THE SOTERIOLOGY OF CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

REVEALED IN HIS SERMONS AND CONTROVERSIAL WRITINGS

By

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A Thesis presented to the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

A. D. 1951.
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1 The dedication of this thesis is a facsimile of that which appears in each volume of Spurgeon's sermons.
TO

THE ONE GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH,

IN

THE TRINITY OF HIS SACRED PERSONS,

BE ALL HONOUR AND GLORY,

WORLD WITHOUT END,

AMEN.

TO THE GLORIOUS FATHER, AS THE COVENANT GOD

OF ISRAEL;

TO THE GRACIOUS SON, THE REDEEMER OF HIS PEOPLE;

TO THE HOLY GHOST, THE AUTHOR OF

SANCTIFICATION;

BE EVERLASTING PRAISE FOR THAT GOSPEL OF THE

FREE GRACE OF GOD,

HEREIN PROCLAIMED UNTO MEN.
PREFACE
The question has been asked: "Did Spurgeon have a theology?" "Did he know anything about theology?" This thesis answers these questions in the affirmative. Spurgeon knew theology, and on occasions he was insistent that certain doctrines, as he preached them, should be accepted in their entirety. He used theology fully in his sermons, but it was as a preacher, and not as a technical theologian. Spurgeon was a successful class-room teacher in his own College, but in the pulpit he was a preacher. His sermons cover the entire field of Christian doctrine. They are a superb example of preaching theology. Spurgeon utilized all of his theology in a practical effort to bring men to a knowledge of Christ.

Spurgeon never attempted to shape his theology into a formal system. He had an aversion for systems of theology. As far as a system of theology was concerned, he said in effect: "The Bible, and nothing else, is my theological system". Yet, before he began his public ministry, he had formulated a very definite system of theology from which he never departed. He believed that every minister of the gospel should have a definite knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible before launching out into Christian service.

Many biographers have given adequate treatment to Spurgeon's life and activity, but apparently there is not in existence any treatment of his doctrinal views that objectively records his theology in a systematic, or even in an informal fashion. An endeavor has been made in this thesis to examine and record systematically Spurgeon's soteriology. Some have the opinion that Spurgeon never had any theological system at all. There are many who have expressed a desire to know what Spurgeon actually believed. There are others who have a superficial knowledge of his doctrines and consequently they have formed erroneous ideas about his theology. Other than a personal desire to study Spurgeon, these considerations constitute the main justification for this thesis. An effort has been made to interpret Spurgeon's thought without any prejudice.
Although this survey gives the heart of Spurgeon’s theology, it does not propose to be exhaustive. Many areas of his thought, notably his ecclesiology, have been left untouched. What I have tried to do is to explore the central region which directly concerns his doctrine of salvation.

The source material for this study has been primarily the sixty-three volume set of Spurgeon’s sermons known as The New Park Street and The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. Most of the volumes contain between six and seven hundred pages each. In this thesis these volumes appear in the footnotes as Works with the number of the volume following. Extensive use has also been made of many other of Spurgeon’s publications, particularly his four-volume Autobiography and collected pamphlets dealing with his controversies, particularly the Down Grade Controversy. The five "Controversial Writings" are given chronologically in "The Sword and the Trowel" for the year 1887. Actually there are more doctrinal views revealed in his "controversial sermons" recorded in The New Park Street and The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, than in these "Controversial Writings". Reference has been made to these "controversial sermons" in the body of the thesis. The two major controversies, The Baptismal Regeneration Controversy, and The Down Grade Controversy, have been briefly treated in separate chapters. These controversies have been examined primarily for their bearing on the topic of this thesis.

American spelling has been followed throughout this thesis, except when quoting from a British author.

The writer wishes to express his gratitude to those who have assisted him in this work. First of all I am indebted to Principal Charles S. Duthie of the Congregational College, Edinburgh and of New College, Edinburgh, and Professor G. T. Thomson, New College, Edinburgh, under whose supervision this study has been carried on for the past three years. I must further acknowledge my appreciation to the Reverend Doctors T. G. Dunning of the Baptist Church
House, London, and E. A. Payne, formerly of Regent's Park College, Oxford, now of the Baptist Church House, London, for their helpful suggestions. I am also especially indebted to the Reverend Doctor Graham Scroggie of London for lending as part of his collection of Spurgeon's sermons; and to the Reverend A. C. Burley of Bournemouth for permission to use his library containing many volumes of sermons and pamphlets from Spurgeon's private library. I must also express my appreciation to Miss Winifred Maynard, B. A., B. Litt., Oxford, now English Tutor in the University of Edinburgh, for her help in removing from the thesis American words and expressions which are unfamiliar to English readers. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. A. N. MacLeod, Edinburgh, not only for the use of his library which contains many volumes of Spurgeon's sermons, but for his help in checking the final draft of the thesis.
CHAPTER I

A BRIEF SURVEY OF SPURGEON'S LIFE AND ACTIVITY
Ten days after William Carey died in India, another great English preacher, one who is called "the last of the Puritans", was born. Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born June 19, 1834. He was the first of seventeen children born to the Reverend John Spurgeon and Eliza Spurgeon of Kelvedon, Essex. He inherited a personality which combined character traits from the Huguenots, Quakers, Puritans, and Independents. His father and grandfather were Congregational ministers.

During his boyhood days, Spurgeon sat at the feet of older men and women, making their religious vocabulary his own, but without the Christian experience of which they spoke. He was a precocious youth, a child prodigy, with a phenomenal memory. His education began in the home. In his childhood days he made his father's study his own. He familiarised himself with the old Puritan divines, remarking that "when I was yet a youth...never was I happier than when in their company". He was a lover particularly of such Puritan writers as Baxter, Brooks, Bunyan, and Manton. John Calvin and Rowland Hill were read extensively.

It is easy to tell a real Puritan book even by its shape and by the appearance of the type. I confess that I harbour a prejudice against nearly all new editions, and cultivate a preference for the originals...It made my eyes water, a short time ago, to see a number of these old books in the new Manse: I wonder whether some other boy will love them, and live to revive that grand old divinity which will yet be to England her balm and benison....Out of that darkened room I fetched those old authors when I was yet a youth, and never

was I happier than when in their company. Out of the present contempt, into which Puritanism has fallen, many brave hearts and true will fetch it, by the help of God, ere many years have passed. Those who have daubed up the windows will yet be surprised to see Heaven's light beaming on the old truth, and then breaking forth from it to their own confusion.¹

His privileges and opportunities for study surpassed those of many of his schoolmates, and early in life he began to teach others older than himself. It is the general opinion that Spurgeon's educational advantages were limited. This erroneous belief has probably arisen from the fact that he did not receive college training. Though Spurgeon never officially entered the University of Cambridge, he spoke of himself, with a characteristic touch of humour, as a Cambridge man. "I was for three years a Cambridge man," he said, "though I never entered the University."²

At the time of his training it was impossible for a Nonconformist to receive a degree from Cambridge or even to matriculate at Oxford. Spurgeon could speak of himself as being a Cambridge man in virtue of the fact that he assisted Mr. E. S. Leeding in his private school at Cambridge for three years.

Spurgeon was thoroughly prepared for college and it was the desire not only of his father but of others that he should enter Stepney Baptist College, now Regent's Park College. His attempt to see the president of the college concerning his matriculation failed. He believed this was an act of divine Providence. Spurgeon was not particularly interested in receiving a college degree. It was more the desire of others than his own that he should enroll at Stepney. In letters to his father he said, "I have no very great desire for it [college]; in fact, none at all"³, and, "I have all along had an aversion

². Ibid., p. 204.
³. Ibid., p. 244.
After his failure to see the president, he heard the voice of God distinctly speaking to his saying, "Seest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not," and from that day he determined to forsake a college career and continue preaching in his first pastorate at Waterbeach.

Though Spurgeon was not, in an official sense, college trained, his education equalled, if not surpassed that of many a university graduate. His sermons give evidence not only of a knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, but of a profound knowledge of the classics and a familiarity with history and science. His mathematical attainments were rare. His retentive memory made learning an easy process and his great powers of observation and imagination enhanced his ability to apply, in a simple, yet fascinating way, the truths of the gospel. While he was in school at Cambridge, Spurgeon wrote in his diary these words:

Education is indeed a talent from the Lord. What a weight of responsibility rests upon me! I trust I shall one day employ this more to His honour.

Spurgeon constantly applied himself to study. Later he wrote, "I am not uneducated." He rejoiced that he was not a college man. "I am more and more glad that I never went to College."

Spurgeon may be classed as an educationalist. At the age of seventeen he opened a school of his own. Later, in keeping with his idea of stewardship, he opened a night school in the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London where thousands of young men who otherwise would not have received an education were trained. His greatest contribution toward education was the establishment of Pastor's College, now known as Spurgeon's College, where hundreds of young men have been trained for the ministry.

2. Jeremiah 45:5.
4. Ibid., p. 244.
5. Ibid., p. 248.
In a résumé of Spurgeon's life, the story of his conversion is of paramount importance because of its relation to his theology. In his five years' search for Christ he passed through great spiritual conflicts, and his soul-agonies often caught him in the throes of infidelity. Sin had become to him "an intolerable burden", and while he possessed a keen sense of personal guilt, and was positive that the Holy Spirit had convicted him of sin, he could not, in view of God's holiness, satisfactorily reconcile the love of God with His justice. "How could God be just, and yet justify me who had been so guilty?"

As he pondered the doctrine of the Atonement a new and fresh revelation came to him when he remembered that "Jesus was declared to be the propitiation for sins that God might be just". He realized that the death of Christ was vicarious, and that it was in his place and for his sins that the Atonement was made. Spurgeon finally concluded that the love of God was the overriding element of His justice, and that salvation was thus a matter of sheer grace. This led him to the discovery that there was nothing he could do to merit eternal life, and that he must look from self to Christ for salvation. "In my conversion the very point lay in making the discovery that I had nothing to do but to look to Christ, and I should be saved." Previous to this "look", Spurgeon acknowledged that he had, in a measure, depended not only upon "good works" for salvation, but on "self-sufficiency". When the Spirit brought him to the cross he was led to see his nothingness in such a vivid light that he exclaimed "I can do nothing; I am ruined". When Spurgeon saw his true vanity in the eyes of Christ, and then utterly depended upon Him for his soul's redemption, he heard the call of God.

2. Ibid., p. 102.
3. Ibid., p. 92.
saying, "'Come unto Me,' and without hesitating he turned immediately to God, stating that the call was "irresistible".

That was an effectual call; there was no resisting it. Oh, how the Word came into my soul! Was there any power of resistance remaining in me? No; I was thrown down; each bone seemed to be broken. I began to think there never would be a trace of anything built up in my heart. Out went my supposed merits! Out went my knowledge, my good resolves, and my self-sufficiency! By-and-by, out went all my strength. When this digging-out was completed, the ditch was so deep that, as I went down into it, it seemed like my grave. Such a grief it was for me to know my own sinfulness, that it did not seem possible that this could help my upbuilding in comfort and salvation. Yet, so it is, that if the Lord means to build high, He always digs deep; and if He means to give great grace, He gives deep consciousness of need for it. Long before I began with Christ, he had begun with me; but when I began with Him, it was as the law-writers say, 'In forma pauperis,' after the style of a wretched mendicant,—a pauper who had nothing of his own, and looked to Christ for everything.

Both before his conversion and even after his acceptance of the New Park Street Chapel, Spurgeon suffered from long periods of depression of spirit. It was his firm belief that such depression was an act of divine Providence preparing him for greater service in His kingdom.

This depression comes over me whenever the Lord is preparing a larger blessing for my ministry; the cloud is black before it breaks, and overshadows before it yields its deluge of mercy. Depression has now become to me as a prophet in rough clothing, a John the Baptist, heralding the nearer coming of my Lord's richer benison. So have far better men found it. The scouring of the vessel has fitted it for the Master's use. Immersion in suffering has preceded the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Fasting gives an appetite for the banquet. The Lord is revealed in the backside of the desert, while His servant keepeth the sheep, and waits in solitary awe. The wilderness is the way to Canaan. The low valley leads to the towering mountain. Defeat prepares for victory. The raven is sent forth before the dove. The darkest hour of the night precedes the day-dawn. The mariners go down to the depths, but the next wave makes them mount towards the heavens; and their soul is melted because of trouble before the Lord bringeth them to their desired haven.

Spurgeon acknowledged that in his religious training at home he had been "tutored in piety" and put into his cradle "by prayerful hands".

2. Ibid., p. 552.
He had been reared in the atmosphere of the gospel and had heard the essence of it preached over and over again. He had memorized Scripture and religious hymns and poetry. He had read the best of Puritan and other literature. He admitted that he owed much to the influence of godly parents. During his search for God he stated that the prayers of his parents were soothing to his conscience as he struggled to make a decision for Christ. Referring to his early religious training he said, "I cannot tell how much I owe to the solemn words of my good mother". Spurgeon recognized the importance of parental influence in the lives of children, and emphasized that parents were the most natural agents for God to use in leading children to Christ.

Fathers and mothers are the most natural agents for God to use in the salvation of their children. I am sure that, in my early youth, no teaching ever made such an impression upon my mind as the instruction of my mother...A man with a soul so dead as not to be moved by the sacred name of 'mother' is creation's blot. Never could it be possible for any man to estimate what he owes to a godly mother. Certainly I have not the powers of speech with which to set forth my valuation of the choice blessing which the Lord bestowed on me in making me the son of one who prayed for me, and prayed with me.

Yet, in a sense, he counted all of this in vain, until, as he said, "the Word of the Lord came to me with power". The miraculous change, in which he felt the power of God to be irresistible, came to him on Sunday, January 6, 1850, when he was led by divine Providence into a Primitive Methodist Chapel at Colchester where he heard an uneducated man whom he described as "stupid" preach briefly from Isaiah 45:22: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else". He had heard others preach from this text, but on this particular occasion the pulpit stranger looked into the balcony where

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2. Ibid., pp. 68-69.
Spurgeon sat and invited him to "look" to Christ for the remission of his sin.

'Young man, you look very miserable....and you always will be miserable—miserable in life, and miserable in death,—if you don't obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved.... Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothin' to do but to look and live.'

Spurgeon could not resist the call of God that morning. Throughout his ministry he testified that the grace of God was irresistible. The Spirit of God presented Christ to him in such a new and powerful way that it was as though he had never heard the gospel. Heeding the words of the stranger, and yielding to the power of God's Spirit, Spurgeon looked to Christ that day and received salvation. "I looked to Him; He looked on me; And we were one for ever."2

I saw at once the way of salvation....I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away. There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen instantly, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him.1

I confess to have been tutored in piety, put into my cradle by prayerful hands, and lulled to sleep by songs concerning Jesus; but after having heard the gospel continually, with line upon line, precept upon precept, here much and there much, yet, when the Word of the Lord came to me with power, it was as new as if I had lived among the unvisited tribes of Central Africa, and had never heard the tidings of the cleansing fountain filled with blood, drawn from the Saviour's veins.3

I must confess I never would have been saved, if I could have helped it. As long as ever I could, I rebelled and revolted, and struggled against God....When my heart was a little touched, I tried to divert it with sinful pleasures. And when that would not do, I tried self-righteousness, and would not then have been saved, until I was hemmed in, and then he gave me the effectual blow of grace, and there was no resisting that irresistible effort of his grace. It conquered my depraved will, and made me bow myself before the sceptre of his grace....He doth irresistibly save and victoriously conquer man's heart.4

2. Ibid., p. 109.
3. Ibid., p. 102.
Spurgeon stated that his conversion was solely under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It was through Him that he had the joy and peace of salvation. Referring to the work of Christ in his conversion, Spurgeon said, "He has done that for me which none but a God could do". It was his custom "to rise with the sun" in order to "read gracious books, and to seek the Lord".

I can recall the kind of pleas I used when I took my arguments, and came before the throne of grace: 'Lord save me; it will glorify Thy grace to save such a sinner as I am! Lord, save me, else I am lost to all eternity; do not let me perish, Lord! Save me, O Lord, for Jesus died!"

The story of Spurgeon's conversion would be incomplete without reference to the ecstatic joy which marked the turning of a man of sin to God. In a moment his life of weeping had turned to one of rejoicing. His account of his conversion experience explains why Spurgeon held that the grace of God was irresistible.

After his conversion at the age of fifteen, Spurgeon felt that he should openly obey Christ in baptism by immersion. His parents were Congregationalists, and Spurgeon had already been accepted as a member of the Congregational Church but had not received communion with their fellowship, his reason being that he had not been properly baptized according to the New Testament. Spurgeon neither believed in, nor practised infant baptism. He stated that "men are saved without any baptism" but he advocated that they should be obedient and receive baptism. "If any ask,—Why was I thus baptized?—I answer, because I believed it to be an ordinance of Christ, very specially joined by Him with faith in His name." In a letter to his father he said, "I firmly

2. Ibid., p. 111.
3. See Appendix A.
5. Ibid., p. 154.
believe and consider that baptism is the command of Christ, and shall not feel quite comfortable if I do not receive it." In a letter to his mother he stated: "Conscience has convinced me that it is a duty to be buried with Christ in baptism, although I am sure it constitutes no part of salvation." Spurgeon believed that the ordinance of baptism should be administered before admission as a Church member and before receiving communion. This was strictly a personal matter and he did not try to force his belief on this question upon others. In another letter to his father he said:

Owing to my scruples on account of baptism, I did not sit down at the Lord's table, and cannot in conscience do so until I am baptized. To one who does not see the necessity of baptism, it is perfectly right and proper to partake of this blessed privilege; but were I to do so, I conceive would be to tumble over the wall, since I feel persuaded it is Christ's appointed way of professing Him. I am sure this is the only view which I have of baptism. I detest the idea that I can do a single thing towards my own salvation.

And again:

I waited until I could go to the Lord's table as one who had believed, and who had been baptized. I had attended the house of God with my father, and my grandfather; but I thought, when I read the Scriptures, that it was my business to judge for myself....I learned a little Greek; but I could not discover that the word 'Baptize' meant to sprinkle; so I said to myself, 'They are good men, yet they may be wrong; and though I love and revere them, that is no reason why I should imitate them.' And they acknowledged, when they knew of my honest conviction, that it was quite right for me to act according to my conscience....Therefore I left my relations, and became what I am to-day, a Baptist, so-called, but I hope a great deal more a Christian than a Baptist.

"I became a Baptist through reading the New Testament,—especially in the Greek," said Spurgeon, as he emphasized that the Prayer Book of the Church of England approved immersion, although it was not

2. Ibid., p. 119.
3. Ibid., p. 121.
4. Ibid., p. 148.
5. Ibid., p. 150.
practised. Spurgeon was broadminded. He did not believe in strict or closed communion. He was always an open-communionist. He never objected to unbaptized Christians receiving the Lord's Supper, although he believed that they were mistaken.\footnote{1} His policy was that one should follow the dictates of one's own conscience. His parents were of the same mind and readily gave their son, Charles, permission to be immersed in the Baptist Church.

I conceive that burial with Christ in baptism is a far more Scriptural and expressive sign of dedication; but I am not inclined to deny my brethren the liberty of confirming that act by the other, if it seem good unto them, as I myself did soon after my conversion. According to my reading of Holy Scripture, the believer in Christ should be buried with Him in baptism, and so enter upon his open Christian life.\footnote{2}

Spurgeon followed his belief in immersion by securing Mr. W. W. Cantlow of the Baptist Chapel at Isleham to baptize him. The date of his baptism was May 3, 1850, his mother's birthday.

After baptism, Spurgeon was anxious to apply himself to the work of Christ. In a letter to his mother he said, "Oh, how I wish that I could do something for Christ".\footnote{3} The following words constitute the prayer Spurgeon prayed in dedicating himself to Christian service.

O great and unsearchable God, who knowest my heart, and triest all my ways; with a humble dependence upon the support of Thy Holy Spirit, I yield up myself to Thee; as Thy own reasonable sacrifice, I return to Thee Thine own. I would be for ever, unreservedly, perpetually Thine; whilst I am on earth, I would serve Thee; and may I enjoy Thee and praise Thee for ever! Amen.\footnote{4}

He began his Christian service by distributing tracts. In connection with this service he began to tell the gospel story. Soon he was teaching a Sunday School class and giving addresses to the children. He visited the homes of the children and explained the way of salvation to all the

\begin{itemize}
  \item See appendix B.
  \item Ibid., p. 118.
  \item Ibid., p. 129.
\end{itemize}
members of the household. The ability of Spurgeon was quickly recognized and he was allowed to join the Lay Preachers' Association. He was given engagements around Cambridge where he was in school. His first sermon was at Teversham. The message was unprepared, Spurgeon not knowing he was to preach until shortly before the service. His success was phenomenal. This sermon at the age of sixteen marked the beginning of a successful and world renowned ministry which was to last over forty years. From that night onward, Spurgeon was constantly engaged in ministerial activity. In 1851, at the age of seventeen, he assumed the duties of his first pastorate at Waterbeach Chapel. He was never ordained according to the established custom of the Church. He had an aversion to "the laying on of empty hands," since by this process "there is no special gift to bestow." "Is not the Divine call the real ordination to preach," he said, "and the call of the church the only ordination to the pastorate?" Ordination at the hands of men was declined on the ground that men did not have the authority to commission one to preach the gospel. His argument was that the minister's true ordination was of God and not of men. Before accepting the London pastorate he expressed his opinion on ordination to one of the New Park Street members thus:

I have a decided objection to any public ordination or recognition...I object to ordinations and recognitions, as such, (1) Because I am a minister, and will never receive authority and commission from man; nor do I like that which has the shadow of such a thing about it. I detest the dogma of apostolic succession, and dislike the revival of the doctrine by delegating power from minister to minister. (2.) I believe in the glorious principle of Independency. Every church has a right to choose its own minister; and if so, certainly it needs no assistance from others in appointing him to the office....(3.) If there be no authority inferred, what is the meaning of the ceremony? 'It is customary.' Granted;—but we are not all Ecclesiastical Conservatives...

2. Ibid., p. 356.
3. Ibid., pp. 356-357.
Spurgeon remained at Waterbeach about three years and was then called to the New Park Street Chapel in London in 1854. In 1861 this congregation moved into the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Soon after he settled in London he met Susannah Thompson, whom he married on January 8, 1856. Throughout his ministry she proved a loyal and faithful wife, guarding his interests until his death. She was a constant source of joy to him. Twin sons, Thomas and Charles, were born to them. After Spurgeon's death, his wife, with the help of his secretary, compiled and edited his four-volume Autobiography.

Spurgeon's success in London was as phenomenal as that at Waterbeach. There were conversions every week. The Chapel was filled to capacity. It was decided that additional seating capacity should be made. While the enlarging of the Chapel was in progress, Spurgeon held his services in Exeter Hall. Upon his return to the Chapel he discovered that it was too small to accommodate the large attendance, and he again rented Exeter Hall, which was also too small to seat his congregations. Plans were made for the erection of a new Church. Meanwhile Spurgeon held his services in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall where he remained until December 1859, when he again rented Exeter Hall until the Metropolitan Tabernacle, seating 5,000 people, was opened for worship on March 18, 1861. His opening words in the Tabernacle were:

I would propose that the subject of the ministry in this house, as long as this platform shall stand, & as long as this house shall be frequented by worshippers, shall be the Person of Jesus Christ. I am never ashamed to avow myself a Calvinist; I do not hesitate to take the name of Baptist; but if I am asked what is my creed, I reply, 'it is Jesus Christ.' My venerated predecessor, Dr. Gill, has left a Body of Divinity, admirable & excellent in its way; but the Body of Divinity to which I would pin & bind myself for ever, God helping me, is not his system, or any other human treatise; but Christ Jesus, who is the sum & substance of the gospel, who is in Himself all theology, the incarnation of every precious truth, the all-glorious personal embodiment of the way, the truth, & the life.

Spurgeon suffered severe pain during his many months of illness, but never once did he complain to God about his affliction. He put into practice a paragraph in one of his greatest sermons, "Songs in the Night". The title of the sermon was used as a synonym for suffering, trouble, and disappointment.

I tell you, we may preach fifty thousand sermons to prove the gospel, but we shall not prove it half so well as you will through singing in the night. Keep a cheerful face, keep a happy heart, keep a contented spirit, keep your eye bright, and your heart aloft, and you will prove Christianity better than all the Butlers, and all the wise men who ever lived....Try and sing songs in the night; for they are so rare that, if thou canst sing them, thou wilt honour thy God, and bless thy friends.

Spurgeon's last sermon in the Metropolitan Tabernacle was on Sunday morning, June 7, 1891. His text was 1 Sam. 30: 21-25. His subject was "The Statute of David for the Sharing of the Spoil". He did not realize, of course, that this would be his last sermon in the Tabernacle, but it was a fitting climax for the career of a Christian soldier who had captivated London with his oratorical genius. Two choice paragraphs from the climax of this sermon are given below. The last paragraph marks the end of the sermon. It is to be noted that his words consist of a eulogy to Christ.

Beloved, we follow a noble Prince. Jesus is the chief among ten thousand for tenderness as well as for everything else. How tenderly considerate he is! How gentle and generous! He has never said a stinging word to us ever since we knew him. He is that riches which has no sorrow added to it. He has rebuked us; but his rebukes have been like an excellent oil, which has never broken our heads. When we have left him, he has turned and looked upon us, and so he has cut us to the quick; but he has never wounded us with any sword except that which cometh out of his mouth, whose edge is love.

Depend upon it, you will either serve Satan or Christ, either self or the Saviour. You will find sin, self, Satan, and the world

2. Ibid., p. 107.
3. Works, 37, pp. 313-324.
4. Ibid., p. 322.
to be hard masters; but if you wear the livery of Christ, you will find him so meek and lowly of heart that you will find rest unto your souls. He is the most magnanimous of captains. There never was his like among the choicest of princes. He is always to be found in the thickest part of the battle. When the wind blows cold he always takes the bleak side of the hill. The heaviest end of the cross lies ever on his shoulders. If he bids us carry a burden, he carries it also. If there is anything that is gracious, generous, kind, and tender, yea lavish and superabundant in love, you always find it in him. These forty years and more have I served him, blessed be his name! and I have had nothing but love from him. I would be glad to continue yet another forty years in the same dear service here below if so it pleased him. His service is life, peace, joy. Oh, that you would enter on it at once! God help you to enlist under the banner of Jesus even this day! Amen.

After months of illness he was taken in October 1891 to Mentone, France, where he remained until his death which occurred on Sunday night, January 31, 1892. In one of his last remarks to his wife, he said, "O wifie, I have had such a blessed time with my Lord". He often called Christ his "Beloved". His body was returned to England and interred in the Norwood Cemetery on February 11, 1892. On his monument are inscribed these words:

Here lies the body
of
CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON
Waiting for the Appearing of His
Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ.

Spurgeon was truly a man of literary attainment. He was an omnivorous reader and gave his opinion of both old and modern publications. He read modern books but his heart remained with the Puritan divines.

God gave Elijah forty days' meat at one meal: do you, dear friends, ever get such meals as that? I do when I read certain books;—not modern-thought books. Give me no such fare as that—

1. Works, 37, p. 324.
a grain of meal to a gallon of water; but let me have one of the good solid Puritan volumes that are so little prized nowadays, and my soul can feed upon such blessed food as that, and be satisfied with it.\(^1\)

At his death there were 12,000 volumes in his library, not counting the numerous volumes he had given away. He was capable of reading several books in one day. A test of his ability to retain their contents proved him amazingly accurate. His work on *Commenting and Commentaries* in which he reviews and gives his evaluation of different books, proves his familiarity with expository and other literature. Similar book reviews are included in *The Sword and the Trowel*. As a mental relaxation, Spurgeon read *Pilgrim's Progress* over one hundred times.

As a religious author, Spurgeon will probably never be surpassed. Counting his posthumous works there are over one hundred and fifty volumes listed under his name. His success as an author may be attributed to his freshness of thought, the simplicity of his language, the evangelical tenor of his message, and a profound knowledge of the Bible. Among the outstanding works of Spurgeon are *The Saint and His Saviour*, his first published book of repute; *The Treasury of David*, a work which was twenty years in preparation; *The New Park Street and Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, a sixty-three volume set of his sermons; *The Salt Cellars*, a collection of proverbs; *John Ploughman's Talk*, a collection of wit and wisdom; *The Sword and the Trowel*, a magazine publication of twenty-eight volumes; *Lectures to My Students*, a three-volume set containing advice to young clergymen; *All of Grace*, a small book which was translated into more foreign languages than any other of Spurgeon's publications; *The Interpreter*, consisting of passages for family devotion and worship; *Morning and Evening Daily Readings*, another devotional commentary; *The Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith*, a devotional and inspirational

\(^1\) *Autobiography*, Vol. 4, p. 265.
commentary which demonstrated Spurgeon's faith during the Downgrade Controversy; and many illustrative volumes such as Sermons in Candles. Many publications attributed to Spurgeon have been taken from his sixty-three volume set of sermons and published under such titles as The Treasury of the Old and New Testament, an eight volume set of select expositions. His four volume Autobiography consists of a diary covering the important events of his life.

Spurgeon also wrote many poems and hymns. An example of his poems may be read in Appendix C. This poem is the result of his conversion experience.

Lewis O. Brastow in his critical observations on Spurgeon's sermons said, "Crude in thought and rough instruments of power they are, and will not live."¹ The modern reader is well aware that the sermons of Spurgeon still live, and that twentieth century book markets continue to advertise new publications of select sermons from his voluminous works.

Spurgeon was predominantly an evangelist, though he did not neglect pastoral duties. Some think of him as the greatest preacher since the Apostle Paul. In his early ministry Spurgeon prayed, "Forgive me, Lord, if I have ever had high thoughts of myself."² It was his desire to become an outstanding power for Christ, with an influence like that of Paul. This is indicated in his prayers.

Make me Thy faithful servant, O my God; may I honour Thee in my day and generation, and be consecrated for ever to Thy service! Make me to be an eminent servant of Thine, and to be blessed with the power to serve Thee, like Thy great servant Paul!²

Spurgeon recorded that he once read that "'If any man shall find a difficulty in selecting a text, he had better at once go back to the grocer's shop, or to the plough, for he evidently has not the capacity

1. Representative Modern Preachers, p. 392.
required for a minister".¹ This statement troubled his conscience until his grandfather, a Congregational minister, remarked to him that "The difficulty is not because there are not enough texts, but because there are so many, that I am in a strait betwixt them".² With this Spurgeon agreed.

To me, still, I must admit, my text-selection is a very great embarrassment...the anxiety of attending to the most pressing of so many truths, all clamouring for a hearing, so many duties all needing enforcing, and so many spiritual needs of the people all demanding supply. I confess that I frequently sit hour after hour praying and waiting for a subject, and that this is the main part of my study; much hard labour have I spent in manipulating topics, ruminating upon points of doctrine, making skeletons out of verses, and then burying every bone of them in the catacombs of oblivion, drifting on and on over leagues of broken water, till I see the red lights, and make sail direct to the desired haven. I believe that, almost any Saturday in my life, I prepare enough outlines of Sermons, if I felt at liberty to preach them, to last me for a month, but I no more dare to use them than an honest mariner would run to shore a cargo of contraband goods....I am always sure to have the most happy day when I get a good text in the morning from my Master....Sometimes, my texts have come to me in a very remarkable way.²

Spurgeon did not attempt to analyze the Bible critically. He was more dogmatic than polemical in his conclusions. He hated controversy, and accepted in child-like faith great truths which could not be comprehended in their entirety. He advocated that sermons should consist of teaching and preaching, and declared that the real worth of a sermon was the truth it contained. Contrary to homiletical exhortation, Spurgeon approved spiritualizing, though he warned against perverting Scripture by an illegitimate use of it. He advised that it should be used sparingly and with common sense. In admonishing his students fearlessly to declare the truth, Spurgeon stated that "The best policy is never to be politic, but to proclaim every atom of the truth so far as God has taught it to you".³

² Ibid., p. 207.
³ Lectures to my Students, p. 77, First Series.
Sermons should have real teaching in them, and their doctrine should be solid, substantial, and abundant. The entire gospel must be presented from the pulpit; the whole faith once delivered to the saints must be proclaimed by us...the true minister of Christ knows that the true value of a sermon must lie, not in its fashion and manner, but in the truth which it contains. The grandest discourse ever delivered is an ostentatious failure if the doctrine of the grace of God be absent from it...

Spurgeon's sermons were full of theological content. He maintained that a sound Biblical theology should become a part of every minister's spiritual equipment before he entered the pulpit, but he gave counsel that "Sermons are not to be bodies of divinity". From the beginning of his ministry, Spurgeon's theology never changed. Certainly he believed in growth and progress, but he held that the fundamental doctrines or truths of the Bible should be definitely fixed in one's mind and held constant.

Let your teachings grow and advance; let them deepen with your experience, and rise with your soul-progress. I do not mean preach new truths; for, on the contrary, I hold that man happy who is so well taught from the first that, after fifty years of ministry, he has never had to recant a doctrine or to mourn an important omission; but I mean, let our depth and insight continually increase, and where there is spiritual advance it will be so.

Spurgeon urged that the doctrines vital to salvation should be continually placed before the public and that no particular truth should receive far greater attention than another, since there must be a combination of all in a well-rounded discourse. Speaking to his students, he remarked:

Brethren, if you are not theologians you are in your pastorates just nothing at all. You may be fine rhetoricians, and be rich in polished sentences; but without knowledge of the gospel, and aptness to teach it, you are but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

Brethren, first and above all things, keep to plain evangelical doctrines; whatever else you do or do not preach, be sure

1. Lectures to my Students, p. 72, First Series.
2. Ibid., p. 80.
3. Ibid., p. 82.
4. Ibid., p. 74.
incessantly to bring forth the soul-saving truth of Christ and him crucified.

In all his sermons, Spurgeon kept Christ at the center. He emphasized that the theme of every discourse should be Christ, and stated that no sermon should be ended without an invitation to sinners to receive Him. "I hope I shall never preach a sermon without speaking to the ungodly, for oh, how I love them!"² Again, "In my soul's intent I have never desired the discouragement of a single soul among you all. Far rather would I die that you might live".³ Spurgeon often stated that Christ was the only theology he knew. The doctrines of salvation and not church dogmas were his concern.

Of all I would wish to say this is the sum; my brethren, preach CHRIST, always and evermore. He is the whole gospel. His person, offices, and work must be our one great, all-comprehending theme.... Salvation is a theme for which I would fain enlist every holy tongue.... O that Christ crucified were the universal burden of men of God. Your guess at the number of the beast, your Napoleonic speculations, your conjectures concerning a personal Antichrist—forgive me, I count them but mere bones for dogs; while men are dying, and hell is filling, it seems to me the veriest drivell to be muttering about an Armageddon at Sebastopol or Sadowa or Sedan, and peeping between the folded leaves of destiny to discover the fate of Germany.... To win a soul from going down into the pit is a more glorious achievement than to be crowned in the arena of theological controversy as Doctor Sufficientissimus; to have faithfully unveiled the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ will be in the final judgment accounted worthier service than to have solved the problems of the religious Sphinx, or to have cut the Gordian knot of apocalyptic difficulty.⁴

Spurgeon interpreted Biblical truth largely in the Calvinistic pattern. He may rightly be described as a moderate Calvinist. He was a Bible evangelist who combined Biblical knowledge with religious devotion in a most effective manner. As an evangelist he naturally laid full stress on the doctrines of grace. Spurgeon emphasized with unceasing

1. Lectures to my Students, p. 78, First Series.
4. Lectures to my Students, pp. 82-83, First Series.
fervour the holiness of God and the moral demands of His law. With all the force of his power, he endeavored to teach that the distinct Christian trait was holiness of life, and his sermons adequately outlined the conditions for this life. The moral government of God demands holiness and Spurgeon believed that this was the test of one's faith and election.

While Spurgeon was preaching at Surrey Gardens Music Hall, his congregations averaged ten thousand at each service. He spoke to an assemblage in Crystal Palace numbering twenty-three thousand, six hundred and fifty-four. Statistics estimate that during his local ministry in London, he preached to congregations totalling over twenty million. With such figures as these it is not startling to learn that his sermons, which were published weekly from 1855 to 1917, had a circulation of over one hundred and fifty million. They were printed in twenty-five languages.

The Tabernacle which Spurgeon built and the school which he conducted there for young men have already been mentioned. The establishment of Pastor's College has also been discussed. Spurgeon's interest was not confined to his College and Tabernacle. He was actively engaged in social work which began by establishing missions and building chapels in the sections of London where social work was needed. The members of Spurgeon's Tabernacle supported the mission work, and Spurgeon contributed substantial amounts for the work. He never asked for contributions without first making an offering.

A monumental undertaking was the founding of the Stockwell Orphanage. This was begun and continued as an enterprise of faith. Before World War II the Orphanage provided for five hundred boys and girls of all denominations, training them for positions in the business world. Spurgeon never discriminated between denominations. The Church
of England has always had the highest number attending at any given time. The Baptists and Congregationalists follow respectively. The first headmaster of the institution was a Congregational minister. The Orphanage, as well as the Metropolitan Tabernacle, was destroyed during World War II, but the work of both is still continued.

Spurgeon's interest extended to both young and old. He established seventeen almshouses for the poor and aged. In the block of almshouses, Spurgeon founded a day school which accommodated four hundred children.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle Colportage Association was also founded for the purpose of disseminating Christian literature to counteract the evils of the day, especially the heresies of the Roman Catholic Church. The members of this society included Christian men from various denominations.

Spurgeon's wife established a book fund known as "Mrs. Spurgeon's Book Fund". The object of the fund was to provide theological works for ministers who were unable to purchase them. Later on, in connection with the book fund, the Pastors' Aid Society was founded to provide clothing and money for needy ministers.

During his London ministry Spurgeon participated in four controversies. The major controversies which he initiated were the Baptismal Regeneration Controversy of 1864, and the Down Grade Controversy of 1887. These are fully discussed elsewhere in this thesis.

There were two minor controversies which occurred during the earlier part of his London ministry and are briefly discussed here.

Spurgeon's first controversy was known as "The Rivulet" or "Hymns for the Heart and Voice". The author of The Rivulet was the Rev. Thomas Toke Lynch. The volume was published late in 1855, and the controversy began the following year. In a general way these hymns were
lacking in the essentials of the life and work of Christ. They were judged to be the work of a Deist. They were severely condemned by men other than Spurgeon. When asked to judge these hymns theologically, Spurgeon said:

...what have I to say of the hymns theologically? I answer, there is so little of the doctrinal element in them that I am at a loss to judge; and that little is so indefinite that, apart from the author's antecedents, one would scarcely guess his doctrinal views at all. ¹

In his extended review of the hymns entitled "Mine Opinion", Spurgeon's overall judgment of the poems was stated thus:

...it is our firm opinion that, until Butler's Hudibras is sung in Heaven, Mr. Lynch's Rivulet will not be adopted in the assemblies of the saints below.²

The second controversy arose in 1860 over a volume of sermons entitled Divine Life in Man, by the Rev. J. Baldwin Brown. The point of controversy in this volume concerned the Atonement. The Rev. J. Howard Hinton condemned the book "as a mischief of the gravest character".³ On April 15, 1860, Spurgeon preached a sermon called "Christ—Our Substitute",⁴ which was an attack against Mr. Brown's position on the Atonement. In this sermon Spurgeon upheld the Deity of Christ, the doctrine of original depravity, and the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. Indirectly, Mr. Brown's book, along with others, was referred to as "modern heresy". Toward the close of this homily which ended Spurgeon's part in this controversy, he said:

I have often thought the best answer for all these new ideas is, that the true gospel was always preached to the poor;—'The poor have the gospel preached to them.' I am sure that the poor will never learn the gospel of these new divines, for they cannot make head or tail of it, nor the rich either...Some of us must stand out

². Ibid., p. 263.
³. Ibid., p. 269.
⁴. Works, 6, pp. 189-196.
against these attacks on truth, although we love not controversy.\(^1\)

These first two controversies were initiated by Spurgeon's friends. He joined in these controversial efforts to combat error and defend the truth. The rôle he played in these controversies foreshadowed the greatest controversy of his career, the Down Grade Controversy in 1887.

