

LESSONS FROM CHRIST'S BAPTISM NO. 3298

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 1912
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 4, 1866

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
Matthew 3:16-17

I WANT to teach two lessons tonight, the first will be a most necessary one for the unconverted, the second will be more suitable to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Without any preface, let us at once try to learn the first lesson from the text, which relates to THE CO-WORKING OF THE TRINITY IN THE MATTER OF OUR SALVATION.

There are some who seem to suppose that Jesus Christ is our Savior to the exclusion of God the Father and of God the Holy Ghost, but this is a most erroneous idea. It is true that we are saved by the precious blood of Christ, but it is equally true that God the Father and God the Holy Spirit have had their share in the great work of our salvation. In order that we might not fall into the error in which some have been entangled, it pleased God to give us, at the very beginning of Christ's public ministry, a very distinct intimation that He did not come alone, and that He did not undertake the work of our redemption apart from the other adorable Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity.

Try to picture to yourselves the scene that our text describes. There is Jesus Christ who has just been baptized in Jordan by John, and John bears witness that He is the Son of God because the sign from heaven for which he had been bidden to look had been given. As Jesus comes up out of the water, the Spirit of God descends upon Him in a visible shape, in appearance like a dove, and rests upon Him. John says that “it abode upon him,” as though the Spirit was thenceforth to be His continual Companion, and truly, it was so.

At the same time that the dove descended, and lighted upon Christ, there was heard a voice from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” This was the voice of God the Father, who did not reveal Himself in a bodily shape, but uttered wondrous words such as mortal ears had never before heard. The Father revealed Himself, not to the eye as the Spirit did, but to the ear, and the words He spake clearly indicated that it was God the Father bearing witness to His beloved Son. So that the entrance of Christ upon His public ministry on earth was the chosen opportunity for the public manifestation of the intimate union between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Now, sinner, from this day forward, if you have never done so before, think humbly, reverently, and lovingly of all the three Persons of the most blessed Trinity in Unity. Bless the Son of God for becoming man in order that He might redeem us from destruction. He left His glory in heaven, and was made in the likeness of men, that He might suffer in our stead, as the Lamb of God's Passover, and that we might shelter beneath His sprinkled blood, and so escape the sword of vengeance.

Do you know that, when Christ was baptized, He gave, as it were, a picture of His great work of redemption? He said to John, “Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,” by which I understand, not that He fulfilled all righteousness by being baptized, but that His baptism was a picture or emblem of the fulfillment of all righteousness. What was done with Christ when He was baptized? Why, first, He

was regarded as one who was dead, and therefore He was buried beneath the waters of Jordan. He thus set forth, by a most significant symbol, the fact that He had come to earth to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and that in due time He would actually die, and be really buried, as now He was submerged beneath the yielding wave in a metaphorical burial.

But baptism does not consist in merely plunging the person into the water, he must be lifted out again, otherwise he would be drowned, not baptized. So the Savior, when He rose up out of the water, set forth His own resurrection. By His baptism, He figuratively said, "I shall die for sinners, I shall rise again for sinners, and I shall go back to heaven to plead for sinners. My death will put away their offenses, and my resurrection will complete their justification." Go ye, who long for salvation, and by faith look to the Savior dying on the cross at Calvary, see Him buried in Joseph's tomb, see Him rise the third day, and after forty days see Him and to heaven leading captivity captive.

His dying, His burial, His rising, His ascension—these are the fulfillment of all righteousness, and it is by these that you must be saved. It is not your being baptized that can save you, it is Christ's being baptized for you with that baptism of blood when He poured out His soul unto death that you might live forever. It is not your suffering, but His suffering that avails for your salvation, it is not your being or your doing that is the secret of blessing, but it is His being and His doing on which you must depend for everything. Trust in Jesus Christ, and you shall find salvation in Him.

Now I want you to look with humbly grateful eyes to God the Holy Ghost. You remember how Jesus Christ applied to Himself the words He read in the synagogue at Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." It was the Spirit of God who gave success to Jesus Christ's ministry, and if you, dear friend, would be saved, it is only the Holy Spirit who can take away from you the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh.

