

SIN LAID ON JESUS NO. 694

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 10, 1866
BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;
and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”
Isaiah 53:6*

THE verse opens with a confession of sin *common* to all the persons intended in the verse. The whole of the elect people of God seem to me to be here represented, they have all fallen, those of them who have lived to years of responsibility have all actually sinned and therefore in common chorus they all say from the first who entered heaven to the last who shall enter there, “All we like sheep have gone astray.” But the confession, while thus hearty and unanimous, is also *special* and particular, “We have turned every one to his own way.”

There is a peculiar sinfulness about every one of the individuals. All are sinful, but each one with some special aggravation not found in his fellow. It is the mark of genuine repentance that while it naturally associates itself with other penitents, it also feels that it must take up a position of loneliness. “We have turned every one to his own way” is a confession importing that each man had sinned against light peculiar to himself or sinned with an aggravation which he at least could not perceive in his fellow.

This confession being thus general and particular has many other traits of excellence about it of which we cannot just now speak. It is very *unreserved*. You will observe that there is not a single syllable by way of excuse. There is not a word to detract from the force of the confession.

It is moreover singularly *thoughtful*, for thoughtless persons do not use a metaphor so appropriate as the text, “All we like sheep have gone astray.”

Not like the ox which “knoweth its owner,” nor even like the ass which “remembers its master’s crib,” nor even like the swine which if it wanders all day long comes back to the trough at night, but “like sheep we have gone astray.” Like a creature cared for but not capable of grateful attachment to the hand that cares for it, like a creature wise enough to find the gap in the hedge by which to escape, but so silly as to have no propensity or desire to return to the place from which it had perversely wandered. Like sheep habitually, constantly, willfully, foolishly, without power to return, we have gone astray.

I wish that all our confessions of sin showed a like thoughtfulness, for to say that we are “miserable sinners” may be an increase of our sin unless we have really felt it, to use words of general confession without our soul entering into them may be but a “repentance that needeth to be repented of,” an insult and mockery to high heaven vented in that very place where there ought to have been the greatest possible tenderness and holy fear.

I like the confession of the text because it is a giving up of all pleas of self-righteousness. It is the declaration of a body of men who are guilty, consciously guilty, guilty with aggravations, guilty without excuse, and here they all stand with their weapons of rebellion broken in pieces, saying unanimously, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.”

I hear no dolorous wailings attending this confession of sin, for the next sentence makes it almost a song. “The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” It is the most grievous sentence of the three, but it is the most charming and the most full of comfort. Strange is it that where misery was concentrated mercy reigned, and where sorrow reached her climax there it is that a weary soul finds sweetest rest. The Savior bruised is the healing of bruised hearts.

I want now to draw the hearts of all who feel the confession to the blessed doctrine set forth in the text, the LORD hath laid on Christ the iniquity of us all.

We shall take the text first by way of *exposition*, then by way of *application*. And we shall conclude with serious and I hope profitable *contemplation*.

I. First, let us consider the text by way of EXPOSITION.

1. It may be well to give the marginal translation of the text, “JEHOVAH hath made to meet on him the iniquity of us all.” The first thought that demands notice is *the meeting of sin*.

Sin I may compare to the rays of some evil sun. Sin was scattered throughout this world as abundantly as light, and Christ is made to suffer the full effect of the baleful rays which stream from the sun of sin. God as it were holds up a burning glass, and concentrates all the scattered rays in a focus upon Christ. That seems to be the thought of the text, “The LORD hath focused upon him the iniquity of us all.” That which was scattered abroad everywhere is here brought into terrible concentration, upon the devoted head of our blessed Lord all the sin of His people was made to meet.

Before a great storm when the sky is growing black and the wind is beginning to howl, you have seen the clouds hurrying from almost every point of the compass as though the great day of battle were come, and all the dread artillery of God were hurrying to the field.

In the center of the whirlwind and the storm, when the lightnings threatens to set all heaven on a blaze, and the black clouds fold on fold labor to conceal the light of day, you have a very graphic metaphor of the meeting of all sin upon the person of Christ. The sin of the ages past and the sin of the ages to come, the sins of those of the elect who were in heathendom, and of those who were in Jewry, the sin of the young and of the old, sin original and sin actual, all made to meet, all the black clouds concentrated and brought together into one great tempest that it might rush in one tremendous tornado upon the person of the great Redeemer and Substitute.