In the introduction to his second volume on *Great Pulpit Masters*, Blackwood voiced a sentiment common among many today, as well as in Spurgeon's day. He said, "To many of us he [Spurgeon] seems the mightiest preacher in Christendom since the Apostle Paul".\(^2\) There are many reasons for the success of his career.

Four factors, three of which may be considered of equal significance, account for the successful ministry of Spurgeon. The first factor, which overrides the other three, is the Holy Spirit, whom Spurgeon declared to be a distinct Person, and not an emanation from God. He referred to the Spirit as the "key" and the "Private Tutor" through whom all spiritual enlightenment came. If Spurgeon were living today he would denounce those biographers who claim that his success was largely due to his heredity, or to his golden voice, or to his unique personality. In his characteristic way he would declare that his power and success came by the Holy Spirit who brought the "effectual blow" of "irresistible grace" to his heart. In his *Lectures to my Students*, Spurgeon said, "Our hope of success, and our strength for continuing the service, lie in our belief that the Spirit of the Lord resteth upon us".\(^3\)

His genius can be attributed only to the fact that he was possessed of

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the Spirit of God. An attestation to this fact is given in his own words:

We may not attribute holy and happy changes in our ministry to anything less than the action of the Holy Spirit upon our souls. I am sure the Spirit does so work. Often and often, when I have had doubts suggested by the infidel, I have been able to fling them to the winds with utter scorn, because I am distinctly conscious of a power working upon me when I am speaking in the name of the Lord, infinitely transcending any personal power of fluency, and far surpassing any energy derived from excitement such as I have felt when delivering a secular lecture or making a speech—so utterly distinct from such power that I am quite certain it is not of the same order or class as the enthusiasm of the politician or the glow of the orator. May we full often feel the divine energy, and speak with power.1

The second factor contributing to Spurgeon's success may be stated in three words: love to Christ. He said, "the test is this, the loving of Christ" and added that this "can only be ascribed to faith".2

The third factor, which Spurgeon himself stated as the reason for his success, is that he preached, not about the gospel, but the gospel of Christ itself. He stated that "The best way to preach sinners to Christ is to preach Christ to sinners."3 His love for Christ resulted in a Christ-centered ministry. His motto was "Jesus only". He never magnified himself. He gave himself unreservedly to Christ, and with a child-like faith implicitly trusted in the promises which God had extended through Christ. He said, "I resolve, God helping me, in my preaching to preach to you nothing else save Jesus Christ".4

The gospel will have no dominant idea in it but Christ. It is a noble steed, but it will bear no rider but him whose vesture is dipped in blood....The gospel is glorious in its going when it bears Jesus in the saddle; but if you preach yourself, or human philosophy, the gospel will fling you over its head....O ye preachers and teachers, lift up Christ! He is as the serpent on the pole, and all who look to him shall live for ever.5

1. Lectures to my Students, p. 9 of Second Series.
3. Lectures to my Students, p. 184, Second Series.
The fourth and last reason, which Spurgeon also gave for his successful career, is the power of prayer, which he considered to be the "vital breath" of a Christian. He stated that "the secret of all ministerial success lies in prevalence at the mercy-seat." It was his custom to pray half-an-hour before engaging in a service. He stated that normally his closest fellowship with God was in his pulpit prayers. He did not allow these to be printed. Oftentimes when he prayed, his soul was in such ecstasy that he wondered whether he was on earth or in heaven.

Sometimes you will enjoy closer fellowship with God in prayer in the pulpit than you have known anywhere else. To me my greatest secrecy in prayer has often been in public; my truest loneliness with God has occurred to me while pleading in the midst of thousands. I have opened my eyes at the close of a prayer and come back to the assembly with a sort of shock at finding myself upon earth and among men.

Some of our communings with the Lord Jesus are too sacred, too spiritual, too heavenly, ever to be spoken of this side the gates of pearl; but the bulk of the Lord's replies to our petitions are such as might be written athwart the skies, that every eye might read them.

Spurgeon often prayed that God would forgive the sins of his prayers, as well as those of his sermons. His most anxious moments were spent in deliberating how he could present Christ to sinners so that they might be reconciled to God. "Abundant prayer must go with earnest preaching," he said, and though he acknowledged that a minister could not always physically be on his knees, he was of the persuasion that "the soul should never leave the posture of devotion." His emphasis on unceasing prayer was that:

1. Works, 21, p. 126.
2. Lectures to my Students, p. 49, First Series.
3. Ibid., p. 14 of Second Series.
5. Lectures to my Students, p. 13 of Second Series.
...ministers ought never to be many minutes without actually lifting up our hearts in prayer. Some of us could honestly say that we are seldom a quarter of an hour without speaking to God, and that not as a duty but as an instinct...1

I can say, and God is my witness, that I never yet feared the face of man, be he who or what he may; but I often tremble—yea, I always do,—in ascending the pulpit, lest I should not faithfully proclaim the gospel to poor perishing sinners.2

Therefore he exhorted his congregation to pray for every phase of his ministry. He said, "Oh, I beseech you, as Aarons and Hurs, hold up my hands, that my pulpit power may not abate!"3 The emphasis which Spurgeon placed on prayer as essential to the success of his work is seen in a petition to his congregation for prayer on his behalf. At the opening of the Metropolitan Tabernacle he said:

Oh, my dear brothers and sisters, upon whose hearts I have been borne so long...do not forget me. Of all men the most pitiable if you take away your prayers, and if, in consequence, God take away His Spirit; of all men the most happy if you will bear me in your arms, if the Lord shall still be my strength and my shield....I hope that in answer to your prayers I may become more prayerful, more faithful, and have more power to wrestle with God for man, and more energy to wrestle with man for God. I pray you, as though I asked it of you for my very life, do this night commend me to God ....I had rather die this night, on this spot, and end my career, than lose your prayers.4

If Spurgeon were living today he would be satisfied with the foregoing reasons because they bring "All glory to God". "The grand object of the Christian ministry", he said, "is the glory of God".5

Humanly speaking, however, several other factors, although subordinate, contributed to his success.

Spurgeon placed great emphasis upon the Bible. He believed the Bible to be the verbally inspired Word of God. He declared that

1. Lectures to my Students, p. 13 of Second Series.
3. Ibid., p. 308.
5. Lectures to my Students, p. 179, Second Series.
there was nothing contradictory in it, and therefore he did not attempt
to prove Biblical truths, but rather to expound and elucidate them.
Spurgeon was definitely an evangelist who was sincere and uncompromising
in proclaiming what he believed to be true. Wherever truth was found it
stood as such regardless of the consequences. Spurgeon preached Christ
as much from the Old Testament as he did from the New. He possessed a
vast reservoir of memorized Scripture which added to the gracefulness of
his sermons.

The positive element in Spurgeon's preaching also contributed
to his success. He was absolutely certain that the doctrines he preached
were right. Spurgeon preached on the basic doctrines of the Bible and
appealed to the clergymen of his day to return to the "old fashioned
gospel" and preach Christ as man's Substitute for sin. He always relied
upon the Holy Spirit to make his message effective. All his preaching
was practically aimed at the conversion of souls. He said, "Our great
object of glorifying God is...to be mainly achieved by the winning of
souls".¹ It has been estimated that between ten and twelve thousand
conversions occurred in his church during his ministry. These results
served to humble him and he consistently cried, "All glory to God".

Spurgeon possessed a natural oratorical power and his generous
flow of artistically arranged phrases added beauty and charm to his mes-
sage, which was always sent directly to the hearer in such a conversational
manner that he would feel that he was being spoken to privately. His
rhetoric was especially of Puritan flavor. While discoursing, he fre-
quently made use of the metaphor, apostrophe, and interrogation. When
he asked questions, he answered them. His spontaneous flow of Saxon was
admired by John Ruskin.

¹. Lectures to my Students, p. 180, Second Series.
Spurgeon was an original thinker, and it is quite evident that other theologians have taken his thoughts and clothed them in another theological dress. His productive imagination and his keen power of observation enabled him to present old truths with a freshness rarely excelled. He possessed the gift of simplified illustration and used this native ability effectively. He was always a student and his unsurpassed memory was never the cause of complacency.

There was certainly the emotional element in Spurgeon's sermons, though not of the ecstatic type. Spurgeon presented truth in its naked form. It was his desire that sin should be seen in its true light. The emotion that he desired was that which would stimulate self-condemnation with the consequent result of soul-salvation.

Though Spurgeon's popularity has been attributed in an exceeding measure to his eloquence, it may be said as a final observation that his power lay in the very soul of a man whose chief object was to magnify Christ who had redeemed him with such condescending love that His grace was irresistible.
CHAPTER II

THE DOCTRINES OF GOD, MAN, AND SIN
THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Spurgeon derives his conception of God from the life of Christ who is God. "Christ gives us the nature of our Father."¹ In every respect Christ is God and nothing can be known about God except through Christ. "If you would know the Godhead, you must behold it in the person of Jesus Christ..."² Spurgeon does not show how the attributes of God are derived from Christ. He simply states that man's knowledge of God comes from Christ, and then proceeds with his thoughts about God.

God is self-existent. He is not matter, nor is He dependent upon matter for existence. He is "pure Spirit". "God is essentially and evermore pure Spirit, and consequently undergoes no variableness nor shadow of a turning."³ Spurgeon does not attempt to define God, but regards Him as having in His own Being the source of all life and activity. As a Personality God is self-determining. "Of none of the creatures can this be said. Immutability is an attribute of God only."³ God's "eternal self-existence" makes Him independent. "God is independent"³ and He is "self-sufficient and all-sufficient".³ Since every person has his existence either in or out of himself, Spurgeon, in his emphasis upon God as Creator, states that "Nothing of God's being is derived

¹ Works, 38, p. 269.
² Works, 22, p. 234.
³ Works, 16, p. 495.
from another, but all that exists is derived from him". \(^1\) "There is no other life except the life which has leaped from the eternal self-existence." \(^2\)

"God is without beginning...everything is now with him." \(^3\) Hence, the existence of man lies within the creative power of God, and man is thus dependent upon Him. In stressing that God exists by the necessity of His own Being, Spurgeon contends that the self-existence of God is implied in the name "Jehovah" and in the proclamation "I Am that I Am". Thus there is nothing of contingency in the existence of God, but "from his own nature" He exists.

...the eternal self-existence of God is taught throughout the Scriptures, and is implied in that name which belongs only to the true God, Jehovah, 'I Am that I Am,'...He is the one only undervived, self-existent, self-sustained Being. Let us know of a surety that the Lord God whom we worship is the only Being who necessarily and from his own nature exists. No other being could have been but for his sovereign will, nor could it continue were that will suspended. He is the only light of life, all others are reflections of his beams. There must be God...but the necessity for the continuance of other spirits lies in his will and not in the very nature of things. \(^4\)

God in His nature and attributes is never subject to change. He is immutable. The "very existence, and being of a God, seems to me to imply immutability". \(^5\) Referring to the unchangeableness of God in His essence, Spurgeon remarks:

...God is Jehovah, and he changes not in his essence. We cannot tell you what Godhead is. We do not know what substance that is which we call God. It is an existence, it is a being; but what that is, we know not. However, whatever it is, we call it his essence, and that essence never changes...God is perpetually the same. He is not composed of any substance or material, but is spirit—pure, essential, and ethereal spirit—and therefore he is immutable....He is the great I AM—the Great Unchangeable. \(^6\)

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1. Works, 16, p. 495.
3. Works, 18, p. 163.
5. Works, 1, p. 4.
6. Ibid., p. 2.
In virtue of God's perfection it is impossible for Him to increase or decrease. "I believe God to be a perfect being [and] if he is a perfect being, he cannot change."¹ A change in God would be inconsistent with perfection, but Spurgeon does not limit the actions of God because of His absolute immutability and perfection, rather he conceives of immutability as consistent with God's freedom and activity.

The God whom we serve not only exists, but reigns. No other position would become him but that of unlimited sovereignty over all his creatures ....Remember, then, that in the universe God is actually reigning. Never let us conceive of God as being infinitely great, but not exerting his greatness, infinitely able to reign, but as yet a mere spectator of events. It is not so. The Lord reigneth even now.²

There is no necessity for change either outside God or within God. "While he is immutable from within, he is immovable from without."³ Yet, because of His sovereignty "He works changes and effects changes, but he himself abides the same".⁴

The immutability of God is further attributed to His infinity which he describes as having no limits or "bounds". To Spurgeon, God is both transcendent and immanent. Infinity is emphasized in a positive sense, i.e., it belongs to God only and not to "two infinities". The fact that God exists means infinity to Spurgeon.

...the fact of God's infinity...puts change out of the question. God is an infinite being. What do you mean by that? There is no man who can tell you what he means by an infinite being. But there cannot be two infinities. If one thing is infinite, there is no room for anything else; for infinite means all. It means not bounded, not finite, having no end ....Infinity has written on its very brow the word 'inmutability.'¹

God is not dithesistic. In His nature He is indivisible. Therefore Spurgeon considers the attributes of God as inseparable, yet distinguishable parts of God's nature. The attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence, demonstrate the unity of God.

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1. Works, 1, p. 5.
2. Works, 16, pp. 496-497.
4. Works, 16, p. 496.
Those who know the Lord should believe in the unity of his essence and subsistence. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." There should be no mistaken notions here: the unity of the Godhead is fundamental, and mistakes here are fatal. We should know the Lord in the plurality of his persons...Get a clear idea, then, of the Trinity in Unity. Do not reason about it; do not try to understand it: remember, it is not your duty to comprehend, but to apprehend such truths as these: you are to believe, rather than to reason. One God in the Trinity of his persons let us know and worship...This doctrine of the Trinity in Unity seems to be the place of standing or falling with public teachers and private believers.1

God is omnipresent. His nature is not limited to the law of space. By "immensity" Spurgeon simply means that God in His nature is not subject to the limits of space. In fact, God fills space. He "is a God who filleth immensity". "God and space are equal." The presence of God literally fills heaven and earth in all its parts.

God, absolutely considered, as a pure spirit, needed no such place as heaven. God is everywhere; long ago he asked, 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' The idea of there being needed any celestial court or place of abode falls short of the true idea of the omnipresent Jehovah.2

He rejects the deistic view of God; and though he believes God is transcendent, he nevertheless says that "God is everywhere, not as a slumbering God, but as an active God".3 God, being one in undivided essence, is present as God at the same time in every place.

...we are sure that God must see us, for we are taught in the Scriptures that God is everywhere...God is here: I do not simply live near him, but 'in him I live, and move, and have my being.' There is not a particle of this mighty space which is not filled with God...God is not a being confined to one place, but he is everywhere...I know from his own words that he is a God who filleth immensity...Conceive of space, and God and space are equal.4

His presence is essentially personal.

He is so present in all places that he is specially near to each person. His circumference is nowhere, but his centre is everywhere. God is as much with you as if there were no other person in the world. His being near to you does not make him far off from another...He is near us in active energy, ready to interpose and help us.5

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1. Works, 11, p. 27.
4. Ibid., p. 250.
5. Works, 33, p. 400.
God has a perfect and eternal knowledge of all things. Being self-existent and the source of all life, "God Almighty, from his very essence and nature, must be an Omnipotent God". God is "the all-seeing one, whose eye took in the whole universe at a glance, and whose knowledge extended far beyond that of mortals". In stressing that God is of one mind, Spurgeon also holds that His purpose is unchanged, and that His infinite mind considered the fall of man and devised the plan of salvation before man was created. Since perfection is the "sole prerogative of God", His mind is free from all imperfection. Thus God knows the end of all things from the beginning.

...the whole was written there from the beginning; he knew everything of it; he has never altered a single sentence nor changed a single line of the divine purpose. What he intended the great picture to be, that it shall be at the end...and when in the end God shall exhibit the whole, he shall elicit both from men and angels tremendous shouts of praise...

Nothing can prevent God from observing every action of man. He "can see a thing before it happens". "God knows you more fully than you know yourself", and "you can never get away from God's observation". The "infinite mind of God is able to grasp a million objects at once, and yet to set itself as much upon one, as if there were nothing else but that one". The paragraphs which follow indicate Spurgeon's conception of the complete and eternal knowledge of God.

...he is infinite in knowledge. We cannot conceive of a God whose knowledge is bounded. That condition belongs to the finite...but not to the Infinite...the great First Cause of everything. God knows all the past, and...present...and future....All knowable things must be known to the Most High; the very nature of God implies it...the infinite knowledge of God is an absolute certainty...Infinite in knowledge, everywhere present, and everywhere perceiving everything, he must know my foolishness and my sin.
To know what men have already done, is a light matter compared with knowing what men will yet do...The Lord knows not only the action, but the motive of the action; all the thoughts that went with my action, all the pride and self-seeking that came after it, and spoiled it, when else it might have been praiseworthy.\footnote{Works, 44, p. 16.}

In the exercise of His omnipotent power, God acts with the wisdom of a holy God. He can do as He wills, but in His actions He does not contradict His holy nature. God is always consistent with His infinite and perfect character.

Men are so little in the way of God that He never finds it needful to perpetrate an injustice even on a single man, and He has never caused one solitary creature to suffer one unnecessary pang. Herein is His greatness, that it comprehends all littlenesses without a strain...He may do what He wills, for none can stay Him; but He never wills to do in any case aught that is unjust, unholy, unmerciful, or in any way inconsistent with the perfection of His matchless character.\footnote{Works, 16, p. 500.}

God "is infinitely good".\footnote{Works, 3, p. 245.} That is one reason why "He is slow to anger".\footnote{Works, 56, p. 33.} A second reason for His goodness lies in the greatness of His power. God has power to control His own power.

When God's power doth restrain himself, then it is power indeed, the power to curb power, the power that binds omnipotence is omnipotence surpassed. God is great in power, and therefore doth He keep in his anger.\footnote{Works, 16, p. 502.}

Spurgeon accepts by faith the enigma of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Man's freedom, however, has no effect upon God's will and purpose for the world. "All opposition to omnipotence must be futile, and must also be transient."\footnote{Works, 56, p. 33.} God's freedom is an act proceeding from His omnipotence. In spite of man's freedom, "God's fiat is irresistible and unimpeachable".\footnote{Works, 16, p. 502.} "Man is powerless...to resist the fiat of God."\footnote{Works, 16, p. 502.} Spurgeon derives comfort from the fact that even though God is sovereign and omnipotent, "he always uses his might with strictest rectitude".\footnote{Works, 16, p. 502.}
I never deny the free agency of man, or diminish his responsibility, but I dare never invest the free will of man with omnipotence, for this were to make man into a sort of God, an idolatry to be loathed....I dare not believe even sin itself to be exempted from the control of providence, or from the overruling dominion of the Judge of all the earth....If man did know God's design, and should set himself with all his might against it, yet as the chaff cannot resist the wind...so neither can man effectually resist the absolute will and sovereign good pleasure of the Most High.

Although Spurgeon discusses numerous phases of the attributes of God, the essence of his thought on all appears in his conception of love and holiness. Spurgeon's thought on the love of God is discussed elsewhere in this thesis and will be treated with brevity here. He reiterates many times that "no love to God exists in the natural heart of man", and for this reason it is considered "a vast condescension" that God in His love should "stoop" to save men whose natural constitution rebels against holy love. "Could condescension go farther than for the Infinite to be joined to the infant, and the Omnipotent to the feebleness of a new-born babe?"

Divine love can have no recompense. That he, the Infinite, should stoop to love the finite; that he the infinitely pure should love the guilty, this is a vast condescension.

God will "not act without a reason" in the salvation of men. This reason is found in God Himself. "The Lord falls back upon himself, and within himself finds a reason for his grace." The motive of His grace is "his own glory".

The depth of God's love is reached, when He, through the death of Christ, acts to forgive sin.

The Eternal God has thrown his whole soul into the business of redeeming men. If you desire to see God most Godlike, it is in the pardon of sin, and the saving of men. If you desire to read the character of God written out in capital letters, you must study the visitation of his love in the person of his dear Son, and all the wonderful works of infinite grace which spring therefrom. It is a grand sight to behold God in earnest when he

2. Works, 29, p. 111.
5. Works, 18, p. 158.
says, 'Now will I arise.' With awe we watch him as he lays bare his arm; but this full energy of power is best seen when his work is grace.\(^1\)

The manifestation of the supreme love of God for men is the cross which reveals the character of God's heart in its fulness as He seeks to restore men to His fellowship. Love is stressed as a permanent quality of God and His relationship to the world is based on this abiding quality.

Infinite mercy and condescending love reflect glory upon God.\(^2\) In redemption you see all the attributes of God, blended in harmony, shining with benignant radiance, not with the flash and flame of Sinai, but with the soft beams of peace and love from Calvary. God is never so gloriously seen as at the cross...\(^2\)

The idea of God's holiness involves the action of God, who in His perfect goodness leads men in the path of salvation. His leading men to repentance is consistent with His goodness and forbearance.

Muse on his attributes, and consider his majesty, for he is not merely infinitely powerful, wise, all-sufficient, and glorious; but he is supremely good. He is good to the fullest extent of goodness. He is a God whose character is matchless... He is a pure and holy God whom we worship; Jehovah, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises.\(^3\)

The perfect moral character of God is the standard of conduct for men. The "moral law, which is the standard of equity for all time"\(^4\) must be kept perfectly. The law is holy and its violation demands punishment. Any infringement of the law is a violation upon the holiness of God. As a Sovereign, God can rightly condemn men because His holiness and love have been assailed. He argues, however, that God acts according to His own will, and, simply because of His omnipotent greatness, He wills to love men and to save them. Christ by His obedience and death paid the penalty of the law, thus preparing the way for the free action of God's mercy. The perfect and holy character of God is "the guarantee of our salvation".\(^5\)

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1. Works, 32, pp. 350-351.
God is love. God is holiness. God is the law. God is love, and doing as he wills, he wills to love. God is holy, and doing as he wills, he wills holiness, he wills justice, he wills truth; and though there were raised a thousand questions as to how is this just? how is that loving? how is that wise? the one sufficient answer is—"God is his own interpreter, And he will make it plain." O sons of men, it is not for me to unriddle the enigmas of the Infinite, he shall explain himself. I am not so impertinent as to be his apologist, he shall clear himself. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'

Wrath is inseparable from God's love and holiness. God is holy and consequently He demands a like holiness in every individual. Holiness is a moral requirement in the government of God. To be consistent with His holy nature God must punish sin, as sin is the antithesis of His holiness. It is impossible for God to look upon sin with complacency, and in as much as His justice remains unchangeable, the only way to escape the penalty of sin is to accept the Atonement of Christ.

...by virtue of our sinnership, God has the right to punish us if he pleases to do so; but if he can, consistently with the principles of eternal justice, pardon us, he has the right to do so. You noticed that I said, 'consistently with the principles of eternal justice,' for God will never violate those principles. He can always do as he wills, but he always wills to do what is right; and, by the atonement of his dear Son, he has made a way by which he can satisfy all the claims of His inflexible justice, and yet can take infinite delight in bestowing his mercy upon the guilty.

Thus in virtue of God's provision for the salvation of men, there is no acquittal for the guilty outside of the Atonement. As the goodness of God promotes repentance, likewise the wrath of His holiness demands exclusion of the wicked from His presence. Justice and mercy, having met in Christ, satisfy the anger of God's holiness toward sin. Those who refuse the sacrifice of Christ must, from the necessity of God's nature, receive eternal punishment.

...God will not acquit the wicked, because he is good....the goodness of God demands that men should perish, if they will sin....And again, the justice of God demands it. God is infinitely just, and his justice demands that men should be punished, unless they turn to him with full purpose of heart.

2. Works, 56, p. 15.
Before Spurgeon's view of man is fully discussed, a few pertinent statements scattered here and there in his sermons are to be noted. Possessed of a "body, soul, and spirit," man is a "complex creature." Those who fancy that they can fully describe him do not understand him. He is a riddle and a contradiction. He is a mortal being whose "first birth gave him life and death together." The "very worst phase of man"—[is] that he is so proud. Spurgeon gives a vivid portrait of man's fallen nature by describing him as "A living, animated lump of clay—defiled and filthy, a living hell, and yet proud." Man is subjected to "absolute dependence upon God" in both the temporal and the spiritual realm. Since God is the Creator, making "all things out of nothing," man, as a creature, is dependent upon Him.

All creation exists by the will of the Lord; and if his will should cease to send forth conserving power to maintain the created things in existence, they would all cease to be.

Existence is a continued creation, for the creatures have no power within themselves to preserve their own being. The world is not like a wheel, which, having received a great push from a strong hand, continues to revolve long after the hand is withdrawn; but the divine energy goes forth continually to uphold all things which it has made.

As the world was created by Christ, and primarily for Christ, even so, "men were created by Christ, and for him." Apart from Christ, the purpose of the creation of man and the cosmos is unintelligible. "I might truly say that the whole world was created for Calvary." From eternity men were in the
mind of God. They were created for His glory. Their creation was "necessary to the completeness of Christ's plan of salvation". Man were created in the image of God for the ultimate purpose of associating with Christ.

In His omniscience, God envisaged the fall of man, whose creation and consequent fall remained a mystery until the full purpose of the creation of the world and man was read in the Incarnation. The Incarnation was the ultimate in creation. This identification of God with man marked the restoration of the image of God within man. It was the beginning of "a new order of created beings" who, even though they were "partly spiritual and partly material," should become so united with Christ "that his life should be their life, and... their life should be derived from him". Thus in his review of the creation of the world and man, Spurgeon concludes that both were for the glory of Christ whose birth and cross were the explanation of the universe. "Jesus is the clue of the universe, its centre and its explanation," and "Creation and history are enigmas which can only be understood in the light of the cross."

I believe that from of old the creation and the sanctification of elect manhood was the apex of the great pyramid of the divine purpose, the focus of the divine glory, that for which all other things were made. There never was a time in which God in the thoughts of his heart was not familiar with man....There was ever about man some high intent of God not then apparent, and, indeed, never seen till he appeared, who is at once God and man. In the creation of man the Lord ever had an eye to that man of men, the Lord Jesus, up to whom all things lead....It was a wonderful thing, that creation of man...in the very fact that man was made in so special a manner there was a drawing near of God to man.

Historically, Spurgeon accepts without argument, the current Christian interpretation of the creation of the world and man as recorded in Genesis. He is not concerned with the sciences of anthropology and cosmogony but with the ethical and spiritual sciences of the soul and its relationship to God. He

2. Ibid., p. 31.
3. Ibid., p. 32.
considers man in his original state as pure and innocent, and after his fall as a free and responsible agent with a will by which he voluntarily determines his course of conduct. Man is understandable only in the light of a Higher Personality.

We shall leave all discussion as to the creation of the world to those learned divines who have paid their special attention to that subject, and to those geologists who know, or at any rate think they know, a very great deal about it...our business is moral and spiritual rather than scientific.

Three reasons are given for the creation of man. Man is created to glorify God. God has a chosen people who will conform to the image of His Son. The cosmos and all the events which take place thereon are designed for a chosen people created in the image of God and for the purpose of glorifying God. "All events shall work for the good of the chosen", and "These chosen men are the centre of God's plan and design." The providences of God always have as their first consideration the chosen or elect of God.

The wheels within wheels, all full of eyes, revolve not without purpose, but they move always in a straight line towards this end,—the accomplishment of the design of God in reference to his own elect.

Secondly, God's "Son was in his thought". Men are created with a view of becoming like Christ in order that Christ should have fellowship with personalities like unto Himself. God envisages a chosen people that "should be his Son's joy, and crown, and delight for ever". Those chosen for this intimate fellowship are the ones who conform to the image of Christ.

The Eternal Son desired association with beings who should be sons as he was, towards whom he could stand in close relationship as being like to them in nature and sonship, and the Father therefore ordained that a seed whom he has chosen should be conformed to the image of the Son, that his Son might head up and be the chief among an order of beings more nearly akin to God than any other.

1. Works, 21, p. 493.
3. Ibid., p. 548.
5. Works, 18, p. 189.
The third reason given for the creation of man, and one Spurgeon calls "a God-like idea", is that "God determined...in saving men [to] show forth all the glory of his nature." Here he refers to the "ever-blessed Son of the Father" who carried out "his divine resolve of magnifying himself in the salvation of guilty men." The nature of God is not confined to the Son alone but also to the believer in whom the nature of God is manifest by a new and eternal spiritual creation. "He has begun our new creation, he is carrying it on, and he is completing it." In other words, the people whom God forms for himself, are being transformed into the image of Christ, and through this process God is bringing glory to Himself both in His nature and in His creation, i.e., in the manifestation of His essential attributes in the spiritual nature of man, and the demonstration of His creative ability as seen in the sons of men.

"'I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.' He has begun our new creation, he is carrying it on, and he is completing it. There is a new character forming in believers by God's own hand: a character which will be the image of the Lord Jesus. We are the handiwork of God, his higher creation, the product of his eternal power; nay, more, it is written, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures'. Jehovah is fashioning us in the image of his Son, and who shall hinder him?...'This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.'

In discussing the original state of man, Spurgeon relies wholly upon the Scriptural phrase "the image of God", by which he means that man was created in the likeness of God. There was no moral inconsistency in his nature. "His moral qualities, before sin had tainted his nature, rendered him akin to the Most High." God created man a holy and perfect being. In his innocency he had free and uninterrupted communion with God.

1. Works, 36, p. 549.
2. Ibid., p. 546.
When we consider what man once was, only second to the angels, the companion of God, who walked with him in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day; when we think of him as being made in the very image of his Creator, pure, spotless, and unblemished, we cannot but feel bitterly grieved to find such an accusation as this preferred against us as a race.

The thoughts of Spurgeon on the exalted place of man are found scattered here and there in his sermons. The dignity of man is elevated by saying that he is a personality "next to God". Yet, man is finite. "We are but creatures of a day, and he is the Everlasting."

Man was made in his innocence to occupy a very lofty place. "Thou madest him to have dominion over all the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. Man would have enjoyed that dominion had he never fallen, but he never could have obtained what he has now gained, for 'We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour'...The nearest being to God is a man...the noblest of all beings is God, and the God-man Christ Jesus...The most glorious being next to God is man."

Man did not remain innocent. His rebellion against God resulted in a depraved nature. Men were not created with evil tendencies. A pure and holy God would not create evil. Evil results from man's disobedience to God's holy law.

If we be in this state, it is inconceivable that God should have made us so. A pure and holy Being must have been the Creator of pure and holy beings. As Job saith, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one;' we may reverse the question and say, 'How could an unclean thing come out of a clean thing?' The Holy God must be the Parent of holy children, and when God made manhood he must have made it perfect, otherwise he did not act according to his own nature.

The image of God in man was not completely exterminated by the fall, nevertheless the "fall crushed man entirely". Even though man's conscience and affections were perverted in the fall a ray of hope is seen among the ruins of man's nature.

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1. Works, 1, p. 149.
2. Works, 54, p. 553.
4. Works, 13, p. 56.
...when man fell in the garden, manhood fell entirely; there was not one single pillar in the temple of manhood that stood erect. It is true, conscience was not destroyed. The pillar was not shattered; it fell, and it fell in one piece, and there it lies along, the mightiest remnant of God's once perfect work in man. But that conscience is fallen, I am sure....did conscience ever bring a man to such a self-renunciation, that he did totally abhor himself and all his works and core to Christ? No, conscience, although it is not dead, is ruined, its power is impaired...Then it becomes necessary for this very reason, because conscience is depraved, that the Holy Spirit should step in, to show us our need of a Saviour, and draw us to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Man inherits the Adamic nature in the womb. Adam's sin is transmitted to the race, and by natural birth, man reflects, not the image of God, but the image of Adam who originally stood as man's representative. Thus the fundamental root of original sin lies in Adamic likeness.

It remains a marvellous riddle how man is what he is till you turn to this Book, and when you read the story of the fall the riddle is all unriddled; then we see how that first parent of ours, who stood for us as our representative, sinned, and by that sin tainted the whole race, so that we, being born of him, are born in his image and in his likeness, and he being a rebel we are born rebels, he being a traitor we are born traitors too. 'Behold,' says David, 'I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.' There is the root of the matter. It is not by God's making that we are sinful, it is by Adam's unmaking of us and ruining of us that we come to be what we are, inheritors of original sin and corruption.

Evil cannot be prevented "because the evil that man has is in his nature", and such a nature is accompanied by a "will which is altogether perverted". Spurgeon thus believes in "natural depravity", by which he means the utter inability of man to initiate any process whereby the image of God in man can be restored. Those who do not believe in total depravity pervert the truth. "Man is thoroughly evil; the heart is bad through and through to its very core, it is infected with sin and hatred of God in its centre and essence."

1. Works, 4, p. 140.
2. Works, 12, p. 56.
4. Ibid., p. 460.
5. Works, 11, p. 102.
Permit me to show you wherein this inability of man really does lie. It lies deep in his nature. Through the fall, and through our own sin, the nature of man has become so debased, and depraved, and corrupt, that it is impossible for him to come to Christ without the assistance of God the Holy Spirit...he has neither the will nor the power to come to Christ unless drawn by the Spirit.

The following passage is a pungent quotation on man's total inability to save himself. It is significant that Spurgeon does not even intimate that man is born innocent and simply comes into the presence of sin with the possibility of being tempted and consequently falling into sin. In a positive sense he believes that man is guilty before he is born, and virtually needs salvation in the womb. "I was ruined before I committed any actual sin by the disobedience of the first father of the race who was my representative." He does not understand the "justice" of inheriting Adam's guilt, but it is "revealed" in the Bible and "it must be right".

Man, except God have mercy on thee, thou art lost, and lost from thy very beginning! Thou didst not come into this world as one who might stand or fall, thou wast fallen already; an original and birth-sin had seized upon thee in the womb, and thou wast even then as an infant cast out to perish and to die.

Spurgeon decries any extenuation of guilt on the ground of natural depravity. So far from being an excuse for sin, depravity increases the seriousness of sin, but at the same time natural depravity is the only "loophole" Spurgeon can find for divine mercy. "It is only in the eye of grace that it becomes the door of mercy." Referring to the cry of David in the Fifty-first Psalm, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me", he says that it is on the basis of man being born a sinner that God has mercy upon guilty men. Men fell in Adam. "The fall of Adam was our fall; we fell in and with him" and on this generally accepted theory, he postulates the
possibility of God's discovery of a reason why man should be offered redemption. The angels were not capable of restoration to divine favor because they fell individually, by their own choice, whereas the fall of man was not a voluntary individual fall, but a representative fall in Adam.

...we are born sinners, and God sees there...a sort of loophole. Rightly upon the terms of Justice, there is no conceivable reason why he should have mercy upon us, but grace makes and invents a reason...every fallen angel sinned on his own account, and fell...men did not fall separately and individually...all of us fell without our own consent... We fell federally in our covenant head; it is in consequence of our falling in Adam, that our heart becomes evil from our youth. Now it looks to me as if God's mercy caught that. He seemed to say, 'These my creatures have according to my arrangement of federation, fallen representatively; then I can save them representatively. They perished in one Adam, I will save them in another....I do bless the day now that I fell in Adam, for it may be if I had never fallen in Adam I should have fallen in myself, and then I must have been like fallen angels shut out for ever from the presence of God in the flames of hell.'

Thus it is emphatically declared that "man's nature is incurable," and therefore in its fallen condition it is irreconcilable to God. The only cure for the corrupt nature inherited by the fall "is to kill it, and let it be buried when dead," says Spurgeon, and here he sees "a greater rising" in which believers "are in Christ perfectly restored." In view of man's depravity and his total inability to redeem his nature, man's only hope for restoration to Divine favor is Christ.

In Christ Jesus human nature is lifted up where it never could have been before....It is a wondrous honour this—that manhood should be taken into intimate connection, yea, absolute union with God! For listen: through Jesus Christ we are this day made the sons of God, which angels never were.

2. Ibid., p. 99.
THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

The source of all sin is in the "heart" of man. In his study of Hamartiology, Spurgeon's primary concern is the relation of sin to God and the individual. God does not originate evil to test man's faith. In the soteriological process, he places paramount importance upon personal sin and its forgiveness. With reference to the genesis of sin, Spurgeon says, "we must never forget the fall...This accounts for the depth and fixedness of sin in us, that it is a matter of birth". The "nest in which sin is born and nurtured is the heart itself". "The heart of man is the seed-plot of iniquity, and the nursery of transgression." In Spurgeon's mind, sin has nothing to do with externals. He never uses legalistic terminology to account for its source. Sin is an intrinsic evil, whose origin is traceable to the fall; it is an internal disease of the heart,—something which "comes from within, and not from without". Thus the heart is a generating mechanism for all sin.

The heart is the spring of action: the heart suggests, resolves, designs and sets the whole train of life in motion; the heart gives the impulse and the force; and yet out of the heart thus initiating and working proceedeth all this mischief of sin.

Spurgeon is actually saying that the source of sin springs from the natural tendencies of "self". What does he mean by the "self"? He means the "heart" wherein lie not only the "affections" of man, but the "will" by which man determines his actions. The heart is the "self" or the personality. The heart is "the man's most real self". It is his true ego which is "desperately wicked". "Nature rises no higher than its source, and that which comes out of the heart will be no better than the heart, and that is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." The following passage clearly reveals among

2. Works, 32, p. 405.
3. Ibid., p. 404.
other things, that Spurgeon conceives of sin as that voluntary and universal evil originating in man's heart wherein reside the affections and the power of contrary choice. Sin results when man abuses his freedom.

...what is meant...by 'the heart'? Is it not intended to indicate the man himself—the man's most real self? Sin is sin for the most part because it is of the heart and the will. If the man's heart had nothing to do with it, I do not see how it would be sin. If a man had no will in the matter, where would be his responsibility? It is because we willingly do evil that we sin. The essence of the sin lies in the will to do it, and the full consent of the heart therein. The heart is the centre of life, the core of being, the place where manhood maintains its throne; and what a terrible statement this is, that out of the very centre of life there proceed from man 'evil thoughts, wickedness, blasphemy,' and the like.

The heart is the true man...The Saviour puts his finger on the main-spring of the machine of manhood, and cries, 'Here is the evil'...The leprosy of sin is not as to its primary seat in the head...but in the very heart...By the heart we usually understand the affections, and doubtless the affections of man are the sources of his crimes.

Sin is disobedience. Man's basic sin is pride. The very heart of human sin is man's attempt to become an independent and absolutely autonomous individual, with the intention of becoming God's equal or rival. Man in his freedom determines his course of life. In exercising the power of contrary choice, man revolts against God. "Sin is an attack upon the moral government of God..." This rebellion in which man asserts his own will as opposed to the will of God is a violation of God's true law for man. It is disobedience and as such it dehumanizes man by deforming the image of God within him. Disobedience causes man to rebel against his true nature which is love toward God and man.