I pray you to think with holy reverence of that mighty, mysterious Being who works in human hearts, and molds them according to the will of God. By nature, you are spiritually dead, and only the Spirit of God can give you spiritual life. By nature, you are spiritually blind, and only the Spirit of God can give you spiritual sight. Even the work of Christ on the cross does not avail for you until the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto you. You must look to Christ, or He will not save you, you must trust in Christ, or His precious blood will not be applied to you, but you will never look to Him or trust in Him unless the Father, who sent Him, shall draw you to do so by His Spirit effectually working in you.

When we are thinking and speaking of the Holy Spirit, let us always feel as if we must put off our shoes from our feet, for the place whereon we stand is peculiarly holy. You remember how solemnly Christ warns us as to the consequences of even speaking against the Holy Ghost, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Whenever we mention the name of the Holy Spirit, let us do it with holy awe and reverence, remembering that it is the Spirit that quickeneth, it is the Spirit that instructeth, it is the Spirit that sanctifieth, it is the Spirit that preserveth, it is the Spirit that maketh us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. So, unto the ever-blessed Spirit of God as well as unto the well-beloved Son of God be glory and honor, praise and power, forever and ever.

With equal reverence and with equal awe let us also think of God the Father. What does the Father here say concerning Christ? First, He calls Him His Son. There has been much disputing about how Christ can be equal with the Father, and equally eternal, and yet be the Son of the Father. This is a great deep into which you and I, dear friends, will do well not to pry. We usually speak of Christ being the Son of the Father by what is called "eternal generation." I confess that there is a mystery here which I can neither understand nor explain, but as the Father calls Him His Son, I unhesitatingly believe that He is what the Scripture constantly calls Him, "the Son of God."

In our text, we find that the Father not only calls Christ His Son, but He says, "This is my beloved Son." What wondrous love there must be in the heart of each one of the divine Persons in the sacred Trinity towards each of the others! How blessedly they must look upon one another with divine benignity and complacency! There never could be any diversity in their interests, for they are one in heart, one in purpose, one in every respect, even as Jesus said, "I and my Father are one."

Now, sinner, the point to which I want specially to direct your thoughts is this—that God not only calls Christ His Son, and His beloved Son, but that He says He is well pleased with Him, and this concerns you in that, if you are so united to Christ as to be one with Him, God will also be well pleased with you for His dear Son's sake. But can a sinner ever be pleasing to God? Not in himself, apart from Christ, but all who are in Christ are "accepted in the Beloved." His Father is so pleased with Him that all whom He represents are pleasing unto God for His sake. "But," asks one, "how can I be in Christ?"

My dear friend, if you are one of the Lord's chosen, you are already in Christ in God's eternal purpose, but the way in which you must experientially get into Christ is by true faith in Him. To trust in Jesus is to be in Jesus. To rely upon the atoning sacrifice of Christ is to be one with Christ. Faith is the uniting bond which binds together the Christ in whom we believe and those who believe in Him. If you are truly trusting in Christ, God looks upon you as apart of Christ's mystical body, and He is well pleased with you for Christ's sake.

Thus, then, you have the Son suffering for you, the Spirit applying to you the merit of His atoning sacrifice, and the Father well pleased with you because you are trusting in His beloved Son. Or to put the truth in another form, the Father gives the great Gospel feast, the Son is the feast, and the Spirit not only brings the invitations, but He also gathers the guests around the table. Or to use another metaphor, God the Father is the fountain of grace, God the Son is the channel of grace, and God the Holy Spirit is the cup from which we drink of the flowing stream.

I wish that I could really make you see Jesus Christ standing by Jordan's brink as He came up out of the water after He had been baptized by John, and the Spirit of God descending, and lighting upon Him, and that I could make you hear the voice of the Father saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." If I could do this, all I should have to add would be John's message, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." There is eternal life for every one who truly looks unto Him by faith.

*"There is life for a look at the Crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee;
Then look, sinner, look unto Him, and be saved,
Unto Him who was nail'd to the tree."*

II. In beginning my sermon, I told you that the second lesson I wanted you to learn tonight would be more suitable to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, though at the same time it may also be useful to the unconverted, just as I hope the first lesson has been helpful to the people of God though specially intended for those who are not yet avowedly on the Lord's side. This second lesson, upon which I have now to speak, relates to THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT UPON BELIEVERS, but I should not have dared to take the text without also calling your attention to the first lesson upon which I have already spoken.