As when a thousand streamlets dash down the mountainside in the day of rain, and all meet in one deep swollen lake, that lake the Savior’s heart, those gushing torrents the sins of us all who are here described as making a full confession of our sins.

Or to take a metaphor not from nature but from commerce, suppose the debts of a great number of persons to be all gathered up, the scattered bonds and bills that are to be honored or dishonored on such and such a day, and all these laid upon one person who undertakes the responsibility of meeting every one of them without a single assistant. Such was the condition of the Savior, the Lord made to meet on Him the debts of all His people so that He became responsible for all the obligations of every one of those whom His Father had given Him whatever their debts might be.

Or if these metaphors do not suffice to set forth the meaning, take the text in our own version, “The LORD hath *laid on him* the iniquity of us all,” put upon Him as a burden is laid upon a man’s back all the burdens of all His people. Put upon His head as the high priest of old laid upon the scapegoat all the sin of the beloved ones that He might bear them in His own person. The two translations you see are perfectly consistent. All sins are made to meet, and then having met together and been tied up in one crushing load the whole burden is laid upon Him.

2. The second thought is that *sin was made to meet upon the suffering person of the innocent substitute*.

I have said “the suffering person” because the connection of the text requires it. “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with His stripes we are healed.” It is in connection with this, and as an explanation of all His grief, that it is added, “The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

The Lord Jesus Christ would have been incapable of receiving the sin of all His people as their substitute had He been Himself a sinner, but He was, as to His divine nature, worthy to be hymned as, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.” And as to His human nature, He was by miraculous conception free from all original sin, and in the holiness of His life He was such that He was the spotless

Lamb of God, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and therefore He was, on all accounts capable of standing in the room, place, and stead of sinful men.

The doctrine of the text is, that Jesus Christ, who was man of the substance of His mother, and who was, nevertheless, very God of very God, most true and glorious Creator, Preserver, did stand in such a position as to take upon Himself the iniquity of all His people, remaining still Himself innocent, having no personal sin, was incapable of any, but yet taking the sin of others upon Himself—it has been the custom of theologians to say—by *imputation*, but I question whether the use of that word, although correct enough as it is understood by us, may not have lent some color to the misrepresentations of those who oppose the doctrine of substitution.

I will not say that the sins of God's people were imputed to Christ, though I believe they were, but it seems to me that in a way more mysterious than that which imputation would express, the sins of God's people were actually laid upon Jesus Christ, that in the view of God, not only was Christ treated as if He had been guilty, but the very sin itself was, I know not how, but according to the text it was somehow laid upon the head of Christ Jesus, "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Is it not written, "He shall bear," not merely the punishment of their sin, nor the imputation of their sin, but "He shall bear their iniquities"? Our sin is laid on Jesus in even a deeper and truer sense than is expressed by the term imputation. I do not think I can express it, nor convey the idea that I have in my own mind, but while Jesus never was and never could be a sinner—God forbid that the blasphemous thought should ever cross our lips or dwell upon our heart!—yet the sin of His people was literally and truly laid upon Him.

3. It has been asked, *Was it just that sin should thus be laid upon Christ?* Our reply is fourfold. We believe it was rightly so, first because *it was the act of Him who must do right*, for "the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." JEHOVAH, He against whom the offense was committed, and who has ordained that the sin of the people spoken of should be laid upon Christ. To impugn this, then, would be to impugn the justice of JEHOVAH, and I pray that none of us may have the hardihood to do that.

Shall the potsherd venture to strive with the potter? shall the thing formed contend with the Creator of all things? JEHOVAH did it, and we accept it as being right, caring not what men may think of JEHOVAH's own deed. Remember, moreover, that *Jesus Christ voluntarily took this sin upon Himself*. It was not forced upon Him. He was not punished for the sins of others with whom He had no connection, and against His will. But He Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree, and while bearing it said, "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself."

It was according to His own eternal agreement made with the Father on our behalf. It was according to His own expressed desire, for He had a baptism to be baptized with, and He was straitened until it was accomplished. And therefore whatever of injustice might be supposed, it is removed by the fact that He who was mainly concerned in it was Himself voluntarily placed in such a position.

But I would have you remember, beloved, that *there was a relationship between our Lord and His people*, which is too often forgotten, but which rendered it natural that He should bear the sin of His people. Why does the text speak of our sinning like sheep? I think it is because it would call to our recollection that *Christ is our Shepherd*. It is not, my brethren, that Christ took upon Himself the sins of strangers. Remember that there always was a union of a most mysterious and intimate kind between those who sinned and the Christ who suffered.

