HONEY FROM A LION

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A SERMON
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"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many."
Romans 5:15

THIS text affords many openings for controversy. It can be made to bristle with difficulties. For instance—there might be a long discussion as to the manner in which the fall of Adam can justly be made to affect the condition of his posterity. When this is settled, there might arise a question as to the exact way in which Adam's fault is connected with ourselves—whether by imputation of its sin, or in what other form.

And then there might be further dispute as to the limit of the evil resulting from our first parents' offense, and the full meaning of the Fall, original sin, natural depravity, and so forth. There would be another splendid opportunity for a great battle over the question of the extent of the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ—whether it covers, as to persons, the whole area of the ruin of the Fall, whether, in fact, full atonement has been made for all mankind or only for the elect.

It would be easy in this way to set up a thorn-hedge, and keep the sheep out of the pasture. Or to use another metaphor, to take up so much time in pelting each other with the stones as to leave the fruit untasted. I have, at this time, neither the inclination nor the mental strength either to suggest or to remove the difficulties, which are so often the amusement of unpractical minds.

I feel more inclined to chime in with that ancient father of the church who declined controversy in a wise and explicit manner. He had been speaking concerning the things of God, and found himself at length confounded by a certain clamorous disputant, who shouted again and again, "Hear me! Hear me!" "No," said the father, "I will not hear *you*, nor shall you hear *me*, but we will both be quiet and hear what our Lord Jesus Christ has to say."

So we will not at this time listen to this side nor to that, but we will bow our ear to hear what the Scripture itself has to say apart from all the noise of sect and party. My object shall be to find out in the text that which is practically of use to us, that which may save the unconverted, that which may comfort and build up those of us who are brought into a state of reconciliation with God. For I have of late been so often shut up in my sick chamber that when I do come forth, I must be more than ever eager for fruit to the glory of God.

We shall not, therefore, dive into the deeps with the hope of finding pearls, for these could not feed hungry men. But we will navigate the surface of the sea, and hope that some favoring wind will bear us to the desired haven with a freight of corn wherewith to supply the famishing. May the Holy Spirit bless the teaching of this hour to the creation and nourishment of saving faith.

I. The first observation from the text is this—THE APPOINTED WAY OF OUR SALVATION IS BY THE FREE GIFT OF GOD.

We were ruined by the Fall, but we are saved by a free gift. The text tells us that "the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Although this doctrine is well-known, and is taught in our synagogues every Sabbath day, yet this grand essential truth is often enough forgotten or ignored, so that it had need be repeated again and again.

I could wish that every time the clock struck it said, "By grace are ye saved." I could wish that there were a trumpet voice ringing out at daybreak both on sea and land, over the whole round globe the words, "By grace are ye saved." As Martin Luther said of a certain other truth so say I of this, "You so constantly forget it that I feel inclined to take the Bible and beat it about your head, that you may feel it and keep it in remembrance."

Men do not naturally love the doctrine of grace, and therefore they cast it out of their minds as much as possible. The larger portion of mankind do not believe that salvation is of grace—another part of them profess to believe it, but do not understand its meaning—and many who do understand it have never yielded to it or embraced it. Happy are they who belong to the remnant according to the election of grace, for they know right well the joyful sound, and they walk in the light of the glory of the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus.

Observe, that salvation is a free gift, that is to say, it is bestowed upon men by God *without regard to any merit, supposed or real*. Grace has to do with the guilty. Mercy, in the very nature of things, is not a fit gift for the righteous and deserving, but for the undeserving and sinful. When God deals out to men His gracious salvation, they are regarded by Him as lost and condemned, and He treats them as persons who have no claim upon Him whatsoever, to whom nothing but His free favor can bring deliverance.

He saves them, not because He perceives that they have done anything that is good, or have hopeful traits of character, or form resolutions to aspire to something better—but simply because He is merciful, and delights to exercise His grace, and manifest His free favor and infinite love.

It is according to the nature of God to pity the miserable and forgive the guilty, "For he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever." God has a reason for saving men, but that reason does not lie in man's merit in any degree whatever. This is clear from the fact that He often begins His work of grace upon those who can least of all be credited with goodness.