I want you clearly to understand that, as the Holy Spirit rested upon Christ, so He rests upon all who are in Christ, indeed, when the Spirit rested upon Christ, He rested upon the whole church that was represented by Christ. You remember that David says the unity of brethren is "like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments." So the anointing that Christ received from the Holy Spirit ran down to the very lowest, and least, and last of the members of that church of which He is the Head.

When the Holy Spirit descended from heaven like a dove, and lighted upon Christ, that descent was intended to teach us several lessons which we will now try to learn. Consider, first, *the swiftness* of that

descent. The heavens were opened, there was no delay, but swiftly as a flash of lightning the Spirit descended, and lighted upon Christ. Beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, do you feel dull and heavy tonight? Are you depressed in spirit? There is no reason why, within the next second, you should not be in quite a heavenly frame of mind, for the Spirit of God can descend upon you like a dove, and straightway you shall be lifted up out of your dullness and despondency.

The Spirit needs no time in which to work. The motions of matter are necessarily tardy, matter can only move at a certain rate, and there are many things that retard it. But as you know, the motion of mind is far more rapid, your thoughts can fly to America and back again, more swiftly than I can describe their flight. In a flash, your mind can be soaring away up among the stars millions and millions and millions of miles away.

Now, the mind of the Spirit is the highest order of mind, for He is divine, and therefore His motions are swift as the light, nay, they are incomparably swifter than that. He descended like a dove in order to set forth the rapidity of His flight. You remember that expression in the Song of Solomon, "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib."

So is it when the Spirit comes to us, our soul is as if it were borne along in a swiftly-driven chariot. It does not take the Holy Spirit an hour to convert a soul. The vital spark that regenerates a soul is kindled in an instant. Instantaneous conversion is not the exception, it is the rule, there cannot be any conversion but that which is instantaneous. The after-growth, the development of the work of grace in the heart and life is gradual, but there is a moment in which the soul passes from death unto life, from slavery to liberty, from sin to righteousness. And I have already said to you, Christian friends, that you can in a moment be transported out of a dull, languishing state of heart into one of holy peace and joy. Breathe the prayer—

*"Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all thy quickening powers,
Come, shed abroad a Savior's love,
And that shall kindle ours;"—*

and there is no reason why He should not grant your request even before you have finished your petition.

The figure of a dove also represents *softness* as well as *swiftness*. Rapidity generally causes some measure of sound, we usually associate hurry with noise, but it is not so with the Spirit of God. He descended with silent wings and alighted upon Christ as He came up out of the river where He had been baptized. If it had been recorded that the Spirit descended like an eagle, we should have thought of the whirring at great wings, but the dove's flight is of a far gentler and quieter order.

So, beloved, the Spirit of God may come down upon some of us in this house tonight, yet no one may be aware of His coming except those upon whom He rests as He rested that day upon Christ. Your neighbor may not perceive what has happened to you, there need be no outcry, no shouting, no violent contortions as there have been in certain revivals of which we have heard. No, the blessed Spirit frequently works invisibly, as the wind bloweth where it listeth, and sometimes bloweth so softly that we are not conscious of the slightest sound from the gentle zephyrs that fan our cheeks. I pray that, in the solemn silence of the mind, many of you may thus experience the descent of the Holy Spirit like a dove, so swift yet so soft, so gentle yet so strong.

Besides this, wherever the Spirit comes, He works according to His own holy nature. He comes like a dove, and He operates in a dovelike manner, and if He graciously operates upon you, you also will have dovelike qualities given to you. What are they? Well, I think that the first thought we associate with a dove is that of *purity*. You remember that the spouse in the Song of Solomon says of her Beloved, "His eyes are as the eyes of doves," and the Bridegroom says to His spouse, "Thou art fair, my love;

behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes," that is, eyes of purity, bright sparkling eyes that care not to look upon that which is unclean.