What if I say that it is not unjust but according to law that when a woman gets into debt her husband should bear it? And the church of God sinning it was but right that her Husband, who had espoused her unto Himself, should become the debtor on her behalf. The Lord Jesus stood in the relationship of a married husband unto His church, and it was not, therefore, a strange thing that He should bear her burdens. It was natural for the next of kin to redeem the inheritance, it was most seemly that Immanuel, the next of kin, should redeem His lost church by His own blood.

Recollect that there was a union closer even than the marriage bond, for we are members of His Body. You shall not punish this hand of mine without making the sentient nature which dwells in the brain to suffer therewith. And does it seem strange to you that when the inferior members of the body have transgressed, the Head should be made to suffer? It seems to me, my brethren, that while substitution is full of grace, it is not unnatural, but according to the laws of everlasting love.

Yet there is a fourth consideration that may remove the difficulty of sin being laid upon Christ. It is not only that God laid it there, that Jesus voluntarily took it, and moreover was in such a union with His church that it was natural that He should take it, but you must remember that *this plan of salvation is precisely similar to the method of our ruin.*

How did we fall, my brethren? Not by any one of us actually ruining himself. I grant you that our own sin is the ground of ultimate punishment, but the ground of our original fall lay in another. I had no more to do with my fall than I have to do with my restoration. That is to say, the fall which made me a sinner was wholly accomplished long before I was born by the first Adam, and the salvation by which I am delivered was finished long before I saw the light by the second Adam on my behalf.

If we grant the fall—and we must grant the fact, however we may dislike the principle—we cannot think it unjust that God should give us a plan of salvation based upon the same principle of federal headship. Perhaps it is true, as has been conjectured by many, that because the fallen angels sinned one by one, there was no possibility of their restoration, but man's sinning, not one by one in the first place, but transgressing under a covenant head, there remained an opportunity for the restoration of the race by another covenant headship.

At any rate we, accepting the principle of the federal headship in the fall, joyfully receive it as to the restoration in Christ Jesus. It seems right then, on these four grounds, that the Lord should make the sins of all His people to meet upon Christ.

4. I beg you to observe in the fourth place, *that lying upon Christ brought upon Him all the consequences connected with it.* God cannot look where there is sin with any pleasure, and though as far as Jesus is personally concerned, He is the Father's beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. Yet when He saw sin laid upon His Son, He made that Son cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" It was not possible that Jesus should enjoy the light of His Father's presence while He was made sin for us. Consequently He went through a horror of great darkness, the root and source of which was the withdrawing of the conscious enjoyment of His Father's presence.

More than that, not only was light withdrawn, but positive sorrow was inflicted. God must punish sin, and though the sin was not Christ's by His actually doing it, yet it was laid upon Him, and therefore He was made a curse for us. What were the pangs which Christ endured? I cannot tell you. You have read the story of His crucifixion.

Dear friends, that is only the shell, but the inward kernel who shall describe? It is certain that Christ not only bore all that humanity could bear, but there was a Deity within which added extraordinary strength to His Humanity and enabled it to bear far more than it would otherwise have been able to endure.

I doubt not that in addition to this the Godhead within gave a peculiar sensitiveness to the holiness of Christ's nature, so that sin must have become even more abhorrent to Him than it would have been to a merely perfect man. His griefs are worthy to be described according to the Greek Liturgy as "unknown sufferings." The height and depth, the length and breadth of what Jesus Christ endured no heart can guess, nor tongue can tell, nor can imagination frame. God only knows the griefs to which the Son of God was put when the Lord made to meet upon Him the iniquity of us all.

To crown all there came death itself. Death is the punishment for sin, and whatever it may mean, whatever over and beyond natural death was intended in the sentence, "In the day thou eatest thereof you shall surely die," Christ felt. Death went through and through Him until "He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." "He became obedient to death, even to the death of the cross."

5. Dear friends, for a moment think of the result of all this. Sin meets on Christ and Christ is punished for sin, and what then? Why then sin is put away. If the penalty be endured justice asks no more. The debt discharged—there is no debt. The claim made and the claim met—the claim ceases to be. Though we could not meet that claim in our proper persons, yet we have met it in one who is so united and allied to us that we are in Him even as Levi was in the loins of Abraham.