It was said of our Lord, "This man receiveth sinners," and the saying was most emphatically true. Sovereign grace selects such as Rahab the harlot, and Manasseh the persecutor, and Saul of Tarsus, the mad zealot against Christ—such as these have been seized upon by grace, and arrested in infinite love, that in them the Lord might manifest the power and plenitude of His mercy. Salvation is a work which is begun by the pure, unpurchased, free favor of God, and in the same spirit it is carried on and perfected. Pure grace, which lays the foundation, also brings forth the top stone.

Salvation is also brought to men *irrespective of any merit which God foresees will be in man*. Foresight of the existence of grace cannot be the cause of grace. God Himself does not foresee that there will be any good thing in any man, except what He foresees that He will put there.

What is the reason, then, why He determines that He will put it there? That reason, so far as we are informed, is this, "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy." The Lord determines to display His love, and set on active work His attribute of grace, therefore does He save men according to the good pleasure of His will.

If there be salvation given to men upon the foresight of what they are yet to be, it is clear it is a matter of works and debt, and not of grace. But the Scripture is most decided that it is not of works, but of unmingled grace, for says the apostle, "If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." Our text is express that salvation is "the free gift," and that it comes to us by "the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ."

I go a little further in trying to explain how salvation is a free gift, by saying that it is given *without reference to conditions which imply any desert.* But I hear one murmur, "God will not give grace to men who do not repent." I answer, God gives men grace to repent, and no man ever repents till first grace is given him by which he is led to repentance.

"God will not give His grace to those who do not believe," says one. I reply, God gives grace to men by which they are moved to believe, and it is through the grace of God that they are brought into the faith of Jesus Christ.

You may say, if you please, that repentance and faith are conditions of salvation, and I will not quarrel with you. But please remember that they are not conditions in the sense of deserving anything from God. They may be conditions of receiving, but they are not conditions of purchasing, for salvation is without money and without price. We are expressly told that salvation "is of faith, that it might be by grace"—for faith is not to be numbered with works of the law, to which the idea of merit may be attached.

Faith is far as the poles asunder from claiming anything of God by way of debt. Faith comes as a poor, undeserving thing, and simply trusts the free mercy of God. It never attempts to wear the crown, or grasp a particle of praise. The believer never can be a boaster, for boasting is excluded by the law, of faith.

If a Christian should begin to boast, it would be because his believing is failing, and his evil nature is coming to the front. For faith is of all the graces most self-denying. Her song is always, *Non nobis Domine*, "Not unto us, but unto thy name give praise."

While, therefore, the Word of God assures us that except we repent we shall all likewise perish, and that if we believe not in Jesus Christ we shall die in our sins, it would have us at the same time know that there is no merit in repenting or believing, but grace reigns in God's acceptance of these graces.

We are not to regard the requirement of faith, repentance, and confession of sin as at all militating against the fullness and freeness of divine grace, since, in the first place, both repentance, faith, and true confession of sin are all gifts of grace. And in the next place, they have no merit in themselves, being only such things as honest men should render when they know that they have erred and are promised forgiveness.

To be sorry for my sin is no recompense for having sinned. And to believe God to be true is no work for which I may demand a reward. If, then, I am saved through faith, it is of the pure mercy of God, and of that alone that pardon comes to me.

Beloved, so far is God from giving salvation to men as a matter of reward and debt, and therefore bestowing it only upon the good and excellent, that *He is pleased to bestow that salvation over the head of sin and in the teeth of rebellion.* As I said before, mercy and grace are for the sinful, for none others need them, and God's grace comes to us when we are far off by wicked works. "God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Free grace breaks forth like a mighty flood, and sweeps in torrents over the hills of our transgressions, rising above the high alps of our presumptuous sins. Twenty cubits upward does this sea of grace prevail till the tops of the mountains of iniquity are covered. The Lord passes by transgression, iniquity, and sin, and remembers not the iniquity of His people, because He delights in mercy.

Almsgiving needs a pauper, and grace needs a sinner. There is no opportunity for forgiveness where there is no offense. If men are meritorious, how can God be gracious to them? In such a case it will be enough for Him to be just. When good works can put in a valid claim, peace and heaven can be obtained by the rules of debt. But since it is clear that eternal life is the gift of pure favor, you need not marvel when I say that grace comes to men leaping over the mountains of their iniquities.

