

NONE BUT JESUS—SECOND PART

NO. 362

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, FEBRUARY 17, 1861
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AT NEW PARK STREET, SOUTHWARK

“He that believeth on him is not condemned.”
John 3:18

IN the morning sermon, our time was mainly taken up with the description of faith—what it is. We had only a few minutes left at its close to describe what it leads to—the privilege of justification, which is a gift to the soul as the result of faith. Let this high privilege, then, occupy our attention tonight. The text says, “He that believeth on him—(that is on Christ Jesus)—is not condemned.”

To take up the subject in order, we shall notice first, *the satisfactory declaration here made*. Then, secondly, we shall endeavor *to correct certain misapprehensions respecting it, by reason of which, the Christian is often cast down*, and we shall close with *some reflections, positive and negative, as to what this text includes, and what it excludes*.

I. First of all, then, WHAT A SATISFACTORY DECLARATION! “He that believeth on him is not condemned.”

You are aware that in our courts of law, a verdict of “*not guilty*” amounts to an acquittal and the prisoner is immediately discharged. So is it in the language of the Gospel, a sentence of “*not condemned*” implies the justification of the sinner. It means that the believer in Christ receives *now* a *present* justification. Faith does not produce its fruits, by and by, but *now*. So far as justification is the result of faith, it is given to the soul in the moment when it closes with Christ, and accepts Him as its all in all.

Are they who stand before the throne of God justified tonight?—so are we as truly and as clearly justified as they who walk in white and sing His praises above. The thief upon the cross was justified the moment that he turned the eye of faith to Jesus, who was just then, hanging by his side. And Paul, the aged, after years of service, was not more justified than was the thief with no service at all.

We are *today* accepted in the Beloved, *today* absolved from sin, *today* innocent in the sight of God. Oh, ravishing, soul-transporting thought! There are some clusters of this vine which we shall not be able to gather till we go to heaven, but this is one of the first ripe clusters, and may be plucked and eaten here. This is not as the corn of the land, which we can never eat till we cross the Jordan, but this is part of the manna in the wilderness and part too of our daily raiment, with which God supplies us in our journeying to and fro.

We are *now*—even *now* pardoned. Even *now* are our sins put away. Even *now* we stand in the sight of God as though we had never been guilty. Innocent as father Adam when he stood in integrity, ere he had eaten of the fruit of the forbidden tree. Pure as though we had never received the taint of depravity in our veins.

“There is, therefore, *now* no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.” There is not a sin in the Book of God, even *now*, against one of His people. There is nothing laid to their charge. There is neither speck, nor spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing remaining upon any one believer in the matter of justification in the sight of the Judge of all the earth.

But to pass on, the text evidently means not simply present, but *continual* justification. In the moment when you and I believed, it was said of us, “He is not condemned.” Many days have passed since then, many changes we have seen. But it is as true of us tonight, “He is not condemned.”

The Lord alone knows how long our appointed day shall be—how long ere we shall fulfill the hireling's time, and like a shadow flee away. But this we know, since every Word of God is assured, and the gifts of God are without repentance, though we should live another fifty years, yet would it still be written here, "He that believeth on him is not condemned."

Nay, if by some mysterious dealing in providence our lives should be lengthened out to ten times the usual limit of man, and we should come to the eight or nine hundred years of Methuselah, still would it stand the same, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "The just shall live by faith." "He that believeth on him shall never be confounded."

All these promises go to show that the justification which Christ gives to our faith is a continual one, which will last as long as we shall live. And remember, it will last in eternity as well as in time. We shall not in heaven wear any other dress but that which we wear here. Today the righteous stand clothed in the righteousness of Christ. They shall wear this same wedding dress at the great wedding feast.

But what if it should wear out? What if that righteousness should lose its virtue in the eternity to come? Oh beloved! we entertain no fear about that. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but this righteousness shall never wax old. No moth shall fret it, no thief shall steal it, no weeping hand of lamentation shall rend it in twain.