Jesus Himself also is free. Upon Him the gathered tempest has spent itself, and not a single cloud lingers in the serene sky. Though the waters came His love has dried them up, His suffering has opened the sluices, and made the floods forever spend themselves. Though the bills were brought He has honored them all, and there is not one outstanding account against a single soul for whom He died as a substitute.

6. We cannot close the exposition of this verse without just remarking upon the “*us*” here intended. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of *us* all.” It is usually conceded by us who hold the doctrine of particular redemption that there was in the death of Christ very much of generality and universality. We believe that the atonement of Christ was infinite in value, and that if Christ had decreed to save every man of woman born, He need not have suffered another pang. There was sufficient power in His atonement if He had so willed it to have redeemed the entire race.

We believe also that by the death of Christ there is a general and honest invitation given to every creature under heaven in terms like these—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” We are not prepared, however, to go an inch beyond that. We hold that from the very nature of the satisfaction of Christ it could not have been made for any but for His elect, for Christ either did pay the debts of all men or He did not. If He did pay the debts of all men they are paid, and no man can be called to account for them.

If Christ was the surety of every man living, then how in the name of common justice is Christ to be punished and man punished too? If it be replied that the man would not accept the atonement, then I ask again, Was there a satisfaction given, for if so it was given whether the man accepts it or not, or else satisfaction by itself is powerless until man puts efficacy in it, which is preposterous to suppose.

If you take away from us the fact that Christ did really satisfy for those for whom He stood, we cry like Jacob, “If I am bereaved I am bereaved.” You have taken away all that is worth having, and what have you given us in its place? You have given us a redemption which confessedly does not redeem. You have given us an atonement which is made equally for the lost in hell and for the saved in heaven. And what is the intrinsic value of such an atonement?

If you tell us that Christ made a satisfactory atonement for every one of the human race, we ask you how it was that He made an atonement for those that must have been in the flames of hell thousands of years before He came into this world?

My brethren, ours has the advantage of universality in its proclamation and in its *bona fide* offer, for there is no man living who shall believe in Jesus who shall not be saved by Christ. But it has a greater advantage than this, namely, that those who do believe are saved by it, and they know that Christ made such an atonement for them that for them to be punished for sin would be as much a violation of justice as it would of mercy.

O my soul! You know this day that all your sins were made to meet on Christ, and that He bore the punishment for them all.

***“He bore that we might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire.”***

Here is a rock to stand on, a safe resting place for those who trust in Jesus. As for you who trust Him not, your blood be upon your own heads! If you trust Him not, you have no part nor lot in this matter, you shall go down to your own punishment to bear it yourselves. The Wrath of God abides on you, you shall find that the blood of Jesus has made no atonement for your sins. You have rejected the invitation

that was given, and put far from you the cross of Christ, and upon your heads the pardoning blood shall never drop, and for you it shall never plead, but you must perish under the law because you refuse to be saved under the Gospel.

II. Let us come briefly to the APPLICATION.

Dear hearer, a friend now puts a question to you. There is a countless company whose sins the Lord Jesus bore, *did He bear yours?* Do you wish to have an answer? Are you unable to give one? Let me read this verse to you and see if you can join in it. I do not mean join in it saying, “That is true,” but feeling that it is true in your own souls. “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

If there be in you this morning a penitential confession which leads you to acknowledge that you have erred and strayed like a lost sheep, if there be in you a personal sense of sin which makes you feel that you have turned to your own way, and if now you can trust in Jesus, then a second question is not wanted. The Lord hath laid on Him your iniquity, and the iniquity of all such as confess their sin and look alone to Christ.

But if you will not trust to Christ, I cannot say to you that the Lord has taken the sin from you and laid it upon Christ, for in my soul I know that living and dying as you now are, that sin of yours will rise up in judgment against you to condemn you.

Dear friend, I will venture to say you, are you reconciled to God’s way of getting rid of sin? Do you feel any joy in your heart at the thought of Jesus bearing sin for you and suffering for you? If you do not, I cannot offer you the consolation which the text gives to those who submit to it. But let me ask you, do you mean to bear your sin yourself? Do you know what that means? Jesus smarted when He bore the sin of His people, but what a smart shall yours be when you bear your own! “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.”

There are some nowadays who are mightily angry at the doctrine of everlasting punishment. I too, might be angry at it if it were an invention of man, but when it is most certainly threatened in God’s Book, it is vain for me to kick against the pricks. My question should not be, “How can I dispute against it?” but “How can I escape from it?”