Abounding mercy delights to blot out abounding sin, and it will never lack for opportunity to do its pleasure. There is no lack of occasions for grace in this poor fallen world, and of all the places where there is most room I know of one spot not far from here where there is a grand opportunity for infinite mercy, and super abounding grace to exercise their power.

Here is the spot—it is this treacherous, guilty heart of mine. I think, my brother, you know of another spot that is very like it. And you, my sister, too, can say, "Wondrous mercy! Surely there is room for all its heights and depths to be shown in this sinful soul of mine." Ay, and it will be shown,

too, if you can but look for it through Christ Jesus—for it is the delight of God's grace to flow into unlikely places. Mercy is the glory of God, and He loves to bestow it on those who least deserve it.

We are saved by grace, free grace, pure grace, grace without regard to merit or to the possibility of such a thing, and *many of us have been saved by grace of the most abounding and extraordinary sort.* Some of us will be prodigies of divine love, miracles of mercy, to be wondered at throughout eternity. We shall be set up in heaven as monuments for angels to gaze at, in which they shall see a display of the amazing goodness of the Lord.

Some of us, I said, but I suppose that in each one of the redeemed there is some particular development of grace which will make him specially remarkable, so that the whole body of us, as one glorified church, shall be made known unto angels, and principalities, and powers, the manifold wisdom of God. Oh, what a revelation of grace and mercy will be seen when all the blood-washed race shall gather safely around the eternal throne, and sing their hallelujahs unto Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood.

Note one thing more concerning this plan of salvation, that *all this grace comes to us through the one man Jesus Christ*. I sometimes hear people talking about a "one man ministry." I know what they mean, but I know also that I am saved by a one man ministry, even by one who trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him.

I was lost by a one man ministry, when father Adam fell in Eden. But I was saved by a one man ministry, when the blessed Lord Jesus Christ bore my sin in His own body on the tree. O matchless ministry of love, when the Lord from heaven came into the world and took upon Himself our nature, and became in all respects human, and being found in fashion as a man, was obedient to death, even the death of the cross! It is through the one man, Christ Jesus, that all the grace of God comes streaming down to all the chosen.

Mercy flows to no man save through the one appointed channel, Jesus Christ the Son of man. Get away from Christ, and you leave the highway of God's everlasting love—pass this door, and you shall find no entrance into life. You must drink from this conduit-pipe, or you must thirst forever, and ask in vain for a drop of water to cool your parched tongue.

"In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." All the infinite mercy of God and love of God—and God Himself is love—is concentrated in the person of the well-beloved Son of the Highest, and unto Him be glory forever. Sing unto Him, you angels! Chant His praise, you redeemed! For by the one man Christ Jesus the whole company of the elect have been delivered from the wrath to come, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God.

Thus I have tried to set before you God's way of salvation.

II. Starting aside, as it may seem, from the current of our thoughts, but only with the view of coming back to it with a forcible argument, we next note that IT IS CERTAIN THAT GREAT EVILS HAVE COME TO US BY THE FALL.

Paul speaks in this text of ours of the "offense," which word may be read the "Fall," which was caused by the stumbling of our father Adam. Our fall in Adam is a type of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, but the type is not able completely to set forth all the work of Christ—hence the apostle says, "But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

It is certain, then, that we were heavy losers by the offense of the first father and head of our race. I am not going into details and particulars, but it is clear that we have *lost the garden of Eden*, and all its delights, privileges, and immunities, its communion with God, and its freedom from death. We have lost our first honor and health, and we have become the subjects of pain and weakness, suffering and death—this is the effect of the Fall.

A desert now howls where otherwise a garden would have smiled. Through the sin of Adam we have been born under conditions which are far from being desirable, heirs to *a heritage of sorrow*. Our griefs

have been alleviated by the bounty of God, but still we are not born under such conditions as might have been ours had Adam remained in his integrity and kept his first estate.

We came into the world with *a bias towards evil*. Those of us who have any knowledge of our own nature must confess that there is in us a strong tendency towards sin, which is mixed up with our very being. This is not derived solely from faults of education, or from the imitation of others. But there is a bent within us in the wrong direction, and this has been there from our birth. Alas! that it should be so, but so it is.