It is, it must be eternal, even as Christ Himself, JEHOVAH our righteousness. Because He is our righteousness, the self-existent, the everlasting, the immutable JEHOVAH, of whose years there is no end, and whose strength fails not, therefore of our righteousness there is no end. And of its perfection and of its beauty there shall never be any termination. The text, I think, very clearly teaches us that he who believes on Christ has received forever a continual justification.

Again, think for a moment the justification which is spoken of here is *complete*. "He that believeth on him is not condemned"—that is to say, not in any measure or in any degree. I know some think it is possible for us to be in such a state as to be half-condemned and half-accepted. So far as we are sinners so far condemned, and so far as we are righteous so far accepted.

Oh beloved, there is nothing like that in Scripture. It is altogether apart from the doctrine of the Gospel. If it be of works, it is no more of grace, and if it be of grace, it is no more of works. Works and grace cannot mix and mingle any more than fire and water. It is either one or the other, it cannot be both, the two can never be allied. There can be no mixture of the two, no dilution of one with the other.

He that believes is free from all iniquity, from all guilt, from all blame. And though the devil brings an accusation, yet it is a false one, for we are free even from accusation, since it is boldly challenged, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" It does not say, "Who shall prove it?" but "Who shall lay it to their charge?" They are so completely freed from condemnation, that not the shadow of a spot upon their soul is found, not even the slightest passing by of iniquity to cast its black shadow on them.

They stand before God not only as half-innocent, but as perfectly so—not only as half-washed, but as whiter than snow. Their sins are not simply erased, they are blotted out—not simply put out of sight, but cast into the depths of the sea. Not merely gone, and gone as far as the east is from the west, but gone forever, once for all.

You know, beloved, that the Jew in his ceremonial purification, never had his conscience free from sin. After one sacrifice, he needed still another, for these offerings could never make the comers thereunto perfect. The next day's sins needed a new lamb, and the next year's iniquity needed a new victim for an atonement. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God." No more burnt-offerings are needed, no more washing, no more blood, no more atonement, no more sacrifice. "It is finished!" hear the dying Savior cry.

Your sins have sustained their deathblow, the robe of your righteousness has received its last thread—it is done, complete, perfect. It needs no addition. It can never suffer any diminution. Oh,

Christian, do lay hold of this precious thought. I may not be able to state it except in weak terms, but let not my weakness prevent your apprehending its glory and its preciousness.

It is enough to make a man leap, though his legs were loaded with irons, and to make him sing, though his mouth were gagged, to think that we are perfectly accepted in Christ, that our justification is not partial. It does not go to a limited extent, but goes the whole way. Our unrighteousness is covered—from condemnation we are entirely and irrevocably free.

Once more. The non-condemnation is *effectual*. The royal privilege of justification shall never miscarry. It shall be brought home to every believer. In the reign of King George the Third, the son of a member of this church lay under sentence of death for forgery. My predecessor, Dr. Rippon, after incredible exertions, obtained a promise that his sentence should be remitted.

By a singular occurrence the present senior deacon—then a young man—learned from the governor of the jail that the reprieve had not been received, and the unhappy prisoner would have been executed the next morning, had not Dr. Rippon gone post-haste to Windsor, obtained an interview with the king in his bed-chamber, and received from the monarch's own hand a copy of that reprieve which had been negligently put aside by a thoughtless officer.

"I charge you, doctor," said his majesty, "to make good speed." "Trust me, Sire, for that," responded your old pastor, and he returned to London in time, just in time, and only just in time, for the prisoner was being marched with many others on to the scaffold.

Ay, that pardon might have been given, and yet the man might have been executed if it had not been effectually carried out. But blessed be God, our non-condemnation is an effectual thing. It is not a matter of letter—it is a matter of fact. Ah, poor souls, you know that condemnation is a matter of fact. When you and I suffered in our souls, and were brought under the heavy hand of the law, we felt that its curses were no mock thunders like the wrath of the Vatican, but they were real. We felt that the anger of God was indeed a thing to tremble at, a real substantial fact.