Dear hearer, do not venture into God’s presence with your sins upon yourself. Even our God is a consuming fire, and His fury will break forth against you when you come to stand there. Have you an imagination that your own merits may make atonement for sin? I pray you think what Christ had to do before He could cast sin off from Himself, what griefs He bore, through what an ocean of wrath He passed.

And do you think that your poor merits, if they be merits, can ever avail to do what the Savior suffered so much to accomplish? Do you hope to escape without a punishment? If you do, let me pray you to think the matter over, for if God smote His own Son, do you think He will permit you to go scot-free? If the King of Glory, when He only takes others’ sins upon Him, must needs die, what do you think will become of you, poor worm of the dust?

Think you that God will be unjust in order to save you? Do you suppose that He will be hail fellow, well met! with you, and revoke His own sentence because you do not choose to be saved by a plan which is both just to Him and safe to you? Shall God be unjust to pander to your fancies, or indulge your lusts?

Sinner, bow the knee to this plan of salvation, for let it be known to you—and I speak now, knowing what I say, and coolly too—there is none other plan of salvation under heaven. There may be other ways of salvation preached, but other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

If you shall struggle after salvation individually, and hope to get to heaven apart from the headship of Christ, you may struggle, but you shall be like the Jews of old who had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. If you shall be going about to establish your own righteousness, but not submitting yourself to the righteousness of Christ, you shall perish.

But let me ask you, does not this plan commend itself to you? If I trust Jesus, this is to me the evidence that He took my sins and suffered in my place. Oh the joy it gives me! I speak to you honestly of my own experience now, there is no doctrine that fires my soul with such delight as that of substitution. The doctrine of atonement, as it is often preached, is a hazy, misty doing of something by which the law is honored, or perhaps dishonored, for I scarcely know which to call it, this yields me no joy.

But when I know that Christ was literally and positively, not metaphorically and by way of figure, but literally and positively the substitute for His own people, and when I know that trusting in Him I have the evidence of being one of His people, why my soul begins to say, Now let me live! I'm clean, through Jesu's blood I'm clean. Now let me die! for I shall boldly stand in the day of resurrection, through Jesus my Lord.

Why, soul, it seems to me as if it were enough to make you leap into the arms of Christ crucified! covered with blood for you! disinterestedly suffering for His own enemies that they might live! Oh stay not away!

*“Come, guilty souls, and flee away
Like doves to Jesu's wounds;
This is the welcome Gospel-day,
Wherein free grace abounds.*

*“God loved the church, and gave His Son
To drink the cup of wrath;
And Jesus says He'll cast out none
Who come to Him by faith.”*

III. Now consecrate a few minutes to hallowed CONTEMPLATION.

1. You do not want talk, you want thought, I will give you four things to think of. The first is *the astounding mass of sin that must have been laid on Christ*. Now do not jump at it and say, “Yes, the sins of the millions of His elect.” Do not leap at that, get at it by degrees. Begin with your own sin. Have you ever felt that?—your own sin. No, you never felt the full weight of it. If you did you would have been in hell.

It is the weight of sin that makes hell. Sin bears its own punishment in its own weight. Do you remember when you felt that the pains of hell got hold upon you, and you found trouble and sorrow? That hour when you called upon the name of the Lord, saying, “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul!” Then you only felt as it were the little end of your sins, but all your sins, what must they weigh!

How old are you? You know not how old you may be before you enter into rest, but all the sins of all your years He carried. All the sins against light and knowledge, sins against law and Gospel, weekday sins, Sabbath sins, hand sins, lip sins, heart sins, sins against the Father, sins against the Son, sins against the Holy Ghost, sins of all shapes, all laid upon Him. Can you get the thought now?

Now multiply that. Think of the sins of all the rest of His people, persecutions and murders at the door of such a one as Saul of Tarsus, adultery at the door of David—sins of every shape and size, for God's elect have been among the chief of sinners. Those whom He has chosen have not been the best of men by nature, but some of them the very worst, and yet sovereign grace delighted to find a home for itself where seven devils had dwelt before, nay, where a legion of devils held their carnival.

Christ looks abroad among the sons of men, and while a Pharisee is passed by, Zaccheus the publican is selected—and the sins of all these with their full weight laid upon Him. The weight of sin would have crushed all these into hell forever, and yet Christ bore all that weight. And what if I venture to say the very eternity and infinity of wrath that was due for all that mass of sin, the Son of God marvelously sustained by the infinity of the Godhead within, bore and sustained the whole.