In addition to having this tendency to sin, we are made *liable to death*—nay, not liable alone, but we are sure in due time to bow our heads beneath the fatal stroke. Two only of the human race have escaped death, but the rest have left their bodies here to molder back into mother earth, and unless the Lord comes speedily, we expect that the same thing will happen to these bodies of ours.

While we live, we know that the *sweat of our brow* must pay the price of our bread. We know that our children must be born with pangs and travail. We know that we ourselves must return to the dust from whence we are taken, for dust we are, and unto dust we must return. O Adam, you did a sad day's work for us when you listened to the voice of your wife and eat of the forbidden tree. The world has no more a paradise anywhere, but everywhere it has the place of wailing and the field of the dead.

Where can you go and not find traces of the first transgression in the sepulchre and its moldering bones? Every field is fattened with the dust of the departed—every wave of the sea is tainted with atoms of the dead. Scarcely blows a March wind down our streets but it sweeps aloft the dust either of Caesar or his slave, of ancient Briton, or modern Saxon, for the globe is worm-eaten by death.

Sin has scarred, and marred, and spoiled this creation by making it subject to vanity through its offense. Thus terrible evils have come to us by an act in which we had no hand—we were not in the Garden of Eden, we did not incite Adam to rebellion, and yet we have become sufferers through no deed of ours. Say what you will about it, the fact remains, and cannot be escaped from.

This sad truth leads me on to the one which is the essence of the text, and constitutes my third observation.

III. FROM THE FALL WE INFER THE MORE ABUNDANT CERTAINTY THAT SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH CHRIST JESUS SHALL COME TO BELIEVERS.

If all this mischief has happened to us through the fall of Adam, why should not immense blessing flow to us by the work of Christ? Through Adam's transgression we lost paradise, that is certain. But if anything can be more certain, we may with greater positiveness declare that the second Adam will restore the ruin of the first. If through the offense of one man many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, shall abound and has abounded unto many.

Settle in your minds, then, that the fall of Adam has wrought us great damage, and then be as much assured that the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, in which we had no hand whatever, must do us great service. Believing in Christ Jesus, it becomes beyond all measure sure to us that we are blessed in Him, seeing that it is already certain that through the fall of Adam we have become subject to sorrow and death.

For, first, *this appears to be more delightful to the heart of God*. It must be fully according to His gracious nature that salvation should come to us through His Son. I can understand that God, having so arranged it that the human race should be regarded as one, and should stand or fall before Him in one man, should carry out the arrangement to its righteous end, and allow the consequences of sin to fall upon succeeding generations of men—but yet I know that He takes no pleasure in the death of any, and finds no delight in afflicting mankind.

When the first Adam transgressed, it was inevitable that the consequences of his transgression should descend to his posterity, and yet I can imagine a perfectly holy mind questioning whether the arrangement would be carried out. I can conceive of angels saying to one another, "Will all men die

through this entrance of sin into the world? Can it be that the innumerable sons of Adam will all suffer from his disobedience?"

But I cannot imagine any question being raised about the other point, namely, the result of the work of our Lord Jesus. If God has so arranged it that in the second Adam men rise and live, it seems to me most gloriously consistent with His gracious nature and infinite love that it should come to pass that all who believe in Jesus should be saved through Him.

I cannot imagine angels hesitating and saying, "Christ has been born, Christ has lived, Christ has died—these men have had nothing to do with that—will God save them for the sake of His Son?" Oh, no, they must have felt, as they saw the babe born at Bethlehem, as they saw Him living His perfect life, and dying His atoning death, "God will bless those who are in Christ. God will save Christ's people for Christ's sake."

As for ourselves, we are sure that if the Lord executes judgment, which is His strange work, He will certainly carry out mercy, which is His delight. If He kept to the representative principle when it involved consequences which gave Him no pleasure, we may be abundantly assured that He will keep to it now that it will involve nothing but good to those concerned in it. Here, then, is the argument—"For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

This assurance becomes stronger still when we think that *it seems more inevitable that men should be saved by the death of Christ than that men should be lost by the sin of Adam*. It might seem possible that, after Adam had sinned, God might have said, "Notwithstanding this covenant of works, I will not lay this burden upon the children of Adam." But it is not possible that after the eternal Son of God has become man, and has bowed His head to death, God should say, "Yet after all I will not save men for Christ's sake."