Now, just as real as the condemnation which justice brings, just so real is the justification which mercy bestows. You are not only nominally guiltless, but you are really so, if you believe in Christ. You are not only nominally put into the place of the innocent, but you are really put there the moment you believe in Jesus.

Not only is it said that your sins are gone, but they are gone. Not only does God look on you as though you were accepted, you are accepted. It is a matter of fact to you, as much a matter of fact as that you sinned. You do not doubt that you have sinned, you cannot doubt that—do not doubt then that when you believe, your sins are put away. For as certain as ever the black spot fell on you when you sinned, so certainly and so surely was it all washed out when you were bathed in that fountain filled with blood, which was drawn from Emanuel's veins.

Come, my soul, think of this. You are actually and effectually cleared from guilt. You are led out of your prison. You are no more in fetters as a bond-slave. You are now delivered from the bondage of the law. You are freed from sin and you can walk at large as a free man. Your Savior's blood has procured your full discharge. Come, my soul—you now have a right to come to your Father's feet. No flames of vengeance are there to scare you now, no fiery sword—justice cannot smite the innocent.

Come, my soul, your disabilities are taken away. You were once unable to see your Father's face, you can see it now. You could not speak with Him, nor He with you, but now you have access with boldness to this grace wherein we stand. Once there was a fear of hell upon you, there is no hell for you now. How can there be punishment for the guiltless?

He that believes is guiltless, is not condemned, and cannot be punished. No frowns of an avenging God now. If God is viewed as a Judge, how could He frown upon the guiltless? How should the Judge frown upon the absolved one?

More than all the privileges you might have enjoyed, if you had never sinned, are yours now since you are justified. All the blessings which you would have had if you had kept the law and more, are yours tonight because Christ has kept it for you. All the love and the acceptance which a perfectly

obedient being could have obtained from God, belong to you, because Christ was perfectly obedient on your behalf, and has imputed all His merits to your account that you might be exceeding rich, through Him who for your sake became exceeding poor.

Oh that the Holy Spirit would but enlarge our hearts that we might suck sweetness out of these thoughts! There is no condemnation. Moreover, there never shall be any condemnation. The forgiveness is not partial, but perfect. It is so effectual that it delivers us from all the penalties of the law, gives to us all the privileges of obedience, and puts us actually high above where we should have been had we never sinned.

It fixes our standing more secure than it was before we fell. We are not now where Adam was, for Adam might fall and perish. We are rather where Adam would have been if we could suppose God had put him into the garden for seven years and said, “If you are obedient for seven years, your time of probation shall be over, and I will reward you.”

The children of God in one sense may be said to be in a state of probation, in another sense there is no probation. There is no probation as to whether the child of God should be saved. He is saved already. His sins are washed away, his righteousness is complete, and if that righteousness could endure a million year’s probation, it would never be defiled. In fact, it always stands the same in the sight of God and must do so forever and ever.

II. Let me now endeavor to CORRECT SOME MISAPPREHENSIONS BY REASON OF WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE OFTEN CAST DOWN.

What simpletons we are! Whatever our natural age, how childish we are in spiritual things! What great simpletons we are when we first believe in Christ! We think that our being pardoned involves a great many things which we afterwards find have nothing whatever to do with our pardon.

For instance, we think we shall never sin again. We fancy that the battle is all fought, that we have got into a fair field, with no more war to wage. That we have got the victory and have only just to stand up and wave the palm branch. That all is over, that God has only got to call us up to Himself and we shall enter into heaven without having to fight any enemies upon earth.

Now, all these are obvious mistakes. Though the text has a great meaning, it does not mean anything of this kind. Observe that although it does assert, “He that believeth is not condemned,” yet it does not say that he that believes shall not have his faith exercised. Your faith will be exercised. An untried faith will be no faith at all.

God never gave men faith without intending to try it. Faith is received for the very purpose of endurance. Just as our Rifle Corps friends put up the target with the intention of shooting at it, so does God give faith with the intention of letting trials and troubles, and sin and Satan aim all their darts at it. When you have faith in Christ, it is a great privilege, but recollect that it involves a great trial.