I would like to stop a minute and let you turn it over, but when you go home perhaps you will spend half an hour very profitably in thinking that—

*“The enormous load of human guilt
Was on my Savior laid;
With woes as with a garment He
For sinners was arrayed.”*

2. The next subject I offer you for contemplation is this, *the amazing love of Jesus which brought Him to do all this*. Remember Paul’s way of putting it. “Scarcely for a righteous (or strictly just) man will one die; preadventure for a good (or benevolent) man one might even dare to die; but God commendeth his love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.”

When Christ has renewed us by His Spirit, there may be a temptation to imagine that some excellency in us won the Savior’s heart, but my brethren, you must understand that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. Not that infant washed and swaddled, not that fair maiden with the jewel in her ear, and with the pure golden crown upon her head, not that lovely princess, presented like a chaste virgin to her husband. No, that was not what Jesus saw when He died. He saw all that in the glass of His prescience, but the actual condition of that fair maid was very different when He died for her, she was cast out, unwashed, unsalted, unswaddled, in her blood, a foul, filthy thing.

Ah! my brethren, there is no filthy thing under heaven so filthy as a filthy sinner. When there was not a ray of beauty to be discovered in us, when neither without nor within a single thing could be found to commend us, but we were morally altogether abhorrent to the Holy nature of Christ, then—oh wondrous grace!—He came from the highest heaven that the mass of our sin might meet on Him.

I met with this question the other day, which seemed a novel one to me. The question was asked thus, “Suppose you had a child that had leprosy, or some other foul disease. Suppose this dear child of yours was infected and contaminated to the most loathsome degree in every part, till the eyes were blinded and the hands were rotting, and the heart was turning to stone, and the whole body was covered with wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.

Now, suppose there were no cure for this child but for your perfectly sane and healthy soul, supposing it to be such, to be put into that child’s body, and for you to bear that child’s diseases instead of that child. Would you consent to it?” I can suppose a mother’s love yielding even to that, but the more disgusted you had been with those putrefying sores, the more terrible would the task become.

Now that only touches the fringe of the work which Jesus did for us when He Himself took our sins and bore our sicknesses. Such a wonderful union is there between Christ and the sinner that I venture to say there are some expressions in the New Testament and in the Old with regard to Christ’s connection with the sin of man that I would not dare to use except as direct quotations from Holy Writ. But being there you shall see how wondrously the love of Jesus Christ induced Him to take upon Himself our sad condition and plight.

But oh the love! Oh the love! Nay, I will not speak of it, you must muse upon it. Silence is sometimes the best eloquence, and it will be best for me to say to you, oh the depths of the love of Jesus! Unsearchable, past finding out! God over all, blessed forever, should have laid on Him the iniquity of us all!

3. Wonder of wonders that I need another minute to set you thinking on another subject, *the matchless security which this plan of salvation offers*. I do not see at what point that man is vulnerable who can feel and know that Christ has borne his sin. I look at the attributes of God, and though to me, as a sinner, they all seem bristling as with sharp points, thrusting themselves upon me, yet when I know that Jesus died for me, and did literally take my sin, what fear I the attributes of God?

There is Justice, sharp and bright, like a lance, but justice is my friend. If God be just, He cannot punish me for sin for which Jesus has offered satisfaction. As long as there is justice in the heart of Deity, it cannot be that a soul justly claiming Christ as his substitute can himself be punished.

As for mercy, love, truth, honor, everything matchless, Godlike and divine about Deity, I say of all these, “You are my friends. You are all guarantees that since Jesus died for me I cannot die.” How grandly does the apostle put it! It seems to me as if he never was worked up by the Holy Spirit to such a pitch of eloquence as when speaking about the death and resurrection of the Savior, he propounds that splendid question, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

There, where eternal justice sits upon a flaming throne, the apostle gazes with eyes undimmed into the ineffable splendor, and though someone seems to say, “The Judge will condemn,” he replies, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” Can He justify and then condemn us? He justifies those for whom Christ died, for we are justified by His resurrection. How then shall He condemn?

