

Expiation

A Sermon

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By the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

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“Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.”—[Isaiah 53:10](#).

BOTH Jews and Gentiles knew pretty well what an offering for sin meant. The Gentiles had been in the habit of offering sacrifices. The Jews, however, had by far the clearer idea of it. And what was meant by a sin-offering? Undoubtedly, it was taken for granted by the offerer, that without shedding blood there was no remission of sin. Conscious of guilt, and anxious for pardon, therefore he brought a sacrifice, the blood of which should be poured out at the foot of the altar—feeling persuaded that without sacrifice there was no satisfaction, and without satisfaction there was no pardon. Then the victim to be offered was, on all occasions, a spotless one. The most scrupulous care was taken that it should be altogether without blemish; for this idea was always connected with a sin-offering, that it must be sinless in itself; and being without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, it was held to be a competent victim to take the offender's place. That done, the victim being selected, the offerer put his hand upon the sin-offering—and this indeed was the essence of the whole transaction—putting his hand on the victim, he confessed his sin, and a transference took place, in type at least, from the offender to the victim. He did, as it were, put the sin from off his own shoulders on to those of the lamb, or the bullock, or the he-goat which was now about to be slaughtered. And, to complete the sin-offering, the priest draws his knife and kills the victim which must be utterly consumed with fire. I say this was always the idea of a sin-offering,—that of a perfect victim; without offense on its own account, taking the place of the offender; the transference of the offender's sin to that victim, and that expiation in the person of the victim for the sin done by another.

Now, Jesus Christ has been made by God an offering for sin; and oh that to-night we may be able to do in reality what the Jew did in metaphor! May we put our hand upon the head of Christ Jesus; as we see him offered up upon the cross for guilty men, may we know that our sins are transferred to him, and may we be able to cry, in the ecstasy of faith, “Great God, I am clean; through Jesus' blood I am clean.”

I. In trying now to expound the doctrine of Christ's being an offering for sin, we will begin by laying down one great axiom; which is, that SIN DESERVES AND DEMANDS PUNISHMENT.

Certain divines have demurred to this. You are aware, I suppose, that there have been many theories of atonement; and every new or different theory of atonement involves a new

or different theory of sin. There are some who say that there is no reason in sin itself why it should be punished, but that God punishes offenses for the sake of society at large. This is what is called the governmental theory,—that it is necessary for the maintenance of good order that an offender should be punished, but that there is nothing in sin itself which absolutely requires a penalty. Now, we begin by opposing all this, and asserting, and we believe we have God’s warrant of it, that sin intrinsically and in itself demands and deserves the just anger of God, and that that anger should be displayed in the form of a punishment. To establish this, let me appeal to the conscience—I will not say to the conscience of a man who has, by years of sin, dwindled it down to the very lowest degree, but let me appeal to the conscience of an awakened sinner,—a sinner under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And are we ever in our right senses, brethren, till the Holy Spirit really brings us into them? May it not be said of each of us as it was of the prodigal, “He came to himself?” Are we not beside ourselves till the Holy Spirit begins to enlighten us? Well, ask this man, who is now really in the possession of his true senses, whether he believes that sin deserves punishment; and his answer will be quick, sharp, and decisive. “Deserve it,” saith he, “ay, indeed; and the wonder is that I have not suffered it. Why, sir, it seems a marvel to me that I am out of hell, and Wesley’s hymn is often on my lips,—

’Tell it unto sinners, tell,
I am, I am out of hell.”

“Yes, sir,” says such a sinner, “I feel that if God should smite me now, without hope or offer of mercy, to the lowest hell, I should only have what I justly deserve; and I feel that if I be not punished for my sins, or if there be not some plan found by which my sin can be punished in another, I cannot understand how God can be just at all: how shall he be Judge of all the earth, if he suffer offenses to go unpunished?” There has been a dispute whether men have any innate ideas, but surely this idea is in us as early as anything, that virtue deserves reward, and sin deserves punishment. I think I might venture to assert that if you go to the most degraded race of men, you would still find, at least, some traces of this—shall I call it tradition? or is it not a part of the natural light which never was altogether eclipsed in man? Man may put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; darkness for light, and light for darkness; but this follows him as a dog at the heels of its master,—a sense that virtue should be rewarded, and that sin must be punished. You may stifle this voice, if you will, but sometimes you will hear it; and terribly and decisively will it speak in your ears to say to you, “Yes, man, God must punish you; the Judge of all the earth cannot suffer you to go scot free.” Add to this another matter; namely, that God has absolutely declared his displeasure against sin itself. There is a passage in Jeremiah, the forty-fourth chapter and the fourth verse, where he calls it “That abominable thing which I hate.” And then, in Deuteronomy, the twenty-fifth chapter, at the sixteenth verse, he speaks of it as the thing which is an abomination to him. It must be the character of God, that he has a desire to do towards his