You asked for great faith the other night—did you consider that you asked for great troubles too? You cannot have great faith to lay up and rust. Mr. Greatheart in John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim* was a very strong man, but then what strong work he had to do. He had to go with all those women and children many scores of times up to the celestial city and back again. He had to fight all the giants, and drive back all the lions, to slay the giant Slaygood, and knock down the Castle of Despair.

If you have a great measure of faith, you will have need to use it all. You will never have a single scrap to spare, you will be like the virgins in our Lord’s parable, even though you are a wise virgin, you will have to say to others who might borrow of you, “Not so, lest there be not enough for us and for you.”

But when your faith is exercised with trials, do not think you are brought into judgment for your sins. Oh, no, believer, there is plenty of exercise, but that is not condemnation. There are many trials, but still we are justified. We may often be buffeted, but we are never accursed. We may oftentimes be cast down, but the sword of the Lord never can and never will smite us to the heart.

Yea, more, not only may our faith be exercised, but our faith may come to a very low ebb, and still we may not be condemned. When your faith gets so small that you cannot see it, even then still you are

not condemned. If you have ever believed in Jesus, your faith may be like the sea when it goes out a very long way from the shore, and leaves a vast track of mud, and some might say the sea was gone or dried up. But you are not condemned when your faith is most dried up.

Ay! and I dare to say it—when your faith is at the flood-tide, you are not more accepted then, than when your faith is at the lowest ebb. For your acceptance does not depend upon the quantity of your faith, it only depends upon its reality.

If you are really resting in Christ, though your faith may be but as a spark, and a thousand devils may try to quench that one spark, yet you are not condemned—you shall stand accepted in Christ. Though your comforts will necessarily decay as your faith declines, yet your acceptance does not decay. Though faith does rise and fall like the thermometer, though faith is like the mercury in the bulb, all weathers change it—yet God's love is not affected by the weather of earth or the changes of time. Until the perfect righteousness of Christ can be a mutable thing—a football to be kicked about by the feet of fiends—your acceptance with God can never change. You are perfectly accepted in the Beloved.

There is another thing which often tries the child of God. He at times loses the light of his Father's countenance. Now, remember, the text does not say, "He that believeth shall not lose the light of God's countenance." He may do so, but he shall not be condemned for all that. You may walk, not only for days, but for months in such a state that you have little fellowship with Christ, very little communion with God of a joyous sort.

The promises may seem broken to you, the Bible may afford you but little comfort, and when you turn your eye to heaven, you may only have to feel more of the smarting that is caused by your Father's rod. You may have vexed and grieved His Spirit, and He may have turned away His face from you. But you are not condemned for all that.

Mark the testimony, "He that believeth is not condemned." Even when your Father smites you, and leaves a welt at every stroke, and brings the blood at every blow, there is not a particle of condemnation in any one stroke. Not in His anger, but in His dear covenant love He smites you. There is an unmixed and unalloyed affection in every love-stroke of chastisement from your Father's hand, as there is in the kisses of Jesus Christ's lips.

Oh! believe this, it will tend to lift up your heart, it will cheer you when neither sun nor moon appear. It will honor your God. It will show you where your acceptance really lies. When His face is turned away, believe Him still, and say, "He abideth faithful though he hides his face from me."

I will go a little further still. The child of God may be so assaulted by Satan, that he may be well-nigh given up to despair, and yet he is not condemned. The devils may beat the great hell-drum in his ear, till he thinks himself to be on the very brink of perdition. He may read the Bible, and think that every threatening is against him, and that every promise shuts its mouth and will not cheer him.

And he may at last despond, and despond, and despond, till he is ready to break the harp that has so long been hanging on the willow. He may say, "The Lord has forsaken me quite, my God will be gracious no more," but it is not true. Yea, he may be ready to swear a thousand times that God's mercy is gone forever, and that His faithfulness will fail for evermore, but it is not true, it is not true.

A thousand liars swearing to a falsehood could not make it true, and our doubts and fears are all of them liars. If there were ten thousand of them, and they all professed the same, it is a falsehood that God ever did forsake His people, or that He ever cast from Him an innocent man—and you are innocent, remember, when you believe in Jesus.

