speaks the truth, because He is the Payer and the payment too. He, in your room, place, and stead, sinner—if now you believe on Christ—He, in your room, place, and stead, took all your guilt, and paid all your debts, even to the utmost farthing. If you are a believer, your discharge is signed and sealed, for there is nothing due from you to God but faithfulness and love.

But you tell me that you owe to God perfect obedience. You do; and Christ has perfectly obeyed, and He tells you, therefore, "I am the way." He has kept the law, magnified it, and made it honorable; and what you have to do is to take the work that He has finished, and you shall find Him to be the way. Do you want tonight to be a child of God? Christ says, "I am the way." Be one with Christ, and then, as Christ is God's Son, you will be God's child too. Would you have peace with God? Trust Christ tonight; put your soul in Christ's hands; He is our Peace, and so will He be the way to peace for you. Would you, in fine, be saved tonight? O my dear hearers, are there not some among you who would tonight be saved? Then Jesus says, "I am the way," not merely the Savior, but the salvation. Trust Christ, and you have salvation, for Christ says, "I am your salvation." Take Him, and in taking Him, you have the blood that washes, the robe that clothes, the medicine that heals, the jewels that decorate; you have the life that shall persevere, and the crown that shall adorn. Christ is all-in-all; all you have to do is trust Christ, and trusting Him, you shall find Him to be the way, from the beginning, even to the end.

III. But I must close by urging you to accept the counsel here implied. "I am the way;" not merely, "I was the way for the thief on the cross," but "I am the way for you tonight;" not "I will be the way when you feel your need more, and when you have worked yourself into a better state;" but "I am, sinner, the way just now. I am the way for you, just as you are; to all that you want I am the way." We sometimes see railways approaching towns, but they do not bring them right into the heart of the place, and then you must take a cab or an omnibus to finish the journey. But this "way" runs right from the heart of manhood's depravity into the very center of glory, and there is no need to take anything to complete the road. You recollect what good Richard Weaver said, on that platform, when he was illustrating the fact of Christ saving sinners, and saving them just now? He told us a story of his friend in Dublin, who took him a first class ticket for Liverpool, as he said, "All the way through," and you will remember how he illustrated this by saying that when he came to Christ, he put his trust in Him, and had a first-class ticket to heaven all the way through. "I did not get out to get a new ticket," he said; "there was no fear that my ticket would be exhausted half-way, for it was a ticket all the way through. I paid nothing," said Richard, "but that didn't matter; my ticket was enough; the guards came, and looked in, and said, 'Show your tickets, gentlemen;' they didn't say, 'Show yourselves,' but 'Show your tickets;' and they didn't come to the door, and say, 'Now, Mr. Weaver, you have no business in that first class carriage; you are only a poor man; you must come out; you are not dressed smartly enough;' as soon as they saw my ticket, the ticket all the way through, that was enough; and so"—well said that man of God—"when the devil comes to me, and

says, 'Richard Weaver, how do you hope to get to heaven?' I show him the ticket; he says, 'Look at yourself.' 'No,' I say, 'that is just what I am not going to do; I look at my ticket.' My doubts and fears say, 'Look at what you are;' Ah! never mind what I am; I look to what Christ gave me, and which He bought and paid for Himself, that ticket of faith which will surely carry me all the way through."

That is about the end of the journey, you see; the ticket will take you to the end. Christ is the way to the end, too, but I want, tonight, to show you that He is the way to your end as well as to God's end. Christ has run the railroad right into heaven, but does it run from where I am? Because, if not, if there is a space between me and the place where that railway stops, how am I to get there? I cannot have the cab of Morality, for the axle is broken. I shall not get up into the great omnibus of Ceremonies, for the driver has lost his badge, and I am sure there will be mischief come of that. How, then, am I to get there? I cannot get there at all unless the road comes right here to where I am. Well, glory be to God, it does come to just where you are tonight, sinner. There needs no addition of yours—no preparing for Christ—no meeting Jesus Christ half-way—no cleaning yourselves, to let Him give you the finishing touch—no mending your garments, that He may afterwards make them superfine—no, but, just as you are, Christ says, "I am the way."

But you say, "Lord, what would You have me to do?" "Do?" He says; "do? Nothing but believe on Me—trust Me—trust Me now." Did I hear one up in those boxes in the top gallery say, "When I get home tonight, I'll pray"? I hope you will; but that is not the gospel. The gospel is, trust Jesus Christ now; Christ is the way now—not only from your chamber to heaven, but from this place, from the very spot where you now are, to heaven. I say again, dear brethren, that I abhor from my very heart that new kind of legality which is preached by some ministers, who will have it that we must not tell the sinner to believe on Christ now, but that he must undergo a preparatory process of conviction, and the like. This is Popery back again, for it has the very essence of Popery within it. Instead of that, I lift up my Master's cross before the dying and the dead—before the blind, the ruined, and the filthy. Trust Jesus Christ, and you are saved.