creatures that which is equitable. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" If there is anything in them which deserves reward, rest assured he will not rob them of it; and, on the other hand, he will do the right thing with those who have offended, and if they deserve punishment, it is according to the nature and character of a just and holy God that punishment should be inflicted. And we think there is nothing more clear in Scripture than the truth that sin is in itself so detestable to God that he must and will put forth all the vigor of his tremendous strength to crush it, and to make the offender feel that it is an evil and a bitter thing to offend against the Most High. Beware, ye who forget God in this matter, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you. Sin must be punished.

The other idea, that sin is only to be punished for the sake of the community, involves injustice. If I am to be damned for the sake of other people, I demur to it. No, sir: if I am to be punished, Justice says; at any rate, that it shall be for my own sins, but if I am to be eternally a castaway from God's presence merely as a sort of trick of government to maintain the dignity of his law, I cannot understand the justice of this. If I am to be cast into hell merely that I am to teach to others the tremendousness of the divine holiness, I shall say there is no justice in this; but if my sin intrinsically and of itself deserves the wrath of God, and I am sent to perdition as the result of this fact, I close my lips, and have nothing to say. I am speechless; conscience binds my tongue. But if I am told that I am only sent there as a part of a scheme of moral government, and that I am sent into torment to impress others with a sense of right, I ask that some one else should have the place of preacher to the people, and that I may be one of those whose felicity it shall be to be preached to; for I see no reason in justice why I should be selected as the victim. Really, when men run away from the simplicities of the gospel in order to make Jehovah more kind, it is strange how unjust and unkind they make him. Sinner, God will never destroy you merely to maintain his government, or for the good of others. If you be destroyed, it shall be because you would not come to him that you might have life; because you would rebel against him; because sin from stern necessity did, as it were, compel the attribute of divine justice to kindle into vengeance, and to drive you from his presence for ever. Sin must be punished.

The reverse of this doctrine, that sin demands punishment, may be used to prove it; for it is highly immoral, dangerous, and opens the floodgates of licentiousness to teach that sin can go unpunished. O sirs, it is contrary to fact. Look ye! Oh! if your eyes could see to-night the terrible justice of God which a being executed now,—if these ears could but hear it,—if ye could be appalled for a moment with

"The sullen groans and hollow moans
And shrieks of tortured ghosts,"

you would soon perceive that God is punishing sin! And if sin deserve not to be punished, what is Tophet but injustice on a monstrous scale? What is it but an infinite outrage against everything which is honest and right, if these creatures are punished for anything short of

their own deserts. Go and preach this in hell, and you will have quenched the fire which is forever to burn, and the worm of conscience will die. Tell them in hell that they are not punished for sin, and you have taken away the very sting of their punishment. And then come to earth, and go, like Jonah went, though with another message than Jonah carried, through the highways and the broadways, the streets and thoroughfares of the exceeding great city, and proclaim that sin is not to be punished for its own intrinsic desert and baseness. But if you expect your prophecy to be believed, enlarge the number of your jails, and seek for fresh fields for transportation in the interests of society; for if any doctrine can breed villains, this will. Say that sin is not to be punished, and you have unhinged government; you have plucked up the very gate of our commonweal; you have been another Samson to another Gaza; and we shall soon have to rue the day. But, sirs, I need not stop to prove it; it is written clearly upon the consciousness of each man, and upon the conscience of every one of us, that sin must be punished. Here are you and I to-night brought into this dilemma. We have sinned; we all like sheep have gone astray; and we must be punished for it. It is impossible, absolutely, that sin can be forgiven without a sacrifice. God must be just, if heaven falls. If earth should pass away and every creature should be lost, the justice of God must stand, it cannot by any possibility be suffered to be impugned. Let this, then, be fully established in our minds.