"But" say you, "I am full of sin." "Ay," say I, "but that sin has been laid on Christ." "Oh," say you, "but I sin daily." "Ay," say I, "but that sin was laid on Him before you committed it, years ago. It is not yours. Christ has taken it away once for all. You are a righteous man by faith, and God will not forsake the righteous, nor will He cast away the innocent."

I say, then, the child of God may have his faith at a low ebb, he may lose the light of his Father's countenance, and he may even get into thorough despair, but yet all these cannot disprove my text, "He that believeth is not condemned."

“But what,” say you, “if the child of God should sin?” It is a deep and tender subject, yet must we touch it and be bold here. I would not mince God’s truth lest any should make a bad use of it. I know there are some, not the people of God, who will say, “Let us sin, that grace may abound.” Their condemnation is just. I cannot help the perversion of truth. There are always men who will take the best of food as though it were poison, and make the best of truth into a lie, and so be damning their own souls.

You ask, “What if a child of God should fall into sin?” I answer, the child of God does fall into sin. Every day he mourns and groans because when he would do good, evil is present with him. But though he falls into sin, he is not condemned for all that—not by one of them, or by all of them put together, because his acceptance does not depend upon himself, but upon the perfect righteousness of Christ.

And that perfect righteousness is not invalidated by any sins of his. He is perfect in Christ—and until Christ is imperfect, the imperfections of the creature do not mar the justification of the believer in the sight of God.

But oh! if he fall into some glaring sin—O God, keep us from it!—if he fall into some glaring sin, he shall go with broken bones, but he shall reach heaven for all that. Though, in order to try him, and let him see his vileness, he be suffered to go far astray, yet He that bought him will not lose him. He that chose him will not cast him away. He will say unto him, “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

David may go never so far away, but David is not lost. He comes back and he cries, “Have mercy upon me, O God!” And so shall it be with every believing soul—Christ shall bring him back. Though he slip, he shall be kept, and all the chosen seed shall meet around the throne. If it were not for this last truth—though some may stick at it—what would become of some of God’s people? They would be given up to despair.

If I have been speaking to a backslider, I pray he will not make a bad use of what I have said. Let me say to him, “Poor backslider! Your Father’s heart yearns over you. He has not erased your name out of the registry. Come back, come back now to Him, and say, ‘Receive me graciously and love me freely.’ And He will say, ‘I will put you among the children.’ He will pass by your backsliding and will heal your iniquities, and you shall yet stand once more in His favor, and know yourself to be still accepted in the Redeemer’s righteousness and saved by His blood.”

This text does not mean that the child of God shall not be tried, or that he shall not even sometimes fall under the trial. But it does mean this, once for all, he that believes on Christ is not condemned. At no time, by no means, is he under the sentence of condemnation, but is evermore justified in the sight of God.

III. Now, dear brethren, but little time remains for the closing points, therefore, in a hurried manner, let me notice WHAT THIS TEXT EVIDENTLY INCLUDES, and may God grant that these few words may nevertheless do good to our souls!

“He that believeth on him is not condemned.” If we are not condemned, then at no time does God ever look upon His children, when they believe in Christ, as being guilty. Are you surprised that I should put it so? I put it so again—from the moment when you believe in Christ, God ceases to look upon you as being guilty, for He never looks upon you apart from Christ.

You often look upon yourself as guilty, and you fall upon your knees as you should do, and you weep and lament. But even then, while you are weeping over inbred and actual sin, He is still saying out of heaven, “So far as your justification is concerned, you are all fair and lovely.”

You are black as the tents of Kedar—that is yourself by nature, you are fair as the curtains of Solomon—that is yourself in Christ. You are black—that is yourself in Adam, but comely, that is yourself in the second Adam. Oh, think of that!—that you are always in God’s sight comely, always in God’s sight lovely, always in God’s sight as though you were perfect. For you are complete in Christ Jesus, and perfect in Christ Jesus, as the apostle puts it in another place. Always do you stand completely washed and fully clothed in Christ. Remember this, for it is certainly included in my text.