Stand and look at the Christ upon the cross, and mark those wounds of His, and you will become absolutely certain that sin can be pardoned, nay, must be pardoned to those who are in Christ Jesus. Those flowing drops of blood demand with a voice that cannot be gainsaid that iniquity should be put away.

If the voice of Abel crying from the ground was prevalent, how much more the blood of the only begotten Son of God, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot. It cannot be, O God, that You should despise or forget the sacrifice on Calvary. Grace must flow to sinners through the bleeding Savior, seeing that death came to men through their transgressing progenitor.

I do not know whether I shall get into the very soul of this argument as I desire, but to me it is very sweet to look at *the difference as to the causes of the two effects*. Look now at the occasion of our ruin—"the offense of one." The one man transgresses, and you and I and all of us come under sin, sorrow, and death. What are we told is the fountain of these streams of woe? The one action of our first parents.

Far be it from me to say a word to depreciate the greatness of their crime, or to raise a question as to the justice of its consequences. I think no one can have a more decided opinion upon that point than I have. For the offense was very great, and the principle which led to our participation in its results is a just one, and what is more, is fraught with the most blessed after-consequences to fallen men, since it has left them a door of hope of their rising by the same method which led to their fall.

Yet the sin which destroyed us was the transgression of a finite being, and cannot be compared in power with the grace of the infinite God. It was the sin of a moment, and therefore cannot be compared for force and energy with the everlasting purpose of divine love.

If, then, the comparatively feeble fount of Adam's sin sends forth a flood which drowns the world in sorrow and death, what must be the boundless blessing poured forth from the infinite source of divine grace? The grace of God is like His nature, omnipotent and unlimited. God has not a measure of love, but He is love—love to the uttermost dwells in Him. God is not only gracious to this degree or to that, but He is gracious beyond measure—we read of "the exceeding riches of his grace." He is "the God of all grace" and His mercy is great above the heavens.

Our largest conceptions fall far short of the loving-kindness and pity of God, for, "His merciful kindness is great towards us." As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are His thoughts above our thoughts in the direction of grace. If, then, my brethren, the narrow fountain which yielded bitter and poisonous waters has sufficed to slay the myriads of the human race, how much more shall the river of God which is full of water, even the river of the water of life, which proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, supply life and bliss to every man that believes in Christ Jesus?

Thus says Paul, "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." That is the argument of the text, and to me it seems to be a very powerful one, sufficient to dash out the very life of unbelief and enable every penitent man to say, "I see what I have lost in Adam, but I also see how much I obtain through Christ Jesus, my Lord, when I humbly yield myself to Him."

Furthermore, I would have you note *the difference of the channels* by which the evil and the good were severally communicated to us. In each case it was, "by one," but what a difference in the persons! We fell through Adam, a name not to be pronounced without reverence, seeing he is the chief patriarch of the race, and the children should honor the parent. Let us not think too little of the head of the human family.

Yet what is the first Adam as compared with the second Adam? He is but of the earth earthy, but the second man is the Lord from heaven. He was at best a mere man, but our Redeemer counts it not robbery to be equal with God.

Surely, then, if Adam with that puny hand of his could pull down the house of our humanity, and hurl this ruin on our first estate, that greater man, who is also the Son of God, can fully restore us and bring back to our race the golden age. If one man could ruin by his fault, surely an infinitely greater man in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily can restore us by the abounding grace of God.

And look, my brethren, what this man did. Adam commits *one* fault and spoils us, but Christ's works and achievements are not one, but many as the stars of heaven. Look at that life of obedience—it is like a crown set with all manner of priceless jewels—all the virtues are in it, and it is without flaw in any point. If one sinful action of our first covenant head destroys, shall not a whole life of holiness, on the part of our second covenant representative be accepted for us?

But what is more, Adam did but eat of the forbidden fruit, but our Lord Jesus died, pouring out His soul unto death, bearing the sin of His people upon Himself. Such a death must have more force in it than the sad deed of Adam. Shall it not save us? Is there any comparison between the one act of rebellion in the garden, and the matchless deed of superlative obedience upon the cross of Calvary, which crowned a life of service?

Am I sure that the act of disobedience has done me damage? Then I am much more certain that the glorious act of self-sacrifice must be able to save me, and I cast myself upon it without question or misgiving. The passion of God's only begotten must have in it infallible virtue for the remission of sin. Upon the perfect work of Jesus my soul hangs at this moment, without a suspicion of possible failure, and without the addition of the shadow of a confidence anywhere else.