You need not to be told, as for the first time, that God in his infinite mercy has devised a way by which justice can be satisfied, and yet mercy can be triumphant. Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, took upon himself the form of man, and offered unto Divine Justice that which was accepted as an equivalent for the punishment due to all his people.

II. Now, the second matter that I wish to bring under your notice is this,—THAT THE PROVISION AND ACCEPTANCE OF A SUBSTITUTE FOR SINNERS IS AN ACT OF GRACE.

It is no act of grace for a person to accept a pecuniary debt on my behalf of another person. If I owe a man twenty pounds, it is no matter to him whatever who shall pay the twenty pounds so long as it is duly paid. You know that you could legally and at once demand a receipt and an acquittance from any one who is your creditor, so long as his debt is discharged, though it is discharged by another, and not by you. It is so in pecuniary matters, but it is not so in penal matters. If a man be condemned to be imprisoned, there is no law, there is no justice which can compel the lawgiver to accept a substitute for him. If the sovereign should permit another to suffer in his stead, it must be the sovereign's own act and deed. He must use his own discretion as to whether he will accept the substitute or not; and if he do so, it is an act of grace. In Gods case, if he had said in the infinite sovereignty of his absolute will, "I will have no substitute, but each man shall suffer for himself, he who sinneth shall die," none could have murmured. It was grace, and only grace which led the divine

mind to say, "I will accept of a substitute. There shall be a vicarious suffering; and my vengeance shall be content, and my mercy shall be gratified."

Now, dear friends, this grace of God is yet further magnified not only in the allowance of the principle of substitution, but in the providing of such a substitute as Christ—on Christ's part that he should give up himself, the Prince of Life to die; the King of glory to be despised and rejected of men; the Lord of angels to be a servant of servants; and the Ancient of days to become an infant of a span long. Think of the distance

"From the highest throne in glory
To the cross of deepest woe,"

and consider the unexampled love which shines in Christ's gift of himself. But the Father gives the Son. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." To give your wealth is something, if you make yourself poor; but to give your child is something more. When the patriot mother tears her son from her bosom, and cries, "Go, my first-born, to your country's wars; there, go and fight until your country's flag is safe, and the hearths and homes of your native land are secure," there is something in it; for she can look forward to the bloody spectacle of her son's mangled body, and yet love her country more than her own child. Here is heroism indeed; but God spared not his own Son, his only-begotten Son, but freely delivered him up for us all. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." I do implore you, do not look upon the sacrifice of Christ as an act of mere vengeance on the Father's part. Never imagine, oh! never indulge the idea, that Jesus died to make the Father complacent towards us. Oh, no, dear friends: Jesus' death is the effect of overwhelming and infinite love on the Father's part; and every blow which wounds, every infliction which occasions sorrow, and every pang which rends his heart, speaks of the Father's love as much as the joy, the everlasting triumph, which now surrounds his head.

Let us add, however, to this, that, although Jesus Christ's dying as a substitute does give to him lawful right to all promised privileges, and does make him, as the covenant head of his people a claimant of the divine mercy, yet it does not render any of the gifts which we receive from God the less gifts from God. Christ has died; but still everything that we receive comes to us entirely as a gratuitous outflow of God's great heart of love. Never think you have any claim to anything because Christ purchased it. If you use the word *claim* at all, let it always be in so humble and modified a sense that you understand that you are still receiving, not of debt, but of grace. Look upon the whole transaction of a substitute, and of Christ becoming the second Adam, as being a matter of pure, rich, free, sovereign grace, and never indulge the atrocious thought, I pray you, that there was justice, and justice only here; but do magnify the love and pity of God in that he did devise and accomplish the great plan of salvation by an atoning sacrifice.

III. But now to go a step further, and with as much brevity as possible. The Lord having established the principle of substitution, having provided a substitute, and having through him bestowed upon us gratuitously innumerable mercies, let us observe THAT JESUS IS THE MOST FITTING PERSON TO BE A SUBSTITUTE, AND THAT HIS WORK IS THE MOST FITTING WORK TO BE A SATISFACTION.