God created man as a sinless personality. "There was about him no tendency to evil, he was created pure and perfect; and sin does not enter into the constitution of man, per se, as God made it." Therefore sin "is a disease

...because it is not an essential part of man as he was created. Sin is in man but "let no man, in any sense whatever, attribute sin to God as the Creator." Sin is foreign to man's nature, yet because of Adam's disobedience it is a part, an abnormal part, of his nature. Men are "born" with the disease of sin. Thus sin is a "moral" disease which is incurable by man.

Sin is a contagious disease, which passes from one to another. It is hereditary; it is universal; it is incurable; it is a mortal malady; it is a disease which no human physician can heal. Death...cannot cure this disease; it displays its utmost power in eternity, after the seal of perpetuity has been set upon it by the mandate, 'He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.'

The essence of sin is not an expression of the lower part of man's nature. The first cause of sin is not in man's physical appetite, but in his intellectual capacity where pride attempts to deify self to the exclusion of God, thus causing man to pursue a pseudo-Godlikeness. The real essence of sin, then, is man's opposition to God in which there is a rebellion against His will and authority. This resistance to the will of God comes as a voluntary act against the positive command of God. Thus disobedience toward God is "the very essence and virus of the worst possible sin". When Spurgeon speaks of sin as rebellion against God he uses the strongest word in the Old Testament (Ib) to say that it is a voluntary rebellion,—a self-determined offence against God. The correct definition of sin and its nature is given by relating it to God and His will. Sin "is rebellion against God, and 'exceeding sinful,' because it interferes with the just rights and prerogatives of God".

Sin is mainly an attack upon God; it is an offence against his own most excellent person, it is treason against his most glorious sovereignty.

David touched the pith of the matter when he said, 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.'

2. Ibid., p. 18.
3. Ibid., p. 156.
5. Works, 19, p. 638.
Sin is man's choice of self. In other words, sin is "selfishness" and is thus opposed to the Divine sovereignty of God.

The very gist of sin lies in our setting up our own way in opposition to the way and will of God...we have all aspired to be our own masters, we have all desired to follow our own inclinations, and have not submitted ourselves to the will of God.\(^1\)

Sin is a want of conformity to the will of God; sin is a forgetfulness of the obligations of the relation which exist between the creature and the Creator. This is the very essence of sin. Injustice to my fellow creature is truly sin, but its essence lies in the fact that it is sin against God, who constituted the relation which I have violated.\(^2\)

Spurgeon interprets conformity to the law to mean conformity to the perfect character of God. "God's perfect law is the transcript of his own perfect character, and sin is any want of conformity to the law and to the character of God."\(^3\) It is certain that "every sin breaks God's law"\(^4\) with the consequent result that "Every breach of the law is a sin".\(^4\) However, sin should not be judged "by its consequences".\(^4\) It is not the "results...that makes the sin, but the thing itself",\(^5\) by which he means the "source" from which the sin originates. Every sin is an aggressive act against God.

Every time you do what God would not have you do, you do in effect, so far as you can, put God out of his throne, and disown the authority which belongs to his Godhead; you do in intent, so far as you can, kill God. That is the drift of sin--sin is a God-killing thing. Every violation of law is treason in its essence--it is rebellion against the lawgiver....Those offenses of yours which you have thought so little of, have been really a stabbing at the Deity...every sin is really an attempt to thrust God out of the world...every sin is saying, 'Let there be no God.'\(^6\)

The purpose of the law is to compel "the man to see that sin dwelleth in him, and that it is a powerful tyrant over his nature".\(^7\)

\(^1\) Works, 16, p. 207.
\(^2\) Works, 14, p. 290.
\(^3\) Works, 35, p. 127.
\(^4\) Works, 43, p. 135.
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 136.
\(^6\) Works, 14, p. 198.
\(^7\) Works, 34, p. 135.
Spurgeon further qualifies sin as a moral evil by saying that "its moral disease, puts all the faculties out of order and ruins our whole nature." It is a "humiliating truth that out of the heart all sorts of moral evils proceed." Sin is not a passive thing or something for which man is not responsible. In fact, the dynamic of sin is that evil by which man has disturbed both the physical and moral order of the universe. Every sin is a violation of God's moral order, and every sin is an act of presumption against God. "Sin, if we rightly consider it, is an upsetting of the entire order of the universe." In opposition to any theory that makes sin an upward step, Spurgeon states that "Sin is always on the downgrade, so that when a man proceeds a certain length he inevitably goes beyond it." It is clearly brought out in the following passages that man's spiritual death is an outgrowth of his moral inconsistency.

...man, by nature, is morally weak...Man is under the dominion of his own lusts...There is nothing which the devil can suggest, to which man will not yield while he is a stranger to divine grace. And if the devil should let him alone, his own heart suffices.

If men were literally dead, then they were incapable of sin; but the kind of death of which we speak involves a responsibility none the less, but all the greater...His inability is not physical, but moral inability, and is the consequence of his own persistence in evil. The law is as much binding upon the morally incapable as upon the most sanctified in nature. If, through a man's own perversity, he wills to reject good and love evil, the blame is with himself. He is said to be dead in sin, not in the sense that he is irresponsible, but in the sense that he is so evil that he will not keep the law of God.

Further, sin alienates the heart of man from the heart of God, who "cannot comfortably commune with us while our hearts are fountains of defilement, from which iniquity proceeds." This alienation is the result of "sins against light and conscience," or in another phrase, sins "against light and

2. Works, 13, p. 50.
8. Ibid., p. 405.
against knowledge". 1 "Sin becomes exceeding sinful when it is committed against light and knowledge." 2 Although all the faculties of man are affected by the fall, enough light remains in him for a conscious discrimination between right and wrong. This remaining light in man may be interpreted as that "tenderness of conscience" 3 about which he so often speaks, and this may be further interpreted as the remaining light of God within man, or as Spurgeon puts it, "the light and knowledge against which you have offended" 4.

We are bound to confess the aggravations of our sin, how we sinned against light and against knowledge, against conscience, and against divine love, against the monitions of the Holy Spirit, against tender warnings which came from his gentle voice. 1

The sin of those who know more than others is marked with a special emphasis. Those who sin against a tender and enlightened conscience, and against holy examples and influences, sin with a ten-fold guilt. 5

In a short personal reference to sins against light and conscience, Spurgeon says:

True, I did not go into any gross sin; but then I had so much light, and so much tenderness of conscience, and I lived in such a godly atmosphere in my home, that every sin I did commit was worse than the sins of those who never had such advantages. 5

Spurgeon associates the punishment of sin with the character of God, maintaining that it is an irrevocable part of His nature. "He is a Sovereign but he never, in his sovereignty, violates righteousness." 6 God's righteousness must necessarily punish sin to vindicate His holiness. The penalty of sin is treated in the section on Eschatology; a brief excerpt here is sufficient to show that the wrath of God is an essential element of His holiness.

Any theology which offers the pardon of sin without a punishment, ignores the major part of the character of God. God is love, but God is also just—as severely just as if he had no love, and yet as intensely loving as if he had no justice. To gain a just view of the character of

1. Works, 21, p. 370.
God you must perceive all his attributes as infinitely developed; justice must have its infinity acknowledged as much as mercy. The soul that sinneth it shall die. Sin must be punished, or God must cease to be.

What have the doctrines presented in this chapter to do with soteriology? Spurgeon concludes that if man is "next to God", God will not arbitrarily cast him from His presence. Sin has estranged man from God. It has condemned man, but God has not left him beyond the point of redemption. Why? Because God loves man. It is His very nature to love. He loved men, even in His thoughts, before they were created. Since man was created for the glory of God, and since all creation looked forward to the "man" of men, in order that He should have fellowship with a new order of beings like Himself, God's purpose for the creation of man would not be frustrated. It was not God's will that man should become disobedient, but in his freedom God allowed him to fall, and even before his fall, a plan of redemption was effected. Therefore when man, by his own folly, separated himself from God, God in an act of condescending grace provided a way for man to return to God. God forgives sin "for the sake of glorifying Christ". Grace met depravity in Christ. When man sinned, God left a door of mercy open for him. Man's representative fall in Adam left a sort of "loophole" for God to find a reason to save men, and God found that reason in His own heart. God is just and holy. He will do right, and it is His will that all men should be saved; but He does not "will" it as an eternal decree. When depravity was met by God's grace in Christ Jesus, it was as though God felt somewhat responsible, not for man's disobedience, but for man's salvation. This is "pure grace". God has always followed men in condescending love. The design of the Supernatural is to redeem the natural. When man sees Offended Justice undertaking for him, when he sees Divine love taking his punishment in a substitutionary

1. Works, 8, p. 638.
2. Works, 24, p. 669.
death, thus providing an avenue of escape from deserved damnation, he realizes that he who is "opposed to God" is "less than nothing" and that God is everything. He realizes that salvation is by grace and "grace alone".

Man's sin is the "dagger" that killed Christ, but God's love is the reason for his salvation. God is holy, and man cannot come into His presence without holiness. Wrath, as well as justice, is a part of God's holiness. Wrath excludes sinfulness from God's presence. Therefore, if men do not enter into God's plan of salvation, they are responsible for their own damnation. God does not "will" the damnation of any man, but He looks upon men in the God-man, Christ, and those who are not found in Him necessarily exclude themselves from the presence of God.
CHAPTER III

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT
There is not a mortal man from the equator to the poles of any rank or any language, or bearing any hue upon his skin, who is not subject to this universal mediatorial power of the Lord Jesus Christ. I trace to Christ's atonement the continued life of the most obdurate. All the long-suffering mercy of God seems to me to flow through the channel of the Saviour's authority over all flesh. It is in virtue of this power that the gospel is preached to all men—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." Hence the command to believe receives its divine sanction, and those are condemned who believe not in his name. On account of this universal mediatorial power of Christ, that I can stand upon this platform and say in the broadest possible terms, that whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus shall never perish, but have eternal life, and I can preach a gospel which, in its proclamation, is as wide as the ruin and as extensive as the fall.

Why is redemption said to be eternal?...I speak of the Lord God with great reverence, when I say that redemption was from eternity in his thoughts. What if this world was first created myriads of ages ago, as it probably was; yet in the succeeding epochs neither plant nor animal was created without respect to the divine ultimatum, which is redemption!...From every act of Deity a finger points to Jesus, the atoning sacrifice. Redemption is the drift of creation, and the hinge of providence. The undertone of all the voices God has created is God in Christ Jesus....Things created serve as a platform for things redeemed: the temporal creation gives way before eternal redemption....In the divine decrees everything is shaped and fashioned according to the work of that wondrous Person in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. The eternal councils of God have ever had an eye to the everlasting righteousness, and to the everlasting redemption of the everlasting Son of the Father. Redemption is no new thought with God, no expedient to snatch the world from an unexpected accident, no patching-up of a broken-down purpose. Redemption is the centre of the divine plan; the focus of the manifestation of God, the summit of the mountain of revelation.

1. Works, 10, p. 250.
THE COVENANT OF WORKS AND THE COVENANT OF GRACE

With the creation of man, God gave a moral constitution in the form of a law, or the covenant of works, whose precepts were to be perfectly maintained. Although the covenant of works historically preceded the covenant of grace, the "covenant of grace was the original covenant"¹ which was made "before the foundation of the world".¹ The covenant of works began in Eden and not on Sinai. This covenant between God and man carried a guarantee of life in a blessed state on the condition of man's perfect obedience. Failure to adhere to this rigid law of God in every respect would result in man's separation from God and subject him to the penalty of death. Through a sovereign act of God, Adam was made the head and federal representative of the race. Adam was a free moral agent, with the privilege of obedience or disobedience. The fate of the race rested on his choice of the above alternatives. Spurgeon interprets the law or the covenant of works thus:

The first covenant...is the covenant of works, which is this: 'There is my law, O man; if thou on thy side will engage to keep it, I, on my side will engage that thou shalt live by keeping it. If thou wilt promise to obey my commands perfectly, wholly, fully, without a single flaw, I will carry thee to heaven. But mark me, if thou violatest one command, if thou dost rebel against a single ordinance, I will destroy thee for ever.' That is the...covenant propounded on Sinai...or rather, propounded, first of all, in the garden of Eden, where God said to Adam, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'²

¹. Works, 3, p. 122.
². Ibid., p. 121.
"The law of God is perfect"; it is "the standard of equity for all time". Furthermore, it comprehends "in its circle every form of duty which springs out of our relationship to God or man". This law is "absolutely immutable" since it reveals the "unchangeable nature" of God's holiness. Thus it is clear that God's law is an absolute standard of righteousness and any infringement of it constitutes an act of self-will and disobedience on the part of man. "The law is holy, and just, and good; it is like the God who made it, it is a perfect law", and "when a law is admitted to be perfect, then disobedience to it is an act of exceeding guilt".

In exercising his freedom, Adam broke the law and since the law demands absolute moral perfection, Adam's disobedience of it made him guilty and rendered salvation by law impossible. "There is no hope of salvation by the law." This act of disobedience did not change the immutable law "for that law is the expression of the nature of the Eternal, and reveals his holiness and justice". Thus the law stands as a means of condemning the sinner.

Adam, "the federal head of the race", chose to violate God's command. He thus failed in his moral responsibility to the Divine law, and, says Spurgeon, all his descendants, being federally embraced in him and represented by him, fell in and with him. Adam's relation to the race was that it obeyed or disobeyed according to its representative, and consequently the rewards or penalties received by him belonged also to the race.

Father Adam stood for us, and represented us in the old covenant of works. If Adam will keep that covenant, he and all his children shall be blest. Alas, our foundation was too frail, our first parent was not able to bear the responsibility of the covenant; and therefore he fell, and we all fell in him to our fatal cost.

1. Works, 37, p. 552.
2. Works, 30, p. 692.
5. Works, 10, p. 258.
7. Works, 37, p. 556.
8. Works, 34, p. 126.
Since God deals with the race on the basis of His federal representative, Adam's sin, in a legal sense, is that of the race. In recognizing the oneness of the race with Adam, Spurgeon does not consider the imputation of Adam's guilt to the race as an act of arbitrary sovereignty. By Adam's disobedience, death, both physical and spiritual, was passed on to the race. "By one transgression Adam introduced death into the race, 'and so death passed upon all men, for that all had sinned'; but Jesus came to bring life by his obedience." In his rebellion against God, Adam voluntarily incurred guilt, which demanded penalty, and since he acted for the race, not only his guilt but his corrupt nature was transmitted to the race, making each of his descendants liable to the penalty of death on account of sin. Adam's fall is therefore a representative fall of the whole race. Thus, "we were all represented by Adam in the Garden of Eden, and...when he sinned, he so sinned as to sin representatively, and we fell by virtue of his disobedience." The race inherited from Adam a "tendency" to sin. His "one" offence brought condemnation upon the race.

On the basis of the violated law, fellowship with God is impossible. "It is not possible for God...who is 'a consuming fire,' to come into contact with that which is sinful without destroying it." Following this thought Spurgeon states the stringent demands of God upon the individual. These are perfect obedience to the law and punishment for violation of the law.

Hear, ye sinners, hear this! God demands of you two things,—first that you should keep his law. You cannot do this, for you have already broken it....But God demands more than this. He demands punishment for the sins that are past, as well as a perfect obedience for the years to come.

2. Works, 43, p. 553.
God's holiness cannot tolerate sin, therefore it must be punished. Under the law all men must perish. Therefore since no reason for men's salvation can be found in himself, God, out of pure mercy, finds His own reason for the salvation of men. He remembers His first covenant, which is a covenant of grace.

When there is no motive for grace discoverable to our anxious eye, there is a fountain of self-created mercy in the Lord's own heart, and this he causes to overflow and fill a channel of his own making. Though there is nothing in the creature, there is everything in the covenant. If the Lord can find no plea in the character of the offender, he discovers an argument in himself: he remembers his own covenant, and for his own name's sake he deals in mercy with the guilty.¹

Thus the old covenant was replaced by the new covenant of grace which was made before the foundation of the world. The weakness of the old covenant of works lay in the fact that it was made between God and man. The new covenant is between God and Christ. "The covenant is everlasting in its beginning; for it was made...between the first divine Person of the sacred Trinity and the Second, on the behalf of his chosen."² The strength of the new covenant is in the Godhead, who made the everlasting covenant "according to the greatness of the Lord's love".³ The enduring quality of this covenant is grounded on the fact that God "took from his bosom his Only-begotten Son, and...gave him to be a covenant to the people".³ On this premise "it is not possible for God to break a covenant".⁴

What, then, is the new covenant and how does it differ from the old?

...the covenant of grace, not made with God and man, but made with God and Christ Jesus...is this: 'Christ Jesus on his part engages to bear the penalty of all his people's sins, to die, to pay their debts, to take their iniquities upon his shoulders; and the Father promises on his part that all for whom the Son doth die shall most assuredly be saved, that seeing they

¹ Works, 32, p. 98.
² Ibid., p. 100.
³ Ibid., p. 101.
⁴ Ibid., p. 102.
have evil hearts, he will put his law in their hearts, that they shall not depart from it, and that seeing they have sins, he will pass them by and not remember them any more for ever. The covenant of works was, 'Do this and live, 0 man!' but the covenant of grace is, 'Do this, 0 Christ, and thou shalt live, 0 man!' The difference of the covenants rests here. The one was made with man, the other with Christ; the one was a conditional covenant, conditional on Adam's standing, the other is a conditional covenant with Christ, but as perfectly unconditional with us....The covenant was made by God with Christ, signed, sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well.¹

The new covenant, which is "of pure grace",² is one in which the Persons of the Godhead participated to effect the salvation of men. The "Surety" of this covenant is Christ who "made a covenant on our behalf, and stood for us before the living God".³ In this new covenant Christ "covenanted with God on our behalf that he would vindicate the broken law, and...keep it in every jot and tittle on our behalf".⁴ In view of Christ's obedience and sacrifice, "the Father...would put away the sin of his people"⁴ and accept them in love. Spurgeon emphasizes the seriousness of this covenant by saying that "they sealed the compact with blood".⁴ In his doctrine of the covenants, he places paramount importance on the blood of Christ. The eternal covenant is of no effect without divine blood-shedding. It was the supreme cost of the Divine Son that caused God to remember His covenant. The "blood of Jesus Christ is the blood of the everlasting covenant".⁴ All covenant blessings result from His death.

God must remember his covenant...to make the covenant with men, and to carry it out, cost him his innermost self...the eternal Son...must die the death of the cross that the covenant may be established. Covenant-making was no trifle with God....it is the grandest of themes. It is a wondrous fact Godwards.⁵

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CHRIST TYPIFIED IN THE ANCIENT SACRIFICES

The only type of worship acceptable to God after the fall was that which constituted a bloody sacrifice.

This was probably instituted by God himself when he clothed Adam and his wife with skins of beasts; it has been thought that he then indicated to them the slaughter of beasts for sacrifice. Certain it is that the first worship of fallen man was by sacrifice.1

In Spurgeon's view, there is no doubt as to the origin of primitive sacrifices. They were all by Divine revelation, and their nature and design "all pointed to the one great sacrifice"2 of Christ. All sacrifices from Adam to Christ were of a piacular nature and are declared to be ordained of God and typical of the Christian sacrifice. He considers the Paschal lamb as the most exemplary type of Christ.

The Paschal lamb was a special type of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not left to gather this from the general fact that all the ancient sacrifices were shadows of the one true and real substance; but we are assured in the New Testament that 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.' As the Paschal lamb must be without blemish, so was our Lord, and its killing and roasting with fire were typical of his death and sufferings.3

The Mosaic sacrifices were vicarious and expiatory. The victim in the Old Testament was chosen and offered by man to God as a poena vicaria, the life of the animal being substituted in the place of the offerer's life. In other words, the victim in the Old Testament was the sinner's substitute and its death represented the sinner's punishment for sin. This sin-offering is constantly referred to as being consistent with the vicarious sacrifice of Christ who was "made sin", and who was "the appointed victim"4 to suffer in the sinner's stead. The difference between the Old Testament sacrifice and the New Testament sacrifice is that in the Old Testament the offerer provided the victim, whereas in the New Testament, God Himself provided the Substitute.

1. Works, 12, p. 328.
2. Works, 20, p. 266.
4. Ibid., p. 567.
That which God prepares for poor sinners is a provision most gloriously made. God provided a ram instead of Isaac. This was sufficient for the occasion as a type; but that which was typified by the ram is infinitely more glorious. In order to save us God provided God; I cannot put it more simply. He did not provide an angel, nor a mere man, but God himself. God gave thee his Godhead to be thy Saviour when he gave thee his Son.

The perfect selection of the victim chosen for the Old Testament sacrifice is typical of the perfect life of Christ.

Come now and look at the Lord Jesus Christ, both at his Godhead and his manhood, at his life and his death, his acts and his sufferings, and see if there be any iniquity in him....God has provided himself with a perfect sacrifice; that which you have to bring to God, God first brings to you.

In the Levitical sacrifices the transgressor was identified with the victim. In this way he identified himself with his sin, mentally transferring it to the victim. The sins of the offerer were confessed over the victim, and it was then slain as the vicarious sacrifice and penalty for the sinner. On the Day of Atonement, which Spurgeon declares to be typical of the real Atonement, two goats which were considered as one victim, each having its specific function, were presented before the door of the Tabernacle. The people in general presented the first goat for sacrifice. Spurgeon deems this act an essential part of the ceremony, since in his opinion the Incarnation of Christ is typified.

Learn from this that the compensation to God’s honour for man’s sin must come from men. It was a man in the garden who dared to rebel: it must be a man, another man, who shall honour God’s law, so as to set the race in a fresh relationship towards God....The goat is given by all Israel: the atonement to God’s honour must come out of our race, and hence it is that our Lord is the son of Mary, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh: qualified, being a man, to perform the obedience required of man, and to right, as a man for men, the wrongs which man had done to God.

The blood of the slain goat, which represented purification, was sprinkled “seven times before Jehovah, before the veil” of the sanctuary. This

2. Works, 30, p. 159.
"was to be a perfect presentation of the precious blood before the place where
God was concealed." ¹ After the sprinkling of the blood, the priest smeared
blood on the four horns of the altar of incense. "The horns of the altar
signify the power of his intercession, and the power of Christ's intercession
lies in his sacrifice, lies in the blood."² The presenting of the blood before
the Lord completed the vicarious sin-offering of the transgressor.

Spurgeon emphasizes that when the blood of the goat was presented
before Jehovah that "sweet incense" should also be offered. He counts this as
symbolic of the "offering of sweet merits...which...Jesus Christ has most
abundantly offered"³ to God. But he stresses that "something more than merit"⁴
is required for man's salvation. It was necessary for the goat to die before
the blood could be presented to God. The death of the goat is emblematic of the
death of Christ whose blood was shed as a penalty for man's sin. Spurgeon's
sermons on the Atonement are well dotted with the word "blood". For instance,
in his discourse on "The Blood of the Testament"⁵ the word "blood" occurs at
least one hundred and twenty-five times, not counting indirect references.

Nothing could permit the justice of God to look upon man at all until
there had been something more than merit. There must be penalty. 'Die he,
or justice, must.' Man must die, or God's justice must die. There must
be blood-life poured out for sin. Now, when that goat was put to death, and
the blood flowed forth into the golden bowl, then, brethren, you saw before
your eye of faith Jesus Christ put to death upon Calvary.⁶

The first goat typifies Christ and His death on the cross. The other
goat that was brought before the door of the Tabernacle remained alive. Upon
its head, Aaron confessed all the sins of Israel. This second goat, known as
the scapegoat, was led away, bearing the sins of the people. Spurgeon comments

1. Works, 40, p. 325.
2. Ibid., p. 339.
3. Works, 60, p. 159.
4. Ibid., p. 160.
5. Works, 26, pp. 625-636.
that "the Lord set forth the method of the removal of sin...by the scapegoat".\(^1\)
The scapegoat typifies Christ as the Sin-bearer. In a controversial sermon the
two goats are described as having a typical reference to the work of Christ not
only as He suffered the penalty for sin but as He removed it. The point of argu-
ment here is the literal transference of sin to Christ, which Spurgeon holds to be
true. At the same time, however, he states that sin fell upon Christ in such a
sense that "it never stained his matchless purity and perfection of character. The
misery of it came to him, but the guilt of it never defiled him".\(^2\)

In strict application of the presentation of the blood of the animal
within the Holy of holies, Spurgeon, in another of his controversial sermons,
emphatically states that "the atonement was presented with a view to the Lord".\(^3\)
It has a Godward and manward reference which he does not deny, but he contends
that not only the ancient sacrifice but the actual death of Christ had its first
and foremost relation to God Himself.

Have you not often heard it said that all the atonement accomplished was
something in relation to us? We think upon the death of Christ, and it stirs
our affections; but that is the only result, as some teachers say. It brings
us to God, but it does not bring God to us. That is what they say; but when
we turn to Holy Scripture, we find that the bloodshedding was with reference
to God himself, as well as with reference to us, because in the text it is
distinctly said, 'The priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the
altar of sweet incense before the Lord'...Its place was where the Lord
would specially see it...and, as if to show that that was the main point, it
was put where the people could not see it; that it might be distinctly said
to them, 'It is, after all, God's sight of the great sacrifice which saves
you'...the place of the blood is where the Lord sees it in reference to us.\(^4\)

Spurgeon's conclusion is that all the ancient sacrifices of the Old
Testament have a typical reference to Christ. They all "pointed to the one great
sacrifice"\(^5\) of Christ who was to be offered "in the ages to come".\(^6\) The entire
purpose of the Mosaic and Levitical sacrifices was to portray symbolically, in the
death of the animal, the expiatory and substitutionary death of Christ. The animal
sacrifices were brought to an end with the sacrifice of Christ who "was God's Amen
to all the Levitical types".\(^7\) On the cross, "God solemnly put an Amen into what
otherwise was but typical and shadowy".\(^7\) In all things, Christ was God's "Amen".

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\(^1\) Works, 32, p. 547.  
\(^2\) Works, 60, p. 165.  
\(^3\) Works, 40, p. 228.  
\(^4\) Works, 40, p. 227.  
\(^5\) Works, 30, p. 266.  
\(^6\) Ephesians 2:7.  
\(^7\) Works, 12, p. 136.
THE ATONING PERSON

In his emphasis upon the pre-existent Christ, Spurgeon depicts Him as being "in the bosom of his Father”, 1 and thus claims for Him "the eternity which belongs to God”. 2 This is done on the basis of "The Word". "We know that this is no other than that august personage whom John calls 'The Word'”, 2 who in His activity "is the unfolding of the Father's thoughts, the revelation of the Father's heart”. 2 Again, divinity is claimed for Christ on the fact that "'The Word was God'”, 2 and in further crediting to Him the activity of God, Spurgeon emphasizes the Scriptural phrase "'Without him was not anything made that was made'”. 2 Self-existence, being "the essential characteristic of God," 2 is ascribed to Christ and confirmed by John 1:4, "In him was life”. In setting forth the pre-existent deity of Christ, two other Johanne phrases are used to declare that Jesus has the nature of God. "'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,' and the Word is 'the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world'.” 3 In the passage which follows the absolute and eternal relation of Christ to God is fully pictured. Here Christ is visualized as the express image of God who was with the Father before the creation of the world, and who, in His creative activity, "spoke" the world into being. In his account of this unique relationship in which Jesus "was the Son of God or ever the worlds were made, or time began", 4 Spurgeon does not "attempt to explain the doctrine of the eternal Filiation", 4 but rests on the assurance that "as long as there was a Father, there was a Son...Jesus Christ, who has ever been 'the Son of the Highest'”. 4 This Son was "a Son whom God intended to honour beyond all His other sons", 5 and envisaging His future sufferings and humiliation, Spurgeon further states that "Christ's suffering does not mar His Sonship; for

1. Works, 5, p. 269.
2. Works, 15, p. 128.
5. Ibid., p. 171.
though he learned obedience by the things which he suffered, yet he was a Son all the while.\(^1\) In a discourse on Matthew 3:17,\(^2\) he refers to Christ as the "Well-beloved" of the Father. He often used this, and another expression, "the Beloved", in referring to Christ.

In those far-distant ages when the worlds were made, when matter and mind were spoken into existence by the creative word, the Father took counsel with his beloved and equal Son. Jesus Christ as well as the Father was infinite wisdom; He balanced the clouds, and weighed the hills, and appointed the throbs of the tide, and kindled the light of the sun. He was the Father's Well-beloved or ever the earth was. Ay! and in those days primaeval, when as yet there was nothing but God,—if your imagination can get back to the time when our great sun and the moon and stars slept in the mind of God, like unborn forests in an acorn cup, in that eternity when there was no time, no day, no space, nor aught save God the All-in-All, you will realize that, even then, the Only-begotten was with the Father, and in him the Father was well pleased; for as God is eternal in his being, he is eternal in the trinity of his person.\(^3\)

The pre-existence of Christ is an essential element in the mediatorial office. This Person who became flesh is described as "'co-equal and co-eternal with his Father: very God of very God, who counted it not robbery to be equal with God".\(^4\) The human Jesus is "Self-existent",\(^5\) One "whose Being is eternal, without beginning, and without end",\(^5\) and One who "proved himself...to be the mighty God".\(^5\) Being God, clothed in human flesh, "it is our delight...and privilege to attribute to him the attributes of Deity".\(^4\) Jesus is pictured as proceeding from the "bosom of his Father". Thus, to use a phrase of James Denney, Christ is "exclusively related to God"\(^6\) both in His human and divine capacities. Such a relationship necessarily involves a transcendent Being (not, of course, in the Kantian sense,) who became God incarnate, dwelling immanently in those who experience Christ "as the result of his mediatorial work".\(^7\) Spurgeon relates

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2. "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
5. Ibid., p. 272.
the pre-existence of Christ and His mediatorial work thus:

Let it once be granted...that Christ is the mediator, and you have asserted his divinity. You have virtually called him the Son of God; and you have granted his humanity, for he must put his hand upon both...Do you not see therefore that in calling Christ mediator we have in fact called him the mighty God.1

Christ is the God of the Old Testament "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting".2 It was "Jesus who walked in the garden of Eden",3 and it was "Christ [who] came forth to his people in the form of the angel of the covenant, the paschal Lamb, the brazen serpent, the burning bush, and ten thousand types with which the sacred history is so replete".3 Christ is the Antitype of all given types in the Old Testament. "All the types were intended to teach the one great mystery of Christ manifest in the flesh and seen of angels..."4

...whenever you see great things in the Old Testament in the type, you see the real truth of those things in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jew had nothing that we have not; he had nothing even in outline and shadow which we have not obtained in substance. The covenant in its fulness is in Christ: the prophecy is in Moses, the fulfilment is in Jesus: the foreshadowing is in the law, the truth is in the Word made flesh.5

The pre-existent glory of Christ is referred to by using the Scriptural phrase "being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person".6 In his comparison of Christ with Melchizedek, Spurgeon writes: "There is another 'after the order of Melchizedek', the glorious Antitype in whom Melchizedek himself is absorbed".7 Actually Melchizedek is likened to Christ, not Christ to Melchizedek: "if Melchizedek was so great, how much greater is that man whom Melchizedek represents".8 His pre-existent glory and the glory which He assumed

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1. Works, 5, p. 270.
2. Micah, 5:2
4. Works, 7, p. 75.
6. Hebrews 1:3.
8. Ibid., p. 207.
after His suffering are considered in the following excerpt.

...Christ, as God, always was on His Father's throne; he always was God; and even when he was on earth he was still in heaven. The Son of God did not cease to be omnipotent and omnipresent, when he came wrapped in the garments of clay. He was still on His Father's throne; he never left it, never came down from heaven in that sense; he was still there, 'God over all, blessed for ever.' As he has said, 'The Son of Man who came down from heaven, who, also,' at that very moment, was 'in heaven.' But Jesus Christ, as the Man-God, has assumed glories and honours which once he had not; for as man, he did not at one time sit on his Father's throne; he was a man, a suffering man, a man full of pains and groans, more than mortals have ever known; but as God-man, he has assumed glories and honours which once he had not...

In describing the qualifications of the Son to discharge the office of "the chosen Mediator, ordained of God," Spurgeon begins with an encomium on the dignity of His Divine Person. In His Incarnation, Christ was "very God of very God". Spurgeon elaborates upon this Nicean phrase by stating that when "the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us", Jesus "took on him the very nature and substance of menhood" so that "our Lord is as truly and as really man as he is God."

Praise his person, ye saints! Be ye reconciled to God through his person, ye sinners! Ye angels, lead us in the song! Ye spirits redeemed by blood, sing, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,' and our hearts shall keep tune with yours, for we owe the same debt to him. Glory be unto the person of the blessed Lamb. 'Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.' Would God we could see him face to face, and adore him as we would.

Every attribute of God is manifest in this final revelation of His glory.

Though creation may be a majestic organ of praise, it cannot reach the compass of the golden canticle—Incarnation; Pause Christian, and consider this a minute. See how every attribute is here magnified. Lo! what wisdom is here...Lo! what power, for where is power so great as when it concealeth power?...Tell me one attribute of God that is not manifest in Jesus...The whole of God is glorified in Christ; and though some part of the name of God is written in the universe, it is here best read—in Him who was the Son of Man, and, yet, the Son of God.

1. Works, 2, p. 300.
2. Works, 3, p. 556.
7. Works, 4, p. 27.
According to the Kenotic theory, the historical Jesus was divested of His divine attributes during His earthly ministry. This theory holds that Christ resumed His attributes when the days of His humanity ended. Spurgeon believes that when God emptied Himself in Christ every attribute was retained by Him. "Our Lord Jesus Christ never shifted his character, never ceased to be a servant of the Most High, and never ceased to be perfectly obedient to him whom he came to serve."¹ Christ was both God and man "united in hypostatical union". Spurgeon does not conceive of successive changes in the nature of Christ. The actual nature of Christ never changed. How could it? God is not ditheistic. He is the One and indivisible God. God is in Christ. Being "very God of very God" it was impossible for Christ to divest Himself of the Divine nature and attributes of God. However, by His own choice, Christ "emptied himself of all honour and glory,"² thus depriving himself of His divine prerogatives by becoming a sacrificial servant of men.

Mark you, his essence did not undergo a change when it became united with the manhood. When Christ in past years did gird himself with mortal clay, the essence of his divinity was not changed; flesh did not become God, nor did God become flesh by a real actual change of nature; the two were united in hypostatical union, but the Godhead was still the same. It was the same when he was a babe in the manger, as it was when he stretched the curtains of heaven; it was the same God that hung upon the cross...He never has been changed in his essence, not even by his incarnation; he remains everlastingly, eternally, the one unchanging God, the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither the shadow of a change.³

The Incarnation is "one of the most extraordinary doctrines that was ever declared in human hearing".⁴ It is an enigma which is as inexplicable as the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man.

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2. Works, 26, p. 162.
3. Works, 1, p. 2.
Beloved, this is a mystery surpassing all comprehension. If any man should attempt to explain, or even to define the union of the divine and human in the Lord Jesus, he would soon prove his folly. The schoolmen of the dark ages were very fond of asking puzzling questions about what they called the hypostatical union of the deity and humanity of Christ. They could not cast so much as a ray of light upon the subject; they amused themselves with enigmas and lost themselves in labyrinths. It is enough for us to know that the incarnation is a glorious fact, and it suffices us to hold it in its simplicity.¹

The doctrine of the Atonement is closely associated with the Deity and Incarnation of Christ. These doctrines are so closely connected that the one is necessary to the other. The first step toward "the effectual sacrifice implies ...his incarnation, which of course includes his eternal deity".² "It is my solemn conviction that the deity co-worked with his humanity in the wondrous passion by which he has sanctified his elect."³ The paramount importance of this historical mystery of the Incarnation is stressed because of its cosmic significance. The meaning of the ages finds explanation in the episode from the cradle to the cross. The very essence of the gospel "is to be found in the great fact that 'God was manifest in the flesh'".⁴

...the mystery appears greatest of all because it is so nearly connected with our eternal redemption. There could have been no putting away of sin by vicarious suffering if God had not become incarnate. Sin is not removed except by an atonement, neither would any person have sufficed to atone but one of like nature to those who had offended. By man came death; by man also must come resurrection. Jesus appears as man to save his people from their sins, by taking the sins of his people upon himself, and offering a propitiation for them....The cross is the focus of all human history--I was almost going to say it is the centre of the life of God, if such a thing can be. All the ages meet in Calvary. Jesus is the central Sun of all events.

In his book, The Doctrine of the Atonement, George Smeaton quotes the German theologian Liebner thus:

3. Ibid., pp. 161-162.
5. Ibid., p. 700.
'Considered in a purely exegetical light, there is no more certain or clearer result of Scripture exposition than the position, that the I of Jesus on the earth is identical with the I who was before in glory with the Father. Every sundering of the Son speaking on the earth into two I's, one of whom was the eternally glorious Word, and the other the humanly abased Jesus, is rejected by clear Scripture testimony.'

In his expositions, Spurgeon agrees with his contemporaries, Smeaton and Liebner, that though Christ possessed two distinct natures, the human and the divine, neither existed apart from the other, but both were the possession of the same Person with "entire communication between the two". He stresses the unity of the two natures by saying that in Christ "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily", and that the divine nature is so constituted in Him "as to be capable of communication to the sons of men". "Not only does God dwell in the body of man; but our Lord Jesus is God and man in one person."

I shall not go too far if I say that in giving his Son the Lord God gave himself, for Jesus is one with the Father. We cannot divide the Substance though we distinguish the Persons; thus God himself made atonement for sin committed against himself.

Christ's humanity was real. "Jesus did not wear a nature like to ours, but he bore our actual nature—our flesh and blood." Further, "all that is really manhood belongs to the Son of man, who is also 'over all, God blessed for ever'". Jesus "became verily and assuredly man of the substance of his mother".

Along with an emphasis upon His divinity, the following paragraph insists upon the events of Christ's earthly life as a test of His humanity.

The gospel of his incarnation is not a spiritual idea, nor a metaphor, nor a myth. In very deed and truth the God that made heaven and earth came down to earth, and hung upon a woman's breast as an infant. That child, as he grew in stature and wisdom, was as certainly God as he is at this moment in glory. He was as surely God when he was here hungering and suffering,

1. George Smeaton, p. 25.
2. Works, 5, p. 270.
7. Ibid., p. 655.
sleeping, eating, drinking, as he was God when he hung up the morning stars and kindled the lamps of night, or as he shall be when sun and moon shall grow dim at the brightness of his coming. Jesus Christ, very God of very God, did certainly stoop to become such as we are, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh.¹

With this picture of his true humanity, Spurgeon significantly points to Christ's "immaculate perfection of Character,"² stating that he "who became incarnate"² was "without a trace of sin".² He holds the common Christian position that Jesus was tempted with every sin that should fall upon mankind. Deity, in a sense, was humanized even to the point of saying that "deity can suffer".