The good which may be supposed to be in man—his best words and holiest actions—are all to me as the small dust of the balance as to any title to the favor of God. My sole claim for salvation lies in that one man, the gift of God, who by His life and death has made atonement for my sin, but that one man, Christ Jesus, is a sure foundation, and a nail upon which we may hang all the weight of our eternal interests.

I feel the more confidence in the certainty of salvation by Christ because of my firm persuasion of the dreadful efficacy of Adam's fall. Think awhile and it will seem strange, yet strangely true, that the hope of paradise regained should be argued and justified by the fact of paradise lost, that the absolute certainty that one man ruined us should give us an abounding guarantee that one glorious man has in very deed effectually saved all those who by faith accept the efficacy of His work.

Now, if you have grasped my thought, and have drunk into the truth of the text, you may derive a great deal of comfort from it, and it may suggest to you many painful things which will henceforth yield you pleasure.

A babe is born into the world amid great anxiety because of its mother's pains, but while these go to prove how the consequences of the Fall are still with us, according to the Word of the Lord to Eve, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children," they also assure us that the second Adam can abundantly bring us bliss through a second birth, by which we are begotten again unto a lively hope.

You go into the arable field and mark the thistle, and tear your garments with a thorn—these prove the curse, but also preach the Gospel. Did not the Lord God say, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." Through no fault of ours, for we were not present when the first man offended, our fields reluctantly yield their harvests.

Well, inasmuch as we have seen the thorn and the thistle produced by the ground because of one Adam, we may expect to see a blessing on the earth because of the second and greater Adam. Therefore with unbounded confidence do I believe the promise, "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

Do you wipe the sweat from your brow as you toil for your livelihood? Did not the Lord say, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"? Ought not your labor to be an argument by which your faith shall prove that in Christ Jesus there remains a rest for the people of God. In toiling unto weariness, you feel that Adam's fall is at work upon you. He has turned you into a tiller of the ground, or a keeper of sheep, or a worker in metals—but in any case he has made you wear a yoke. Say you then to the Lord Jesus, "Blessed second Adam, as I see and feel what the first man did, I am abundantly certified as to what You can accomplish. I will therefore rest in You with all my heart."

When you observe a funeral passing slowly along the street, or enter the churchyard, and notice hillock after hillock above the lowly beds of the departed, you see set forth evidently before your eyes the result of the Fall. You ask—Who slew all these? And at what gate did the fell destroyer enter this world? Did the first Adam through his disobedience lift the latch for death?

It is surely so. Therefore I believe with the greater assurance that the second Adam can give life to these dry bones, can awake all these sleepers, and raise them in newness of life. If so weak a man as Adam by one sin has brought in death, to pile the carcasses of men heaps upon heaps, and make the earth reek with corruption, much more shall the glorious Son of God at His coming call them again to life and immortality, and renew them in the image of God.

How blessed are those words—"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Is not this killing a lion, and finding honey in its carcass? "Out of the eater cometh forth meat, and out of the strong cometh forth sweetness," when from the fact of the Fall we derive a strong assurance of our restoration by Christ Jesus.

Time fails me, otherwise I meant to have dwelt somewhat at length upon the last head which can now only be cursorily noticed.

IV. It seems certain that if from the fall of Adam such great results flow, GREATER RESULTS MUST FLOW FROM THE GRACE OF GOD, AND THE GIFT BY GRACE, WHICH IS BY ONE MAN, JESUS CHRIST.

Brethren, suppose that Adam had never sinned, and we were at this moment unfallen beings, yet our standing would have remained in jeopardy, seeing that at any moment he might have transgressed and so pulled us down. Thousands of years of obedience might not have ended the probation, seeing there is no such stipulation in the original covenant. You and I therefore would be holding our happiness by a very precarious tenure—we could never glory in absolute security and eternal life as we now do in Christ Jesus.

We have now lost everything in Adam, and so the uncertain tenure has come to an end. Our lease of Eden and its joys has altogether expired, but we that have believed have obtained an inheritance which we hold by an indisputable and never-failing title, which Satan himself cannot dispute—"All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

The Lord Jesus Christ has finished the work by which His people are saved, and that work has been certified by His resurrection from the dead. There are no "ifs" in the covenant now. There is not a "peradventure" in it from beginning to end. No chances of failure caused by unfinished conditions can be found in it. "He that believeth and is baptized *shall be saved*."