Let every sinner here who desires something stable to fix his faith upon, listen to these simple truths, which I am trying to put as plainly as possible. You do understand me, I trust, that God must punish sin; that he must punish you for sin unless some one else will suffer in your stead; that Jesus Christ is the person who did suffer in the room and place of all those who ever have believed on him who do believe in him, or ever shall believe in him,—making for those who believe on him a complete atonement by his substitution in their place. Now we say that Christ was the best person to be a substitute; for just consider what sort of a mediator was needed. Most absolutely he must be one who had no debt of his own. If Christ had been at all under the law naturally, if it had been his duty to do what it is our duty to do, it is plain he could only have lived for himself; and if he had any sin of his own, he could only have died for himself, seeing his obligations to do and to suffer would have been his just due to the righteousness and the vengeance of God. But on Christ's part there was no natural necessity for obedience, much less for obedience unto death. Who shall venture to say that the Divine Lord, amidst the glories of heaven, owed to his father anything? "Who shall say it was due to the Divine Father that Christ should be nailed to the accursed tree, to suffer, bleed, and die, and then be cast into the grave? None can dare to say such a thing. He is himself perfectly free, and therefore can he undertake for others. One man who is drawn for the militia cannot be a substitute for another person so drawn, because he owes for himself his own personal service. I must, if I would escape, and would procure a substitute, find a man who is not drawn, and who is therefore exempt. Such is Jesus Christ. He is perfectly exempt from service, and therefore can volunteer to undertake it for our sake. He is the right person.

There was needed, also, one of the same nature with us. Such is Jesus Christ. For this purpose he became man, of the substance of his mother, very man, such a man as any of us. Handle him, and see if he be not flesh and bones. Look at him, and mark if he be not man in soul as well as in body. He hungers; he thirsts, he fears, he weeps, he rejoices, he loves, he dies. Made in all points and like unto us, being a man, and standing exactly in a man's place, becoming a real Adam,—as true an Adam as was the first Adam, standing quite in the first Adam's place,—he is a fit person to become a substitute for us.

But please to observe (see if you cannot throw your grappling-hooks upon this), the dignity of his sacred person made him the most proper person for a substitute. A mere man could at most only substitute for one other man. Crush him as you will, and make him feel in his life every pang which flesh is heir to, but he can only suffer what one man would have

suffered. He could not, I will venture to say, even then have suffered an equivalent for that eternal misery which the ungodly deserve; and if he were a mere man, he must suffer precisely the same. A difference may be made in the penalty, when there is a difference in the person; but if the person be the same, the penalty must be precisely and exactly the same in degree and in quality. But the dignity of the Son of God, the dignity of his nature, changes the whole matter. A God bowing his head, and suffering and dying, in the person of manhood, puts such a singular efficacy into every groan and every pang that it needs not that his pangs should be eternal, or that he should die a second death. Remember that in pecuniary matters you must give a *quid pro quo*, but that in matters of penal justice no such thing is demanded. The dignity of the person adds a special force to the substitution; and thus one bleeding Saviour can make atonement for millions of sinful men, and the Captain of our salvation can bring multitudes unto glory.

It needs one other condition to be fulfilled. The person so free from personal service, and so truly in our nature, and yet so exalted in person, *should also be accepted and ordained of God*. Our text gives this a full solution, in that it says, “*He shall make his soul an offering for sin.*” Christ did not make himself a sin-offering without a warrant from the Most High: God made him so. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” It was the sovereign degree of heaven which constituted Christ the great substitute for his people. No man taketh this office upon himself. Even the Son of God stoopeth not to this burden uncalled. He was chosen as the covenant-head in election; he was ordained in the divine decree to stand for his people. God the Father cannot refuse the sacrifice which he has himself appointed. “My son,” said good old Abraham, “God shall provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.” He has done so in the Saviour; and what God provides, God must and will accept.

I wish to-night that I had power to deal with this doctrine as I would. Poor trembling sinner, look up a moment. Dost thou see him there—him whom God hath set forth? Dost thou see him in proper flesh and blood fastened to that tree? See how the cruel iron drags through his tender hands! Mark how the rough nails are making the blood flow profusely from his feet! See how fever parches his tongue, and dries his whole body like a potsherd! Hearest thou the cry of his spirit, which is suffering more than his body suffers—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” This is none other than God’s only-begotten Son; this is he who made the worlds; this is the express image of his Father’s person, the brightness of Jehovah’s glory! What thinkest thou, man? Is there not enough there to satisfy God? Truly it has satisfied God: is there not enough there to satisfy thee? Cannot thy conscience rest on that? If God’s appointed Christ could suffer in thy stead, is it not enough? What can Justice ask more? Wilt thou now trust Christ with thy soul? Come, now, sir, wilt thou now fall flat at the foot of the cross, and rest thy soul’s eternal destiny in the pierced hands of Jesus of Nazareth? If thou wilt, then God has made him to be a sin-offering for thee; but if thou wilt

not, beware, lest he whom thou wouldst not have to be thy Saviour should become thy Judge, and say, "Depart, thou cursed one, into everlasting fire in hell!"