The dove is no carrion-loving bird, and you will recollect that it was the only bird that was offered to God in sacrifice under the old dispensation. Perhaps someone says, "Oh, but it was written in the law, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons!" Yes, it was so written, but then I remind you that a pigeon is only one member of the great dove family, and that it was only amongst the doves, of all feathered creatures, that there was found a bird that was clean enough to be offered unto God as a sacrifice. So the selection of a dove as the emblem of the Holy Spirit is very suggestive, for wherever He comes, He breeds purity.

If a man shall live a life of uncleanness, and hatred, and malice, and then say that he has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, he lies, for the Spirit makes us first pure, and then peaceable. Unless thou, my dear hearer, hast shaken off from thee the love of all that is evil, and hast resolved, in God's strength, to live as becometh the Gospel of Christ, thou provest that thou hast not experienced the dove-like influence of the Holy Spirit.

In my early days in the country, I was horribly shocked when I heard of a man standing on a public house table, and saying, though at the time he was almost drunk, "I can say what none of you fellows can say, that I am one of God's elect." All of us who knew anything of the man used to shudder at the thought of his blasphemy in pretending to be one of the elect. Why, if the grace of God does not make a man holy, what is it worth? My dear friend, if you are determined to be damned, leave religion alone altogether, but do not pretend to be a child of God, and yet live in sin. To profess to be an heir of heaven, and then to live as an heir of hell, is such detestable hypocrisy that I pray God that all of you may be preserved from ever falling into it. Where the Spirit of God dwells, there is sure to be purity.

And next to purity comes *peace*. The dove with the olive leaf in its mouth was the token of peace to Noah and those who were with him in the ark, and the dove has long been used as a symbol of peace. If the Spirit of God, like a dove, shall dwell with you, my dear friend, you will have peace in your own conscience, peace with your fellow men, peace with God, as Paul puts it, in writing to the Philippians, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Those worrying, distracting thoughts of yours do not come from the Holy Spirit. Those carking cares, those disquieting anxieties are not the Spirit's work. Where the Spirit, like a dove, dwells in a believer's heart, that ancient assurance is fulfilled, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." May you enjoy this perfect peace through the coming of the Spirit to you!

The dove is, next, the picture of gentleness. You do not expect to see doves fighting like vultures or ravens. I suppose doves do quarrel sometimes, but as a rule, their gentle and amiable nature makes them harmless and lovable. So, Christians should be the most gentle of all men. We are to be willing to be smitten upon one cheek, and then to turn the other to the smiter. I know some professing Christians who, as soon as ever a contrary word is spoken to them, boil over with rage. Well, it is not their Christianity that makes such a display as that, and it is a poor excuse to say that it is their infirmity.

"Oh!" says one, "but if you tread on a worm, it will turn." Yes, the poor little creature turns in its agony, but is a worm to be a model for your conduct? Surely it would be better to ask the Holy Spirit to give you the grace to take the Lord Jesus Christ as your example.

Have you never heard of the Christian man who killed his neighbor by kindness? When his oxen got into his neighbor's field, the cross-grained man put them into the pound, and said that, if they came astray again he would deal with them in the same way. By and by, his own oxen wandered into his neighbor's field, and then the Christian man fed them, and sent word that, if they came there again, he would treat them in the same way. That is the style in which we should endeavor to act towards any who treat us unkindly, by heaping coals of fire upon their heads we may in time burn love into their hearts.

I am afraid that all professing Christians are not as gentile as they should be, though gentleness is one of the prominent characteristics of true Christians. I am not a Quaker, but I must say that, in this

particular quality of gentleness, the Society of Friends has set a good example to the whole Christian church. I wish that the spirit of non-resistance was more generally prevalent among Christians than it often is. It is certainly in accordance with both the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." These words of the apostle Peter follow immediately after his declaration that "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." Where the dove-like Spirit dwells, there will be a gentleness of spirit in harmony with His own nature. I am charmed with the change that is often apparent in the converts who come to join this church.

When I hear of a man who, before his conversion, used to rage and rave in such a way as to be a terror to his family, yet who now, though he is at times greatly provoked, just walks away, and says nothing, I feel that the grace of God is really working in his heart. If what you call grace does not change your evil tempers, you had better exchange it for the true grace of God which will do so, for surely, it is one of the first evidences that the Spirit of God is dwelling within a man when it makes him "gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."