"But I have many sins." He had many drops of blood. "But I am a great sinner." He is a great Savior. "But I am so black." His blood is so efficacious that it can make you as white as snow. "But I am so old." Yes, but He can make you to be born-again. "But I have rejected Him so often." He will not reject you. "But I am the last person in the world to be saved." Then that is where Christ begins; he always begins at the last man. "But, I cannot believe that—" Cannot believe what? What did I ask you to believe? "I cannot believe—" Cannot believe what, I say again. My Master is the Lord from heaven that cannot lie; and you tell me you cannot believe Him! My Master never lied to angel or to men, and He cannot, for He is truth itself; and this is what He says, that whosoever among you will trust Him tonight, He will save you; and if you say you cannot believe Him, you make God a liar, because you believe not on His Son Jesus Christ. I charge you, by the Day of Judgment and by the flaming world, say not that the God who made you will lie to you. Sinner, there shall never be found in hell a spirit that can say, "I trusted Christ, and was deceived; I rested on the cross, and its rotten timbers creaked, and failed me; I looked to the blood of Jesus, and it could not cleanse me; I cried to heaven, but heaven would not hear; I took Jesus in my arms to be my Mediator, and yet I was driven from the gate of mercy; there was no pity for me." Never, never shall there be such a case. I would to God—I was about to say—that I were not preaching to depraved men, and yet to whom else should we go?—because this is the sorrowful reflection, that so many of you will turn on your heel, and say, "There is nothing in it."

But who are those who will look to Christ? Why, those whom God has chosen, in whom the Spirit, as the result of divine election, will effectually work, and who shall be the real trophies of the Redeemer's passion. But, mark you, you have all heard the gospel tonight; and when you and I meet face to face, while the trumpet of judgment is ringing in every human ear, when this solid earth shall shake, when the heavens shall bow, and the stars shall pale their feeble light, I will bear this witness, that I told you plainly the way of salvation; and in that great day I shall be able to say to each one of you, "If you perish, your blood lies not at my door." Is there one who has not understood me? Is there one who still thinks that he is shut out, and that he cannot be saved? To *you*, sir, yes, to you, I add this extra word, "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him;" and though you are black with robbery, or red with blood, or stained with lust up to your elbows, He is able still to save; and trusting Him, with all your heart trusting

Him, you shall find that He will surely bring you to the place where He shall see you with delight, having washed you in His blood.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS 6.

Verse 1. *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

This seems to be a very plausible temptation; it is one which frequently came in the apostle's way, and therefore he very often had to denounce it. It is one of the vilest suggestions of Satan that could possibly come to men.

2. *God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

The whole spirit of the gospel is opposed to the idea of sinning because God is gracious. It is a horrible Satanic suggestion—"As pardon can be so easily obtained from God, let us sin the more against Him." The bare suggestion is utterly degrading and diabolical. It is to be rejected at once.

3. *Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?*

Was not that the real meaning of our baptism? Had it any meaning whatever unless we were really dead with Christ, and therefore were buried with Him?

4. *Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

There is a parallel between Christ and the true Christian. There is a likeness between the Head of the Church and the members of His mystical body. Christ died, and was buried, and His people are reckoned as dead and buried in Him.

5-7. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

That is, he that died to sin when Christ died is free from sin's condemning power.

8-10. *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God.*

In the next verse, the parallel between Christ and Christians comes up again. As Christ died, and was buried, and rose from the dead, and now lives to die no more, so is it with us who believe in Him, and are in Him by a vital union. In Him we died, and in Him we rose, and in Him we now live in newness of life.

11-13. *Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

"Your members"—that is, the various parts of your body and the faculties of your mind are to be yielded up to God "as instruments of righteousness."

14. *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.*

While you were under the law and simply heard it command you to do your duty, the command seemed to awaken all the hostility of your nature so that you remained under the dominion of sin; but now no longer does the law speak to you as it did before. You are not now under the law, but another principle governs you. The grace, the favor, the love which God has shown to you in Christ Jesus, appeals to your heart, and you cheerfully yield to it the obedience which, when the law demanded it, your unregenerate spirit refused to render.

15. *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*

Again the apostle is shocked at such a suggestion. There are some who have denied that the law was binding upon them in any sense, and who have therefore claimed liberty to sin; but they can find no footing anywhere within the sacred enclosure of God's Word.

16. *Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey? Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

If, then, a man lives a life of sin, he proves that he is the servant of sin, for he has obeyed its commands; and let that man know assuredly that he has nothing to do with Christ while he is living in sin. But if a man lives in obedience to Christ, and seeks after righteousness and true holiness, that man is evidently the servant of righteousness, and so the servant of God.

17. *But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.*

Or, as the marginal reading renders it, in harmony with the original, “whereto you were delivered,” for the doctrine was the mold, and you were the metal, reduced to a molten condition, and then poured into the mold to take the shape of gospel truth. God be thanked for this—that, though you did formerly serve sin, you now serve it no longer.

18, 19. *Being then made free from sin, you became the servant of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servant to righteousness unto holiness.*

How powerfully this plea ought to sound with any whose former life was full of positive, plain uncleanness in the sight of God! And how earnestly should the redeemed spirit cry to God to preserve the body pure and chaste before Him!

20. *For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness.*

You did not then trouble yourselves about that matter at all; you left the things of God and piety alone.

21. *What fruit had you then in these things whereof you are now ashamed? For the end of these things is death.*

You had such pleasure as sin could give you, but was it worth having? You derived some profit, perhaps, from evil pursuits; but did the profit ever make up for the loss which you thereby sustained? O you who have had experience of sin to the full, has it, after all, turned out to be the fair and lovely thing that it once seemed to be? No, the serpent had azure scales, but its fangs have poured poison into your blood. It came to you with all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness, like Jezebel with her painted face; but it has worked nothing for you but sorrow and suffering, and it will work your eternal ruin unless God, in His great mercy, shall prevent it.

22. *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and in the end, everlasting life.*

Oh, what wondrous changes the grace of God works! “*But now.*” Paul must have rejoiced to write those two words. He had dwelt upon what men were before the Lord began to deal with them in mercy, “but now” he could say, “being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life.”

23. *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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