IV. We come now to our fourth remark,—THAT CHRIST'S WORK, AND THE EFFECTS OF THAT WORK, ARE NOW COMPLETE.

Christ becomes a substitute for us. We have seen how fit and proper a person he was to be such. We hinted that from the dignity of his person the pains he suffered were a good and sufficient equivalent for our own suffering on account of sin. But now the joyous truths come up that Christ's work is finished. Christ has made an atonement so complete that he never need suffer again. No more drops of blood; no more pangs of heart; no more bitterness and darkness, with exceeding heaviness, even unto death, are needed.

"Tis done—the great transaction's done."

The death-knell of the penalty rings in the dying words of the Saviour,—*"It is finished."* Do you ask for a proof of this? Remember that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead. If he had not completed his work of penalty-suffering, he would have been left in the tomb till now; our preaching would have been in vain, and your faith would have been in vain; ye would have been yet in your sins. But Jesus rose. God's sheriff's officer let him out of "durance vile" because the account had been discharged, and God's great Court of King's Bench sent down the *mittimus* to let the captive go free. More than that: Christ has ascended upon high. Think you he would have returned thither with unexpiated sin red upon his garments? Do you suppose he would have ascended to the rest and to the reward of an accomplished work? What! sit at his Father's right hand to be crowned for doing nothing, and rest until his adversaries are made his footstool, when he has not performed his Father's will! Absurd! Impossible! His ascension in stately pomp, amidst the acclamations of angels, to the enjoyment of his Father's continued smile, is the sure proof that the work is complete.

Complete it is, dear brethren, not only in itself, but, as I said, in its effects; that is to say, that there is now complete pardon for every soul which believeth in Christ. You need not do anything to make the atonement of Christ sufficient to pardon you. It wants no eking out. It is not as if Christ had put so much into the scale and it was quivering in the balance; but your sins, for all their gravity, utterly ceased their pressure through the tremendous weight of his atonement. He has outweighed the penalty, and given double for all your sins. Pardon, full and free, is now presented in the name of Jesus, proclaimed to every creature under heaven, for sins past, for sins present, and for sins to come; for blasphemies and murders; for drunkenness and whoredom; for all manner of sin under heaven. Jesus Christ hath ascended up on high, and exalted he is that he may give repentance and remission of sin. Ye have no need of shillings to pay the priests; nor is baptismal water wanted to erect the pardon: there is no willing, doing, being, or suffering of yours required to complete the task. The blood has filled the fountain full: thou hast but to wash and be clean, and thy sins shall be gone forever.

Justification, too, is finished. You know the difference. Pardon takes away our filth, but then it leaves us naked; justification puts a royal robe upon us. How no rags of yours are wanted; not a stitch of yours is needed to perfect what Christ has done. He whom God the Father hath accepted as a sin offering hath perfected forever thou who are set apart. Ye are complete in Christ. No tears of yours, no penance, no personal mortifications, nay, no good works of yours, are wanted to make yourself complete and perfect. Take it as it is. O sirs! may you have grace to take it as it is freely presented to you in the gospel. "He that believeth on him is not condemned;" "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Trust Christ—implicitly trust Christ; and all that he did shall cover you, while all that he suffered shall cleanse you.