The profound conviction that Christ is God led him to say that Christ "was born without natural corruption, or taint of hereditary depravity,"³ hence without the "tendency to sin".³ His absolute sinlessness and perfected humanity are thus expressed:

There was never any sin in Christ....As to Christ's actions, they are matchless and perfect in every respect; the two great objects of his life were the glory of God and the good of man.²

The sinlessness of Christ did not exclude suffering from his humanity. On the other hand it did not confine it to his Incarnate life. God is not impassive either in his divine or human nature. Deity can and does suffer. God is touched by the infirmities of men, but even though his divine nature suffers, because God is divine He is able to sustain suffering due to sin because Christ became "our sin-offering, making expiation for guilt".⁴

I am told that deity cannot suffer....but I believe that deity can suffer, heterodox as that notion may seem to be. I cannot believe in an impassive God as my Father. If he pities and sympathizes, surely he must have some sensibilities....It is not possible for God to be made to suffer; that would be a ridiculous supposition; yet if he wills to do so he is certainly capable of doing that as well as anything else...I look upon our

¹ Works, 26, p. 161.
² Works, 42, p. 369.
³ Works, 30, p. 175.
⁴ Works, 26, p. 162.
Lord Jesus as in his very Godhead stooping down to bear the weight of human sin and human misery, sustaining it because he was divine, and able to bear what else had been too great a load.¹

God's acceptance of a sacrifice on behalf of men demands the indispensable qualification of moral purity and holiness. This requirement could never be found in man. It could be found in a God-man, but not in a mortal being. Therefore God prepared for Himself a body which would meet the requirements of an immaculate sacrifice for sin. "In his birth he (Christ) received no taint of original sin."² Thus in preparing a sacrifice for Himself it is obvious that the Incarnation is a necessary part of God's plan of salvation. "The body of Christ was specially prepared of God for this great sacrifice."³ "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me."⁴

As a God-man, Christ could, and did fulfill God's requirement of a perfect sacrifice. When He was offered to God "His sacrifice had an immediate efficacy." The dignity of the Person of the sacrifice is to be seen in the fact that Christ is God. "We can never forget that Jesus Christ is God."⁵

Thus the person of our Lord was unique among men, and it is that pure personality which was presented as an offering to the Lord. He was pure and holy, and therefore able to bear the sin of others, since he had none of his own. God especially prepared his body for the indwelling of the Deity, and he stands before us as a personage, the like of which neither

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¹ Works, 26, p. 162. A passage from D. M. Baillie's recent book, God was in Christ, is of interest here. He writes: "There is little help in the traditional solution, that while the impassible God bore suffering in his incarnate life, it was not God the Father but God the Son that suffered, and He suffered not in His divine but in His human nature; for that leaves us asking whether it was really God that suffered, and if not, how we can say that God bore our sins. I cannot but think...that there is some truth in the widespread modern tendency to modify the impassibility doctrine. Perhaps we can conserve both sides of the truth by saying, paradoxically, that while there is suffering (for human sin) in the life of God, it is externally swallowed up in victory and blessedness, and that is how God 'expiates' our sins, as only God could do." (pp. 196-199).

² Works, 55, p. 147.
³ Hebrews 10:5.
⁴ Works, 35, p. 150.
⁵ Works, 26, p. 161.
heaven nor earth containeth. God is pure spirit, but this sacred Person has a body: man hath no pretensions to divinity, but this glorious One counts it not robbery to be equal with God. He is God and man in one person, by a marvellous unity which we believe but can never comprehend; and as our Mediator, by the eternal Spirit, he offered himself without spot unto God.¹

Christ is proclaimed "as one who had come into the world to be the great sacrifice for sin".² Jesus is "the sacrifice provided by God for removing the sin of men".³ As a sacrifice, Christ is "the appointed victim for human sin".⁴ This sacrifice is "in the most emphatic sense, a personal sacrifice".⁵ Christ is God's sacrifice and He died for all men. Therefore Spurgeon finds fault with all other systems that deny the necessity of a vicarious sacrifice and insists that "Jesus is the substitutionary sacrifice".⁶

I can truly declare among you that I do not preach this doctrine of vicarious sacrifice as one among many theories, but as the saving fact of my experience. I must preach this or nothing. I know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, because I have neither hope nor comfort outside of the great atoning sacrifice.⁷

The method by which sin is removed is by the "blood of the Lamb".⁸ Blood signifies "the death of the Son of God".⁹ Without the sacrificial death of Christ by blood-shedding there can be no Atonement. "The death of Christ by blood-shedding was absolutely necessary to make him an acceptable sacrifice for sin."⁸ The meaning of the blood of Christ is given in one sentence. "By the blood of Christ we mean his suffering unto death, the obedience which made him yield his life, and especially the will of his soul to suffer, and the object of his mind in suffering."⁹ In this unique sacrifice of Christ, God offered His own blood as an Atonement for sin. "It was 'his own blood' that he offered."¹⁰ Spurgeon asserts that a proper understanding of the atoning

3. Ibid., p. 566.
4. Ibid., p. 567.
sacrifice by blood will erase "modern heresy" and "scatter error".

The doctrine of the blood of the Lamb prevents or scatters error. I do not think that by reasoning we often confute error to any practical purpose. We may confute it rhetorically and doctrinally, but men still stick to it. But the doctrine of the precious blood, when it once gets into the heart, drives error out of it, and sets up the throne of truth. You cannot be clinging to an atoning sacrifice, and still delight in modern heresies. Those who deny inspiration are sure to get rid of the vicarious atonement, because it will not allow their errors. Let us go on proclaiming the doctrine of the great sacrifice, and this will kill the vipers of heresy. Let us uplift the cross, and never mind what other people say. Perhaps we have taken too much notice of them already. Let the dogs bark, it is their nature to. Go on preaching Christ crucified. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In a spiritual sense, the blood of Jesus is never separated from the crucified Jesus. "You can separate Jesus and the blood materially...but spiritually this 'blood of sprinkling' and the Jesus by whom we live, are inseparable." Christ is not preached apart from the cross. In a controversial sermon, Spurgeon reproves those who place major emphasis on the living Christ apart from His death, and motivated by a deep-seated reverence for the sacrificial death of Christ he maintains that the blood of His sacrifice is the "conquering weapon" by which believers overcome Satan. He denounces the moral theory of the Atonement and states that "we need the atoning sacrifice of Christ to purge the conscience". We shall never give up the doctrine of atoning sacrifice to please modern culture," and if we do "God will not do anything by us if we are false to the cross". Again, "We feel that we have not that perfect purity of heart and cleanness of hands which would fit us for the holy place...till the precious blood of Christ shall be applied to the conscience." The death of Christ by blood-shedding is proclaimed as the "vital point of the gospel".

Remember, that Christ viewed as living, and not as having died, is not a saving Christ. He himself saith, 'I am he that liveth and was dead.' The moderns cry, 'Why not preach more about his life, and less about his death?' I reply, Preach his life as much as you will, but never apart from his death; for it is by his blood that we are redeemed....'We preach Christ crucified,' says the apostle. Ah, yes! there is the point. It is the death of the Son of God which is the conquering weapon. Had he not poured forth his soul unto death, even to the death of the cross...we should have had no weapon with which to overcome the dragon prince. By 'the blood of the Lamb' we understand the death of the Son of God....The point is his death, and paradoxically, this death is the vital point of the gospel. The death of Christ is the death of sin and the defeat of Satan, and hence it is the life of our hope, and the assurance of his victory.1

In Appendix D it is made very definite that apart from the shedding of blood there is no Saviour and no salvation.

The self-emptying of God in Christ was a "sin-offering". When Christ was offered as a sacrifice "there was an offering made of all of Christ, the body of him, or that of which he was constituted".2 The offering of Christ was made "once for all". There "is not a repeated offering of Christ to God, nor a repeated taking possession of heaven on our behalf".3 Spurgeon opposes the belief that only the "spirit" of Christ was offered in His sacrifice and insists that His sacrifice was complete in every respect.

I look upon our Lord Jesus as in his very God-head stooping down to bear the weight of human sin and human misery, sustaining it because he was divine, and able to bear what else had been too great a load. Thus the whole of Christ was made a sacrifice for sin. It was the offering, not of the spirit of Christ, but of the very body of Christ—the essence, subsistence, and most manifest reality and personality of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High.4

Our glory is that by the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross sin was made an end of. He finished transgressions, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.5

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3. Works, 55, p. 150.
5. Works, 33, p. 572.
THE CHARACTER OF THE ATONEMENT

The Atonement was necessary for the salvation of men. If God should damn the whole race, men would have nothing to cavil about, since God must and will do right. God could have left men, like the fallen angels, to suffer the consequences of sin. However, it would have been inconsistent with God's nature to have left man in his fallen state. In His foreknowledge God had already considered the fall of man, and had made adequate preparation for his salvation in the eternal covenant made before the foundation of the world. The Atonement is the essential element of the covenant of grace. For Christ to fulfill His part of the covenant, on behalf of man, there was no alternative but the shedding of His blood which was "absolutely necessary". "It seems to be absolutely necessary that when God comes into communication with guilty man it must be through an atonement, and that atonement must be made by blood, or by the sacrifice of a life."¹

The death of Christ by blood-shedding was absolutely necessary to make him an acceptable sacrifice for sin. 'It behoved Christ to suffer.' He could only enter into the presence of God with his own blood. He could not be the grain of wheat which bringeth forth much fruit unless he should die.²

Christ did not die to appease an angry God, nevertheless God was angry with sin, and as sin necessarily cannot be separated from the sinner, Spurgeon boldly states that God was angry with the sinner.

There was no anger in God against men, as men; for while they abode in purity, he communed with them; but the thrice-holy God must hate evil in every form, and he must abhor it even in his most favoured creatures.³

God found a reason for the Atonement within His own heart. "When God can find in men no reason for showing mercy to him, he still finds a reason for displaying his mercy, for he looks for it in his own heart."⁴ Because of

1. Works, 26, p. 625.
Christ's Atonement, God can look upon the sinner, not in anger, but in the love of Christ. Therefore, God's anger toward the sinner is not an arbitrary act of God. Should this have been the case, Spurgeon declares that his "heart would harden itself like steel in enmity against him God ". ¹ But God is not angry with sinners arbitrarily. His anger lies in violated holiness. "God is necessarily angry with evil because he is holy, and pure, and good." ² Thus Spurgeon concludes that "if I were God I should be angry with such a one as I am, that if I could be perfectly holy as God is I should be equally indignant as God is with sin". ³ The Atonement was necessary not only to remind men of their guilt, but also to impress upon them the cost of God's love in pardoning sin. The Atonement was necessary to drive men from their sin and to bring them into the likeness of Christ. "If he [God] had not aimed at thy holiness, there had not been so imperative a necessity for an atonement". ⁴

Man's sin, then, was the fact that necessitated the Atonement. His original guilt and consequent depravity demanded spiritual and physical death, but God found a reason within "his own heart" for the removal of these obstacles to salvation. To effect the provisions of the everlasting covenant, it was "absolutely necessary" for Christ to die. "Our Lord Jesus seems to say that it was absolutely necessary that he should die, that even his perfect life would have been of no use to us if he had not died." ⁵ By necessity, he does not mean that there was anything in the nature of Christ to warrant His death. There "was no necessity for [Christ's] dying, because he had no original sin, which would have brought corruption on him, and ...no actual sin". ⁶ "He [Christ] did not pass through death as a necessity of nature, for it was no necessity of nature to him." ⁷ The divine necessity lay in the rigidity of law and justice.

1. Works, 18, p. 207.
2. Ibid., p. 206.
3. Works, 33, p. 381.
5. Works, 12, p. 456.
If men were to be saved, the righteousness of the law must be vindicated and the justice of God must be satisfied, else man would suffer the claims of the law. Man, having already sinned, was incapable of honoring the law, therefore, God Himself, in the Person of His Son, must necessarily intervene, in accordance with the covenant of grace, and do for man what he was utterly powerless to do for himself. Actually the necessity was in the heart of God, and it was fulfilled on the part of God in Christ for man. On the one hand, man's sin necessitated Christ's death, and on the other hand, the necessity lay in the heart of God, whose law and justice, without qualification, demanded satisfaction. Sin must be punished, and Christ in His death bore its punishment. Sin was the "dagger that stabbed our Lord". Without His atoning death, forgiveness of sin was impossible. The necessity was both Godward and manward, but in the first instance Godward, since Christ's death could mean nothing to man until, first of all, the moral government of God received satisfaction through His death.

"For thee, O God, for thee he dies! He who hangs on Calvary hangs there in deference to thine own decree, in fulfilment of thine own purpose, in vindication of the honour of thy law, that thou mayest thyself be glorified, that they justice may have full scope, and thy mercy may have illimitable sway."2

If the Lord should forgive sinners without demanding a penalty, He would weaken the foundations of moral government....Sin must be punished...Jesus came to do honour to the broken law....The law must be magnified, and made honourable, and when the Law-maker himself died under the penalty of the law, then a sufficient vindication was given to the vital principle of moral government.3

Spurgeon expresses a personal need of the Atonement and believes that God demands an Atonement for all men. Even though God should not require a sacrifice, it is imperative that he should have an Atonement for his sin.

"Conscience requires atonement because the necessity of the case and the nature

1. Works, 42, p. 450.
2. Works, 12, p. 486.
of God require it". In further emphasizing the necessity of the Atonement as the only medium of forgiveness, justification, and satisfaction, Spurgeon, referring to his personal experience states:

I protest before you all that, if I had been anywhere assured, when I was under conviction of sin, that God could forgive me outright without any atonement, it would have yielded no sort of satisfaction to me...if I could have derived a temporary comfort from the notion of forgiveness apart from atonement, the question would afterwards have come up—how is this just? If God does not punish me, he ought to do so; how can he do otherwise? He must be just, or he is not God. It must be that such sin as mine should bring punishment upon itself. Hover, until I understood the great truth of the substitutionary death of Christ, could my conscience get a moment's peace. If an atonement was not necessary for God, it certainly was necessary for me; and it seems to me necessary to every conscience that is fairly instructed as the absolute certainty that sin involves deserved sorrow, and that every transgression and every iniquity must have its just recompense of reward. It was necessary for the perpetual peace of every enlightened conscience that the glorious atonement should have been provided.

God desires a pure and holy fellowship with personalities like unto Himself. "It is his great object to produce a people fit to commune with himself: a holy people, with whom he can have fellowship in time and in eternity." But two effective barriers hinder man's reconciliation to God. The anger of God against sin, and the enmity of man against God are considered as the two underlying causes that have disrupted fellowship with God. Realizing that these combined elements give rise to God's condemnation of the sinner, Spurgeon in the middle of one of his sermons urges sinners to make the following supplication to God.

O my great creator, couldst thou not be my renewer? Couldst thou not quench in me the fire of enmity against thyself, and make me yet to be thy friend? And, whereas, these two things stand in the way, thine anger and my enmity, canst thou not make a clean sweep of both? At one stroke canst thou not both justify me and regenerate me, so that I may walk with thee and be agreed with thee?

2. Works, 37, p. 306.
3. Ibid., p. 345.
4. Ibid., 16, p. 205.
God must be reconciled to man before man can walk in union with Him. The death of Christ, then, is connected with a divine purpose, namely the reconciliation of God to man. Spurgeon recognizes the inability of man to deliver himself from the throes of condemnation. There is an acute awareness that the dangerous element of sin is God's condemnation of the sinner. Therefore, "the great object of Christ's death, is to deliver us from the world's condemnation, and to deliver us from the world's condition".  

How were sinful men to be delivered from the just condemnation of God? In view of the fact that the purpose of Christ's death was "to bring us into a state of justification before God," it is held that deliverance from condemnation, with the consequent joy of justification and reconciliation, could be effected only through the death of the Son of God. Before the foundation of the world, "Divine wisdom" determined that Christ should be set forth as God's propitiation for sin. Christ must die for the salvation of sinners. He was "chosen" by the Persons of the Trinity to die on the cross. "Divine wisdom, conjoined with Divine Sovereignty, chose, and appointed, and determined that Christ Jesus...should be the propitiation for our sins." This propitiation was necessary for the "vindication of divine righteousness". Actually this propitiation was the setting forth of God Himself to man. God must confront man with Himself. "God...says, 'There must be a propitiation, but I will provide it; there must be atonement, but I will arrange it'." There could be "no other propitiation, or atonement, or way" by which God could forgive sin and bring men into His favor again.

2. Works, 42, p. 447.
Christ's death was the "all-sufficient propitiation" which exhausted the judgment of God against his sinful and rebellious creatures. "We have never got the full idea of Christ till we know that every sin...that the believer hath ever been guilty of, finds...its total annihilation in the propitiation which God hath set forth." Thus Christ in His substitutionary death expiates the sins of guilty men who exercise faith in God's propitiation. "God hath set him forth to be a propitiation for us through faith in his blood." The sufferings of Christ were expiatory and vicarious. By expiation, Spurgeon means that in the propitiation of Christ, God in His condescending love, covers or removes the guilt of men. If men are to receive freedom from condemnation, and exemption from the penalty of the law, their sins must be expiated, and it is declared that "this cannot be done except by the death of my [God's] dear Son, who is one with me, who is very God of very God". It is emphasized that in expiation, God is satisfied with reference to man's guilt because it "was God himself who on the bloody tree offered expiation for sin against himself".

There was no expiation of our sin, and consequently no deliverance from its condemnation, except by Christ's bearing in our room, and place, and stead, that wrath of God which was due to us; and he did it....You know that is the very essence of the gospel.

...the stoop of love could never have seemed so great without expiation...do you know, sometimes, when I am thinking over this wondrous stoop of love, I wish that I could jump into this pulpit directly, and tell you what I feel about it? Sometimes, at dead of night, I sit up in bed, lost in wonder at the amazing love of God in the gift of his dear Son. That I should commit a sin, and that God himself should bear its punishment; that my guilt should make a propitiation necessary, and that the Divine Son of God should suffer in my room, and place, and stead, that the necessary expiation should be made, this surely is the greatest wonder of earth or heaven.

1. Works, 7, p. 205.
2. Ibid., pp. 205-206.
3. Ibid., p. 201.
4. Ibid., p. 244.
5. Works, 37, p. 306.
Christ's propitiation is eternal: "the propitiation of Christ is never more, never less. It cannot be more, it is complete; it cannot be less, for it is the same yesterday, today, and for ever."\(^1\) If no other view of Christ's death should be presented, Spurgeon regards this propitiatory aspect of His death as a sufficient explanation for the salvation of the soul.

The sacrifice of Christ is so mainly a propitiation before God, so thoroughly a vindication of divine righteousness, that this one view of the atonement is sufficient for any man, even if he obtains no other...\(^2\)

To many in Spurgeon's day, as well as modern times, the presence of God on the cross was paradoxical. And even Spurgeon, contemplating the great mystery of "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,"\(^3\) considers "this wondrous stoop of love" beyond comprehension. In his attempt to explain this "atonement by sacrificial death", Spurgeon says:

I am often ready to beat upon my own breast as I study the wondrous mystery of atoning love; for it seems to me so mean a thing to be so little affected by such boundless grace. If we fully felt what God has done for us in the great deed of Jesus' death, it might not be wonderful if we were to die under the amazing discovery. 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.' The immortal God undertakes to bear death for man! The immaculate stands in the sinner's place.... 'Paradise Lost' a Milton may compose, and fascinate a world with his majestic lines; but Paradise Restored by the divine substitution is not to be fully sung by mortal mind. God only knows the love of God.\(^4\)

"The love of Jesus is the centre of salvation," and "Death itself could not change his love".\(^7\) Such love originated in the heart of God and actively displayed itself in the death of Christ who was the "proof" of divine love.

What a wondrous sight was the dying Redeemer! The cross is the focus of all human history--I was almost going to say it is the centre of the life of God, if such a thing can be. All ages meet in Calvary.\(^8\)

\(^1\) Works, 7, p. 206.
\(^2\) Works, 30, p. 269.
\(^3\) 2nd Cor. 5:19.
\(^4\) Works, 26, p. 627.
\(^5\) Works, 30, pp. 546-547.
\(^6\) Works, 33, p. 505.
\(^7\) Works, 40, p. 426.
\(^8\) Works, 13, p. 700.
"The reason of his choice was love."¹ "The death of the cross is to us the highest proof of our Saviour's infinite love to us."²

When Spurgeon stresses that "Christ loved his people from the beginning,"³ and that "In order to save us God provided God,"⁴ he closes the door to any suggestion that Christ suffered and loved mankind independently of God. This dramatic phrase "God provided God" is simply another way of saying that the atoning sacrifice took place within the heart of God Himself. Here Spurgeon seems to be holding a position similar to that held by such modern theologians as Aulen in Christus Victor, and Brunner in The Mediator. These men, along with Spurgeon, maintain that God reconciles Himself in the Atonement. Referring to the example of Abraham and Isaac when they went together to make a sacrifice to God, he says, "Remember...that touching little sentence about Abraham and Isaac: 'They went both of them together'"⁵ emphasizing that "This was true of Jesus and his Father, Jesus a willing sacrifice, and God as willingly surrendering his dear Son for our sakes".⁵ No distinction is made between the love of the historical Jesus and the eternal Father who provided Himself, in the death of Christ, for the redemption of man. The redeeming love of God and the Son for sinful men are completely unified. "Salvation begins with Jehovah-jireh, the cross and the bleeding Saviour."⁴ "This eternal oneness is the security both of grace and glory to us."⁶ God, in His infinite love, "provided a ransom...for lost humanity".⁷

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2. Ibid., p. 507.
The whole system of divine love springs from the love of God, and from nothing else. Jesus loves us because he is love... 0, believer, Jesus loved thee before the world began, and all because he would love thee. He loved thee in order that he might manifest his love to thee. He loved thee in order that thou mightest be conformed unto his image, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren, and that thus we might share his nature and his character and his Father's love, and so draw nearer and nearer to him in ever-growing fellowship of affection... Jesus died because of love. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' That laying down of life in our Lord's case was specially a proof of love, for he died voluntarily; there was no necessity upon him, as upon us, to die.1

The love of God is not without infinite cost, even though in its action, it has "a motive which is divinely gracious".2 The expiation of man's sin required the sacrificial death of the Son of God. It is constantly reiterated that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission,"3 and that "God never forgave sin apart from blood".4 Christ on the cross was the "other self" of God the Father. "When the great God gave his Son he gave God himself, for Jesus is not in his eternal nature less than God".5 In a controversial sermon he remarks:

You may not... divide the Son of God from the Father as to forget that God was in him reconciling the world unto himself. It is the Father's other self who on the cross in human form doth bleed and die... Herein is infinite love!... God himself provided the atonement by freely and fully giving up himself in the person of his Son to suffer in consequence of human sin.6

The motive behind God's propitiation whereby He became reconciled to men was "pure love".

Jesus had no motive in his heart but that he loved us, loved us with all the greatness of his glorious nature, loved us, and therefore for love, pure love, and love alone, he gave himself up to bleed and die.7

2. Works, 12, p. 487.
Although God was angry with sin, the sacrifice of Christ was not necessary to change the attitude of God toward sinners from one of hate to love, or from wrath to mercy. The death of Christ did not purchase God’s love for mankind. God is always love, but “that love could not flow freely” to men because of the barrier of sin. As has been pointed out, when God envisaged men in his mind, He loved them even before they were created. “We, long ere we fell, were loved of God.”

The atoning sacrifice of Christ was not “to make an angry God willing to be merciful”. In a controversial sermon it is made clear that the Atonement was not the cause but the result of God’s love.

They charge us with teaching that the atonement in some way changes the nature of God; we have never said so, and we never dreamed anything of the kind. Above all things, we have ever taught that God is immutable, and cannot be changed either in his nature or in his purpose. They tell us that we teach...that the sacrifice of Christ was offered to make God love his people. We have over and over and over again denied this, and declared that...Christ in his sacrifice is the result of God’s love, not the cause of it.

Then why did Jesus die? “Jesus dies not to create mercy in God’s heart, but to open a way for the exercise of the mercy which was there from all eternity.”

Thus Christ is the medium through whom God works to remove the barrier of sin standing between God and man.

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4. Works, 40, pp. 327-328. An interesting quotation from Emil Brunner follows: "...the wrath of God is not the ultimate reality; it is the divine reality which corresponds to sin. But it is not the essential reality of God. In Himself God is love...This love can therefore only be made known to us through a special revelation. But this revelation simply means that the Divine Love ‘breaks through’ wrath...Here He is the angry God, because by sin He is separated from us. But His nature is not wrath, but overflowing, unfathomable love. He is thus revealed in the Son. This is the place where the love of God breaks through the wrath of God. This revelation of the divine mystery of love in the midst of the reality of wrath is the ‘propitiation’ (λατρεία).” (The Mediator, pp. 519-520.)
The Father always did love his people. Do not think that Christ died to make God the Father loving. He always had loved them from before the foundation of the world, but—'It is finished,' took away the barriers which were in the Father's way. He would, as a God of love, and now he could as a God of justice, bless poor sinners.  

Two Scriptures from the Johannine Writings are used to contradict any idea that the wrath of God had to be placated by the death of Christ before He could love men. In John 3:16, it is evident that "God loved because he would love". Nothing "outside of God himself" could persuade Him to love men.

Whence came that love? Not from anything outside of God himself. God's love springs from himself. He loves because it is his nature to do so.

From the second Scripture, 1st John 4:10, it is observed that "His sacrifice of himself was the atonement through which mercy is rendered possible in consistency with justice." In his attempt to exalt adequately the love of God in Christ, Spurgeon expresses his inability to fathom its depths.

Oh! this love of Christ; it is beyond all degree, standard, or compass. In comparison with it, other love, high and noble as that other love may be, dwindles into insignificance. Herein is love; God loved the unlovely, the hateful, the vile, the depraved, and loved them though they loved not him.

"Herein is love,"—self-denying love, amazing love, unexampled love,—language fails me; I know no words by which to set forth the excellence of this love. "Tis love divine, love beyond degree: God 'sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

Christ was slain for men before the foundation of the world. His death on the cross was simply an outward manifestation of what had taken place in the heart of God before man was created. The Incarnation with its consequent glories was the final revelation of God's eternal love in its fulness, but men were reconciled to God through Christ's death before the Incarnation. In His death,

1. Works, 7, p. 590.
2. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that who-soever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
4. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
5. Works, 29, p. 117.
7. Ibid., p. 31.
Christ made possible the removal of the barrier of sin and God became reconciled to man. Now there is no impediment to God's love. He is reconciled to man, and man, by faith in God's propitiation, is reconciled to God. "Now are we reconciled unto God by the death of his Son."¹ "When we saw God to be reconciled, how we longed for him!"¹ The death of Christ provided a way whereby God's anger on account of sin "was removed because Christ had died."¹ Christ's death, then, is God's only way of becoming reconciled to man, and man must "receive" the reconciliation (Košta Mašta) to become "one" with God.

I think...while we must always regard the cross as being the representation of Christ's love to his Church, we must also view it as being God setting forth to man the way by which he will accept man, pardon his sin, hear his prayer, and be reconciled with his erring creatures.² Thus the cross is the "meeting-place" where God establishes a harmonious relationship with man. The cross reveals that "divine justice is on the sinner's side."³ Christ, then, is the Agent who gives man an introduction to God, and establishes an eternal union between God and man. By his death on the cross, Christ "gave a new and brighter display of his love".⁴

Here is the point where God and our souls can meet....I do like to feel that, notwithstanding all my imperfections and sin, I can meet God in Christ ....God and man cannot agree until they come to the God-man, Christ Jesus; and then, where God and man have met in one Person, and are joined together in an everlasting union, there God meets men, and they are bound together in an alliance that shall never be broken....Our love to Christ enables us to find a meeting-place with God in the person of his dear Son.⁵

It is concluded that God saves men through love. It is a costly love that looks upon men through the cross. Men turn to God because of the dynamic of His love. "Christ on the cross has become the great magnet attracting men to himself."⁶

The cross is the pole wherom is uplifted the banner of love, both his and ours. We love him because he first loved us, and Golgotha is the window through which his love looketh.⁷

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O heart of God, I see thee nowhere as at Golgotha, where the Word incarnate reveals the justice and the love, the holiness and the tenderness of God in one blaze of glory.  

1

The cross was "love's crowning action".  

2

There is a climax to everything, and the climax of love is to die for the beloved one. 'Free grace and dying love' are the noblest themes among men, and when united they are sublimity itself. Love can do much, can do infinite things, but greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends... To lay down one's life is the most that love can do.  

3

The doctrine of the cross is epitomized thus:

In one word, it is the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine that the Lord Jesus Christ was made sin for us, that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and that God hath set him forth to be the propitiation for our sins.  

4

THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF CHRIST

Man is under the curse of the law, therefore "in the most minute respects... somebody must be found who can be obedient" to the law, that through its "perfect obedience" death should be abolished and righteousness should be imputed by the One whose obedience to the law made it "morally and spiritually acceptable to God's Spirit".  

5

This obedience must be in the form of an "offering" that should satisfy God, and this offering could be none other than God Himself, who in His Son "took upon himself our nature" and through suffering "learned obedience" which found its highest expression in the cross.

6

The Creator required obedience, and he beholds in Christ Jesus the servant who has never failed to do the Master's will. Justice demanded that the law should be kept, and, lo, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Seeing that we had broken the law, justice required the endurance of the righteous penalty, and Jesus has borne it to the full, for he bowed his head to death, even the death of the cross.  

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8

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1. Works, 15, p. 156.
2. Works, 19, p. 473.
3. Ibid., p. 470.
5. Works, 60, p. 156.
The obedience of Christ is described by Spurgeon as empirical. As a Son he "learned obedience", but as God "he did not obey". The active and passive elements of Christ's obedience are never separated but are treated as an essential part of His entire experience. "No man knows obedience until he has actually obeyed, both in an active and a passive sense." To effect this dual obedience, Christ "must come under the law, honour the law, and suffer the law". The law then was the test of His obedience and it was through the perfect fulfilment of the law that Christ learned full obedience. "Our Lord as man was made to know by his sufferings what full obedience meant", and this obedience was characterized as a personal and practical submission to the will of God.

...obedience is a thing which has to be learned even by sons. Though Jesus was a Son, yet he learned obedience. As God, our Saviour knew everything. As God, however, he did not obey. It was in his complex character as our Mediator that he learned to obey....obedience has to be learned experimentally....Even our blessed Lord could not have fully learned obedience by the observation in others of such an obedience as he had personally to render, for there was no one from whom he could thus learn....he must learn it by experience....he must learn by doing it, and suffering it....It was in the doing of it that he became actually, personally, experimentally acquainted with what was meant by perfect obedience to the will of God; and he did it brethren. He went right through with that lesson until he had learned obedience. He was getting near to the end of his great task when he said, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt;' but he had fully learned it when he said, 'It is finished'....He had to learn obedience in order that he might save us, for it was God's 'righteous Servant' who was to 'justify many.'

The vicarious obedience of Christ is linked with justification by saying that "Justification has for its matter and means the righteousness of Jesus Christ, set forth in his vicarious obedience, both in life and death". It is in this active-passive obedience of Christ that Spurgeon grounds his doctrine of salvation. Christ's active and passive obedience were both essential to obtain pardon and justification for the sinner, as well as to restore him to Divine

1. Works, 32, p. 597.
2. Works, 47, pp. 175-176.
favor. "His active obedience renders unto God a recompense for our breaches of his holy law", and "In Christ, the actively-obedient, you see God's salvation." His active and passive obedience culminated in the cross.

...Christ won, on the cross, the glory of being the fully-obedient One. 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross'. After having, in all points, kept the law perfectly by his active obedience, he crowned his life's service by his passive obedience, and was glorious indeed when he went to 'the end of the law for righteousness'. Firstborn of many brethren art thou, O thou glorious Son of man, made perfect in thine obedience in order that thou mightest be the Captain of our salvation, and bring many sons unto glory?

To use current terminology, Spurgeon considered the latter half of the nineteenth century as a "modern world" in which constant attacks were being waged against the Biblical idea of the Atonement, which he resolutely stated "to be the very essence of the gospel". In his violent reaction against what is commonly called today "Liberal Protestantism", Spurgeon, defining the Atonement as "the very heart of the gospel", denounced all theories relating to it as heretical and proclaimed that the true conception of Christ's death is of a vicarious nature. As opposed to what was called the "new theology", he gave the following definition of the Atonement which is vividly described as a substitutionary work of Christ for sinners.

The doctrine of the atonement is very simple. It just consists in the substitution of Christ in the place of the sinner; Christ being treated as if he were the sinner, and then the transgressor being treated as if he were the righteous one. It is a change of persons; Christ becomes the sinner; he stands in the sinner's place and stead; he was numbered with the transgressors; the sinner becomes righteous; he stands in Christ's place and stead, and is numbered with the righteous ones. Christ has no sin of his own, but he takes human guilt, and is punished for human folly. We have no righteousness of our own but we take the divine righteousness; we are rewarded for it, and stand accepted before God as though that righteousness had been wrought out by ourselves. 'In due time Christ died for the ungodly,' that he might take away their sins.
Spurgeon was a reader of Albert Barnes, and in comparison with the above definition, it is interesting to note that of Barnes on substitution.

The idea is, that the person substituted is to do or suffer the same thing which the person for whom he is substituted would have done.\(^1\)

The whole emphasis of Spurgeon's preaching centers on Christ the "Sin-Bearer". He stresses over and over again that the death of Christ was "once for all", and that His "eternal merits" continually remove the transgressions of believers. In the majority of his sermons relating to the Atonement, he seldom fails to stress that the merits of Christ are sufficient for man's demerits. It was always his custom to relate his experiences, particularly anything pertaining to his conversion, and on the doctrine of substitution he dogmatically asserts that the doctrine as he states it is the only interpretation, and on this conception of the substitutionary death of Christ, he never recanted.

"This is the pith and the marrow of my theology", that "Jesus suffered in my stead". In a controversial sermon during the Down Grade episode, he remarks:

In his person he was ever the Sin-Bearer, and through his death he puts sin away for ever...His eternal merits for ever...remove the foul offence of human transgression. As the Great Purifier he continually takes away and will continue to take away the sin of the world...This is the pith and the marrow of my theology....There is no sin which he cannot take away.... There is no other sin-bearer, no other atonement, no other satisfaction,... I dogmatize; because I feel more than sure as to my Lord's being the great sacrifice for sin. I could not doubt this doctrine if I were to try to do so. My hope, my joy, my very being hinge on my Lord's substitution. This truth is woven into the warp and woof of my being. Jesus suffered in my stead....Truth is usually in the minority in this evil world. I have faith in the Lord Jesus for myself, a faith burned into me as with a hot iron. I thank God, what I believe I shall believe, even if I believe it alone. If I am the last man to glory in the substitution of the Lord Jesus, I shall count myself honoured to bear his cross alone.\(^2\)

Spurgeon gave a theological resume of his conception of the substitutionary death of Christ in a single paragraph which shows his controversial preaching during the entire Down Grade Controversy at its best.\(^3\) From 1861 to

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3. See Appendix E.
his death in 1892, he denounced all other views of Christ's death and held to the penal-substitutionary doctrine as the central theme of the gospel. The Down Grade Controversy actually began in 1861 as is recorded in his Autobiography, and when it was brought to its height in 1887, Spurgeon continued to uphold in an emphatic way that the only true view of Christ's death was that of a vicarious substitute.

Spurgeon holds "that the sufferings of Christ were vicarious". He decries such ideas as those of Horace Bushnell who maintained that the sufferings of Christ were not vicarious, but rather were designed, not only to sympathize with but to benefit men. Certainly Christ's death was advantageous, but it was more than simply beneficial. It was a death in which Christ was divinely appointed to suffer and die for the sins of men, not only that they might not suffer, but that through the appropriation of His merits by faith they should have eternal salvation. The sufferings of Christ for men were purposely laid upon Him, not only on account of sin, but for the remission of sin. The death of Christ is viewed as the only means of exempting men from sin and the only means of forgiveness.

The proponents of the Governmental Theory of the Atonement simply assert that Christ died "for our sakes". Admitting this, yet denouncing its inadequacy, Spurgeon says that Christ suffered as man's Substitute, by which he means "in the room, and place, and stead of guilty men". He denounces the erroneous philosophy that Christ suffered as a virtuous paragon, and holds that His sufferings were vicarious.

Suffering, suffering to the death, the suffering of the Son of God, a suffering ordained of God to be the vicarious sacrifice, and a suffering which is perfect and complete.

2. Works, 35, p. 147.
The sufferings of Christ were expiatory and vicarious. You are aware that by many this fact is denied. The only solution of the mystery of Christ's death offered by the school to which I refer, is that which presents our Lord as a model of patience and resignation in suffering—a saint in virtue—a hero in endurance; and thus the cross of Christ is deprived of its magnificence and robbed of its glory. But our Lord suffered as an expiatory offering, as a vicarious victim. All suffering is, in a sense, vicarious—not in the fullest meaning of the term, as conveying the idea of substitution, but simply and only in the sense that all suffering is the effect and consequence of sin. Our Lord's sufferings were also the result and consequence of sin—sin, not his own, but his people's; and in the fullest and most emphatic meaning of the terms, were expiatory and vicarious—sufferings, not only the fruit of sin, but more than that, suffering expiatory of sin—sufferings, substitutionary and vicarious, sacrificial and atoning.1

Punishment in one form or another has the character and capacity of suffering. Man, of course, suffers from personal guilt, but Christ suffered not from personal guilt but by taking upon Himself the guilt of the race. The sufferings of Christ on account of sin were both physical and mental, and though His physical sufferings are not to be disparaged, His mental or soul sufferings constituted the heart of His anguish. The sinless Christ was conscious of the guilt imputed to Him. The perfect character of Christ increased His sensitiveness to sin and augmented His ability to suffer.

Yes! the agonies of our sin-suffering, sin-atoning Lord were unknown. They were in their intensity known only to His own holy soul....His mind was a human mind, and all the more sensitive because it was a sinless mind.2 Thus the righteousness of Christ was the source of His suffering, and the intensity of His suffering being enhanced by His absolute purity leads Spurgeon to say that "Our Lord's main suffering lay in his soul—his soul-sufferings were the soul of his sufferings".3 The sufferings of Christ reached their height on the cross. Christ's "sufferings and death were not apparently only, but true and real".4 Spurgeon takes literally the saying of Jesus on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me".5 "The fact is evident that our Lord

1. Works, 7, p. 244.
2. Ibid., p. 245.
suffered by being forsaken of God."¹ Even though the mental sufferings of Christ superseded his physical sufferings, nevertheless these were not sufficient for an Atonement for sin. Sin not only deserves suffering but death. Therefore "all his painful sufferings...could not recompense for sin till the death penalty was paid".² In His sufferings and death, Christ magnified and vindicated the law of God.