Do you say, "I believe he shall be saved if he____"? Do not dare to add an "if" where God has placed none. Remember what will happen to you if you add anything to the book of God's testimony. No, it is written, "He that believeth and is baptized *shall be* saved." "He that believeth in him hath *everlasting* life."

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Thus we have obtained a surer standing than we could have had under the first Adam, and our hymn is true to the letter when it sings—

"He raised me from the deeps of sin,
The gates of gaping hell,
And fix'd my standing more secure
Than 'twas before I fell."

Our Lord has not only undone the mischief of the Fall, but He has given us more than we have lost. Even as the psalmist says, "Then I restored that which I took not away."

By the great transgression of Adam we lost our life in him, for so ran the threatening—"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But in Christ Jesus we live again with a higher and nobler life, for the new life being the direct work of the Spirit, and being sustained by feeding upon the person of the Lord Jesus, is higher than the life of innocence in the garden of Eden. It is of a higher kind in many respects, of which we cannot now speak particularly, but this much we may say, "The first Adam was made a living soul, the second Adam is a quickening Spirit."

The Lord Jesus has also brought us into a nearer relationship to God than we could have possessed by any other means. We were God's creatures by creation, but now we are His sons by adoption. In a certain narrow sense we were the offspring of God, but now by the exaltation of the man Christ Jesus, the representative of us all, we are brought into the nearest possible relationship to God.

Jesus sits upon the throne of God, and manhood is thus uplifted next to deity—the nearest akin to the Eternal is a man, Christ Jesus, the Son of the Highest. We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and therefore we share His honors and participate in His triumphs.

In Christ Jesus, man is made to have dominion over all the works of God's hands, and the redeemed are raised up together with Christ, and made to sit in the heavenly places with Him, above all principalities and powers, and all things that are, for these are the favorites of heaven, the beloved of the great King. No creatures can equal perfected men—they rise superior even to the angels who have never sinned, for in them the riches of the glory of God's grace is more fully seen than in pure, unfallen spirits.

O beloved, has not the Lord Jesus Christ done much for us, and ought we not to expect that it should be so, for the grace of God, and the gift by grace by the man Christ Jesus, are infinitely stronger forces than Adam's sin. There must be much more sap in the man, the Branch, than in that poor plant, the one

man who was made from the dust of the earth. Oh the bliss which opens up before us now. We have lost paradise, but we shall possess that of which the earthly garden was but a lowly type—we might have eaten of the luscious fruits of Eden, but now we eat of the bread which came down from heaven.

We might have heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, but now, like Enoch, we may walk with God after a nobler and closer fashion. We are now capable of a joy which unfallen spirits could not have known—the bliss of pardoned sin, the heaven of deep conscious obligation to eternal mercy. The bonds which bind redeemed ones to their God are the strongest which exist. What a joy it will be to love the Lord more than any other of His creatures, and assuredly we shall do so.

Do not think that this is an unwarrantable assertion, for I feel sure that it is the truth. Do you not read in the Gospels of a woman who washed the Savior's feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and anointed them with ointment? Did not the Savior say that she loved much because she had been much forgiven.

I take it that the same general principle will apply to all places, to eternity as well as to time, and therefore I believe that forgiven sinners will have a love to God and to His Christ such as cherubim and seraphim never felt. Gabriel cannot love Jesus as a forgiven man will do. Those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb will be nearer and dearer to Him, and He will be nearer and dearer to them, than all the ministering spirits before the throne, for He took upon Him our nature and not theirs.

Glory be unto You, O Christ! As I look into the awful deeps of Adam's fall, I tremble, but when I lift up my eyes again to the eternal heights whither You have raised me by Your passion and Your resurrection, I feel strengthened by the former vision. I magnify the infinite grace of God, and believe in it unstaggeringly.

Oh, that I had power to magnify it with fit words and proper speech, but these are not with me. Accept the feeling of the heart when the language of the lip confesses its failure. Accept it, Lord, through the Well-Beloved. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ROMANS 5

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—909, 233, 229

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.