A dove is also one of the most *harmless* of all God's creatures, and a Christian must never intentionally hurt or harm others. Our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to suffer, but He did not make others suffer, and He would not have us seek to propagate His truth in a bitter spirit. If you are dealing with an infidel, let him see that, however strongly you disapprove of his principles, you endeavor to win him away from them, not by unkindness, but by love.

I doubt if anybody is ever bullied into accepting the Gospel. Certainly, more flies are caught with honey than with vinegar, and more sinners are brought to Christ by kindness than by unkindness. Never let anyone be able truthfully to say of you, "There is a professed follower of the Lord Jesus Christ who has done me most serious injury," but rather let it be said concerning you, "There goes a man whom I grossly injured, yet he bore it patiently, and said nothing against me because he was a Christian."

You know too that, in Scripture, the dove is spoken of as a type of *love*. When the turtledove has lost its mate, everybody knows how it will sit, and moan, and mourn. "The voice of the turtle is heard in our land" is the Scriptural description of a spiritual springtime, the season of love and joy. If the dove-like Spirit has come into thy heart, my friend, are soul will be full of love to Jesus, but if thou art not conscious of His presence, thou wilt mourn like the bereaved dove, and wilt dolefully sing—

*"I cannot bear Thine absence, Lord;
I cannot live without Thy smile."*

If I cannot rejoice in Christ, the next best thing is to weep because I cannot enjoy sweet fellowship with Him. If I cannot rest in Christ, it is a good thing if I cannot rest anywhere else. Ah, soul! if thou hast the Spirit of God within thee, thou wilt pine, and sigh, and cry until Christ is very near and very dear to thee, but when He is both near and dear to thee, then thy soul will be like a vessel that is filled to the brim, yet still remaining under the running stream, and thou wilt overflow with love and gratitude to thy dear Lord who hath done such great things for thee.

Time flies, so I must close with just one more thought. You remember that, when this world was created, "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Everything was in a state of chaos and confusion, there was neither life nor order, but when the Spirit of God spread His great wings over the face of the deep, and brooded, like a bird upon its nest, it was not long before the voice of God was heard, and soon, disorder gave place to order, darkness to light, and death to life.

The Holy Spirit comes into our heart now to work the same kind of change as that. He finds our soul in a state of chaos, formless, empty, dark, but when He mysteriously spreads His dove-like wings over our soul, life, and light, and order soon appear. We then begin to see what we never saw before. We put God into His right place, and we realize how great He is, and we put ourselves into our right place, and

we realize what nothings we are. We put the law into its right place, and recognize how terribly stern it is, and we put sin into its right place, and we quail before its terrible power.

When the Spirit of God broods over us, one of the first signs of the new life appearing in our soul is the penitent cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Those sorrow-filled eyes, those swiftly-falling tears, that broken-hearted sigh—all these are the result of the brooding of the Spirit of God upon our disordered nature. And when at last you can truthfully say—

*"I rest my soul on Jesus,
This weary soul of mine;
His right hand me embraces,
I on His breast recline;"—*

that also is the result of the brooding of the Spirit. He has quickened you, He has given you life, for only a living soul can truly say, "I do believe in Jesus." That is a sure sign of the new creation, it is a certain proof that Christ has made all things new in you by the effectual working of His ever-blessed Spirit. To any here who have never realized the dove-like energy of the Holy Spirit, I commend the prayer Charles Wesley wrote—

*"Expand thy wings, celestial Dove,
Brood o'er our nature's night;
On our disorder'd spirits move,
And let there now be light."*

Dr. Watts gives us another prayer in which Christians can heartily unite—

*"Descend from heaven, immortal Dove,
Stoop down and take us on Thy wings,
And mount and bear us far above
The reach of these inferior things!*

*"Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll,
Where solid pleasures never die,
And fruits immortal feast the soul!
!*

*"Oh for a sight, a pleasing sight,
Of our almighty Father's throne!
There sits our Savior crown'd with light,
Clothed in a body like our own."*