Remember, too, that acceptance is finished. There are the Father's arms, and here are you, a black sinner to-night. I do not know you, but it may be you have trodden the pavements, or you have gone further than that, and added drunkenness to shame; you have gone to the lowest vice, perhaps to robbery,—who knoweth what manner of person may step into this place?—but the great arms of the Eternal Father are ready to save you as you are, because the great work of Christ has effected all that is wanted before God for the acceptance of the vilest sinner. How is it that the Father can embrace the prodigal? Why! he is fresh from the swine-trough! Look at him: look at his rags; how foul they are! We would not touch them with a pair of tongs! Take him to the fire and burn the filth! Take him to the bath and wash him! That lip is not fit to kiss; those filthy lips cannot be permitted to touch that holy cheek of the glorious Father! Ah! but it is not so. While he was yet a great way off, his father saw him,—rags and poverty and sin and filth and all,—and he did not wait till he was clean, but ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him, just as he was. How could he do that? Why, the parable does not tell us; for it did not run on with the subject to introduce the atonement. But this explains it,—when God accepts a sinner, he is, in fact, only accepting Christ. He looks into the sinner's eyes, and he sees his own dear Son's image there, and he takes him in. As we have heard of a good woman, who, whenever a poor sailor came to her door, whoever he might be, would always make him welcome, because, she said, "I think I see my own dear son who has been these many years away, and I have never heard of him; but whenever I see a sailor, I think of him, and treat the stranger kindly for my son's sake." So my God, when he sees a sinner long for pardon and desirous of being accepted, thinks he sees his Son in him, and accepts him for his Son's sake. Do not imagine that we preach a gospel in this place for respectable, godly people. No: we preach a gospel here for sinners. I heard, the other day, from one who told me that he believed we were saved by being perfect, that when we committed sin we at once fell out of God's mercy. Well now, supposing that were true, it would not be worth making a large splutter about. It would not be worth angels singing "Glory to God in the highest" about it, I should think. Any fool might know that God would accept a perfect man. But this is the thing of marvel, for which heaven and earth

shall ring with the praises of the Mediator, that Jesus Christ died for the ungodly,—that Jesus Christ gave himself for their sin; not for their righteousness, not for their good deeds. If he had looked to all eternity, he could not have seen anything in us worthy of so great a suffering as that which he endured; but he did it for charity's sake,—for love's sake.

And now, in his name,—oh that I could do it with his voice and with his love and with his fervor!—I do beseech you to lay hold upon him. No matter who you may be, I will not exclude you from the invitation. Hast thou piled thy sins together till they seem to provoke heaven? Do thy sins touch the clouds? Yet come, and welcome; for God has provided a sin-offering. Has man cast thee out? Say, poor woman, does the dreary river seem to invite thee to the fatal plunge? God has not cast thee out. O thou who feelest in thine own body the effect of thy sin, till thou art loathing thyself, and wishing thou hadst never been born—perhaps thou sayest, like John Bunyan, “Oh that I had been a frog, or a toad, or a snake, sooner than have been a man, to have fallen into such sin, and to have become so foul.” Have courage, sinner; have courage. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Do not doubt this message: God has sent it to you. Do not reject it: you will reject your own life if you do. Turn you at his rebuke! It is a loving voice which speaks to you, and that would speak, perhaps, better and more forcibly if it were not choked with love. I do implore thee, sinner, come to Jesus! If thou art damned it is not for want of invitation. If thou wilt perish, it is not for want of earnest pleading with thee. I tell thee, man, there is nothing of thine own wanted. All this is found in the sin-offering; for thou needest not find it. There is no merit of thine needed; there is merit enough in Christ. Is it not the old proverb that you are not to take coals to Newcastle? Do not take anything to Christ. Come as you are—just as you are. Nay, tarry not till you go out of this house. The Lord enable you to believe in Jesus now, to take him now as a complete and finished salvation for you, though you may be the most sunken and abandoned and hopeless of all characters. Why did God provide a sin-offering but for sinners? He could not have wanted to provide it if there was no necessity. You have a great necessity. You have, shall I say? compelled him to it. Your sins have nailed Christ's hands to the cross,—your sins have pierced his heart; and his heart is not pierced in vain, nor are those hands nailed there for naught. Christ will have you, sinner, Christ will have you. There are some of God's elect here, and he will have you. You shall not stand out against him. Almighty love will have you. He has determined that you shall not do what you have vowed. Your league with hell is broken to-night, and your covenant with death is disannulled. The prey shall not be taken from the mighty; the lawful captive shall be delivered. The Lord will yet fetch you up from the depths of the sea. Oh! what a debtor to grace you will be! Be a debtor to that grace to-night. Over head and ears in debt, plunge yourself by a simple act of trusting in Jesus, and you are saved.

Pray, ye who know how to pray, that this message may be made effective in the hand of God. And you who have never prayed before, God help you to pray now. May he now be found of them who sought not for him, and he shall have the glory, world without end. Amen.