...when we speak of his cross and blood we mean those sufferings and that death of our Lord Jesus Christ by which he magnified the law of God; we mean what Isaiah intended when he said, 'He shall make his soul an offering for sin'; we mean all the griefs which Jesus vicariously endured on our behalf at Gethsemane...and especially his yielding up his life upon the tree of scorn and doom.³

As man's Substitute, Christ in His sacrificial life took the law-place of man, and suffered his penalty. The relation Christ's death sustained to sin was that He literally "bore the sins of believers" in a penal sense, and this fact, in Spurgeon's view, kills the Bushnellian or Moral Influence theory of the Atonement. Because of sin, man is brought under God's condemnation. "Sin necessitates death",⁴ and "'The soul that sinneth it shall die'."⁵ Christ, in His identification with men, assumed the consequences of the law, though he was sinless, and died. Christ took away the penalty that a believer should suffer for his own sins by personally bearing them. "He, voluntarily putting himself in our place, bore the result of that substitution."⁵ "It was, in the most emphatic sense, a personal sacrifice."⁶ Atonement in the Old Testament was by the death of a victim, and man's reconciliation to God is by this same process. "The Lord Jesus Christ did not come to earth to make a reconciliation by the holiness of his life, or by the earnestness of his teaching, but by his death."⁴

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¹ Works, 35, p. 146.  
² Works, 31, p. 486.  
³ Works, 32, p. 123.  
⁴ Works, 35, p. 147.  
⁵ Ibid., p. 148.
When Christ submitted to the death which God pronounced upon sin, God accepted Him as having borne man's penalty for sin, and for this reason God "cannot afterwards punish us for the sin that was laid upon him".¹ In one of his controversial sermons, Spurgeon observes:

The great principle upon which our security is based is the righteousness of God, which assures us that he will not punish the substitute and then punish the person for whom the substitute endured the penalty. It was a matter of gross injustice if the sinner, having made atonement for his sin in the person of his covenant Head, the Lord Jesus, should afterwards himself be called upon to account for the very sin which was atoned for. Sin, like anything else, cannot be in two places at once: if the great God took my sin, and laid it on his Son, then it is not on me any more. If Jesus bore the wrath of God for me, I cannot bear that wrath; it were contrary to every principle of a just moral government that the Judge should cast our Surety into prison and exact the penalty of him, and then come upon those for whom the suretyship was undertaken. By this gospel I am prepared to stand or fall; yea, by it I will live or die; I know no other. Because I believe it, I this day cry from the bottom of my heart, 'Jehovah-jireh,' the Lord has provided an effectual redemption for all those who put their trust in him whom God has set forth to be a propitiation.²

In further explaining the doctrine of substitution, Spurgeon explicitly states that Christ died "to take the place of guilty men,"³ and that "the sinner's guilt [was] transferred to Christ, and borne by Him as the sinner's Substitute".⁴ But it was impossible for Christ to sin, yet, "There was before the bar of justice an absolute transfer made of guilt from his elect to himself".⁵ Man's guilt was "actually" and not "metaphorically" laid upon Christ. But sin cannot be transferred from one person to another. How, then, can one account for this transfer of sin to the sinless Christ? And, how can Christ bear guilt without defilement? This is indeed a mystery. The laying of sin upon Christ is an act of God. "None but God could have put sin upon Christ."⁶ God laid sin upon Christ by imputation. This transference of guilt to Christ is not interpreted to mean that He became personally sinful, but that the sin of the race

³. Works, 32, p. 135.
⁵. Works, 56, p. 305.
was legally laid upon Him so that by imputation it was put to His account in God's thought and attitude in the same sense in which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to a believer. Imputation in any sense is a mystery and must be comprehended by faith. The transfer of sin to Christ and the imputation of His merit to guilty men "is a wonderful mystery [which] staggers human reason, [and] faith alone apprehends it".¹

With sin transferred to Christ, the believer is "judged as being in the victim, and represented thereby".² Consequently the justice of God cannot demand punishment of a sinner since he has already been judged and punished in Christ. "When your substitute rendered to the law of God the penalty which it demanded, you virtually rendered it."² Thus "God will never strike a soul through the veil of his Son's sacrifice".³

God is just, he must punish sin; God is merciful, he wills to pardon those who believe in Jesus. How is this to be done? How can he be just and exact the penalty,—merciful, and accept the sinner? He doeth it thus: he taketh the sins of his people and actually lifteth them up from off his people to Christ, so that they stand as innocent as though they had never sinned, and Christ is looked upon by God as though he had been all the sinners in the world rolled into one. The sin of his people was taken from their persons, and really and actually, not typically and metaphorically, but really and actually laid on Christ. Then God came forth with his fiery sword to meet the sinner and to punish him. He met Christ. Christ was not a sinner himself; but the sins of his people were all imputed to him. Justice, therefore, met Christ as though he had been the sinner—punished Christ for his people's sins—punished him as far as its rights could go,—exacted from him the last atom of the penalty, and left not a dreg in the cup. And now, he who can see Christ as being his substitute, and puts his trust in him, is thereby delivered from the curse of the law.⁴

The essential soteriological thought in the preceding paragraph is adequately expressed in the words of James Denney who writes:

Christ takes our place in death, and in so doing is identified with the world's sin; the end in view in this is that we should take His place in life, and in so doing stand justified in God's sight.⁵

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2. Works, 30, p. 165.
3. Ibid., p. 161.
Along with the reality and perfection of Christ's life, Spurgeon insists on His Person as representative of humanity. "God has been pleased to deliver his people through carrying out a principle with which the very system of the universe commenced, namely, that of representation." Christ identified Himself with those whom He came to save. In His human experience He shared a physical body and lived and died according to human standards.

It was a man that died, but he was also God, and the death of incarnate God reflects more glory upon law than the deaths of myriads of condemned creatures could have done. The death of Christ was representative. As Adam was man's first representative, even so, "Our Lord from of old in the eternal covenant was constituted the head and representative of all who were in him." There was no other person so fit to undertake the enterprise of our redemption as this second man, who is the Lord from heaven." With reference to the representation of the first covenant, "That covenant was made with all of us in the person of our representative, the first Adam". Concerning the eternal "covenant of grace which was made before the foundation of the world between God the Father, and God the Son," Spurgeon says that "Christ stood in the covenant as man's representative". Therefore Christ "was not slain as a private individual, but he was put to death as a representative man".

All his people died when he died representatively. Christ's dead body represents to us in its death the death of our old man; and virtually and before God the body of this death died for each of us when Jesus died. Representatively, then, believers are not only crucified with Christ, but they are buried with Him, and they arise with Him. In the resurrection, Christ did not arise "as a private person only, but 'our Lord Jesus,' [arose] as 'that

great Shepherd of the sheep". Therefore Spurgeon can say that "what has been done to Jesus has been virtually done to all his people".

Spurgeon's argument is that the first Adam was the representative of the race and since all men fell in him representatively, on this same principle all men have the possibility of restoration through the Second Adam, Christ. Thus he believes that man is saved by the same economy by which he fell, and his doctrine of the Atonement cannot be understood apart from this representative principle. If men had fallen individually, their estate, like that of the angels, would have been hopeless. The representative system, however, is of such a character that men are identified with the Person representing them, and they stand or fall according to their representative. In Adam a man dies, but in Christ he is made alive. "Christ on the cross represented all of us who believe in him...Whatever happened to him happened also to the flock."²

He Christ is as much the representative man as the first Adam was the representative man; and as in Adam the sin was committed which ruined us, so in the second Adam the atonement was made which saves us. 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'³

When God chose his people, he did not choose them one by one, separately; but he chose Christ, and all his people were chosen in him...the chosen ones are all in Christ also by redemption. When Jesus died, each one of us who believe in Jesus died in him; and when he suffered, we suffered in Christ. Our sins were laid on Christ's head; and now, Christ's merits are laid on us. Christ made an atonement for the sins of all his elect through the shedding of his blood upon the cross. We were in him when he died, we were in him when they laid him in the grave, we were in him when he rose and led captivity captive, and we are in him now.⁴

Christ gained the victory over human sin by His voluntary consent "to bear our sins as our representative".⁵ This representative sin-bearing was the act of God in which He purposely "laid on him the iniquity of us all".⁶ This

2. Ibid., p. 438.
was necessary on God's part, for "apart from the Lord's doing it our sins
could never have been transferred to the Redeemer". As a God-man, Christ
entered into the human realm of suffering and failure, and by virtue of His
sinless Person, He gained the victory over human sin. Thus Christ acts as a
personal Representative for each man who places faith in Him.

...we always stand in connection with others, and God has availed
himself of this which I called a loophole to bring in salvation for us,
by virtue of our union with another man, who is also more than man, the
Son of God and yet the son of Mary, the Infinite who once became an
infant, the Eternal who lived, and bled, and died as the representative
of all who put their trust in him.

The actual basis of Christ's representation is grounded in the blood
of the eternal covenant. "The blood of Christ stands in a fourfold relation¬
ship to the covenant." With reference to Christ, Spurgeon says that His
blood "is the fulfilment of the covenant." In every respect the "blood" of
Christ satisfied the "justice" of God. Secondly, God is the "Surety" of the
"blood of the covenant". In the third respect, the blood of the covenant
stands in a direct relation to men because they are the "objects" of the cove¬
nant. Christ's blood, then, stands as the "fulfilment" of the covenant, while
God the Father stands as the "bond" of the covenant, and the saved sinner
stands as the "evidence" of the salvation provided by the covenant. Comprehendi¬
ing these three, Spurgeon says that "the blood is the glory of all", since
the Father, the Son, and the sinner can boast of its efficacy.

2. Ibid., p. 209.
4. Ibid., p. 424.
With regard to Christ, his precious blood shed in Gethsemane, in Gabbatha and Galgotha, is the fulfilment of the covenant. By this blood sin is cancelled; by Jesus' agonies justice is satisfied, by his death the law is honoured; and by that precious blood in all its mediatorial efficacy, and in all its cleansing power, Christ fulfils all that he stipulated to do on the behalf of his people towards God. When I see Christ dying on the cross, I see the everlasting God from that time, if I may use the term of him who ever must be free, bound by his own oath and covenant to carry out every stipulation. Then, again, the blood of the covenant has relation to us as the objects of the covenant. Some men want to know whether they are elect. We cannot tell them unless they will tell us this. Dost thou believe? Is thy faith fixed on the precious blood? Then thou art in the covenant. Lastly, the blood stands in a relationship to all three, and here I may add that the blood is the glory of all. To the Son it is the fulfilment, to the Father the bond, to the sinner the evidence, and to all—to Father, Son, and sinner—it is the common glory and the common boast.

FURTHER ASPECTS OF THE ATONEMENT

Contrary to the early patristic view that Christ's death was a ransom paid by God to Satan for the emancipation of those whom he held, Spurgeon emphasizes that His death was "an invention of divine wisdom" in which God Himself in His Son should bear the penalty of man's sins. "It is true that no price was paid to Satan, that is not to be imagined for an instant; we were never the devil's rightful possession." In the death of Christ, God "gave himself for us", and in the atoning activity "Jesus did actually redeem his people by a ransom." "Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus a compensation has been given to you for yourselves, so that your rights to yourselves are now the property of your Lord Jesus." ...

...God supplies us with his reason for delivering a soul, and it is an argument of love: 'Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom'...There is no way of salvation but by the ransom; all who ever are saved are saved by the ransom...and there is but one...This ransom is an invention of divine wisdom...Nobody would have thought of that way of the deliverance of a sinner from the pit of hell...if God had not thought of it ....Almighty love seems to sing out with all her might...'I have found a ransom'...This is God's 'Eureka!'...How greatly did he rejoice over the finished work of his well-beloved Son!

2. Works, 26, p. 471.
3. Ibid., p. 470.
4. Ibid., p. 472.
5. Works, 43, pp. 92-93.
A redemptive price was necessary, and it must come from God and be offered to God. Thus Christ, by the "Eternal Spirit", offered to God the eternal merits of His sacrifice. Much emphasis is given by Spurgeon to the value of Christ's merits which are perpetually available for man.

The spirit of Christ was an eternal spirit, for it was the Godhead. There was conjoined with his deity the natural life of a perfect man; but the eternal spirit was his highest self. Notice the use of that word 'eternal,'--'who by the eternal Spirit'--for it gives to the offering of Christ an endless value. It can never cease to operate, for he offered up himself by the 'Eternal Spirit'. His merits ever abide; for they are the merits of an Eternal Person, who by his own Spirit offered up himself a sacrifice for sin. Need I call your attention to the fact that he offered himself 'to God'? Yes, I must; for of late some have blasphemously said that the sacrifice was made to the devil. To mention such profanity is to condemn it.

Spurgeon agrees with the essential elements of the Anselmic, or Commercial Theory of the Atonement, which emphasizes God's honor, and states that the advocates of it are "nearer the truth" than those who reduce the ransom paid by Jesus for mankind to mere nothingness. The emphasis which the Commercial Theory places on honor, satisfaction, justice, and merit, are strongly stressed. He has no objection to the theory itself, but to the motive of its proponents, whom he accuses of using the mercantile expression as another means of deprecating the substitutionary death of Christ. Spurgeon's attitude toward Anselm's theory is that "there is really nothing horrible" in the theory, and as he spiritualizes on the commercial idea he says that even Paul "was not afraid of the mercantile theory" since he preached redemption by purchase.

The death of Christ is a satisfaction to God for sin. In every phase of His life, Christ acted to satisfy the demands of God's holy nature and law for sin, and thus open the way for the restoration of man to favor and fellowship.

2. Works, 26, p. 469.
3. See Appendix F for a passage on the Commercial Theory. This excerpt is from a controversial sermon.
with God. The satisfaction for sin could be provided only by the Incarnate Son of God. Therefore the sacrificial substitutionary death of Christ is God's own provision for satisfying Divine justice. Christ in His death suffered the penalty of the law and died on behalf of sinners. His death was penal and not pecuniary. As a satisfactory to Divine justice for the sins of men, Christ's vicarious sufferings and death rendered adequate compensation. The presentation of His merits to God were so effective that God would never demand penalty from the individual who trusted in Christ's satisfaction.

Though Spurgeon maintains that the moral law is "the standard of equity for all time",¹ he condemns any idea of its redemptive efficacy by saying that "it is no way of salvation for us".¹ The law demanded perfection, and, man, being incapable of rendering perfect satisfaction to the law was subjected to the death penalty of the law. God demanded the death penalty to retain the dignity of the law and to uphold the highest moral standard possible. The death of Christ as a satisfaction to the law proved that an offence against God's moral government should not be treated with laxity. "If the Lord should forgive sinners without demanding a penalty, he would weaken the foundations of moral government."² Men "are redeemed from the law by our Lord's being made under the law".³ This is said to stress that Christ's satisfaction of the law on man's behalf is a matter of "pure grace".

...the fact of Christ having paid a price and having satisfied justice does not remove the pardon of sin out of the region of pure grace. Because justice is satisfied we are not therefore to say that mercy is excluded.... As the giving of Jesus Christ, by whom justice is satisfied, was an act of free favour on the part of God, so the giving of the pardon which comes through Jesus Christ is in the same manner a matter of absolute grace, and by no means of debt or obligation.⁴

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Spurgeon reiterates again and again that Christ, in his death, fully satisfied, and honored, and magnified the righteous law of God. This honor to the law rendered "complete satisfaction to offended justice", and because of this vicarious sacrifice "God is satisfied with Christ", who "has put away sin without dishonour to himself". His doctrine of Christ's satisfaction to offended justice is adequately expressed in the following paragraphs:

To all the demands of God's moral government, to all the claims of law and justice, Jesus now, on behalf of the people for whom He stood as surety, gave a full, honourable, and accepted satisfaction.

So far as the vindication of the justice of God and all his other attributes are to be considered, that vindication was absolutely complete...The work was done; God's honour was clear; God's attributes were glorified, and this was perfectly done by the putting away of Christ.

Then you listen to the gospel, of which the sum and substance is just this, that Jesus Christ has fully atoned for the sins of all his people, that he has suffered everything that they deserved to suffer, and that God has accepted his substitutionary sacrifice as a sufficient atonement for all who believe in him.

In discussing the sacrifice of Christ as "removing sin continually", Spurgeon, though he supports the view of the necessity of Christ's death, and holds that He came in the fulness of time, maintains the timelessness of his death. In his emphasis upon the divine sovereignty of God, he does not limit the sacrifice of Christ to an historical event. He believes in an eternal Atonement, one which had been actualized in the mind of God before the creation of man, or the foundation of the world. Christ "literally poured forth" His blood, but "long ages before, the Lord God had regarded it done". By taking a retrospective and prospective view of the Atonement, it is concluded that the

2. Works, 43, p. 20.
3. Works, 7, p. 245.
5. Works, 57, p. 113.
7. Ibid., p. 373.
Atonement "is perpetual in its effect", and that the salvation of men throughout the ages has always depended upon this perpetual operation of God's grace. From this point of view, the Atonement is neither retrospective nor prospective, but since it stands as an eternal fact it has an eternal present effect which has procured salvation for men of all ages. "His sacrifice on behalf of his people was for all the sins before he came."

Thy salvation lies in that divine Person, whom by faith I see at this moment, clothed in the splendour of heaven, yet still wearing the marks of his passion...he presents a perpetually complete atonement, and continually reconciles sinners to God.

Such a view of the Atonement is in concurrence with that of George Barker Stevens who says, "This idea of eternal atonement has not received at the hands of theologians the attention which its importance deserves". Dr. Stevens further observes:

If atonement is an activity of the divine love in relation to human sin, a self-satisfaction of God in the rescue of sinners, a triumph of love in forgiveness, then God must have been atoning for human sin during the whole history of mankind. Present day theologians such as D. M. Baillie, and Vincent Taylor also concur with Spurgeon that the historical Atonement was simply a manifestation of a realized eternal action within the heart of God, and that Christ has always stood and continues to stand as the "Sin-Bearer". Christ's Atonement has always been perpetual and effectual.

Our Saviour's atoning sacrifice, though it was but once offered, is perpetual in its effect. He must needs die at a certain point of time, and there were reasons why his death should have taken place at the particular moment when it did; yet time does not enter into the essence of it. The sacrifice might have been offered a million years ago, and as the Lamb of God he would still take away sin; or the actual sacrifice might further have been postponed, if infinite wisdom had so chosen, and yet the Lamb of God would now have taken away sin. The date of his death is not the question,

2. Works, 26, p. 163.
his sacrifice is effectual before and after the event. Our Saviour was
the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, in the purpose, and
covenant, and thought of God. His sacrifice saved Adam, and Noah, and
Moses, and David, and all the saints, before the name of Calvary had be¬
come illustrious...Those dear wounds of his in effect perpetually do
bleed; in his case the print of the nails is the token of an inexhaustible
fount of merit, which is always flowing forth for the removal of my guilt,
eternally efficacious, ceaselessly sin-cleansing.1

The extent of the Atonement is interpreted from John 1:29, "Behold the
Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." From this Scripture,
Spurgeon points to the universality of the gospel by showing the willingness of
God to receive all men who trust in the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

There is nothing in this text to shut any man out of mercy. Behold, I
set before you an open door. There is everything in my text to induce every
one of you who is conscious of guilt to come to the Lord Jesus, and accept
him as his substitute and sacrifice. Christ shall take away no man's sin
that doth not believe in him. Christ hath so taken away sin that whosoever
believeth in him shall live.2

The Atonement is considered as intensely personal. In his attempt to
state his position on the efficacy of Christ's blood, Spurgeon relates his
supreme desire to present the atoning sacrifice of Christ so clearly that every
person should understand that Christ is his personal sacrifice:

I must go home to my chamber, and weep because I am powerless to tell
this story, and yet I have laboured to tell it simply, so that all can
understand; and I pray, therefore, that God the Spirit may lead some of you
to put your trust simply, wholly, and entirely, on the blood of Jesus Christ.3

Though supreme emphasis is placed upon the universal scope of the gospel,
the efficacy of the Atonement is limited to believers only. Universal salvation
is repudiated as a "foolish dream". The divine fatherhood of God, in a universal
sense, is decried by proclaiming that the new birth must be experienced before
one can speak of God as "Father", or before one can be called a "son" of God.

The fatherhood of God is toward as many as he hath begotten again unto a lively

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3. Ibid., p. 574.
5. Works, 5, p. 31.
hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; these are his children."¹ In a controversial sermon on "The Blood of the Testament,"² Spurgeon condemns the idea of the "larger hope" of the Atonement, in the sense of universal salvation, and argues further that Christ's death is for those who appropriate His blood by faith.

Brethren, the legatees in Christ's will are those who come and accept his atonement. There is nothing in Christ's will for any person who will not trust his blood. I know of no mercy under heaven for any man who, knowing of the atoning sacrifice, wilfully puts it away. Certain teachers talk about a 'larger hope.' I read nothing of this fancy in the Scriptures, and I dare not go beyond the word of the Lord... 'Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' Other hope, large or small, I know not of from revelation, except this one,—'He that believeth in him is not condemned.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.'³

The theological position of Spurgeon on particular redemption is clarified beyond speculation in the paragraph given in Appendix G. This passage reveals his thought on the Atonement from the beginning of his ministry. Spurgeon differentiates particular redemption from a limited Atonement by saying that "God is reconciled to every believer".⁴ The Atonement is limited only in the sense that it is limited to believers only. It is effectual only for those who appropriate the merits of Christ's sacrifice. The Atonement is universal in aim and scope, but while it envisions all men as its object, the modern idea of the "larger hope" or the universal Fatherhood of God is rejected on the basis that God must discriminate between holiness and sin, and this distinction can be detected only through faith in the blood of the Atonement. The Atonement is placed on both a personal and a universal basis with the stipulation that the Atonement per se is not universally effectual. Therefore Spurgeon can freely say that "Christ made a full, satisfactory, substitutionary atonement for every soul that

1. Works, 43, p. 133.
2. Works, 26, pp. 625-636.
3. Ibid., p. 635.
trusts in him,1 and that "receiving reconciliation is to become a believer".1

"I trust him, therefore I know that he has made a full satisfaction for me."1

"I received the reconciliation the moment I trusted him."1 His precise belief on particular redemption is that the Atonement is not limited but the application of it is limited to believers only.

**THE MEDIATORIAL OFFICE OF CHRIST**

The Mediator between God and man must be perfectly qualified for His office. It has already been seen that Christ must identify Himself with men to save them. "If Jesus Christ is to approach to God for us it is clear that he must come down into our condition, for he must first descend or he cannot ascend."2 It has also been pointed out that Christ must not only assume the nature of man, but to perform the office of a priest, He must be sinless, and Christ was "free from sin whether natural or acquired".3 He was perfect in every aspect of life. Furthermore, Christ must come under the law to redeem men.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ as man was made under the law; but he owed nothing to that law, for he perfectly fulfilled it in all respects."4 Moreover, Christ must suffer and die in order to sympathize with mankind. Christ in His life "was made perfect through His sufferings, and fitted for His solemn office of High Priest".5 In His humiliation Christ was tempted as all other men. Thus, Christ is "able to enter into our feelings and represent those feelings before God".6 Spurgeon regards Christ's sympathy for mankind as the most superb quality of His Priestly office.

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1. Works, 18, p. 211.
3. Ibid., p. 436.
6. Ibid., p. 409.
He abounds in tenderness, and though he has every other quality to make up a perfect high priest, though he is complete, and in nothing lacking, yet if I must mention one thing in which he far outshines us all, but in which we should all try to imitate him, it would be in his tender sympathy to those who are ignorant and out of the way, and to all those who are suffering and sorely distressed.¹

For Christ to assume the duties of the mediatorial office, He must be a divine Person. A hypostatical union of the divine and human natures was absolutely necessary in order to effect man's redemption. "You may not so divide the Son of God from the Father so as to forget that God was in him reconciling the world unto himself."² The success of Christ's intercession demanded the supreme requisite of Divine blood-shedding, without which His mediatorial office could have no effect. "Christ's blood is the very strength of his pleading with God."³ All the requirements for the mediatorial office were found in the Person of Christ. Therefore "Christ is worthy to be a Mediator,"⁴ and He is the only Mediator between God and man. "God will not deal with us without a Mediator, and 'there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus'."⁵ Since man by his own achievement cannot reach God, a Mediator must stand between God and man if God is ever to be reached by man. The One fulfilling this mediatorial office must be able to lay his hand both upon man and God. And who, other than Christ, could do this? With one hand Christ touches man's nature, and with the other He touches God, and "who could put His hand on God but God".⁶ Thus "the working of providence is not apart from the mediation of Christ".⁴ Christ "places one hand on man and the other upon God; he is the Daysman, who can lay his hand upon both; and the Church greatly rejoices in this".⁴

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We believe...that Christ is the mediator between God and man... Let it once be granted then that Christ is the mediator, and you have asserted His divinity. You have virtually called Him the Son of God; and you have granted His humanity, for He must put His hand upon both; therefore He must put His hand upon man in our nature; He must be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and be in all points like as we are. But He is not a mediator unless He can put His hand upon God, unless as fellow of the Eternal One He shall be able without blasphemy to place His hand upon the divine Being. There is no mediator-ship unless the hand is put on both, and who could put His hand on God but God?...Only God can put His hand on God, and yet Christ hath this high prerogative, for mark, there is no mediator-ship established, there cannot be unless the two are linked.¹

God was not compelled from a necessity of His nature to enter upon a mediatorial work for men. Nevertheless, if sinful men were to approach God, a Mediator was absolutely necessary. "We must approach the Lord through a Mediator: it is absolutely necessary."² Therefore Christ is the appointed and qualified Mediator who voluntarily stood in the place of, and interceded for mankind. This voluntary and costly work of reconciliation was motivated by "immeasurable love".

Moved by inconceivable, immeasurable love, and counting all the cost, he devoted himself to the supreme effort [of reconciliation] ....Of his own free will he placed himself before offended justice to meet its claims, and so he removed every barrier which stood between us and the throne of God.³

In discussing Christ's offices of prophet, priest, and king, Spurgeon adheres to the Scriptures that relate to these combined offices as being fulfilled in One Person. He refers to Deuteronomy 18:15 where, Moses, speaking of Christ, said, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me". In a sermon on "The Prophet Like Unto Moses",⁴ Christ is thus referred to: "In him is fulfilled that glorious prophecy, 'I have exalted One chosen out of the people'."⁵ All Old Testament prophecy relating to Christ as prophet, priest, and king, has been fulfilled in Christ. "The prophecies that went before of Christ must be fulfilled, and they have all been

² Works, 25, p. 437.
³ Works, 26, p. 438.
⁴ Works, 25, pp. 433-444.
⁵ Ibid., p. 438.
carried out to the letter.1 "The Christ is the exact substance of the fore-
shadowings of the Messianic prophecies."1 Thus the priesthood of the Old
Testament "was evidently all subordinate to the superior Melchisedec-priesthood
of Jesus Christ our Saviour, and was predestinated to give place to it".2 The
priesthood of Christ "united with itself the dignity of kingship".2 Christ,
being invested with the powers of a prophet, priest, and king, and having made
an "efficacious sacrifice to purge our sins"2 has absolute authority as Mediator
"to rule and govern and protect us".2

In stressing the priestly reference in Hebrews 7:20 which states that
"The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order
of Melchisedec", Spurgeon maintains that the Priesthood of Christ is of an
eternal character, and that its superiority over the Aaronic priesthood lies in
the fact that the priestly office of Christ is the true reality of that picture
which the Levitical priesthood represented. From eternity, hence before the
establishment of an earthly priesthood, "Christ was looked upon by God as priest
and sacrifice for men".2

In comparing Christ and Melchisedec, Spurgeon, continuing the idea of
the eternal Priesthood observes:

Melchisedec had no predecessor, no assessor, and no successor; and so is
it with our Lord. Of his order there was none before him,—he is the only
priest of his line: none stood side by side with him, for he needed none;
and none can be compared with him; by his one sacrifice he hath perfected
all who accept his priesthood, and what more is needed? None can follow
our Lord in his office. How can there be any successor to him, since he
hath an endless life, and in the power of that endless life ever liveth to
make intercession for us?3

2. Works, 27, p. 262.
3. Ibid., p. 263.
When Christ cried, "It is finished", he put an end to sin forever.

Now he hath finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness: for he has offered such an expiation that God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth.

It would appear that Christ's relation to sin ended completely. The above statement, however, is qualified by the assertion that, "In effect, the wounds of Jesus incessantly bleed our expiation. The cross is as glorious as though he were still upon it". The eternal redemption Christ obtained for men in His sacrificial death continues in this reign of grace, His merits being applied by the Holy Spirit. "Christ never will lay down his office while there remains a single man to be saved."

Still in effect our Lord Jesus bleeds to-day as much as he did eighteen hundred years ago, for the blood is just as certain in its power with God at the present moment as when the thief said, 'Lord, remember me.'

Thus the Priesthood of Christ did not end with His death, but it is perpetual in its effect. "But our Lord Jesus Christ's priesthood and all the economy which he has ushered in, was intended by God to be perpetual." The Aaronic priesthood was "a shadow of things to come". Christ's Priesthood is the true reality of that which was foreshadowed.

The real altar is the person of Christ, the real sacrifice is the death of Christ, and the real priest is Christ himself....In Christ is the actual putting away of sin, the effectual atonement, the real and efficacious substitution for guilty men, the redemption which actually redeems, the sacrifice which reconciles. In him dwells the truth of the matter: he is not prediction but fact, not promise but fulfilment.

The perpetuity of Christ's atoning work continues in heaven in His office of Intercession. Christ perpetually stands before God representing His people, and pouring out, as it were, the blood of His sacrifice. The efficacy

3. Works, 34, p. 179.
5. Works, 22, p. 488.
of His intercession is totally dependent upon the merits of His sacrificial blood. The "power of Christ's intercession lies in his sacrifice, lies in the blood."1 It is through this intercessory pleading that Christians are enabled to overcome the power of Satan. Christ in His exaltation is the "meeting-place" where sinners can meet God.

Christ is the meeting-place for a sinner and his God. God is in Christ, and when you come to Christ, God meets you, and a treaty of peace is made between you and the Most High.2

He is not only representing us, but he is preparing a place for us... and all the while he is continually offering intercession for his people. 'He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors,' wherefore 'he is able also to save them to the utmost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' Oh, thou blessed risen Christ, I am not astonished that thou dost come even to my bedside, and make the watches of the night bright to me with the glory of the presence, since even the sublimities of heaven and all the sonnets of the seraphim cannot take off thy mind for a single moment from thine own chosen people.3

The intercession of Christ is closely related to the work of the Holy Spirit. In fact the work of Christ is a perpetual operation of the Spirit who makes intercession for the regenerate only. "I want you to notice...that these intercessions of the Holy Spirit are only in the saints."4 The Spirit, of course, influences sinners to accept Christ, but the blessings of intercession are reserved for believers only.

...he quickens sinners into spiritual life, and he strives with them to overcome their sinfulness and turn them into the right way...but His intercession is not in or for the unregenerate...Unless we are the sons of God...we are shut out from the intercession of the Holy Ghost, ay, and from the intercession of Jesus.4

There can be no division in the Trinity, therefore its Persons cooperate in the work of intercession. Christ is "an advocate with God, and the Holy Ghost [is] an advocate with men".5 Thus man has "the incense of Christ's
merit pleading with God, and the light of God's Spirit pleading with men".\(^1\)

These intercessions for the saints are of no avail unless God is directly approached. "The Father must hear us, else of what avail are our cries?"\(^1\)

Therefore, while the Holy Spirit "must also help our infirmities,"\(^1\) Christ, as man's Mediator, must stand between the believer and God "presenting his merit ... or else our prayer can never be accepted of God".\(^1\)

It is in this manner, the pleading of Christ, and the pleading of the Holy Spirit, that prayer becomes successful.

When prayer is the work of the Spirit in the heart we are absolutely certain that it must succeed, because the Spirit maketh intercession in the saints according to the will of God...Jesus stands ready to take every prayer of ours, however, imperfect in knowledge...and he presents the purified and perfected prayer with his own merit...True prayer is the offering to God of the merit of the Lord Jesus, and hence it must be accepted...True prayer is presented ever by the Lord Jesus, and hence, again, its certainty of efficacy: how can the Father deny anything to the Well-beloved?\(^2\)

\(^1\) Works, 29, p. 148.
\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 148-149.
CHAPTER IV

THE DOWN GRADE CONTROVERSY

REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF THE ATONEMENT
The Down Grade Controversy actually began in 1861, though it was not so designated until Spurgeon published what is known as his "Controversial Writings". The tenor of his preaching on the Down Grade of the Church was the same in 1861 as 1887, the year in which he published the five "Controversial Writings". Spurgeon was unaware that his articles on the Down Grade would be challenged by pastors of his own denomination. There was no more reason for a controversy in 1887 and the years following, than in 1861. He preached against doctrinal error with the same vigor in 1861 as in 1887. There was not the slightest change in his attempt to curb error in the Church from 1861 until his death in 1892. The passage which follows gives his conception of the Atonement. If it could be said that he had a crystallized body of divinity on the Atonement this would express his true thought.

I ask you, my beloved hearers, what is the grand object of modern heresy but to undermine the cross of Christ, to ignore the sacrifice of his death, to blot out the glorious atonement, and to reduce the splendid paraphernalia of Calvary, with all its moral and sublime results, to a mere nonentity. His death, his obedience was the obedience of the law-maker in the form of the law-fulfiller to a law which man had broken and violated; and that obedience perfect and complete, so that broken law is the righteousness that justifies the ungodly, and places him that believes spotless before God. Hold you fast that truth—the imputed righteousness of the Lord our righteousness wrought and complete in his perfect obedience to the precepts of a broken law. His death on Calvary was an atonement to Divine justice; the shedding of his blood was for the remission of man's sins; the paying out of his soul to death was the perfect honour given to the moral government of Jehovah; and when he went out of the streets of Jerusalem staggering beneath the beam on which he was to be impaled...there he poured out his holy soul unto death,—oh, my
brethren, it was to harmonize justice and mercy, holiness and truth, to blend in one vast bow of hope all these Divine attributes, that they might span the moral heaven and encircle our lost humanity. It was then he gave up his soul unto death, and offered up that sacrifice for sin, which man, in his madness, folly, and infidelity, dares in this our day to ignore and to deny.\(^1\)

Spurgeon was spiritually prepared to suffer for Christ. Though he was the outstanding minister of his denomination, he knew that the controversial position he had taken in his stand for truth would be unfavorably regarded by those who were inclined to accept the "new theology". But he was determined to fight for what he believed to be Biblical truth, and his faith assured him that in the end truth would triumph.

A Christian minister must expect to lose his repute among men; he must be willing to suffer every reproach for Christ's sake; but, then, he may rest assured that he will never lose his real honour if it be risked for the truth's sake, and placed in the Redeemer's hand. The day shall declare the excellence of the upright, for it will reveal all that was hidden, and bring to the light that which was concealed. There will be a resurrection of characters as well as of persons. Every reputation that has been obscured by clouds of reproach, for Christ's sake, shall be rendered glorious when the righteous shall 'shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.'\(^2\)

He was strongly convinced that his controversial position would be justified by God, and that through Him strength would be provided to fortify him against all criticism.

I protest that, if all the sages of the world were to utter one thundering sarcasm, if they concentrated all their scorn into one universal sneer of contempt, I do not think it would now affect me the turn of a hair, so sure am I that my Lord will justify my confidence.\(^2\)

In his first article on "The Down Grade", Spurgeon traced the history of the expulsion of Puritanism from the Church of England. He claimed that to the Church of England, Puritanism "was obnoxious...for the godliness of living which it enjoined, and for the Calvinism of its

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teaching". After the ejection of the two thousand ministers who refused to conform to the ritual of the Church of England, "By some means or other, first the ministers, and then the Churches, got on 'the down grade,' and in some cases the descent was rapid, and in all, very disastrous." The Down Grade of the Churches began with the secession of "puritan godliness of life".

In proportion as the ministers seceded from the old Puritan godliness of life, and the old Calvinistic form of doctrine, they commonly became less earnest and less simple in their preaching, more speculative and less spiritual in the matter of their discourses, and dwelt more on the moral teachings of the New Testament, than on the great central truths of revelation. Natural theology frequently took the place which the great truths of the gospel ought to have held, and the sermons became more and more Christless. Corresponding results in the character and life, first of the preachers and then of the people, were only too plainly apparent.

Spurgeon's purpose in tracing the history of the effect of the purgation of Puritanism from the Churches was "that it might act as a warning to the unsettled and unsettling spirits of our own day." In this first "Controversial writing" of February 1887, he emphasized man's natural propensity to evil in preference to rectitude. A consequence of this lapse from Puritanism into worldly living was that the doctrines of the Bible, rather than being preached as vital truths, were more or less eliminated from the sermons of many clergymen.

Ruin by sin, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and redemption by the blood of Christ—truths on the preaching of which God has always set the seal of his approbation—were conspicuous chiefly by their absence.

As is usual with people on an incline, some who got on 'the down grade' went further than they intended, showing that it is easier to get on than to get off, and that where there is no brake it is very difficult to stop. Those who turned from Calvinism may not have dreamed of denying the proper deity of the Son of God, renouncing faith in his atoning death and justifying righteousness, and denouncing the doctrine of human depravity, the need of Divine renewal,

2. Ibid., p. 126.
3. Ibid., p. 123.
and the necessity for the Holy Spirit's gracious work, in order that men might become new creatures; but, dreaming or not dreaming, this result became a reality.¹

The second of the Down Grade articles traced the cause of the decline of spirituality among the Churches to an inadequate faith in the Bible.

In the case of every errant course there is always a first wrong step. If we can trace that wrong step, we may be able to avoid it and its results. Where, then, is the point of divergence from the 'King's highway of truth'? What is the first step astray? Is it doubting this doctrine, or questioning that sentiment, or being sceptical as to the other article of orthodox belief? We think not. These doubts and this scepticism are the outcome of something going before....The first step astray is a want of adequate faith in the divine inspiration of the sacred Scriptures. All the while a man bows to the authority of God's Word, he will not entertain any sentiment contrary to its teaching. In looking carefully over the history of the times, and the movement of the times, of which we have written briefly, this fact is apparent: that where ministers and Christian churches have held fast to the truth that the Holy Scriptures have been given by God as an authoritative and infallible rule of faith and practice, they have never wandered very seriously out of the right way. But when, on the other hand, reason has been exalted above revelation, and made the exponent of revelation, all kinds of errors and mischiefs have been the result.²

All erroneous doctrine was attributed to the denial of the full inspiration of the Bible, which was the starting point of all error.

If this be a fact—who can disprove it?—then we live in dangerous times, and there is a great peril very near all those, whoever they may be, who call in question the inspiration—the divine inspiration—of the Word of God. 'O earth, earth, earth! hear the word of the Lord.'¹

Having denounced all who refused to believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, including the Unitarians, Socinians, Arminians, Arians, and others, Spurgeon, in the third article in the Down Grade series pointed to the fact that this doctrinal error was not only in other churches, but to a greater extent than anticipated, it had also crept into some of the Baptist Churches. In this article he indicated that he would not remain in fellowship with the Baptist Union of Britain as long as they permitted erroneous doctrine in Baptist Churches.

². Ibid., p. 170.
No lover of the gospel can conceal from himself the fact that the days are evil. We are willing to make a large discount from our apprehensions on the score of natural timidity, the caution of age, and the weakness produced by pain; but yet our solemn conviction is that things are much worse in many churches than they seem to be, and are rapidly tending downward. Read those newspapers which represent the Broad School of Dissent, and ask yourself, How much farther could they go? What doctrine remains to be abandoned? What other truth to be the object of contempt? A new religion has been initiated, which is no more Christianity than chalk is cheese; and this religion, being destitute of moral honesty, palms itself off as the old faith with slight improvements, and on this plea usurps pulpits which were erected for gospel preaching. The Atonement is scouted, the inspiration of Scripture is derided, the Holy Spirit is degraded into an influence, the punishment of sin is turned into fiction, and the resurrection into a myth, and yet these enemies of our faith expect us to call them brethren, and maintain a confederacy with them.1

Such false doctrinal foundations led to "a natural decline of spiritual life, evidenced by a taste for questionable amusements, and a weariness of devotional meetings".1 "The fact is that many would like to unite church and stage, cards and prayer, dancing and sacraments."2 Speaking with particular reference to himself, but also with a note of exhortation to the Baptist denomination, and to those evangelicals who were not in agreement with the Broad School of Dissent, Spurgeon said, "If we are powerless to stem this torrent, we can at least warn men of its existence, and entreat them to keep out of it".2

The case is mournful. Certain ministers are making infidels. Avowed atheists are not a tenth as dangerous as those preachers who scatter doubt and stab at faith....Germany was made unbelieving by her preachers, and England is following in her track. Attendance at places of worship is declining, and reverence for holy things is vanishing; and we solemnly believe this to be largely attributable to the skepticism which has flashed from the pulpit and spread among the people. Possibly the men who uttered the doubt never intended it to go so far; but none the less they have done the ill, and cannot undo it.3

At this juncture the reader may ask the question: What was the general theological position in England during the nineteenth century?