And then he lifts up his voice yet again—“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who sitteth at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

On other grounds a man must feel unsafe, but here he may know himself sure. Go you that will, and build upon your sandy foundations. Run up your superstructures till they are as high as Babel’s tower, and tumble about your ears unable to support their own weight. But as for me, my soul shall rest upon this solid rock of substitution, and clinging to the rock with confident resolve, I know that I have no cause for fear since Jesus died for me.

4. Lastly, I desire to give you as a subject for contemplation, and I pray you do not forget it, this question, *What then are the claims of Jesus Christ upon you and upon me?* Brethren and sisters, I have sometimes wished to be eloquent, never when I had a cause to plead in which I was myself involved, but when I have had to speak for Jesus. But indeed, there is no need of eloquence here. Your hearts shall be the pleaders, His agonies shall be the plea.

Did our blessed Lord take your sin, my brethren, and suffer all its terrific consequences for you, so that you are delivered? By His blood and wounds, by His death, and by the love that made Him die, I conjure you treat Him as He should be treated! Love Him as He should be loved! Serve him as He should be served!

You will tell me that you have obeyed His precepts. I am glad to hear it. Are you sure that you have? “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Have you kept the ordinances as He delivered them? Have you sought to be obedient to Him in all respects? In all your Lord’s appointed ways have you scrupulously pursued your journey? If you can say this I am not content. It does not seem to me that with such a leader as Christ, mere obedience should be all.

Napoleon singularly enough had power to get the hearts of men twisted and twined about him, when he was in his wars there were many of his captains and even of his private soldiers who not only marched with the quick obedience of a soldier wherever they were bidden, but who felt an enthusiasm for him.

Have you never heard of him who threw himself in the way of the shot to receive it in his bosom to save the Emperor? No obedience, no law could have required that of him, but enthusiastic love moved him to it. And it is such enthusiasm that my Master deserves in the very highest degree from us. It is out of and beyond all categories of law, it is far exceeding all that law ventured to ask, and yet not supererogation for all that, for you are not under the law but under grace. And you will do more out of love than you would have done out of the compulsion of demand.

What shall I do for my Master? What shall I do for my Lord? How shall I set Him forth? My brethren and sisters, my highest aim before God, next to the conversion of the unconverted among you, is this, that you who do love Christ may really love Him and act as if you did. I hope you will never become a dead cold church.

Oh may my ministry never help to lull you into such a state as that! If Jesus Christ does not deserve everything of you He does not deserve anything. You do not know anything of His claims if you do not feel that—

*“If you could make some reserve,
And duty did not call;
You love the Lord with zeal so great
That you must give Him all.”*

Christ stands for me, oh may I learn to stand for Him, and plead for Him, and live for Him, and suffer for Him, and pray for Him, and preach and labor for Him as He may help me! May I remind you each individually as you all followed your own way, and individually had some sin to increase that burden, to pay Him individual service? Contribute of your substance to the common work of the church, and do that constantly and as a matter of delight. Our college which is doing so much service greatly needs and demands the help of all who love our work, and love the Lord’s truth.

But in addition to that, do something for yourself, speak for Christ yourself, have some work in hand on your own account. Do, I say again, at all times assist the work of the combined body, for that will be a great work, God being in us as our life and stay, and let no man withhold of his substance from Christ’s cause. But still that is not all, He does not ask your pocket only but also your heart. It is not the pence, it is the activities of the soul. It is not the shillings and the guineas and so on, but it is your very inmost soul, the core of your spirit. O Christian, by the blood of Jesus devote yourself to Him again!

In the old Roman battles it sometimes happened that the strife seemed dubious, and a captain, inspired by superstitious patriotism would stand upon his sword and devote himself to destruction for the good of his country, and then, according to those old legends, the battle always turned.

Now, men and brethren, sisters, every one of you who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, devote yourselves this day to live, to die, to spend, and to be spent for King Jesus. You will be no fool, for no man ever had an ambition more worthy. You will not be devoting yourself to one who does not deserve it. You know how much you owe Him, nay, you do not know to the fullest extent, the depth of your obligation, but you know you owe Him all that you have, your escape from hell and your hope of heaven. Follow me this morning in these verses—

*“Tis done, the great transaction’s done;
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine:
He drew me, and I follow’d on,
Charm’d to confess the voice divine.*

*“Now rest, my long-divided heart;
Fix’d on this blissful center rest;
With ashes who would grudge to part,
When call’d on angel’s bread to feast?*

*“High heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renew’d shall daily hear;
Till in life’s latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear.”*

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ISAIAH 53

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.