*"When shall the day, dear Lord, appear,
That I shall mount to dwell above,
And stand and bow amongst them there,
And view Thy face, and sing, and love?"*

May the Lord bless every one of you, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ROMANS 6

Chapter 6. Verse 1. *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

If the sinfulness of man has really given an opportunity for the display of divine mercy, then the devil's logic would be, "Let us commit more sin, that there may be more room for grace to work." But Christians have learned their reasoning in another school, and to such diabolical arguments they answer in the words of the apostle—

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

The two terms are exactly opposite to one another. If, through grace, we are dead to sin, how can we live in it? If, sinners as we are, we come to Christ to be saved from sin, then it would be a complete misuse of language to talk of being saved from sin, yet still to continue in it. Besides, the apostle goes on to show that the ordinance, by which believers in Jesus are to be admitted into the visible Christian church will not suffer them to continue in sin.

3-4. *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* [See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1627, "Baptism—a Burial," and No. 2197, "Christ's Resurrection and our Newness of Life"].

You remember, my brethren and sisters in Christ, that hallowed hour when you went down into the liquid tomb, when, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, you were immersed upon profession of your faith in Jesus Christ. By that solemn act you set forth your death to sin, and when you were raised again out of the opening element, you thereby made a profession of your faith in Christ's resurrection, and moreover, you did there and then, seeing that you had received the grace of God in truth, profess to rise unto newness of life. How could you, then, go back to sin? That would be to make your baptism a lie, indeed, you are all of you unbaptized unless you have been baptized into Christ's death.

5-6. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* [See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 882, "The Old Man Crucified"].

God has driven the nails through the active powers of our sin, both hands and feet are fastened to the cross of Christ, and though the heart and the head may sometimes wander, yet our old man is crucified with Christ that the body of sin may be destroyed, and we are looking forward to that happy day when the old man shall be dead altogether, and we shall be made meet to enter into the inheritance of the saints in light. We believe that our old man will never die until we die, but we thank God that the death of our body will be also the death of the body of sin.

7. *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

He can no longer live in it, for he is dead, and if we are really dead in Christ, we can no longer live in sin as we were wont to do.

8-11. *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* [See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 603, "Death and Life in Christ," and No. 2933, "Dead, yet Alive"].

If Christ could die again, then believers might lose their spiritual life, and there might be such a thing as falling from grace, but while Jesus lives, no member of his mystical body can die. His own promise is, "Because I live ye shall live also." He died unto sin once, we do the same. He lives no more to die, we also do the same. Highly privileged are they who are dead with Christ, and blessed is that ordinance in which we set forth our death and burial with him.

12-13. *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

Your legs used to carry you to the theatre, compel them now to carry you to the house of God even though you are weary. Your eyes could look long enough upon wickedness, let not their lids fall when

you are sitting to hear a sermon. Let all the members of your body which once served Satan now serve God. Consider that your whole body is a consecrated temple and be not satisfied unless the whole of it is reserved for the great God himself.

14-15. *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?* [See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1410, "Believers Free from the Dominion of Sin," and No. 1736, "The Doctrines of Grace do not Lead to Sin"].

This is another of the Antinomian suggestions that were made in the apostle's time, and that are still made now, and how does Paul answer it? Why, with this solemn adjuration—

15-18. *God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.* [See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1482, "Our Change of Masters"].

Is not that a glorious sentence, "Being then made free from sin"? Yes, the fetters are all gone, we have put up our feet upon the block, and the chains have been knocked off, we have put our hands down, and the irons have been broken in pieces. Free from sin! 'Tis true that sin still tempts us, but it cannot prevail against us, it tries to put the bit in our mouth, and to ride us as once it did, but we no longer submit to its sway. Sin is now an enemy to fret and worry us, but not a king to trample upon us, and rule over us.

19-20. *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servant of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*

You disdained the silken bonds of piety; you said that you would never wear what you called the iron fetters of grace; you were "Free from righteousness." So, surely, now that you are the servants of righteousness, you should seek to be free from sin.

21-23. *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* [See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1868, "Death and Life: the Wage and the Gift"].

[Another sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon verse seventeen is No. 2409 in *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, "A Great Sermon by the Greatest Preacher"].

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