2. Ibid., p. 398.
3. Ibid., p. 399.
Was Spurgeon correct in his assault against the current theology? To use his own interrogative, "Are the charges made by Mr. Spurgeon at all true?" He said that "Too many ministers are toying with the deadly Cobra of 'another gospel,' in the form of 'modern thought'." What was this "modern thought", or this "new theology" against which Spurgeon demanded that all true evangelicals denounce as blasphemy against the Holy God? In the brief discussion of the "new theology" of the nineteenth century which follows, attention is called only to that theology which is pertinent to the charges which Spurgeon proclaimed to be in direct opposition to fundamental Biblical orthodoxy.

As an introduction to nineteenth century English theology, a glimpse into German rationalism will facilitate an understanding of modern thought in Britain. Schleiermacher had advanced the belief that religion was not something which came from without, the impartation of a gift, but that it was an eternal part of man's nature. This introduction of "nature religion" stressed the religious feeling of man. Hegel had attempted to unify Christianity and philosophy, and Strauss boldly tried to replace Christianity with philosophical truth. Bruno Bauer reduced the historical Christ to a product of the primitive Church, and Feuerbach concluded that religion was an origination of man's own thinking. Albert Ritschl in his subjective idea of the Atonement taught that men could not enter into full fellowship with the spirit of Christ until the removal of the sense of guilt. According to him, the work of Christ was for this purpose. He denied that there was such a thing as guilt and adhered to the belief that Christ's death removed this illusion.

It was during the nineteenth century that this philosophical and

2. Ibid., p. 398.
theological thought from Germany began to penetrate English thinking. This radical theology was introduced to the people of Britain especially during the latter half of the century. Modern theological thought, however, began in England with Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). His philosophy was more anthropocentric than theocentric. He taught that because of the mysterious character of the Atonement, its reasons and nature were incomprehensible.

Dr. William Magee of Ireland boldly stated that it was impossible to know how the death of Christ made possible the forgiveness of sins. He denied the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice and intercession. Along with others he spoke of the Atonement as an "expedient", while another group thought of it as "transcendent".

Dr. John McLeod Campbell, denied the penal element in Christ's sufferings, and advanced the theory that Christ, in His death, had made "a perfect confession of our sins".1 "This confession, as to its own nature," he said, "must have been a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man."1 It was further stated by Dr. Campbell that "He who would intercede for us must begin with confessing our sins".1 A brief statement on his idea of the penal element in Christ's sufferings reads thus:

...The sufferer suffers what he [Christ] suffers just through seeing sin and sinners with God's eyes, and feeling in reference to them with God's heart. Is such suffering a punishment?...There can be but one answer...it is impossible to regard suffering, of which such is the nature, as penal...2

In his Theological Essays, and his book on The Doctrine of Sacrifice, F. D. Maurice stressed self-surrender as the vital element of Christ's death. His essential thought is that Christ simply manifested to men what God in His love had already achieved for mankind. Christ in His

2. Ibid., p. 101. See also p. 102.
Atonement removed the moral anger of God, and therefore men have already been forgiven. Maurice denied the penal sufferings of Christ and stated that in His death Christ did not satisfy God. He believed in universal salvation, maintaining that all men were sons of God by creation, and children of God through Christ, defending his position by saying that God reconciled Himself to men in Christ. "Is not the Cross the meeting-point between man and man, between man and God?"  

Edward Pusey argued against the necessity of Christ's death and held that the Incarnation was not absolutely necessary in freeing men from sin.

T. H. Green regarded the miracles as impossibilities and confined Christ to the ordinary limitations of man. He confined faith in God to moral and intellectual standards.

Another teaching of the nineteenth century was that of Dr. E. F. Westcott, who taught that Christ in His death was the subject of "His Father's discipline". Thus the sufferings of Christ were viewed as a disciplinary measure on God's part.

Matthew Arnold with his philosophical agnosticism ruled out the orthodox belief in the supernatural element in religion and advocated an ethical idealism which placed God on an impersonal basis. "The undoubted tendency of liberal opinion is to reject the whole anthropomorphic and miraculous religion of tradition, as unsound and untenable." He discarded faith as the basis of Christianity. Herbert Spencer, who held that God could not be known, may be placed in this same category.

The Socinians held that it was unjust to maintain that Christ in

2. B. F. Westcott, The Victory of the Cross, p. 81
His innocence acted as a substitute for the guilty. They denied Christ's death as a satisfaction for sin on the basis that the Fatherhood of God did not require it. In their failure to recognize the inseparableness of God's love and wrath they set forth the death of Christ as a measure of God's sympathy with mankind.

John Clifford, a Baptist, and his followers, amongst whom were T. W. Davies, J. T. Marshall, and N. H. Marshall, were liberals in that they denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible, the vicarious atonement of Christ, and eternal punishment for unbelievers.

The ritualism of the Church of England was a target Spurgeon aimed at in his conflict against modern tendencies. He opposed the priesthood, the worship of Christ in the sacraments, and especially baptismal regeneration.

During this century the Bible was under severe criticism from such men as Benjamin Jowett, S. R. Driver, T. K. Cheyne, Colenso and others. Charles Gore held the theory of "historical revelation" thus denying the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.

F. W. Farrar doubted the doctrine of eternal punishment, postulating that should there be a hell it would not be of literal fire.

...there are four elements in the current opinion which I consider to be as unsupported by Scripture as they are repugnant to reason...These four elements...are 1, the physical torments, the material agonies, the 'sapiens ignis' of Eternal Punishment; 2, the supposition of its necessarily endless duration for all who incur it; 3, the opinion that it is incurred by the vast majority of mankind; and 4, that it is a doom passed irreversibly at the moment of death on all who die in a state of sin.¹

In view of this nineteenth century new theology, Spurgeon declared that he would continue to preach "the old-fashioned doctrine". "I stand to the truth of the atonement though the Church is being buried

¹ F. W. Farrar, Eternal Hope, pp. XXIII-XXIV. See also Sermon on: "'Hell'—What it is Not", pp. 49-89.
beneath the boiling mud-showers of modern heresy.\(^1\) In his fight against the "new theology", he was confident that in spite of error, truth would reign.

Just now, the Lord Jesus is betrayed by not a few of His professed ministers. He is being crucified afresh in the perpetual attacks of scepticism against His blessed gospel. For one, I mean to sit over against the very sepulchre of truth. I am a disciple of the old-fashioned doctrine as much when it is covered with obloquy and rebuke as when it shall again display its power, as it surely shall. Sceptics may seem to take the truth, and bind it, and scourge it, and crucify it, and say that it is dead; and they may endeavour to bury it in scorn, but the Lord has many a Joseph and a Nicodemus who will see that all due honour is done even to the body of truth, and will wrap the despised creed in sweet spices, and hide it away in their hearts. ... We will sit down in sorrow, but not in despair; and watch until the stone is rolled away, and Christ in His truth shall live again, and be openly triumphant. We shall see a Divine interposition, and shall cease to fear.\(^1\)

The foregoing new theological thoughts of the nineteenth century give sufficient substantiation for Spurgeon's attack against the Churches in general. It is readily seen that the old or traditional theology had met with severe criticism, and Spurgeon believed that by the dissemination of this "new heresy" all Christendom was on the Down Grade. Therefore, he felt an inward compulsion to voice his sentiments against any teaching that, in his opinion, was contrary to Scriptural orthodoxy. In his enthusiasm to cleanse the Baptist denomination of the "modern heresy", Spurgeon, referring to the Baptist Churches that tolerated some of these new teachings, asked, "how far are we justified in being in confederacy with those who are departing from the truth?\(^2\)

In the third "Controversial Writing" he strongly intimated that he would withdraw from the Baptist Union if action were not taken to cope with those Baptist pastors and Churches who adhered to modern theology. Spurgeon was a Baptist, but he was not such a denominationalist that he would sacrifice truth for error.

Rather than acquiesce to the demands of the majority, he, for Christ's sake, and for the freedom of his own conscience, preferred to stand up fearlessly for what he believed to be true evangelical theology. "It would be a grievous fault if the sons of the Puritans did not maintain the freedom of their consciences; but it will be no less a crime if they withdraw those consciences from under the yoke of Christ."¹ Spurgeon often said that the Bible was the only theology he knew. Among other things, he advocated a Baptist statement of faith as one means of protesting against modern tendencies in Baptist Churches, as the following passage indicates.

It now becomes a serious question how far those who abide by the faith once delivered to the saints should fraternize with those who have turned aside to another gospel. Christian love has its claims, and divisions are to be shunned as grievous evils; but how far are we justified in being in confederacy with those who are departing from the truth? It is a difficult question to answer so as to keep the balance of the duties. For the present it behooves believers to be cautious, lest they lend their support and countenance to the betrayers of the Lord. It is one thing to overleap all boundaries of denominational restriction for the truth's sake; this we hope all godly men will do more and more. It is quite another policy which would urge us to subordinate the maintenance of truth to denominational prosperity and unity. Numbers of easy-minded people wink at error so long as it is committed by a clever man and a good-natured brother, who has so many fine points about him. Let each believer judge for himself; but, for our part, we have put on a few fresh bolts to our door, and we have given orders to keep the chain up; for, under colour of begging the friendship of the servant, there are those about who aim at robbing the Master....We fear it is hopeless ever to form a society which can keep out men base enough to profess one thing and believe another; but it might be possible to make an informal alliance among all who hold the Christianity of their fathers. Little as they might be able to do, they could at least protest, and as far as possible free themselves of that complicity which will be involved in a conspiracy of silence. If for a while the evangelicals are doomed to go down, let them die fighting, and in the full assurance that their gospel will have a resurrection when the inventions of 'modern thought' shall be burned up with fire unquenchable.²

Spurgeon believed that a right understanding of the doctrine of the Atonement was so important and central in Christian thought that he

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¹ "The Sword and the Trowel", 1887, p. 558.
² Ibid., p. 400.
finally refused, as the Down Grade Controversy showed, to have any fellowship with those who had different views. Spurgeon could not give up anything without giving up all. In the fourth "Controversial Writing" of October 1887, he made final his decision to withdraw from the Baptist Union. This decision was further confirmed in the fifth and final writing of November 1887. In view of the foregoing modern theological conceptions, he was not willing to associate in any union with those who tolerated error, thus teaching "another gospel". His determination to secede from the Baptist Union was based on the fact that "Fellowship with known and vital error is participation in sin"\(^1\), and as previously noted, Spurgeon preferred to fight "error" rather than associate with it. In the fourth "Controversial Writing" he said:

> If we do not believe in Universalism, or in Purgatory, and if we do believe in the inspiration of Scripture, the Fall, and the great sacrifice of Christ for sin, it behoves us to see that we do not become accomplices with those who teach another gospel, and as it would seem from one writer, have avowedly another God....What action is to be taken we leave to those who can see more plainly than we do what Israel ought to do. One thing is clear to us: we cannot be expected to meet in any Union which comprehends those whose teaching is upon fundamental points exactly the reverse of that which we hold dear.... To us it appears that there are many things upon which compromise is possible, but there are others in which it would be an act of treason to pretend to fellowship. With deep regret we abstain from assembling with those whom we dearly love and heartily respect, since it would involve us in a confederacy with those with whom we can have no communion in the Lord. Garibaldi complained that, by the cession of Nice to France, he had been made a foreigner in his native land; and our heart is burdened with a like sorrow; but those who banish us may yet be of another mind, and enable us to return.\(^2\)

Spurgeon argued for a simple statement of the Baptist faith. His desire was that the Baptist Union should state their principles on fundamental Biblical orthodoxy. He asked, "Is there any denomination in Christendom which declines to state its views upon fundamental doctrine? Should there be any religious body devoid of a basis of union drawn from

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2. Ibid., pp. 513 & 515.
Holy Scripture?" His principal motive for wanting a creedal statement was to promote and encourage unity among the Baptist Churches. Such a statement, if not sanctioned by certain pastors, would determine whether they accepted the "old" or "new" theology. Spurgeon was not alone in his plea for a statement of faith. An unknown writer, a member of the Baptist Union, said, "Give us then a true, simple, and well-defined basis of evangelical doctrine" that will place before the denomination a systematic statement of Biblical truth. Many of those connected with the Baptist Union were opposed to such a statement of faith, especially Dr. John Clifford, who succeeded in blocking any statement of principles. Dr. Clifford, as has been pointed out, was a liberal, and refused either to sign or to accept any theological opinions other than his own. He was a more rigid denominationalist than Spurgeon. To all those who held denomination above truth, Spurgeon in the fifth "Controversial Writing" said:

"To pursue union at the expense of truth is treason to the Lord Jesus. If we are prepared to enter into solemn league and covenant for the defence of the crown-rights of King Jesus, we cannot give up the crown-jewels of his gospel for the sake of a larger charity."

In his final "Controversial Writing", in answer to the question whether his Church should remain in the Union, Spurgeon said, "We retire at once and distinctly from the Baptist Union". Then he proceeded to give his opinion of a union without a statement of faith. As will be noted in the following passage he described such a union without standardized principles as "without form and void".

The Baptist Churches are each one of them self-contained and independent. The Baptist Union is only a voluntary association of such churches, and it is a simple matter for a church or an individual to withdraw from it. The Union, as at present constituted, has no disciplinary power, for it has no doctrinal basis whatever, and we see

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2. Ibid., p. 11.
4. Ibid., p. 560.
no reason why every form of belief and misbelief should not be com-
prehended in it so long as immersion only is acknowledged as baptism. 
There is no use in blaming the Union for harbouring errors of the ex-
tremest kind, for, so far as we can see, it is powerless to help it-
self, if it even wished to do so. Those who originally founded it 
made it 'without form and void,' and so it must remain. At least, we 
do not see any likelihood of a change. A large number have this state 
of things in admiration, and will go on with it; we have no such ad-
miration, and therefore have ceased from it. But we want outsiders 
to know that we are in nowise altered in our faith, or in our denom-
national position. As a baptized believer, our place is where it has 
ever been.

Spurgeon never returned to the Baptist Union of Britain. His 
withdrawal not only from the Baptist Union, but from the London Baptist 
Association was a surprise to the Baptist denomination. The majority of 
the Baptist churches remained in the Union. Some ministers, however, with-
drew from the Union after Spurgeon left it. In the passage following he 
expressed very definitely why he refused to have fellowship and communion 
with supposedly orthodox Christians.

As a matter of fact, believers in Christ's atonement are now in 
declared religious union with those who make light of it; believers 
in Holy Scripture are in confederacy with those who deny plenary in-
spiration; those who hold evangelical doctrine are in open alliance 
with those who call the fall a fable, who deny the personality of the 
Holy Ghost, who call justification by faith immoral, and hold that 
there is another probation after death, and a future restitution for 
the lost. Yes, we have before us the wretched spectacle of profes-
sedly orthodox Christians publicly avowing their union with those who 
deny the faith, and scarcely concealing their contempt for those who 
cannot be guilty of such gross disloyalty to Christ. To be very 
plain, we are unable to call these things Christian Unions, they be-

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2. Ibid., p. 558.
the purgation of doctrinal and Scriptural error from the Church of Jesus Christ. A careful scrutiny of nineteenth century theology and philosophy has revealed that Spurgeon was correct in his statement that the Churches were on the Down Grade. Spurgeon never expected this controversy to arise. When he found himself the target of his friends, he boldly declared that what he was doing was not for his glory, but for the glory of God. He gave as his motto that of George Whitefield: "Let my name perish, but let Christ's name last for ever".  
Spurgeon could have started a "new Denomination" but he envisaged a greater hope. His final "Controversial Writing" ended with the ecumenical hope of one Church in "manifest unity." "There cannot be two churches of Christ. There is but one Church, one Head, and one body."  

Oh, that the day would come when, in a larger communion than any sect can offer, all those who are one in Christ may be able to blend in manifest unity! This can only come by the way of growing spiritual life, clearer light upon the one eternal truth, and a closer cleaving in all things to him who is the Head, even Christ Jesus. 

During most of his life, Spurgeon suffered from gout and rheumatism. The trials he suffered during the crucial years of the Down Grade Controversy, (1887-1889), increased his illness. In bidding farewell to an intimate friend, Mr. E. H. Ellis, who was returning to Australia, he said, referring to the Controversy: "Good-bye, Ellis; you will never see me again, this fight is killing me". He never recanted from a single statement in his "Controversial Writings". He believed that God would justify his action. Before his death he remarked, "I am delivered from all fear of failing in this battle".

As far as the Baptist Union was concerned, Spurgeon's protest

against the "new theology" was a failure. However, he received numerous letters from ministers who congratulated him on his stand against "evil" doctrine. Many of them admitted that they were on the "Down Grade", and that the Controversy had re-established their faith in God. The position of evangelical clergymen was certainly strengthened. The Controversy brought before the religious public a keen sense of doctrinal rectitude. There was a new veneration for the doctrine of the Atonement, and for Biblical truth in general. A personal interview with a minister who was on the "Down Grade" is given by Spurgeon in his Autobiography.

I might not have had such an intense loathing of the new theology if I had not seen so much of its evil effects. I could tell you of a preacher of unbelief, whom I have seen, in my own vestry, utterly broken down, driven almost to despair, and having no rest for the sole of his foot until he came back to simple trust in the atoning sacrifice. If he were speaking to you, he would say, 'Cling to your faith, brethren; if you once throw away your shield, you will lay yourself open to imminent dangers and countless wounds; for nothing can protect you but the shield of faith.'

During the Down Grade Controversy, Spurgeon answered his critics by simply reiterating and confirming the Biblical position he had always held. In all his controversies he maintained a dignity and a humor which was unapproachable. His controversial spirit was praised even by his opponents.

CHAPTER V

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION
BACKGROUND

There are those both in England and America who continue to believe that the chief characteristic of Spurgeon's theology is his doctrine of election in which he taught a double-predestination. The holders of this opinion undoubtedly have formed their erroneous idea from mis-read and isolated sermons, mis-quoted excerpts taken out of their context, and a natural prejudice against those who heavily stress the doctrine of election. Election in the true sense of the term was a theological favorite of Spurgeon, and a subject from which he voiced many of his most profound thoughts. His theology cannot be properly evaluated until an intelligent understanding of this doctrine, according to the mind of Spurgeon, is reached.

Many of Spurgeon's contemporaries neglected the preaching of election either because they held that it would have a demoralizing effect upon the people, or because they felt it had no place in the gospel at all. Though some would eliminate election, "a thing which I consider to be utterly impossible,"¹ it should be preached to all Christendom, he said, since it is contained first of all in the Bible, to say nothing of its affirmation in the creedal confessions of faith. Schechter on this point spoke the mind of Spurgeon when he said, "it is difficult to see how any revealed religion can dispense with it".²

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2. S. Schechter, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, p. 62.
In this study it is to be remembered that Spurgeon's background was the Calvinism of the eighteenth century. He has been called the last of the Puritans who were definitely Calvinistic. The general position of Baptist clergymen at the close of the eighteenth century may be understood in a single sentence of John Collett Ryland to William Carey (1761-1834), who contended against particular redemption, and maintained that Christ died for all men. When Carey proposed foreign missions, Ryland immediately voiced the sentiments of a congregation of Baptist ministers by saying, "Sit down, young man; when the Lord gets ready to convert the heathen, he will do it without your help or mine". 1

It cannot be denied that Spurgeon's predecessors held the doctrine of a limited Atonement. One of them, Dr. John Gill (1697-1771), who is noted for his Body of Divinity, was a hyper-Calvinist who preached a doctrine that bordered on fatalism. Those who followed him may be placed in this same general category.

Andrew Fuller (1754-1815), who was in complete sympathy with Carey's views, revolted against the hyper-Calvinism of his day and adopted a modified form of Calvinism akin to that of Carey. Actually these men opened the way for a new type of Calvinism and, in a sense, it may be said that Spurgeon fell heir to the enlightened path that these men opened. On the other hand, Spurgeon, because of his broadmindedness and his uncompromising faith in the Scriptures, would have taken the course that he followed independently of the position of these men.

Spurgeon departed from the views of Augustine, Zwingli, and Calvin, and held that there was no decree of double-predestination in the Bible. He was a Calvinist, and though he did not sever his connection with Calvinism, he

nevertheless departed from what is termed "strict Calvinism". Like Fuller, he thus incurred the criticism of hyper-Calvinists, and was strongly attacked by those who held an erroneous view of election. On the other hand, he was severely criticized by some of the advocates of a universal Atonement who labeled him as an ultra-Calvinist. His extraordinary power in presenting the truth enabled Spurgeon to defend his position on the universality of the gospel vigorously.

His Calvinism was modified to include in the plan of God's grace every person who believed in Christ as Saviour.

Perhaps you have read about us poor Calvinists, what a wretched, miserable sect we are, how we are always trying to keep salvation to ourselves, and how we believe that only a very few will ever be saved! Put all that down among the lies that our enemies tell us! it is not true, and it never was true, for there are no people under heaven who are more anxious that all men should be saved than are we...Our hearts, we trust, are full of love to men, despite all that is said about us.1

Spurgeon believed that no knowledge concerning salvation should be taught other than that revealed in the Scripture. The truths contained therein should be accepted on the ground that they proceeded from God, and therefore could not be in error. It was inconsequential to him whether or not the Biblical doctrine of election proved acceptable to the whims of men. The Bible, and not the systems of other men, was Spurgeon's ultimate authority and standard. He did not preach one Biblical truth to the neglect of the other. He maintained that a true Calvinist would voice man's responsibility as loudly as he did the sovereign grace of God because these doctrines were in the Bible, and on this Authority he said, "If God teaches it, it is enough".2

It has been my earnest endeavor ever since I have preached the Word, never to keep back a single doctrine which I believe to be taught of God ....The Arminian trembles to go an inch beyond Arminius or Wesley, and many a Calvinist refers to John Gill or John Calvin, as an ultimate authority. It is time that the systems were broken up, and that there was sufficient grace in all our hearts to believe everything taught in God's Word, whether it was taught by either of these men or not.2

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2. Works, 6, p. 133.
I must confess, however, that there are some men who preach this doctrine [God's sovereignty] who are doing ten thousand times more harm than good, because they don't preach the next doctrine [man's responsibility] I am going to proclaim, which is just as true....They can preach one side, but not the other....We are true Calvinists...Calvin is nobody to us. Jesus Christ and him crucified, and the old fashioned Bible, are our standards....If we find high doctrine there, let it be high; if we find low doctrine, let it be low; let us set up no other standard than the Bible affords.1

By the grace of God I ask no man's applause, I preach the Bible as I find it. Where we get wrong is where the Calvinist begins to meddle with the question of damnation, and interferes with the justice of God; or when the Arminian denies the doctrine of grace.2

Those who preached the doctrines of sovereign grace and election in strict Calvinistic fashion were called believers in "high doctrine", i.e., they were hyper-Calvinistic. In their presentation of the plan of salvation they held that, by a special decree, God had elected a certain number out of the world to be saved. Therefore they taught election without stressing a life of faith and holiness. In their system, God's sovereignty was the prevailing factor. They emphasized the absoluteness of God to the extent that it made salvation a matter of force rather than choice. Their system did not require the co-operation of man's will with the will of God. Salvation was guaranteed irrespective of man's freedom and responsibility. Their plan made redemption a one-sided affair. Spurgeon holds that truth has many sides and that the Atonement comprehends all men.

I do not think I differ from any of my Hyper-Calvinistic brethren in what I do believe; but I differ from them in what they do not believe. I do not hold any less than they do, but I hold a little more, and I think, a little more of the truth revealed in the Scriptures. Not only are there a few cardinal doctrines, by which we can steer our ship North, South, East, or West; but as we study the Word, we shall begin to learn something about the North-west and North-east, and all else that lies between the four cardinal points.3

1. Works, 4, p. 341.
2. Ibid., p. 344.
Contrary to this hyper-Calvinistic teaching, Spurgeon contends that sovereign grace is "free grace" and that it has been made available by the will of God to all men who favorably respond to the call of God in Christ Jesus. His interpretation of the Bible was not in harmony with the ultra-Calvinistic attitude.

I have aimed in my ministry constantly to preach, as far as I can, the whole of the gospel rather than a fragment of it....I never desired to be reputed so excessively Calvinistic as to neglect one part of Scripture in order to maintain another. If I am thought to be inconsistent with myself, I am very glad to be so, so long as I am not inconsistent with Holy Scripture. Sure I am that all truth is really consistent, but equally certain am I that it is not apparently so to our poor, finite minds.1

Spurgeon naturally would have taught a double-predestination if he had believed it was in the Bible, but when he encountered Scriptures that seemed to approach this doctrine, he could not reconcile them with the love of God, and therefore, holding that all truth is consistent, his conscience compelled him to preach salvation based on the free and electing love of God in Christ Jesus. Reprobation is not considered a willful act of God in which He damned men for His glory. It is a necessary consequence of the rejection of election in Christ. Furthermore, Spurgeon's conversion experience made it impossible for him to teach double-predestination.

THE TRUE CONCEPTION OF ELECTION

The position taken by Spurgeon on election is altogether different from that of his predecessors, and considering his Calvinistic background, he is to be commended for taking a stand against what he called "foolish inferences drawn from the doctrine of predestination".2 Spurgeon was not oblivious to the fact that in frankly stating his position on predestination he was stepping into a danger-zone that would controvert the fixed opinion of much of

1. Works, 10, p. 231.
2. Works, 15, p. 69.
the theological thought of his day. It cannot be denied that in his time this doctrine was maintained with such theological error that it proved disastrous to the general populace.

When Spurgeon’s ministry began, many were preaching election, not as a doctrine of love and grace, but as a doctrine of fatalism. After a careful examination of Spurgeon’s sermons, it can be remarked, without hesitation, that fatalism and determinism were the very antithesis of the universal and evangelistic gospel that he proclaimed. He preached election in a practical way, inviting all men to accept it as “free grace”. Against the double-predestination decree, Spurgeon said, “You must not say that he God elected them simply to heaven, and others only to hell”.¹

God forbid we should suppose the possibility of any sinner crying after the Saviour, and the Saviour saying, ’No, I will not have you.’ Blessed be his name, ’Him that cometh to me,’ he says, ’I will in no wise cast out’....There is nothing asked of thee but this. Trust him! trust him!²

When Spurgeon was invited to become pastor of the New Park Street Chapel in London, he was not elated over the invitation. In fact he said, “I am contented where I am”.³ This church was not altogether in harmony with Spurgeon’s doctrine of election. There were many hyper-Calvinists in its membership. This fact constituted a major problem in Spurgeon’s decision. After he accepted the Church, he wrote to his father and said, “I do not anticipate going there with much pleasure”,³ but having brought the Church at Water-beach to his doctrinal position, he believed it was possible to bring another to his views.

The London people are rather higher in Calvinism than I am; but I have succeeded in bringing one church to my own views, and will trust, with Divine assistance, to do the same with another. I am a Calvinist; I love what someone called ‘glorious Calvinism,’ but ‘Hyperism’ is too hot-spiced for my palate.³

2. Works, 9, p. 108.
Election misunderstood and misinterpreted before and during the time of Wesley no doubt contributed to the moral laxity of the eighteenth century, and this same demoralizing effect continued during the nineteenth century, though to a lesser degree. Spurgeon believed it had led multitudes to hell because it had been and continued to be improperly preached. One of the most famous sermons of Spurgeon’s career was "Baptismal Regeneration". This sermon, which initiated the Baptismal Regeneration Controversy, was followed by another entitled "Children Brought to Christ, Not to the Font". Though this sermon dealt directly with the controversial issue then involved, it revealed Spurgeon’s true view on the proclamation of the doctrine of election. A paragraph from this controversial sermon giving this view follows.

The doctrine of election...a great and glorious truth, full of comfort to God’s people; how often is that made to frighten sinners from Jesus! There is a way of preaching that doctrine, in which you make it put on a black and ugly face, and stand with a drawn sword, and say, ‘you must not come unless you know you are one of God’s elect.’ That is not the way to preach the doctrine. The true way of preaching it is, ‘God has a chosen people, and I hope you are one of them; come, lay hold on Jesus, put your trust in him’....Oh! it is my soul’s delight to preach a gospel which has an open door to it, to preach a mercy-seat which has no veil before it; the veil is rent in twain, and now the biggest sinner out of hell who desires to come, is welcome.'

The Victorian Era, characterized by the industrial revolution, and remarkable advances in many branches of the sciences including theology, witnessed a marked religious depression not only among those who were naturally inclined to be religious, but especially among those who were not disposed to religion at all. This fact, coupled with the idea that only a certain number out of the mass of humanity were elected to salvation, gave the more serious-minded minister a situation that could not be solved without difficulty. Spurgeon wrestled with the problem by focusing attention upon the evils of the

1. Works, 10, pp. 313-328.
2. Ibid., pp. 413-424.
3. Ibid., p. 421.
modern theological thought of his day and by denouncing as presumptuous any infringement upon the electing love of God that would exclude any man from the purpose of grace.

The quotation directly above was taken from a sermon preached in 1864. The excerpt following is from his first volume of sermons published in 1855. From the beginning of his ministry, Spurgeon's doctrine of election was a fixed pattern in his mind and he never changed it. He coped with the existing anomalies of election by urging all men "to come to the throne of electing mercy". The gospel was offered to all men as "a great invitation without limitation".¹

There are many of you who do not like election, and I cannot blame you for it, for I have heard those preach election, who have sat down, and said, 'I have not one word to say to the sinner'...But, I say, take courage...O thou sinner, that there is election!...What if I told thee perhaps none can be saved...wouldst thou not tremble...and say, 'then how can I be saved, since none are elect?' But...there is a multitude elect...a host that no mortal can number. Therefore, take heart, thou poor sinner!...may'st not thou be elect as well as any other?...O sinner! come to the throne of electing mercy....What though there is an allotted number, yet it is true that all who seek belong to that number.²

It was, therefore, Spurgeon's desire and motive to crush the belief of a limited Atonement and prove that the Biblical doctrine of election, which he believed to be central throughout the Bible, is an election based on the electing love of God as seen through the revelation of His will in Christ Jesus. He emphatically argues that the reason for election is not to be found in the individual, but in God, whose sovereign right it is to choose. He holds that Biblical doctrine has been misrepresented, and that on the basis of the will of God there is a potential election for all men. True election is an election in Christ only for those having faith in Christ.

¹ Works, 4, p. 342.
² Works, 1, p. 322.
Thus life receives an eternal meaning through the revealed will of God in Christ. From eternity men were in the mind of God and loved of God with an everlasting love. Therefore, election, being of an eternal nature, is an election grounded in God's love, and is synonymous with His love. Election as viewed through the mind of God includes, without exception, all persons who are willing to be of the election. In a nutshell that is Spurgeon's idea of eternal election. It is a personal election in Christ Jesus for as many as are willing to accept by faith His work of redemption. It was Spurgeon's personal experience with God that led him to conclude that election is an impartial decree of God. "I never can or will despair of the salvation of one of my fellow-creatures now that I am myself saved."¹

In one of his lectures to his students entitled, "On Conversion as our Aim", it is emphasized that a free and universal invitation should be given to all men.

In our Master's name we must give the invitation crying, 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' Do not be deterred from this, my brethren, by those ultra-Calvinistic theologians who say, 'You may instruct and warn the ungodly, but you must not invite or entreat them.'²

This same attitude is further demonstrated in the dramatic prayers which Spurgeon often prayed during the discourse of his sermons.

Oh Lord, we beseech thee, undo the sinner's work. Great Potter, reverse the wheel, re-mould the clay, break thou in pieces the old vessel that is preparing to be a drinking cup for Satan, and do thou again melt it down, and re-fashion it, and bring it forth again upon the wheel, and touch it with thine own hand, and make it yet a vessel for honour, fitted for the Master's use.³

A careful examination of the following passage makes it entirely feasible that Spurgeon often played upon the idea of the "chosen" in an effort to convince any sinner that he was the one chosen from before the foundation of

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the world to be saved. Biographers and other writers spoke of Spurgeon as a man who made his sermons so personal that it was possible to forget that one was in an assembly. He made the individual feel that he was talking to him personally as though only two people were present. This mode of preaching had a marked effect upon his audiences as may be noted in the increase of his Church membership during his ministry. There were 232 members of the New Park Street Baptist Church when Spurgeon became pastor in 1854. The average number of baptisms from 1854 to 1891 was 387 each year. The total number added during his pastorate was 14,692.1

0 that thou wouldst know that he hath chosen thee, that he hath separated thee for himself, and to be his even from thy mother's womb! Ah! thou hast played the harlot, but he will bring thee back...0 stubborn sinner, my Master means to have thee. Run as thou wilt, thou wandering sheep, the Shepherd is after thee: yield thee...yield thee now..."Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."2

He was convinced that there are no contradictions in the Bible. Scriptures that apparently contradict each other are parts of "one harmonious whole". In a sermon entitled "High Doctrine and Broad Doctrine",3 he emphatically states that Scriptural statements are in agreement with one another. The text he uses in this sermon is one which the hyper-Calvinists used as a proof text for their doctrine of a limited Atonement.4 Spurgeon stresses that Scripture should be interpreted according to its context. He argues for the liberality of this verse and holds that each phrase contains a consistent statement of truth.

These two sentences have been looked upon as representing two sides of Christian doctrine. They enable us to see it from two stand-points—the Godward and the manward....'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.' Some have styled this side of truth Calvinistic...The second

2. Works, 11, p. 599.
3. Works, 30, pp. 49-60.
4. John 6:37. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."
sentence sets forth...evangelical doctrine, and is in effect a promise and
an invitation,—'There that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' This
is a statement without limitation of any kind: it has been thought to leave
the free grace of God open to the free will of man, so that whosoever
pleases may come and may be sure that he will not be refused. We have no
permission to pare down either sentence, nor is there the slightest need
to do so....I was once asked to reconcile these two statements, and I
answered, 'No, I never reconcile friends.' These passages never fell out:
they are perfectly agreed....The grand declaration of the purpose of God
that he will save his own is quite consistent with the widest declaration
that whosoever will come to Christ shall be saved....The two truths of my
text are by no means inconsistent the one with the other: they are perfectly
agreed. Happy is the man who can believe them both, whether he sees their
agreement or does not see it.1

THE APPROACH TO THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

Spurgeon approaches the doctrine of election with a profound sense of
reverence and humility. He insists that this doctrine, which was the ground of
much controversy during the nineteenth century, cannot be comprehended in its
entirety. Nevertheless he considers its neglect as a sin of no little conse-
quence, since the salvation of man lies within it. After Spurgeon had examined
the nature of man, he always regarded election as a mystery, and in his attempt
to understand God's reason for His choice of sinful man, he says:

I know nothing, nothing again, that is more humbling for us than this
doctrine of election. I have sometimes fallen prostrate before it, when
endavoring to understand it. I have stretched my wings, and, eagle-like,
I have scoured towards the sun. Steady has been my eye, and true my wing,
for a season; but, when I came near it, and the one thought possessed me—
'God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation,' I was lost in its
lustre, I was staggered with the mighty thought; and from the dizzy elas-
tivation down came my soul, prostrate and broken, saying, 'Lord, I am nothing,
I am less than nothing. Why me? Why me?'

When he begins to delve into the mystery of election and the freedom
and responsibility of man, his mind becomes absorbed in the wonder of God's
gracious purpose toward mankind.

Before thy sovereignty, I bow, great God, and acknowledge that thou
doest as thou willest, and that thou givest no account of thy matters.2

2. Works, 1, p. 321.
Oh, singular choice! Oh, strange election! My soul is lost in thy depths, and I can only pause and cry, 'Oh, the goodness, oh, the mercy, oh, the sovereignty of God's grace.'

Spurgeon does not delve into a decree of creation, but stresses along with the Bible, that election preceded creation, and that the world was created because of the eternal election of God. The world and man are given full meaning in Christ for whom they were created. It has already been seen that the purpose of the creation of man was that God should bring glory to Himself through Christ, who should become "the first of a new order of beings" who should have fellowship with Him by conforming to His likeness.

Spurgeon firmly holds that all things were predestined before the creation of the world, yet he maintains that such an established order does not in any way interfere with the freedom and responsibility of man. All things are fixed, yet Spurgeon never intimates that God, because of His sovereignty, predetermines that some should be saved, and others lost. He never makes the mistake of separating the will of God from His character, a thing which is utterly impossible.

I will not venture to judge the Lord, but I do think it is altogether incompatible with his goodness that he should have made a creature, and, as a creature, have condemned it to misery. Justice seems to demand that there shall be no punishment where there is no sin.

Spurgeon never fails to emphasize that God's election of men in Christ demands a favorable response on the part of men. "We are not to be passive like wood or marble," but "We are to work with God in the matter of our becoming like Christ." God chooses men and elects them to eternal life in Christ, but no man has actually been elected until he has personally trusted in Christ. For "election is personal," and it takes place by the exercise of personal faith.

1. Works, 6, p. 135.
2. Works, 18, p. 189.
3. Works, 10, p. 74.
4. Works, 18, p. 188.
5. Works, 1, p. 318.
in the vicarious death of Christ. Spurgeon always contends that God has a "chosen" people and that these people will be saved. His belief in the foreknowledge of God leads him to this dogmatic position on the "chosen". The "chosen" however are simply personal believers in Christ. There is no decree in which God has "willed" the salvation of men. Universal salvation is denied on the ground that God does not "will" the salvation of all men. Speaking from the text, "God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the truth,"\(^1\) Spurgeon says:

It is quite certain that when we read that God will have all men to be saved it does not mean that he wills it with the force of a decree or a divine purpose, for, if he did, then all men would be saved.\(^2\)

The "elect" must forsake sin and believe in Christ. These are those "chosen" before the foundation of the world.

...I believe that it is my Father's wish that 'all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.' But I know, also, that he does not will it, so that he will save any one of them, unless they believe in his dear Son; for he has told us over and over that he will not. He will not save any man except he forsakes his sins, and turns to him with full purpose of heart...\(^3\)

There is no limit placed on the number of the elect. They are those who believe in Christ. Spurgeon does not claim that any man can be of the election on the basis of partial grace. He holds that previous knowledge of election, hence conformity to Christ, is excluded on the ground of faith, which he regards as the "mark" and "evidence" of election.

Election brings me faith, and faith is the evidence of my election; but to say that my faith is to depend upon my knowledge of my election, which I cannot get without faith, is to talk egregious nonsense.\(^4\)

It can be said that on certain occasions, Spurgeon apparently borders on double-predestination, but without a doubt it may be safely stated that he is

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1. 1 Timothy 2:3-4.
2. Works, 26, p. 49.
3. Ibid., p. 52.
wholly emancipated from the double-predestinarianism of Calvin and his predecessors. "Do not conceive, my hearers, that some decree, passed in the dark ages of eternity, will save your souls, unless you believe in Christ." He never recanted from this statement which was made at the beginning of his ministry.