Another great thought included in my text is this, you are never liable as a believer to punishment for your sins. You will be chastised on account of them, as a father chastises his child—that is a part of the Gospel dispensation, but you will not be smitten for your sins as the law-giver smites the criminal. Your Father may often punish you as He punishes the wicked, but never for the same reason.

The ungodly stand on the ground of their own demerits—their sufferings are awarded as their due deserts. But your sorrows do not come to you as matter of desert—they come to you as a matter of love. God knows that in one sense your sorrows are such a privilege that you may account of them as a boon you do not deserve.

I have often thought of that when I have had a sore trouble. I know some people say, “You deserved the trouble.” Yes, my dear brethren, but there is not enough merit in all Christians put together to deserve such a good thing as the loving rebuke of our heavenly Father. Perhaps you cannot see that, you cannot think that a trouble can come to you as a real blessing in the covenant. But I know that the rod of the covenant is as much the gift of grace as the blood of the covenant. It is not a matter of desert or merit—it is given to us because we need it.

But I question whether we were ever so good as to deserve it. We were never able to get up to so high a standard as to deserve so rich, so gracious a providence as this covenant blessing—the rod of our chastening God. Never at any time in your life has a law-stroke fallen upon you. Since you believed in Christ, you are out of the law’s jurisdiction. The law of England cannot touch a Frenchman while he lives under the protection of his own Emperor. You are not under the law, but you are under grace. The law of Sinai cannot touch you, for you are out of its jurisdiction. You are not in Sinai or in Arabia.

You are not the son of Hagar or the son of a handmaid, you are the son of Sarah, and are come to Jerusalem and are free. You are out of Arabia and are come to God’s own happy land. You are not under Hagar, but under Sarah, under God’s covenant of grace. You are a child of promise and you shall have God’s own inheritance.

Believe this, that never shall a law-stroke fall on you, never shall God’s anger in a judicial sense drop on you. He may give you a chastising stroke, not as the result of sin, but rather as the result of His own rich grace, that would only get the sin out of you, that you may be perfected in sanctification, even as you are now perfect and complete before Him in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

I was about to go into a list of things which this text includes, but the time fails me, therefore I must spend the last minute or two in saying WHAT THIS TEXT EXCLUDES.

What does it exclude! Well, I am sure it excludes boasting. “He that believeth is not condemned.” Ah! if it said, “He that *worketh* is not condemned,” then you and I might boast in any quantity. But when it says, “*He that believeth*”—why, there is no room for us to say half a word for old self. No, Lord, if I am not condemned, it is Your free grace, for I have deserved to be condemned a thousand times since I have been in this pulpit tonight.

When I am on my knees, and I am not condemned, I am sure it must be sovereign grace, for even when I am praying I deserve to be condemned. Even when we are repenting, we are sinning and adding to our sins while we are repenting of them. Every act we do, as the result of the flesh, is to sin again, and our best performances are so stained with sin, that it is hard to know whether they are good works or bad works. So far as they are our own, they are bad, and so far as they are the works of the Spirit, they are good. But then the goodness is not ours, it is the Spirit’s, and only the evil remains to us. Ah! then, we cannot boast! Be gone, pride! Be gone!

The Christian must be a humble man. If he lift up his head to say something, then he is nothing indeed. He does not know where he is, or where he stands, when he once begins to boast, as though his own right hand had gotten him the victory. Leave off boasting, Christian. Live humbly before your God, and never let a word of self-congratulation escape your lips. Sacrifice self and let your song be before the throne, “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory for ever.”

What next does the text exclude? Methinks it ought to exclude—now I am about to smite myself—it ought to exclude doubts and fears. “He that believeth is not condemned.” How dare you and I draw such

long faces, and go about as we do sometimes as though we had a world of cares upon our backs. What would I have given ten or eleven years ago if I could have known this text was sure to me, that I was not condemned. Why, I thought if I could feel I was once forgiven, and had to live on bread and water, and be locked up in a dungeon, and every day be flogged with a cat-o-nine tails, I would gladly have accepted it, if I could have once felt my sins forgiven.