I am going to speak to those of you who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for you are chosen; faith is the sure mark of election. If you believe in Jesus, and are resting in him, this is the token that God has chosen you from before the foundation of the world; for no man yet ever had a true faith in Christ without receiving it from God, and that gift from God is the token that he will give all other saving gifts, and that he has chosen that man to eternal salvation.

Thus election is as universal as the Atonement. Just as the benefits of the Atonement are efficacious only for those who are willing to receive them, even so entering into the election is conditional upon a personal decision for Christ.

Faith is the first mark of one's election, and is inseparable from holiness. One's election is a call to holiness, and election irrespective of a man's demeanor is impossible. There were those in his time who believed in election by selection, maintaining that there were no conditions attached to election. Consequently many of the so-called "elect" were continuing in sin without any proof of a regenerate life. Therefore Spurgeon says, "The Lord has not ordained any man to eternal life with the proviso that he may continue in sin...but he has ordained him that he shall become a new creature in Christ Jesus." "Faith" and "holiness" are the marks considered by Spurgeon as the assurance of one's election.

I tell you there have been thousands of men who have been ruined by misunderstanding election; who have said, 'God has elected me to heaven, and to eternal life;' but they have forgotten that it is written, God has

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elected them 'through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' This is God's election—election to sanctification and to faith. God chooses his people to be holy, and to be believers. 1

In defending his position that holiness characterizes the lives of the elect, Spurgeon utilizes two verses from Ephesians. Speaking from Ephesians 1:4, he says, "It is God's eternal design that his people should be holy, and this purpose he has pursued at infinite cost". Then from Ephesians 2:10, he states that "The Lord has decreed...the holy lives of his people" and that "there is no ordination to salvation apart from sanctification".

It has been pointed out that Spurgeon does not hold a decree of double-predestination. Actually "Christ" is his decree of election. Referring to 1st Peter 2:6, he says, "He that is built upon him [Christ] shall not be removed," and "Our souls' eternal interests are laid on Christ". According to the Scripture, he holds that Christ is God's elect, and that God "looked through Christ" when He chose men to eternal life. On this basis, Christ is the medium of God's elect, and God Himself is the ultimate object of election. In a sermon on "God's Will and Man's Will," it is emphasized "that salvation is of God's will", i.e., salvation is impossible without, first of all, God desiring and taking the initiative in man's salvation. God chooses men for salvation "in Christ". By electing men "in Christ" the freedom of God is manifested. God "looked through Christ" and He is free to accept or reject men in Him. Thus, "in Christ" God "wills" man's salvation, but man "does not receive it against his will". "So come and drink, sinner; God wills it. Trust Jesus; God wills it".

1. Works, 1, p. 319.
2. "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love."
4. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them."
5. Works, 31, p. 158.
6. "Therefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded."
8. Ibid., p. 462.
10. Ibid., p. 197.
11. Ibid., p. 169.
12. Ibid., p. 192.
...he has chosen us in Christ Jesus. He first chose Christ as the head and then looked through Christ upon us and chose us to be members of Christ's mystical body. We are none of us chosen apart from Jesus Christ; but we are chosen in Christ, loved in Christ, given to Christ, united to Christ, and accepted in Christ....Until Christ ceases to be God's elect, the Father can never cast away those who are chosen in Christ Jesus.¹

From man's point of view, "our conformity to Christ is the sacred object of predestination".² Christ desires that men should become like Himself that He should have fellowship with those made in the likeness of His image and character. On the one hand, then, the object of predestination is to make men like Christ. "The force that is conforming us to Christ is the will of God in predestination."³ On the other hand, the ultimate reason for making men like Christ is that God aims "at his own glory in the glory of his dear Son".⁴ Thus God through Christ is the ultimate Subject of election.

It has already been stated that Spurgeon maintains that "all truth is really consistent,"⁵ but to the human mind "it is not apparently so".⁵ It is not difficult for him to say that God cannot be inconsistent, and that there are no contradictions in the Bible. He admits that God is an absolute Sovereign, but in His sovereignty He acts for the good of man.

There is not the slightest shadow of a conflict between God's sovereignty and God's goodness. He may be a sovereign, and yet it may be absolutely certain that he will always act in the way of goodness and love. It is true that he will do as he wills; and yet it is quite certain that he always wills to do that which, in the widest view of it, is good and gracious.⁶

Spurgeon does not consider that sovereignty and predestination annul freedom. In his mind election and freedom do not contradict each other, but are necessary parts of one truth. Men have a free will which is not infringed upon

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2. Works, 18, p. 163.
3. Ibid., p. 168.
4. Ibid., p. 189.
5. Works, 10, p. 231.
6. Ibid., p. 78.
by Divine sovereignty; "the wonder is that free grace does not violate it."¹

In contrast to those who hold the idea that man, because of God's sovereignty, has no freedom, or on the other hand, that the freedom of man is practically without limit, Spurgeon holds that neither of these positions can be true because man is free and at the same time his freedom is limited. "True freedom comes to us through him who is, in the highest sense, 'the Son'."² Thus freedom actually comes through election and cannot possibly contradict Divine sovereignty.

In rebuking the Arminian doctrine of free will, Spurgeon emphasizes that Christian theism recognizes both God's sovereignty and man's freedom, and that on account of His sovereignty He will not interfere with the free agency of man. The elect are led to God because they are willing to be led. God does not force them. The rejected are not willing to be led of God's Spirit, hence their stubborn will dams them. Man, by virtue of his freedom, has the prerogative of obeying or disobeying God. Thus, says Spurgeon, if truth is to be understood in its proper light, it must be viewed on the two lines of God's sovereignty and man's freedom. He sees predestination and human responsibility as parallel lines which converge in the mind of God, though to the human mind they appear as religious antinomies. Man will never be capable of reconciling the truths of election and free agency or responsibility, yet these are truths which actually meet in daily practical experience. They cannot be eliminated without destroying the sovereignty of God. For Spurgeon, the truth lies not between the two extremes of Divine sovereignty and human freedom but in both doctrines. He never attempts to reconcile the doctrines of sovereign grace and man's responsibility because he sees no discrepancy between them.

References:
2. Works, 10, p. 226.
The system of truth is not one straight line, but two. No man will ever get a right view of the gospel until he knows how to look at the two lines at once....I see in one place, God presiding over all in providence; and yet I see, and I cannot help seeing, that man acts as he pleases, and that God has left his actions to his own will, in a great measure. Now, if I were to declare that man was so free to act, that there was no presence of God over his actions, I should be driven very near to Atheism; and if, on the other hand, I declare that God so overrules all things, as that man is not free enough to be responsible, I am driven at once into Antinomianism or fatalism. That God predestines, and that man is responsible, are two things that few can see. They are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory; but they are not. It is just the fault of our weak judgment. Two truths cannot be contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one place that everything is foreordained, that is true; and if I find in another place that man is responsible for all his actions, that is true; and it is my folly that leads me to imagine that two truths can ever contradict each other. These two truths, I do not believe, can ever be welded into one upon any human anvil, but one they shall be in eternity; they are two lines that are so nearly parallel, that the mind that shall pursue them farthest, will never discover that they converge; but they do converge, and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the throne of God, whence all truth doth spring.1

The above quotation may be taken as the key to Spurgeon’s doctrine of election. It is from one of the most powerful sermons of his career, “Sovereign Grace and Man’s Responsibility”.2 The passage is sufficient to render a clear and emphatic exegesis of his position on predestination, removing all doubt from previous entanglements concerning his true belief.

Spurgeon’s theology was not primarily concerned with logical consistency. All his theology was utilized for preaching and always carried a practical spiritual end, the conversion of the individual soul. Kant3 in his great speculative philosophy postulates an unseen world where he feels the antinomies of the present, such as freedom and necessity, pleasure and duty, can be reconciled. Thus Kant says that he cannot see parallel lines meeting in this world; so another world where they will meet is a necessity. When Spurgeon uses the same simile he is not concerned about their meeting in this world, though he is positive they will meet in the next.

1. Works, 4, p. 357.
2. Ibid., pp. 337-344.
In theology we live by faith, not by logic. We believe and are safe; but the moment we begin to speculate we are like Peter sinking in the waves. If we will keep simply to what the word of God says, we shall find in it truths apparently in conflict, but always in agreement. On every subject there is a truth which is set over against another truth: the one is as true as the other; the one does not take away from the other, nor raise a question upon the other; but the one ought to be stated as well as the other, and the two set side by side. The two relative truths make up the great road of practical truth, along which our Lord travels to bless the sons of men. Some like to run on one rail. I confess a partiality to the two, and I should not like to make an excursion to-morrow on a railway from which one of the rails had been taken.

Even though the human mind cannot conceive of predestination and free agency meeting in this world, the fact remains that anyone can travel on a train and make excellent progress on railroad lines that never meet. With the two lines of predestination and free agency he can travel toward definite and practical spiritual objectives.

**Calling and Election**

In point of time, Spurgeon conceives of election preceding calling, since election is eternal. In the Christian experience, however, he places calling first for the reason that a believer cannot know whether he is elect until he comes to a saving knowledge of Christ. Thus Spurgeon believes that calling comes to a Christian in time and is the first echo of the Christian experience.

It will be asked, however, why is calling here put before election, seeing election is eternal, and calling takes place in time? I reply, because calling is first to us. The first thing which you and I can know is our calling: we cannot tell whether we are elect until we feel that we are called. We must, first of all, prove our calling, and then our election is sure most certainly.

In the purpose of the call, Spurgeon envisages a union with Christ whereby believers become participants in a reciprocal fellowship made possible through the appropriation of Christ by faith.

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He called you...that you might receive Christ and walk in him...that you might have fellowship with Christ...Now, when we were called to Christ, we were called to have fellowship with him of this peculiar kind, that we became relatively and absolutely identical with Christ.¹

Spurgeon's doctrine of calling is not inconsistent with his doctrine of election, though a casual perusal of his sermons on calling would suggest that he is a hyper-Calvinist. This, however, is far from the truth, and is not at all in harmony with the general tenor of his ministry. He maintains that there are two calls. A general call from God comes to all men indiscriminately. This universal call of God is sincere but ineffective since it is not divinely enforced or applied by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, another call is necessary before men can be saved. This is a special, or efficacious call, one which is accompanied with such dynamic spiritual power that it is irresistible.

If there is any double-predestination tendency in Spurgeon's thought, it is revealed in this irresistible efficacious call. All other calls, whether they come through the ministry of the Word or otherwise, are external and pass unheeded, as seen in the experiences of men, until this special call is heard. Men can plead for others to accept Christ on the basis of morality and reason, as well as from an eternal point of view, but, as Spurgeon indicates in his own life, one struggles against the call of God until there comes the particular call with its irresistible grace. Spurgeon mentions that in his own experience many futile attempts had been made to bring him to Christ. It was not until the efficacious call was heard, however, that he could say, "thy love hath smitten me and made me powerless to resist".² Contrary to his concept that coercion is foreign to the mind of God, he maintains that when the true call of God is heard, men are constrained by an irresistible force to accept Christ.

¹ Works, 11, p. 116.
² Ibid., p. 118.
As far as his personal experience with Christ is concerned, God's grace is irresistible. The "great starting point of God in the heart," is "the effectual calling of men by the Holy Spirit."¹ A personal account of the effective call with its irresistible grace is quoted below from Spurgeon's Autobiography.

The call which saves is like that of Jesus, when he said, 'Mary,' and she said unto Him, 'Rabboni.' Can I not recollect the hour when He whispered my name, when He said in mine ear, 'Come unto Me'? That was an effectual call; there was no resisting it....Oh, how the Word came into my soul! Was there any power of resistance remaining in me? No; I was thrown down; each bone seemed to be broken. I began to think there never would be a trace of anything built up in my heart....Yet, so it is, that if the Lord means to build high, He always digs deep; and if He means to give great grace, He gives deep consciousness of need of it.²

Spurgeon insists that the general or universal call of God is sincere, but at the same time he states that this call is ineffectual; and yet he makes it clear that there is sufficient power in the general call to make it effective, remarking that if men do not accept this call the responsibility for their damnation lies upon themselves. Here is an obvious contradiction in Spurgeon. He is saying that the general call from God, though it is sincere, is not a genuine call. If it were, it would be irresistible and all men would be saved. Men resist this universal call, but it is impossible to resist the special or effectual call because it is attended with sufficient grace and power to make it irresistible.

This call is sincere on God's part; but man by nature is so opposed to God, that this call is never effectual, for man disregards it....But mark, although this call be rejected, man is without excuse in the rejection; the universal call has in it such authority, that the man who will not obey it shall be without excuse in the day of judgment...it is a call, but it is not attended with divine force and energy of the Holy Spirit in such a degree as to make it an unconquerable call, consequently men perish, even though they have the universal call of the gospel ringing in their ears.³

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¹ Works, 2, p. 153.
³ Works, 5, p. 130.
Actually, Spurgeon preaches only one call, and it carries the universal tenor of the gospel with it. The call of God that characterizes his ministry is stated thus:

We are bidden to preach the gospel of the kingdom throughout all nations, and to cry, 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' 'Whosoever.' There is no limit to it, and it would be a violation of our commission if we should attempt to enclosure what God has made as free as the air, and as universal as manhood.1

Again:

Hold on to the point of being consistent; make that the main thing; banish those texts which speak about anything general; never open your mouth with a universal invitation; make it out that the Bible has not a word in it directed to men as men, but only to the chosen, and I will undertake that unless there be an unprecedented act of God's sovereignty, you shall preach from one end of the year to the other and you shall not be troubled at the number of the elect people. There will be very few who will ever come forward. But I know also (and he who will look candidly will see it), that the most effective ministry is this—-which is not ashamed of the doctrine of grace, the ministry which does not stutter or stammer in talking about election; does not trim or cut the divine sovereignty of God, but which is equally clear upon the other point that God hath declared his own solemn oath, 'I will not the death of a sinner, but had rather that he should turn unto me and live;' a ministry which holds sovereignty but holds responsibility too, which dares to talk about God's special object with bold voice and yet insists upon it that he has proclaimed to every creature under heaven this gracious proclamation, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'2

This idea of the irresistible effectual call is copied from his predecessors and does not harmonize with the general tenor of his ministry. It is sheer contradiction. His emphasis upon effectual calling and irresistible grace is based on his conversion experience in the Primitive Methodist Chapel of Colchester where he heard a preacher speak on the text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else".3 His dynamic experience, resulting from a long search for God, was so exhilarating that the Augustinian phrase "irresistible grace" was the only terminology by which he could adequately express the gift of God's grace. The use of this

1. Works, 10, p. 558.
2. Ibid., p. 237.
3. Isaiah 45:22.
phrase is wholly inapplicable to Spurgeon's ministry, and he refutes the implication of it in every evangelistic attempt. He plainly teaches the free agency of man and places the choice of eternal life entirely upon the individual.

I believe in the responsibility of man, and the free-will of man, as much as I believe in predestination. I believe in the responsibility of man as much as you do, and I believe in the free-agency of man as much as anybody living.¹

Remember, no one will be responsible for your damnation but yourself, at the last great day. God will not be responsible for it.²

Thus salvation is a matter of human choice since man is left free and responsible. The acceptance of Christ is purely voluntary and Spurgeon emphatically refuted his plagiarized phrase of "irresistible grace" when he utilized a Puritanical twist to the Catechism's definition. Stressing that there is a direct and personal call of God for every man, he exhorted his hearers to individualize themselves by allowing their minds to lie open in order that they might hear the call of God. To emphasize the personalness of the call, he asked his hearers to remove the plural pronouns "us" and "our" from the catechetical statement, and to substitute in their place the singular pronoun "me". Then the Shorter Catechism would read:

'Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing me of my sin and misery, enlightening my mind in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing my will, he hath persuaded and enabled me to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to me in the gospel.'³

This is Spurgeon's definition of effectual calling, and he holds that not only the doctrine of calling is to be thus understood, but every other doctrine in the Word of God.

It would be impossible to reconcile Spurgeon's doctrine of calling with his appeal to the unconverted, if the doctrine of irresistible grace, which necessarily follows Calvinistic predestination, were allowed. It is true that

1. Works, 34, p. 54.
2. Works, 4, p. 343.
throughout his ministry Spurgeon maintained the doctrine of irresistible grace, but one can be dogmatic in saying that he was inconsistent in the use of this term, especially since he advocated the free agency of the individual. He was consistent in saying that the grace of God is available for all men, and that they are responsible for accepting or rejecting it. For Spurgeon, irresistible grace was more a matter of experience than of doctrine. No man who sincerely believed in the irresistible power of the Spirit could preach to sinners as Spurgeon did. Like Thomas Collier, he believed that reprobation was on account of individual sin and failure to exercise faith in Christ. In speaking to sinners who had not been effectually called, Spurgeon observes:

And mark this—if any of you can say—'Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to thy cross I cling;' if any of you abjuring your self-righteousness, can now come to Christ and take him to be your all in all; you are called, you are elect.¹

He interprets the effective call as man's submission to the special call of God's Spirit made to the inner self. The Spirit makes the call but He cannot effectually apply the merits of saving grace until the sinner himself is willing to receive those benefits which cleanse the soul, so bringing it into its proper relationship to God. A called person can confidently rest on the assurance that he has been elected, and will be given power to persevere to the end.

What we have to obtain, as absolutely necessary to our salvation, is a special calling...made to the inner man, by the power of the Spirit...and then the other important thing is election. As without calling there is no salvation, so without election there is no calling.²

There is an indissoluble connection between calling and election. These doctrines are absolutely indispensable in the soteriological process. It is these connected links that prompt Spurgeon to say that anxiety over salvation

2. Ibid., p. 130.
can be eliminated when one can prove himself to be called. In his thinking, calling and election represent no Biblical inconsistency. He likens them to a chain extended across a river, the last link on each side being fixed by a staple.

The great scheme of salvation is like those chains which we sometimes see at horse-ferries. There is a chain on this side of the river fixed into a staple, and the same chain is fixed into a staple at the other side, but the greater part of the chain is for the most part under water, and you cannot see it: you only see it as the boat moves on, and as the chain is drawn out of the water by the force that propels the boat. If today I am enabled to say I am called, then my boat is like the ferry-boat in the middle of the stream. I can see that part of the chain, which is named 'calling,' but blessed be God, that is joined to the side that is called 'election,' and I may be also quite clear that it is joined on to the other side, the glorious end of 'glorification.'

CONCLUSIONS ON PREDESTINATION

Spurgeon brought new light into the doctrine of election for his day by standing firmly on the ground that the practical end of election is the conversion of the soul. He preached an election to saints and sinners, not of works, but of grace, urging all to believe in Christ through whom their election is sealed. This election is not based on individual merit, nor on any foreseen goodness in man, but entirely on the grace of God. The "elect" are of an election which pursues faith and holiness. Salvation is not for the "few"; God elects "in Christ" all men who are willing to be of the election. "The purest Evangelism springs from this truth" of election.

Election is treated as a doctrine of comfort. It stabilizes the Christian, enabling him to live from faith to faith. It is an election to eternal life. Believers may rest upon this doctrine with the assurance that it is the anchor of the soul and the unchanging guide of life. Election is immutable.

2. Works, 6, p. 204.
I tell you, sirs, it is this that brought me to Christ....I did not go up to the booking office, and take a ticket for a quarter of the distance to heaven; but I took my ticket all the way through.¹

Spurgeon approaches election with an attitude of humility and falls prostrate at the feet of God and says, in effect, "I cannot understand the mystery of election but I know it is true. My faith tells me it is true." His doctrinal approach to the Bible is given in two short sentences. "If he [God] says it, it is so. Believe it."²

In Spurgeon's thinking, Divine predestination and human freedom do not constitute a problem. He is conscious of the fact that the doctrines of Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are to the mind of man contradictory. But on his part, he insists that these doctrines are consistent. They are neither contradictory nor irreconcilable. All truth is consistent: therefore one truth cannot contradict another. Truths that are irreconcilable to man are perfectly intelligible to God.

Concerning the freedom of the will, Spurgeon's position is that of a Free Will Baptist, i.e., a man has a free will in determining the acceptance or rejection of free grace. In other words every man has a right to make his own theological decisions. All men have a free will. Therefore Spurgeon preaches sovereign grace and man's responsibility to all men, leaving the choice of life or death with the individual. In the final analysis he places the blame for a man's damnation upon himself. There is nothing in Spurgeon's sermons to indicate that God either saves or damns people according to His own good pleasure. They are saved for His glory but damned for their own sin. Spurgeon cannot justly be charged with a doctrine of fatalism and at the same time preach free agency and man's responsibility. One cannot rightly speak of him as antinomian since he preached an election which involves faith in God issuing in holiness of life.

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2. Works, 24, p. 98.
Spurgeon knows more about the Bible than about theology. When he cannot prove doctrines that are apparently contradictory he admits his weakness, but with the stipulation that even though he cannot prove them he believes them. These doctrines are in the Bible, and being a rigid believer in the plenary inspiration of the Scripture, he accepts them by faith because they are in the Bible.

Our faith feels a joy in believing seeming contradictions, a delight in accepting apparent impossibilities. We have a belief in God's veracity so sure and steadfast that if all the angels in heaven were to deny the truth of God we would laugh them to scorn.¹

Those who are elect, Spurgeon believes to be eternally saved. They can never perish. In almost every instance, he speaks of the number of predestined as an innumerable host which no man can number. It is an election on the part of God but Spurgeon emphasizes the personalness of it by asking the sinner to individualize himself and listen to the voice of God as He makes a personal call, urging that God, because He wills to have mercy upon him, will save him on the condition that personal faith be exercised in Him. Faith is the mark of personal election; it is a potential election of all men, based on faith. Contrary to the principles of the strict Baptists, Spurgeon, in a simple statement, speaks of the "more enlarged principles"² which his Christian thinking embraces. These "enlarged principles" certainly include the potential election of all men in his theological thought, and most assuredly Spurgeon arrives at this conclusion when he sums up his thought on election by saying that God chooses in Christ all men who have faith in Him. Christ is the medium through whom God chooses the elect.

Election is an election to service as well as to salvation. In gratitude for God's choice of men, an elect person should render a personal

service in the kingdom of God. "A sense of being chosen of God stirs a desire for the service of God,"¹

The ministry of Spurgeon cannot be understood apart from election, the doctrine that he considered to be a part of his life because he saw embedded therein a soteriology of electing love and pardoning grace. A conclusion regarding his position on this subject has already been formed. An overall survey, however, may be read in the following excerpt in which Spurgeon gives his complete thought on the extent of election under the term "compendious redemption".

Christ has redeemed the souls of all his people who shall ultimately be saved. To state it after the Calvinistic form, Christ has redeemed his elect; but since you do not know his elect until they are revealed, we will alter that, and say, Christ has redeemed all penitent souls; Christ has redeemed all believing souls; and Christ has redeemed the souls of all those who die in infancy, seeing it is to be received, that all those who die in infancy are written in the Lamb's book of life, and are graciously privileged by God to go at once to heaven, instead of toiling through this weary world. The souls of all those who were written before all worlds in the Lamb's book of life, who in the process of time are humbled before God, who in due course are led to lay hold of Christ Jesus as the only refuge of their souls, who hold on their way, and ultimately attain to heaven; these, I believe, were redeemed, and I most firmly and solemnly believe the souls of none other men were in that sense subjects of redemption.

¹. Works, 34, p. 369.
CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE
BEHIND ELECTION GRACE

In his attempt to analyze and proclaim the truth, Spurgeon, humanly speaking, can find no reason why God should render mercy toward rebellious men by bestowing grace upon them. "I fail to see any reason for it," he says, when attempting to find something in man that would bring God to him. The only reason for mercy toward mankind lies in the heart of God, who alone can find a reason for saving men. "God not only finds a reason where we cannot see any, but he makes a reason which over-rides all other reasons." Spurgeon finds the over-riding reason in grace, and his thought is adequately expressed in the words of Garvie: "Grace, with its gift of eternal life, has come into the world, and is more exceedingly abounding through the obedience of Christ."^2

When death reigned, God emptied (KENW) Himself in Christ. Through His death on the cross there is seen a divine demonstration of God's grace (XPIS). The cross, however, is not the cause of God's grace. "He does not love because Christ died, but Christ died because the Father loved."^3 "The motive for the salvation of the human race is to be found in the breast of God, and not in the character or condition of man."^4 Therefore since "Nothing in man can be the cause of God's love, so nothing in man can be an effectual

1. Works, 44, p. 158.
2. Alfred E. Garvie, Studies of Paul and His Gospel, p. 130.
3. Works, 9, p. 171.
hindrance as to prevent God from loving man." ¹ God condescends to save men "upon the basis of his own sovereign love and unbounded grace." ² Thus Spurgeon concurs with Karl Barth that "Election stands by grace; we must never forget this." ³

If any man be saved, he is saved by Divine grace, and by Divine grace alone; and the reason of his salvation is not to be found in him, but in God. We are not saved as the result of anything that we do or that we will; but we will and do as the result of God's good pleasure, and the work of his grace in our hearts. ⁴

Thus grace originated in the love of God and was manifested by the historical Person of Christ and His work. Like Hodgson, Spurgeon never separates grace from the Person of Christ. "The danger to be avoided," says Leonard Hodgson, "is that of regarding grace as a "something" detachable from God's living personal activity and capable of working on its own as a kind of impersonal deputy for God..." ⁵ Spurgeon, like Paul, always ascribes to God, but it becomes effective only through a Person, and cannot therefore be impersonal. God is gracious because it is an inescapable part of His nature. Grace is an intrinsic attribute of God. "As by necessity of his Godhead he is omnipotent, and omnipresent, so by absolute necessity of his divinity he is gracious." ⁶ The grace of God as revealed in Christ is an expression to man that God has taken divine action on behalf of man. "Grace is the active movement of the divine will to produce the results which have been graciously determined on." ⁷ Divine grace which "wrote the first letter of the gospel," ⁸ and which "will write the last letter of it," ⁹ reveals the wisdom of God in the plan of redemption.

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1. Works, 9, p. 176.
2. Works, 5, p. 69.
Grace sat in the council chamber of eternity and devised the scheme of mercy, the plan of redemption, the method of peace through the blood, the whole dispensation of salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.¹

The grace of God is completely comprehended in Christ, the Divine Personality who revealed the Godhead bodily. The doctrines involved in the soteriology of mankind are centered in and built around the historical Person of Christ whose atonement is the acme of God’s grace.

Jesus Christ had grace exhausted in his person. In him ‘dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.’ All grace was given to him; the very exhaustion of the inexhaustible store; as much as to say that God could give no more, and that Jesus Christ himself could not receive or possess more grace. It was all poured into his person; and when he speaks, he seems to exhaust grace itself.²

Thus the ultimate cause behind election is the grace of God. Spurgeon’s true doctrinal position on grace is clearly revealed in the text of first Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am". This Pauline sentence defines the dominant conviction of primitive Christianity on the grace of God and Spurgeon’s thought on grace may be confined to this early, yet universal Christian conception. Salvation from the beginning to the end is an act of God’s grace. Grace begins salvation, grace continues the good work, and grace prompts any virtuous act on God’s part toward mankind. It is grace that sustains God’s action in election. Grace is the moving cause in election.

There is nothing in man to merit God’s love. He is without hope and his sins deserve the just wrath of God. Therefore Spurgeon emphasizes salvation on one note “all of grace”, insisting that its origin is from the “wholly other” who manifested Himself on Calvary. Like Paganini he plays on one string, "'Grace reigns,' and grace alone".³ The quoted words "Grace reigns" were the last words of Mr. Honest in The Pilgrim’s Progress. Grace is magnified as God’s love which is available in Christ for all men.

2. Works, 54, p. 98.
'By the grace of God I am what I am.' I am elect;—my election is of grace. I am redeemed;—redemption is a mighty masterpiece of grace. I am called;—called by grace. I am preserved,--preserved by grace; and whatever there is in me that is commendable and virtuous,—whatever there is in me which the Son of God can admire, and which gives to my own soul real comfort,—must be all of grace, and of grace alone.1

The teaching that salvation can be obtained through good works and grace is an abominable heresy. In his book, All of Grace, Spurgeon emphasizes grace as the only source of redemption, "the fountain head of our salvation",2 and the basis of forgiveness. "Because God is gracious...sinful men are forgiven...and saved. It is not because of anything in them...but because of the boundless love...and grace of God." Grace is benevolence for criminality. Justification is by grace through faith and not of works. Salvation is either all of works or all of grace. It is impossible to comingle these opposites. "These two cannot be married, for God forbids the bans. He will have it all grace or all works, all of Christ or all of man."3 Salvation must never involve the idea of work, or any other plan whereby man should conceive of the false philosophy that he can contribute something toward the saving of his soul. Good works are not to be condemned per se. They "must be in the Christian".4 "They are not the root, but the fruit of his salvation."4

If we were to preach to sinners...that salvation would be by their own works, we should be setting aside the way of salvation by grace. There cannot be two ways of salvation for the same people. If we take to the one, we practically deny the other...If salvation be of merit, it is not of mercy.5

Both Wesley and Spurgeon emphasize that salvation by grace is entirely unmerited. Grace is the antithesis of works. It is an expression of the good will of God toward sinful man. The sin of man reveals the need of God's grace.

1. Works, 49, p. 256.
2. All of Grace, p. 41.
3. Works, 8, p. 29.
5. Ibid., p. 340.
Since grace is the undeserved mercy of God, "it is clear that our sin is by no means an impediment to our salvation". The unmerited grace of God which prompts men's redemption is universal in scope.

As the Lord my God liveth, before whom I stand, there shall never a soul perish that can cast itself upon the sovereign grace of God through Jesus Christ his Son.

Grace is the "golden thread" which initiates and finally brings the Christian life to ultimate perfection. In taking the first step in the salvation of men, God seeks them before they ever think of seeking Him. Thus all merit, before and after conversion, is ruled out. It is by the sheer grace of God that men are saved. "Grace is the first and last moving cause of salvation." Works, then, are excluded from the redemptive process on the ground of free and unmerited grace.

We see a golden thread of grace running through the whole of the Christian's history, from his election before all worlds, even to his admission to the heaven of rest. Grace all along, 'reigns through righteousness unto eternal life,' and 'where sin aboundeth, grace doth much more abound'. There is no point in the history of a saved soul upon which you can put your finger and say, 'In this instance he is saved by his own deservings'. Merit is an unknown word in the Christian church....

Thus grace is not given in view of anything that God will ever see in men. "The love of God is so immense, so boundless and so infinite, that you cannot conceive for a moment that it could have been caused by anything in us." Free grace pervades every sphere of life. It is sovereign grace, i.e., God wills that men should have it. Spurgeon's conception of grace, in contrast to the early Greek idea of divine immanence, reveals a transcendent God whose love flows spontaneously to men through Christ. The more Spurgeon ponders the significance of the interposing grace of God, the greater its ocean fulness becomes. This is suggestive of a poet's remark about a poor woman who, when

2. Ibid., p. 441.
she saw the ocean for the first time, exclaimed that she was glad to see some-
thing of which there was enough. Referring to the immeasurable freeness of God's
gracious gifts, Spurgeon observes:

...they come without suggestion...No one has prompted the grace of God
...out of his own heart the thought has come of itself. The gifts of his
grace were in his eternal purpose from of old...He gives freely in the
sense of absolute spontaneity.1

Though Spurgeon believes in free agency he is never of the opinion that
there is any inherent quality in the will of man which will lead him by his own
volition to seek God. He distinguishes between "free will" and "free agency".
In his view, "free will" as the Pelagians and Arminians held it, keeps men in
trespasses and sins. No man can come to Christ at the impulse of his own free
will. By "free agency" he means the ability to seek Christ voluntarily after
Christ has first sought the individual. Man by his very nature deserves con-
demnation, but God's unconstrained freedom in election makes a way of escape from
sin in the righteousness of Christ. Men are free to respond to God's grace
which operates upon the soul, prompting though not forcing it to accept Christ.
There must first be a willingness on the part of man to receive Christ, and when
that is manifest the Holy Spirit enables him to appropriate Christ to his life.
Free agency makes men solely responsible for their choice. The only barrier to
election lies in man's freedom of choice.

After his conversion, Spurgeon writes:

I remember, when I was converted to God, I was an Arminian thoroughly.
I thought I had begun the good work myself...and I think I began to com-
pliment myself upon the fact that I had perseveringly entreated of him in
the midst of much discouragement.2

However, when he considers why he sought God, he concludes that it was "because
he God led me to do it".2 Before there was any desire for God, by an act of

grace, God showed him his need of the Eternal. Then he grasped the truth that "God must begin," and that "Nature can never rise above itself." After realizing that God initiates the first desire for a spiritual life, Spurgeon writes: "at once I saw the doctrines of grace as clear as possible." 

Men do not seek God first; God seeks them first; and if any of you are seeking him to-day it is because he has first sought you. If you are desiring him he desired you first, and your good desires and earnest seeking will not be the cause of your salvation, but the effects of previous grace given to you.

Spurgeon constantly emphasizes that there is nothing good in man. The graces that are in him proceed from the throne of God. The good that is in man is given or created by God. Whatever man does in the realm of beneficence the thought behind the act is prompted by the grace of God. "All that is good or ever will be good in us, is preceded by the grace of God, and is the effect of a Divine cause within." Spurgeon and Griffith Thomas concur that "Grace is first, a quality of graciousness in the Giver, and then a quality of gratitude in the recipient, which in turn makes him gracious to those around." Again Wesley and Spurgeon agree that "Whatsoever good is in man, or is done by man, God is the author of it.

The Pelagians held that grace is a human trait whose development depends upon the exercise of that natural endowment. They would not admit the necessity of grace in salvation. It was thought of, more or less, as a tool which becomes subservient to man. It is something which acts as a special power for the easier performance of good. In contending against the idea that grace is a mere tool to be used at the discretion of man, Spurgeon emphasizes that grace is a power which acts upon man. Man cannot use it, but rather it

uses man. The operation of God's Spirit upon the soul is an act of grace which influences the soul toward God. The presupposition of the whole Christian life is the grace of God as revealed in Christ. "We will maintain this truth against all comers, that saints are what they are 'by the grace of God,' and not by their own free will."¹

Grace is not a thing which I use; grace is something which uses me. But people talk of grace sometimes as if it was something they could use, and not as an influence having power over them. Grace is something not which I improve, but which improves me, employs me, works on me...Men cannot take the grace of God and employ it in turning themselves from darkness to light. The light does not come to the darkness and say, use me; but the light comes and drives the darkness away.²

Bunyan, during a period of sadness and depression of mind, thrice heard the words "My grace is sufficient for thee" resounding in his breast. The effect of these words released his grief and awakened in him a new power. In his Grace Abounding to the chief of Sinners, the story of his life, he writes, "And oh! methought, that every word was a mighty word unto me; as my, and grace, and sufficient, and for thee; they were then, and sometimes are still far bigger than others".³ This experience, Bunyan continues, "broke my heart, and filled me full of joy and laid me low as the dust..."³

After he had been preaching over twenty years Spurgeon had a similar experience. As he pondered the meaning of the words "My grace is sufficient for thee", a laughter which he would never term psychological seized him.

I have often read in Scripture of the holy laughter of Abraham, when he fell upon his face and laughed; but I do not know that I ever experienced that laughter till a few evenings ago, when this text came home to me with such sacred power as literally to cause me to laugh.⁴

Grace and election are at the very heart of Spurgeon's ministry. The basis of election is grace. It is a personal election and demands a personal

¹. Works, 49, p. 255.
². Works, 2, p. 189.
³. John Bunyan, The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded: or a Discourse concerning Law and Grace, second part entitled Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, p. 60.
⁴. Works, 22, p. 197.
service rendered in obedience to Christ. It demands practical activity in the name of Christ, and it drove Spurgeon to an enthusiasm that never died. His potent desire to serve God arose out of the "old" doctrines of grace which had indelibly engraved themselves upon his mind in the days of his youth. From the beginning to the end of his ministerial career, Spurgeon regarded the grace of God as irresistible, at least in his own conversion, and this conception of God's love constrained him into a service for Christ that fanned itself into a flame of inward delight. This made him react violently from the newer theological trends. In a controversial sermon he remarks:

You who are at ease in Zion can do with the chaffy modern theology; but when your heart is heavy, and especially when your conscience is under a sense of sin, you will want these two dishes on the table—free grace and dying love, and you cannot do without them....I cannot give up the doctrines of grace, for they are my life. I do not so much hold them as they hold me....Certain doctrines would not make a mouse move one of its ears; but the grand old doctrines of grace stir our blood, quicken our pulse, and fill our whole being with enthusiasm....Free grace wakes me up at night, and makes me wish that I were a nightingale; and all day long it makes me wish that I were an angel, that I might never cease my praise.1

THE BEGINNINGS OF GRACE

Following the tradition of the Augustinian and Calvinistic school, Spurgeon considers the individual totally dependent upon the work of God's Spirit for any action that leads him toward God. He consistently emphasizes that a power outside the individual must act upon him before he can know God. Any move toward God though it may seem to be voluntary and spontaneous on man's part most certainly has the action of the Spirit behind it. Spurgeon always thinks of God in the early theological sense, i.e., as the Prime Mover or First Cause of all things. The sinner, by nature will never move toward God, neither can he cooperate with God until He has made the initial step. This initial step is called

"prevenient grace" since it originates with God who seeks when He is not sought, and who goes before the sinner preparing the way for his salvation. "The God of our mercy has gone before us, and out-run us."¹

If you have nothing with which to entertain the grace, grace will bring its own company with it. It will come into your empty heart, and make you one of the 'people prepared for the Lord'. Grace waits not for men, neither tarry for the sins of men. We call it prevenient grace, because it comes before it is sought, and God bestows it on a people who are utterly undeserving of it.²

Even at birth, or at least sometime prior to conversion, the hand of God is at work in the preparation of the heart for the implantation of saving grace. This "preparatory grace" is not "saving grace" but rather a beginning toward salvation. It is a secondary grace, or even better, a first work upon the heart to make it pliable for yielding to the true work of the Spirit.

...I can believe that, before a man even hears the gospel at all, there may be an antecedent work of what I may almost call secondary grace,—not saving grace, but a making ready of the heart for the reception of the saving grace of God.³

"God's moulding and fashioning in [man] even before regenerating grace comes into his heart,"⁴ is an act of providence which is closely united with grace. The kinship of providence and grace are likened to a wheel and the hand that moves it: "if providence is the wheel, grace is the hand which turns and guides it".⁵ Though grace operates upon the will before it turns to God it is impossible to say when grace actually begins to show itself in one's life. For this operative yet unrecognizable grace, Spurgeon uses the term "formative" as opposed to "quickening grace" which is readily acknowledged as a power which can be perceived by the senses.

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1. Works, 60, p. 314.
3. Ibid., pp. 603-604.
5. Ibid., p. 594.
You can tell when the quickening grace comes, but not when the grace itself comes. For know, in one sense, grace was exercised upon the chosen 'Before the day-star knew its place, Or planets ran their round.' I should say that there is what I cannot call by any other name than formative grace, exercised upon the vessels of mercy at their very birth.¹

In his own experience, Spurgeon is unable to say definitely when the work of God's grace began in his soul, but he is quite positive it was at an early period. This work of grace was so simple that it included reproving his spirit when his conscience was not at rest on account of wrongs done against his mother.