Now you are a forgiven man, and yet you are cast down! Oh! shame on you. No condemnation! and yet miserable? Fie, Christian! Get you up and wipe the tears from your eyes. Oh! if there be a person lying in jail now, to be executed next week, if you could go to him and say, “You are pardoned,” would he not spring up with delight from his seat. And although he might have lost his goods, and though it would be possible for him, after pardon, to have to suffer many things, yet, so long as life was spared, what would all this be to him? He would feel that it was less than nothing.

Now, Christian, you are pardoned. Your sins are all forgiven. Christ has said to you, “Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you”—and are you yet miserable? Well, if we must be so sometimes, let us make it as short as we can. If we must sometimes be cast down, let us ask the Lord to lift us up again. I am afraid some of us get into bad habits, and come to make it a matter of practice to be downcast. Mind, Christian, mind, it will grow upon you—that peevish spirit—if you do not resist that sinfulness at first, it will get worse with you.

If you do not come to God to turn these doubts and fears out of you, they will soon swarm upon you like flies in Egypt. When you are able to kill the first great doubt, you will perhaps kill a hundred, for one great doubt will breed a thousand, and to kill the mother is to kill the whole brood. Therefore, look with all your eyes against the first doubt, lest you should become confirmed in your despondency and grow into sad despair, “He that believeth on him is not condemned.” If this excludes boasting, it ought to exclude doubts too.

Once more, “He that believeth on him is not condemned.” This excludes sinning any more. My Lord, have I sinned against You so many times, and yet have You freely forgiven me all? What stronger motive could I have for keeping me from sinning again? Ah, there are some who are saying this is licentious doctrine. A thousand devils rolled into one must the man be who can find any licentiousness here.

What! go and sin because I am forgiven? Go and live in iniquity because Jesus Christ took my guilt, and suffered in my room and stead? Human nature is bad enough, but methinks this is the very worst state of human nature, when it tries to draw an argument for sin from the free grace of God.

Bad as I am, I feel this, that it is hard to sin against a pardoning God. It is far harder to sin against the blood of Christ, and against a sense of pardon, than it is against the terrors of the law and the fear of hell itself. I know that when my soul is most alarmed by a dread of the wrath of God, I can sin with comfort compared with what I could when I have a sense of His love shed abroad in my heart.

What more monstrous! to read your title clear, and sin? Oh, vile reprobate! you are on the borders of the deepest hell. But I am sure if you are a child of God, you will say when you have read your title clear and feel yourself justified in Christ Jesus,

*“Now, for the love I bear His name,
What was my gain, I count my loss;
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to His cross.”*

Yes, and I must and will esteem all things but loss for Jesus’ sake. O may my soul be found in Him, perfect in His righteousness! This will make you live near to Him—this will make you like unto Him. Do not think that this doctrine by dwelling on it will make you think lightly of sin. It will make you think of it as a hard and stern executioner to put Christ to death, as an awful load that could never be lifted from you except by the eternal arm of God.

And then you will come to hate it with all your soul, because it is rebellion against a loving and gracious God, and you shall by this means, far better than by any Arminian doubts or any legal quibbles, be led to walk in the footsteps of your Lord Jesus and to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes.

I think this whole sermon, though I have been preaching to the children of God, is meant for sinners too. Sinner, I would that you did say so. If you know this, that *he that believes is not condemned*, then, sinner, if you believe, you will not be condemned. And may all I have said tonight help you to this belief in your soul.

“Oh, but,” say you, “may I trust Christ?” As I said this morning, it is not a question of whether you may or may not, you are commanded. The Scripture commands the Gospel to be preached to every creature, and the Gospel is, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” I know you will be too proud to do it unless God by His grace should humble you.

But if you feel tonight that you are nothing and have nothing of your own, I think you will be right glad to take Christ to be your all in all. If you can say with poor Jack the Huckster,

“I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,”

you may go on and say with him, this night,

“But Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

God grant that it may be so, for His name’s sake. Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.