In my own experience, I never quite know where I am to put my finger upon the beginning of God's work in my soul. I can tell the very day and hour when I was converted, but I had many stirrings of conscience before that. I know that I was very effectually convinced of sin; but when the gracious work began, I cannot say. One of the first things that I recollect is lying awake at night because I had done something wrong to my mother; I do not know whether that was not the grace of God working in my heart even then, I think that it was. I am sure that it was, in some measure, the Lord graciously working within me, and making me ready for the more manifest work of his Spirit.²

In the work of preparatory grace, Spurgeon outlines four steps which he considers as prerequisites to saving grace. Actually these are the results of prevenient grace. The first step comes through an eager desire to hear the gospel. "God often gives an attentive ear and makes a man willing to listen to the Word."³ The second work of grace leading toward salvation is "an ingenuousness of heart,"⁴ that is, an unprejudiced attitude toward the gospel. This is "a blessed work of preparatory grace, making the heart ready to receive effectual calling".⁴ The third step is "a tender conscience",⁴ which cannot tolerate evil. The last step preceding saving grace is "the creation of dissatisfaction with... the present state"⁴ of the unconverted.

4. Ibid., p. 597.
Two conclusions are drawn from these initial steps which ultimately lead to the conversion of the soul. The first, simply stated, is that religion begins, continues, and ends with God. The second conclusion completely excludes works and good morals from salvation, making it clear that true religion is all of grace.

True religion is supernatural at its beginning, supernatural in its continuance, and supernatural in its close. It is the work of God from first to last.1

All along, from sin's pit to heaven's gate, without a break, the whole road is paved with grace. We do not begin with grace, and then go on to trust in works; we do not at first receive freely, and then afterwards have to live upon a hard-earned wage.2

John Oman, in his thought-provoking book entitled Grace and Personality, concurs with Spurgeon on the moral inability of man to find a reason for salvation within himself:

...grace is grace precisely because, though wholly concerned with moral goodness, it does not at all depend on how moral we are.3

"Saving grace" is that grace which saves instantaneously. It is that grace which turns one in a moment from an enemy to a true friend of Christ.

Spurgeon points to the fact that there were those in his congregation who were dead in trespasses and sins, while others by their side were saved by grace. The difference between these groups he calls "distinguishing grace". It is simply that mark by which one is recognized as having been separated from the world while the other continues in the world. The reason for the difference is God Himself.

Why is it that I this day am not sitting down a callous hearer, hardened under the gospel?...The only reason, my brother, why thou art at this time an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ...is because He hath made thee to differ...Therefore must thou give all glory to his holy name, and cry--'Not unto us, but unto thy name be all the praise.'4

1. C. H. Spurgeon, All of Grace, p. 113.
Spurgeon’s thought about the supernatural influence of God’s Spirit upon the minds of His creatures is the very antithesis of the Deistic view. God does not leave men to themselves, but rather intervenes by “restraining grace” especially on the part of believers, in order that sin shall not be followed to its logical consequence.

What a mercy it is that when God’s people do go into sin to any extent, he speaks and says, “Hitherto shalt thou go, but no further; here shall thy proud sins be stayed!” There is, then, restraining grace.¹

Occasionally Spurgeon declared that some Christians were placed in particular places and under peculiar circumstances in order that they might more clearly see the Providence of God leading them to the throne of grace. Such portions of his sermons were always spoken to Christians, the underlying reason being their humiliation. Spurgeon hated the sin of pride. His life was one of utmost humility. He would always have the Christian maintain what Rudolf Otto called a “creature-consciousness or creature-feeling”² or “personal nothingness”³ before his Creator. The idea is that of inward prostration before one’s Maker. Spurgeon gloried in his Christianity and believed that every Christian should enjoy his salvation. No saint, however, should take undue pride in the fact that he is not as other men are.

Though thousands came under the influence of Spurgeon’s ministry, numbers had no tendency to make him feel his importance or popularity. The honor and praise of men was never sought because he believed it to be inconsistent with the election of grace, which, when properly understood, subordinates the creature and exalts God. His ego remained unchanged even though he preached to audiences ranging from ten to twenty-five thousand. Such numbers humbled him and led him to preach more forcibly that the object of worship was God and not man.

¹. Works, 11, p. 596.
³. Ibid., p. 18.
Now, the man who believes that the Lord has chosen him unto himself will worship the Lord alone, and will neither idolize the creature, nor even cast a side-look upon him when he is adoring his Maker. It is ours to worship always, and to worship none but Jehovah.\textsuperscript{1}

If you have really obtained the mercies of the covenant through the Lord's gracious choice of you, the knowledge of this fact will lay you low and keep you there, your cry will be, 'Why me, Lord; why me?'\textsuperscript{2}

Referring again to the difference distinguishing grace makes between individuals, Spurgeon emphasizes the extent of that grace by reminding the saved that if God's mercy has reached them, it can make the vilest sinner different. He accounts for the difference by the "saving interference"\textsuperscript{3} of grace, which in its first meaning, is "that free and undeserved favour of God which forgives and blots out sin and iniquity".\textsuperscript{3} Again, "saving interference" is that "divine operation by which God works upon the wills and affections of men so as to change and renew them".\textsuperscript{3}

If you were brought in why not another?...Why you have been pardoned yourself; and if the Lord can do that, he can do anything. I am sure if the Lord has brought me to his feet there does not remain in the world a case that can ever equal mine....Go back then, Christian, armed with this fact, that God who hath made thee to differ can make anybody to differ.\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Works, 34, p. 363.
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 368.
  \item \textsuperscript{3} Works, 43, p. 89.
  \item \textsuperscript{4} Works, 5, p. 505.
\end{itemize}
The source of faith is in God alone. Faith "does not grow in man's heart by nature"; it is "a thing which is obtained". Faith comes from God as a grace, and wherever it exists, it is the gift of God and a work of the Holy Spirit. Faith is a definite act on the part of man, but it must first be given before it can be exercised.

All our good things come from without us, only evil can be deduced from within us. Now, that which is obtained by us must be given to us; and well are we taught in Scripture that 'faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.' Although faith is the act of man, yet it is the work of God.... Faith, we say, is man's act, for we are commanded to 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,' and we shall be saved. At the same time, faith is God's gift, and wherever we find it, we may know that it did not come there from the force of nature, but from a work of divine grace.

Faith is not the "independent source" of salvation. It is a part of the machinery which grace employs in the soteriological process. On the human side, Spurgeon recognizes that all things are possible to man through faith, but he also holds that faith per se is powerless, and that man is not to look to his faith but to the source of that faith, the gift of God in Christ Jesus, for salvation. Salvation is conditional on faith. Faith, however, is not the giving of self to God. The primary aspect of faith is receiving Christ, after which comes the dedication of one's life to Him. Salvation is receiving

1. Works, 10, p. 50.
2. Ibid., pp. 50-51.
Christ by faith. "The first act, and, indeed, the underlying act all the way along, is to receive, to imbibe, to take in Christ, and that is called believing on his name." 1 Faith acts as the channel through which the grace of God freely flows to sinful men.

Grace is the first and last moving cause of salvation, and faith, important as it is, is only an important part of the machinery which grace employs. We are saved 'through faith,' but it is 'by grace.' Faith is the channel or aqueduct, and not the fountain head, and we must not look so much to it as to exalt it above the divine source of all blessing which lies in the grace of God. Never make a Christ out of your faith, nor think of it as if it were the independent source of your salvation. Our life is found in 'looking unto Jesus,' not in looking to our own faith. By faith all things become possible to us; yet the power is not in the faith, but in the God upon whom faith relies. 2

An interesting comparison between Spurgeon and H. R. Mackintosh on the above thought may be read in the following passage. Mackintosh says:

...faith resides not in its psychological or reflex effects, but in the Divine object it apprehends; what saves is not faith simpliciter, no matter what, but faith in God our Saviour. Indeed, it is just because faith invariably terminates on God in His character as faithfully and unchangeably Redeemer—to use old-fashioned terms, on the Promiser even more than His promises—that faith is never represented in the Bible as saving men by an inherent meritorious virtue. 3

The reason for God's gift of faith to man is the same as that given for grace, namely, none at all. The reason lies in the heart of God alone.

God's love has no reason except in his own bowels; God's reason for pardoning a sinner is found in his own heart, and not in the sinner. And there is as much reason in you why you should be saved as why another should be saved, namely no reason at all. There is no reason in you why he should have mercy on you; but there is no reason wanted, for the reason lies in God and in God alone. 4

2. Works, 27, pp. 401-402.
From a human point of view, however, there are several reasons for man's faith in God. The first reason for faith is man's innate desire for God. This desire is the result of the electing love of God as He works through the Holy Spirit creating in man an inner sense of his need for God. Through this desire there comes a realization of a state of emptiness which makes one hunger for this "Otherness". Faith is called a gift because it is something which has been received and worked upon by the Spirit. It is through the Spirit that any person is brought to a saving knowledge of Christ.

...the first work of God the Holy Spirit in man, is...to make him feel a great hungering and thirsting, a great emptiness within himself; he is vexed with an uneasiness, a perpetual pining, and groaning after a something, he scarcely knows what.1

...I think I am not to be misunderstood on this point, that the reason of faith, or why men believe, is God's electing love working through the Spirit by a sense of need, and so bringing them to Christ Jesus.2

Another reason for faith in Christ is man's recognition of his inability to save himself. The need which the Spirit sets in motion advances to the stage where man realizes the necessity of someone to interpose between God and man. By this consciousness of self-impotence the individual, having been led by the Spirit to understand his utter ruin without God, is enabled by the Spirit to lay hold upon Christ.

There is in us no merit and no strength: but in the Lord Jesus Christ we find both righteousness and strength, and we accept him this day for that reason. Because we are so deeply conscious of our own self-impotence we lean hard upon his all-sufficiency.3

Spurgeon concurs with Richard Kroner on his idea of man's inability. Kroner remarks:

We no longer believe so much in man as did the contemporaries

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2. Works, 7, p. 108.
of Kant. We begin to realize again that faith in the power of God is the basis even of man's own power and of reason's achievements.¹

Thus, by the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the individual is led to hunger for God, to realize his utter ruin on account of sin, and to feel his insufficiency and unworthiness to approach God by reason of his merit. His only hope is the mediatorial death of Christ, the supreme reason why men should have faith in God.

"...we come to the Lord Jesus by faith, and say, 'God has provided an atonement here, and I accept it; I believe it to be a fact accomplished on the cross that sin was put away by Christ, and I rest on him.'²

A sinner must come to Christ on the ground of a sinner and no other. Men should believe in Christ, not by reason of anything good in themselves, but simply because Christ commands them to have faith in Him. The universal command to believe in Christ is a faith-warrant issued to all men. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,"³ is a gate of mercy and an invitation to all sinners. Powerful emotion and feeling or any inward bias are insufficient guarantees of faith. The true foundation of belief rests on the command to believe in Christ, and not on some inadequate confidence resulting from ecstatic feeling.

What is a man's warrant then for believing in Christ. Here it is. Christ tells him to do it, that is his warrant....Faith in Christ then is a commanded duty....Now on the ground that God commands me to believe, I have a right to believe, be I who I may. The gospel is sent to every creature....This is your warrant, sinner, and a blessed warrant it is, for it is one which hell cannot gainsay, and which heaven cannot withdraw.⁴

Faith, which intellectually cannot stand alone, but ultimately rests upon a creative act of God, producing obedience in the heart

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2. Works, 30, p. 163.
3. Acts 16:31
through the operative grace of God, has as its object, Christ. Machen writes that "it is not merely God as Creator who is the object of faith, but also, and primarily, God as Redeemer from Sin". Spurgeon in emphasizing God in Christ as the object of faith virtually used a phrase from the Nicene Creed, Ὁ θεὸς ὁ Λεγόμενος Πάτερ (of the same substance with the Father) which was current in Christian history in Rome before 250 A.D., and which became famous during the great Arian Controversy, 320 A.D. The use of this word Ὁ θεὸς Λεγόμενος implied that Christ, who was recognized as fully man, was also acknowledged as fully God. Spurgeon always speaks of Christ as "Very God of very God" (ὁ θεὸς ὁ Λεγόμενος ἐκ θεοῦ λεγόμενος) with the warning that belief in Him in any other sense is vain. Ultimately, faith is reliance upon God in Christ, but initially this faith trusts in Christ as its object. Faith in God is a result of faith in Christ, which must come first. Spurgeon recognizes that God the Father and God the Spirit make their contribution in completing the work of faith in the soul, and that without belief in the Trinity faith is incomplete, but at the same time he states that faith must first look to Christ, through whom God looks upon the believer to ascertain whether his faith rests totally upon the finished work of Christ in redemption. Objectively, faith looks to the revealed truth of God in its entirety, but specifically and chiefly it comprehends every phase of the life of Christ, and particularly His sacrifice.

Mark...the whole foundation upon which Faith rests is, Christ living in the flesh, Christ dying in the flesh, Christ rising from the dead, Christ pleading in glory in behalf of sinners.

2. Works, 9, p. 388.
In order that faith in the Trinity might obtain, Christ and His righteousness is placed in the center of the religious experience, making Him the sole object of faith. Thus it is incumbent upon the individual to believe first in Christ and His vicarious death, after which he can know God.

The object of Faith to a sinner is Christ Jesus. Now belief in God is an after-result of faith in Jesus. I know your whole salvation depends on the whole Trinity, but yet the first and immediate object of a sinner's justifying faith is neither God the Father nor God the Holy Ghost, but God the Son, incarnate in human flesh, and offering atonement for sinners.

Thus, in emphasizing that faith's foundation is solely Christ, Spurgeon does not stress faith per se as he does faith's object. In his book on Biblical Doctrines, Dr. Warfield, like Spurgeon, insists that salvation is accomplished not by the "act of faith," but "in the object of faith". He observes:

The saving power resides exclusively, not in the act of faith or the attitude of faith as the nature of faith, but in the object of faith; and in this the whole Biblical representation centres, so that we could not more radically misconceive it than by transferring to faith even the smallest fraction of that saving energy which is attributed in the Scriptures solely to Christ Himself.

Similarly, Spurgeon declares:

The object of faith, then, is Christ as the substitute for sinners. God in Christ, but not God apart from Christ, nor any work of the Spirit, but the work of Jesus only must be viewed by you as the foundation of your hope.

Before treating Spurgeon's analysis of faith, it may be well to delve into the reason he gives for God's choice of faith as the primary condition of salvation. Faith is chosen as the means of receiving Christ because it is a most natural aspect of human life. Faith is a receiver which is particularly adapted as a channel through which the

1. Works, 7, pp. 105-106.
stream of grace may flow. The mental body cooperates with faith in the reception of grace. This faith channel serves as the mode of communion between the Creator and the creature.

...as far as we can tell, faith has been selected as the channel of grace because there is a natural adaptation in faith to be used as a receiver...faith in the mental body is created on purpose to be a receiver; it is the hand of the man, and there is a fitness in bestowing grace by its means.

In his three-fold analysis of faith, Spurgeon outlines the essential characteristics which he considers indispensable to as well as inseparable from saving faith. The first of these necessary steps to saving faith he specifies as knowledge. Knowledge is an introduction to faith. "Knowledge opens the door, and then through that door I see my Saviour." A knowledge of the "truth" must precede faith. "It is the truth which saves," and "Jesus Christ is the truth: the whole testimony of God about Christ is the truth."

Men are saved, and the same men that are saved come to a knowledge of the truth. The two things happen together, and the two facts very much depend upon each other. God's way of saving men is not by leaving them in ignorance. It is by a knowledge of the truth that men are saved.

An exhaustive understanding of the Word of God is not necessary for a saving experience. However, it is impossible to know God without first hearing and apprehending the gospel message. "Personal religion and individual knowledge of God are indispensable." For Spurgeon, faith can never be the antithesis of knowledge since it has its beginning in knowledge. "A measure of knowledge is essential to faith" and any other position is untenable.

1. Works, 27, p. 408.
2. Works, 11, p. 31.
3. Works, 26, p. 52.
What is faith? It is made up of three things—knowledge, belief, and trust. Knowledge comes first....'How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?'

'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' There is the whole history of faith—the Word of God gives the teaching which blesses us with knowledge, and then comes faith.... hearing something which I can apprehend is the means of my believing.

The great obstruction to saving faith resides not in the faculties of reason, but in the affections of the heart. The degenerate heart of man is naturally opposed to a character of holiness and in this state of impurity the inclination of the human heart is, if possible, to standardize God by putting Him on a level with man. The seat of evil is the depraved heart of man. Thus man's rebellious heart must first receive the truth of God's knowledge before the character of God can stand in direct opposition to the vitiated character of man.

...man's great stumbling-block in coming to God does not lie in his reason; there is a difficulty in his reason, but not the major one. The first and primary impediment to his knowledge of God lies in the affections. Man's heart is set upon that which is evil; consequently he wants a God after his own fashion, who will smile upon sin, or at least tolerate it. The Lord complains in the psalm, 'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself': it is the tendency of man to think that God is like himself.

Speaking from the text, "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord"; Spurgeon emphasizes that on account of the corrupt affections of man, heart-knowledge, given by God, is a necessary essential in the plan of salvation. When Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent," he used a form of the word \( \text{θέλω} \) which means to have personal knowledge of something, hence experience. The knowledge

5. *John*, 17:3.
Spurgeon terms "saving knowledge" is more than intellectual assent. It is experiential knowledge, or that "knowledge given us by Christ through his Spirit".¹ Experiential or saving knowledge is that which convicts the heart of sin and turns it to God in a practical experience of grace. In referring to "believing knowledge" as "personal knowledge", Spurgeon states that before "saving knowledge" can be effective "There must be a personal appropriation of what you believe to be true".² This experiential knowledge of the heart is the direct work of the Spirit’s activity upon the intellectual and emotional faculties of man. Saving faith involves the intellect, as well as the affections of the heart.

Faith is an act partly of the intellect and partly of the affections, and we must therefore have both head and heart renewed by the Spirit of God, or we shall not have true faith. Even though the mind may be purified, it will not suffice unless the affections also are cleansed, because love to God never comes out of a foul heart...³

It is impossible to love anyone without an apprehension of the one loved, hence love to God is impossible without a knowledge of Christ; "how can I love till knowledge gives me a view of Christ?"⁴ The least knowledge of Christ gives opportunity for the affections of the heart to become God-centered.

We cannot love a God whom we do not know; a measure of knowledge is needful to affection....Brethren, we must know in order to believe; we must know in order to hope; and we must especially know in order to love. Hence the great desirableness that you should know the Lord, and his great love which passeth knowledge.⁵

In regeneration the affections of the heart are turned into their proper channel by the transforming power of God's Spirit. This instilling of the true knowledge of God in the heart results in the

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2. Works, 26, p. 57.
3. Works, 47, pp. 265-266.
establishment of a new love relationship between God and man.

All true knowledge of God is attended by affection for him. In spiritual language to know God is to love him. 'He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love'....Where the Lord is fully known he is intensely loved....It is the great passion of the renewed soul to glorify God, whom he knows and loves; knowledge without love would be a powerless thing, but God has joined this knowledge and love together in a sacred wedlock, and they can never be put asunder. As we love God we know him, and as we know him we love him.¹

The second element of which faith consists according to Spurgeon is belief. By belief he simply means the acceptance of facts made known by the revelation of God in Christ. A man must know and believe the foundational facts of the life and work of Christ before salvation by faith is effected.

Endeavor especially to know the doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ, for that is the centre of the target at which faith aims; that is the point upon which saving faith mainly fixes itself, that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them'....Get firmly to believe that 'the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanseth us from all sin;' that his sacrifice is complete and fully accepted of God on man's behalf, so that he that believeth on Jesus is not condemned.²

To bring faith to completion there must be more than knowledge and belief in facts. There must be trust, which is the primary concept of faith, and the third element of which faith consists according to Spurgeon. But before there can be trust, with its consequent salvation, it is imperative that a man should conclude and acknowledge that he has fully exhausted any remedy by which he can save himself. Until this verdict of man's extremity, hence God's opportunity, is reached, there is no hope for a sinner. In trust the individual lays hold of and abandons himself to Christ, placing his hope of eternal life in His finished work, and accepting His righteousness as his own. Men must accept Christ's righteousness as their own, else they have no salvation. Faith

¹. Works, 20, pp. 677-678.
². Works, 27, p. 403.
centers in the Person of Jesus Christ, but it is not confined solely to this greatest revelation of God, but to every revelation which comes in connection with Christ. In the passages which follow a marked similarity may be seen between the works of Spurgeon and Brunner. Spurgeon remarks:

Faith is not self in action but self forsaken, self abhorred, self put away that the soul may trust in Christ, and trust in Christ alone....the way of salvation by faith is so simple that it seems beneath the dignity of exceedingly clever men. May God bring them to a knowledge of this truth: may they see that they cannot be saved except by giving up all idea of saving themselves; that they cannot be saved except they step right into Christ, for until they get to the end of the creature, they will never get to the beginning of the Creator.¹

Brunner states:

You cannot know what the word 'God' means until you are at the end of your strength, and can hope only in God. The man who has not yet discovered the 'God only' has not yet discovered God....The true God is the God one finds when he can no longer help himself, and he puts his hope in Him alone.²

In the Baptismal Regeneration Controversy, the main issue of which centered in the doctrines of faith and regeneration, Spurgeon in speaking of faith as "the one indispensable requisite for salvation,"³ says that belief consists of two things: faith in the atoning work of Christ, and confident trust in that work.

Believing consists in two things; first there is an accrediting of the testimony of God concerning his son....Having received this testimony, the next thing is to confide in it—indeed here lies, I think, the essence of saving faith, to rest yourself for eternal salvation upon the atonement and the righteousness of Jesus Christ, to have done once for all with all reliance upon feelings or upon doings, and to trust in Jesus Christ and in what he did for your salvation.³

The expression 'fides est fiducia' is a prominent element of faith. By the Greek word πίστις Spurgeon points out that true faith is that of reliance and trust. The Greek word πίστις ultimately

¹ Works, 26, p. 55.
² Emil Brunner, Our Faith, p. 97.
³ Works, 10, p. 324.
means to trust, having been persuaded of a truth. Spurgeon denounces notional faith and, as has been pointed out, he ultimately places saving faith upon the heart and not simply upon an intellectual understanding. It is the actions of the heart that distinguish between true and false faith. When a man's nature is not affected by his faith, that faith is of a mental character, for saving faith inevitably influences and affects the inclinations and practices of the heart. Faith is reliance upon God, not self, and it accepts His revelation as infallible.

A summary of faith is given in one word, "trust". "If I wanted to describe saving faith in one word, I should say that it is trust."

Commit yourself to the merciful God; rest your hope on the gracious gospel; trust your soul on the dying and living Saviour... Trust is the life-blood of faith: there is no saving faith without it. Cast yourself upon him, rest in him, commit yourself to him. That done, you have exercised saving faith. Faith is not a blind thing; for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing; for faith believes facts of which it is sure. It is not an unpractical, dreamy thing; for faith trusts, and stakes its destiny upon the truth of revelation.

Spurgeon plainly teaches that faith is a work of God. At the same time, he does not deny that faith is a definite act on the part of man. There are two truths involved in the act of saving faith. The first truth is on the part of God, the second is on the part of man. God gives faith and He leaves it to man to exercise. This exercise of faith, which according to the Scripture may be called a work, is the only work which Spurgeon recognizes in the process of salvation, and he considers that work as something being worked out by the believer, which has previously been instilled in the heart. A God-given faith does not absolutely save the soul until that soul with its own faculties definitely commits its life to Christ through this God-given faith. Faith is a

1. Works, 29, p. 627.
2. Works, 27, p. 403.
personal work in which one confidently trusts in a personal Saviour. This work of faith on the part of man is pleasing to God. Such a work is not a righteousness of the heart, but the heart trusting in, and appropriating to itself the righteousness of Christ. In explaining the Godward and the manward sides of faith, Spurgeon uses John 6:29 as the Scripture: "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent". He would never concede for a moment that there is anything in man that can save him or even bring him to God. But when faith has been received and favorably acted upon by the individual, good works inevitably follow. The connection between saving faith and good works is inseparable. A single sentence summarizes Spurgeon's position toward these two doctrines: "Faith, without works, is one of the most damnable things out of hell". Continuing from this point of view, Ferre has enforced Spurgeon's decision thus:

Even though our works are naturally not our faith, we must show our faith by our works. But work is more than the result of faith. It is also a stimulus and food for faith. For faith is a living decision affecting the whole man.

Spurgeon remarks:

...if men desire to work, the first and chief of all work is that they believe on Jesus Christ whom God hath sent....It is true that faith is the gift of God, but this does not militate for a moment with the other truth that faith is the work of man: for it is and must be the act of man. No one in his sense can deny that....if there be such a thing as a faith which is not a man's own act and deed it will not save him. Repentance is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, but we must ourselves repent, or we never shall be saved. Faith is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost does not believe, or repent: these are a man's own acts. With our hearts we believe unto righteousness....Faith is, therefore, the work of man; and it is the chief of works, the work most pleasing to God, the most godlike work, or as the text puts it, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.'

3. Works, 26, p. 94.
When true faith exists in an individual it will manifest itself in the service of God. However, one's ability to serve God cannot successfully advance beyond one's religious experience. "A man who is faithful before God will not go beyond his religious experience". The attitude of a man toward God acts as a test of his faith, which if true, produces good works, as a proof of his love for God. A man's life has not been changed if there is no evidence of faithfulness in the service of God. Good works have no saving efficacy, but faith without works is dead. Spurgeon does not make the common mistake of separating faith from faithfulness. These must exist together, and where both are found, good works are naturally manifest.

We believe that men are saved by faith alone, but not by a faith which is alone; they are saved by faith without works, but not by a faith which is without works. The faith which saves is the most operative principle known to the human mind; for he that believes in Jesus for salvation, being saved, and knowing that he is saved, loves him that saved him, and that love is the key of the whole matter. The loving believer ceases from everything which would displease him whom he loves.

Faith "appropriates on our behalf the result of the Redeemer's service and sacrifice," and has as its counterpart, love. Love for Christ is a spontaneous reaction of faith’s perception of Christ’s vicarious death. Love is manifested, in a measure, when faith has its beginning. The very nature of faith is to love, and since love for God has its beginning in faith, and actually grows out of faith, the two are naturally inseparable. For "faith...worketh by love."

...Faith always produces love...The two graces are inseparable....True faith in God cannot exist without love to him, nor sincere love without faith; they are united, like the Siamese twins, and where you meet the one the other is sure to be present....This

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happens by necessity of faith's own nature. The moment a man believes in Jesus Christ he loves him as a matter of course...Faith creates love as summer breeds flowers. Our first love came with our first faith by a necessity of nature which can never change.  

Although love grows out of faith, it also increases faith in Christ. Faith can work only by love. Thus the close connection between the two may be seen in that the lack of the one negates the other, and the presence of the one necessitates the presence of the other, both sharing alike in the Christian life. "Certainly love cannot flourish except as faith flourishes...The two graces must diminish or increase together".  

Ultimately, however, love has the supremacy over faith, since it is through love that faith's perfection is realized. "Love reacts upon faith and perfects it,"  thus making faith "a debtor to love". From a practical point of view, however, Spurgeon equates faith and love, and states that "Love is entirely dependent upon faith".  

And so faith, leading us by the way of gratitude up to the standpoint of love begets in us a desire to please him, and also a desire to imitate him; for love...always grows like its object. You cannot love a thing without becoming something like it, in proportion to the force of love; and just in proportion as you love Jesus you must get like him.  

All the effects of faith listed by Spurgeon are too numerous to mention in this thesis. Some of the more important which he stresses are mentioned here. "Faith," says Spurgeon, "is the salvation-grace," and as he continues his emphasis on salvation by grace through faith, he remarks that faith is "the simplest and yet the grandest act of the mind". When grace flows through the channel of faith, a union between God and man is effected. This is the first effect of faith. It admits Christ. 

2. Ibid., p. 463.  
3. Ibid., p. 465.  
4. Ibid., p. 462.  
5. Works, 1, pp. 117-118.  
6. Works, 1, p. 245.  
7. Works, 21, p. 25.
into the life of a penitent sinner, whose sins have separated him from God. The supreme act of man is a vital seizing of God through a faith which results in a life-union with Christ.

Faith is the saving grace—it is the connecting-link between the soul and Christ....Remove faith, and Christian life becomes a non-entity: it is extinct at once, for 'the just shall live by faith:' and without faith how could they live at all?¹

Faith also effects justification. The sinner is declared righteous through faith in the blood of Christ. In the moment in which true faith in Christ is exercised there is instant justification. Justification through faith is a present reality, and a permanent status.

There is a man there who has just this moment believed; he is not condemned....He stands in the sight of God now as innocent as though he had never sinned. Such is the power of Jesus' blood, that 'he that believeth is not condemned.'...And if he is not now, then it follows that he never shall be...²

In view of Christ's bearing the deserved punishment of the individual, Spurgeon teaches that the believer should remain in a constant state of subordination before his Maker. The basis for glory is in the cross, which is an all-sufficient reason for the exclusion of boasting and the subordination of self. In the category of sins, pride is considered the most abominable in the sight of God. "God has touched other sins with his finger, but against this vice he has made bare his arm".³ Humility characterized the life of Spurgeon, and he argues that it is a virtue which should describe the life of every Christian. When pride, as well as works, exalts self, the life is in direct opposition to God.

The Christian must be an humble man. If he lift up his head to say something, then he is nothing indeed. He does not know where he is, or where he stands, when he once begins to boast, as though his own right hand had gotten him the victory. Leave off boasting, Christian. Live humbly before thy God, and never let a word of

¹. Works, 1, p. 246.
². Works, 7, p. 111.
³. Works, 8, p. 25.
self-congratulation escape thy lips. Sacrifice self, and let thy song be before the throne—'Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory for ever.'

Faith, which is called the most pleasing work of man in the sight of God, wholly relies upon the finished work of Christ as the only means of man's reconciliation to God. Such reliance honors Christ, and places the creature in a proper attitude of dependency, thus defining his right relationship to his Creator. The sacrifice of Christ is the chief factor placing the individual on a status of dependency, especially since a person confides in Him for liberation from sin. In virtue of the believer's new relation to Christ, he naturally becomes a "servant" of God. It is faith that leads believers to say "'Our Father'".2

...faith puts us into a right relationship with God; for what is the right relationship of a creature to his God but that of dependence? Is it not most suitable that since God made us, and he has all power and all strength, we should depend upon him for our being, as well as for our well-being? See how he hangs the world upon nothing....All things hang upon him, and the only position for a created being is that of entire dependence; what is that but faith?...Because faith brings the creature back to conscious dependence, therefore God is well pleased with it.3

In the vital act of faith a new spiritual life is created. As a result, the new nature is constantly at war with the old nature, attempting to exterminate sin, that holiness may be effected. There can be no experiential faith when the moral and spiritual issues of life are not in direct opposition to the evil forces of the world. Faith is the basis of every virtue of life which leads to holiness, without which no man can see God. "Faith is in itself one of the noblest of graces; it is the compendium of all virtues."4 Holiness is more than a virtue. "Virtue is the best thing that philosophy can produce, but holiness is the true fruit of

1. Works, 7, p. 119.
2. Works, 29, p. 630.
the gospel of Jesus Christ, and of that alone."\(^1\) As the life of faith progresses in Christ, the virtues proceeding therefrom have their development in true godliness. "All virtues flourish in the atmosphere of the cross, all vices die beneath the shade of the cross..."\(^2\)

You shall never find true faith unattended by true godliness; on the other hand, you shall never discover a truly holy life which has not for its root and foundation a living faith upon the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.\(^3\)

Another result of faith lies in election and calling, the two doctrines on which the critics of Spurgeon denounced him as a fatalist and a double predestinarian, but in which he vindicates himself by defining them in such a way that each individual is made responsible either for his election or his damnation. Election and effectual calling are sealed or made effective through personal faith. Faith in God "is the seal...of our election," and "faith seals our effectual calling".\(^4\)

The concluding effect discussed here is growth in faith. Spurgeon considers a dead faith as no faith and a live faith as a growing faith. In a sermon on "The Necessity of Growing Faith,"\(^5\) he lists several methods by which a believer makes progress in his faith. Among those of first importance he names knowledge, experience, communion with God, and prayer, followed by obedience, as the chief means of increasing one's faith. Over all these, however, he places love as the supreme means of increasing and developing faith. All growth in faith is the work of the Holy Spirit.

...if there be any growth in faith, it is the work of God's Spirit. Faith is the gift of God in its beginnings, and it is equally the gift of God in its increase....the progress of faith reveals the same power as the commencement of faith.\(^6\)

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1. Works, 42, p. 279.
2. Works, 15, p. 418.
3. Works, 10, p. 49.
6. Ibid., p. 474.
FAITH AND CONFESSION

Faith in Christ brings the individual into a new relationship with God. Consequently sin is understood in a new light, and the individual, in an act of confession, turns from sin and self, and looks for another to whom the guilt can be confessed. In this act of self-renunciation and individual resignation to the will of God, the believer realizes that he must turn to a Mediator, One greater than he, without sin, to whom confession of sin can be made. Thus "none of us can stand before God without a Mediator". The penitent sinner can stand before God only in Christ through whom God deals with the sinner.

In one of his sermons, "Putting the Hand upon the Head of the Sacrifice," Spurgeon outlines three distinct acts in which the believer confesses his sins. The first of these comes from the realization of the futility of self-righteousness. The very act of coming to Christ is a confession of sin. Secondly, the inability of the individual to approach God himself causes him to seek refuge in Christ through whom his sins are covered. The third act of confession, which is extremely important, since it is in the power of God to do as He wills with those whom He creates, lies in the sinner's acknowledgement of his unworthiness to live on account of his sinful nature, and his admittance that nothing but punishment should be his reward.

When I accept the Lord Jesus to be my righteousness it is a confession of sin, for I should not need his righteousness if I had one of my own. The very fact of presenting a sacrifice at all contains within it a confession of the need of a sacrifice, which is the confession of personal shortcomings, and a want of personal acceptableness.

After the conscience has been condemned and convicted by the

3. Ibid., p. 159.
Holy Spirit, and after sin has been viewed in its proper perspective, Spurgeon believes that confession, which is "attended with no apology on account of sin,"¹ finds its first expression in self-condemnation followed by the cry of the confessor, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."² This is a declaration by the individual that he has sinned against God. This confession condemns any goodness that he may have, and it is an acknowledgement without excuse or qualification for sin.

Speaking from the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner,"³ Spurgeon again calls attention to the direction of a sinner's confession. As sin is rebellion against God, even so a spontaneous confession of it must be directed to Him. Objectively, the basic confession is Jesus Christ and His righteousness, while subjectively, the words "a sinner" characterize the confession. The private confession of sin should not be to a priest or any other person, but to God through Christ. A public confession of sin should be general and not particular. A general confession, being broad in its scope, does not necessitate the enumeration of specific sins, the knowledge of which serves to contaminate the minds of those unaware of such transgressions. When one confesses his sins to another, the guilt of both is multiplied. To avoid this danger of polluting one's fellow creature, confession should be directed to God alone.

...it is a confession without an excuse...as long as a man can make an excuse for his sin, he will be a lost man; but when he dare not and cannot frame an excuse, there is hope for him. 'I have sinned against thee,' is a confession without an excuse....it is a confession without any qualification. He does not say, 'Lord, I have sinned to a certain extent; but, still, I have partly balanced my sins by my virtues, and I hope to wipe out my faults with my tears.' No; he

says, 'I have sinned against thee' as if that were a full description of his whole life.¹

Another most significant characteristic of confession, coupled with a contrite and believing heart, is an humble pleading in the blood of Christ. The cross is identified with the mercy-seat, apart from which there is no hope for sinful men. In the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," there is an appeal both to the Atonement and to the mercy-seat.

There is...a distinct appeal to the atonement and the mercy-seat in this short prayer. Friend, if we would come before God with our confessions, we must take care that we plead the blood of Christ. There is no hope for a poor sinner apart from the cross of Jesus. We may cry, 'God be merciful to me,' but the prayer can never be answered apart from the victim offered, the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. When thou hast thine eye upon the mercy-seat, take care to have thine eye upon the cross too.²

Faith precedes confession in the soteriological process. Faith belongs to the heart, which prompts the confessions of life. There is a close connection between faith and confession. When the heart cries, "Lord, I believe," an outward confession of faith in Christ inevitably follows. Spurgeon conceives of life as a confession regardless of its direction. The concern here, however, lies in confession of sin resulting from faith in God. Faith and confession are inevitably connected with salvation.

Notice...the result of the two put together: 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' The result of faith and confession is salvation. I do not doubt that a man, who truly believes in Jesus, is saved even before he makes a confession of his faith; but it is very remarkable that the blessing of salvation is constantly connected with these two things rather than with either of them alone...⁴

Among the many ways of confession of faith, the most valuable

¹. Works, 43, pp. 449-450.
². Works, 4, pp. 413-414.
⁴. Works, 52, p. 518.
for a Christian are the God-ordained ordinances of baptism and the Memorial Supper. These are discussed elsewhere in this thesis. However, it may be said here that Spurgeon considers them to be "the distinctive badge of believers".1 Regarding baptism as a confession of faith, he says that "Baptism is the outward expression of the inward faith,"2 and states further that a true believer in Christ "confesses his faith before God and before the Church of God by being baptized".2

For a hundred reasons, it is absolutely needful for Christ's kingdom that the believer should openly confess his faith. And hence baptism, being God's way of our openly confessing our faith, he requires it to be added to faith, that the faith may be a confessing faith, not a cowardly faith; that the faith may be an open faith, not a private faith; that so the faith may be a working faith, influencing our life, and the life of others, and not a mere secret attempt for self-salvation by a silent faith which dares not own Christ.3

On the Memorial Supper as a confession, Spurgeon observes:

...when we gather round the table of communion, in obedience to our Master's command, 'This do in remembrance of me,' we 'do shew the Lord's death till he come;' and there, in the breaking and eating of the bread, and the pouring out and drinking of the wine, we make another confession that we have trusted in Jesus as our Saviour...4

**REPENTANCE**

According to Dr. John A. Broadus, the translation of metanoia as repentance "is the worst translation in the New Testament".5 The English word "repent", from the Latin repoenitet, means to be sorry again, but this inadequate translation of the Greek word metanoia which has no true English equivalent, simply leaves the way open for an emotional rather than an intelligent understanding of metanoia, which Spurgeon interprets to mean "a change of mind of a very deep and practical character, which makes the man...

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1. Works, 9, p. 400.
3. Ibid., p. 607.
love what once he hated, and hate what once he loved."\(^1\) Spurgeon uses *metanoia* as the word to discuss repentance as a change which affects one's life from both a spiritual and a human point of view. In concurrence with this view, Treadwell Walden, referring to the word *metanoia*, says:

*...we desire it—above all...because it implies the use of the entire nature of man, intellectual, moral, affectional, spiritual, his human part and his divine part, in the act of apprehending and appropriating the truth of God.*\(^2\)

The Hebrew word \(\mathcal{J} \mathcal{V}\) means "to turn about".\(^3\) Such action inevitably necessitates a change, and it is this unavoidable change of mind which intrinsically appears in the word *metanoia* that Spurgeon thunders so loudly to his hearers. On the bases of the Hebrew word \(\mathcal{J} \mathcal{V}\) and the Greek word \(\mu \epsilon \tau \alpha \nu \omega \delta\), Spurgeon defines repentance, which is a part of conversion, thus:

Conversion, if translated, means a turning round, a turning from, and a turning to—a turning from sin, a turning to holiness—a turning from carelessness to thought, from the world to heaven, from self to Jesus—a complete turning....Repentance is a part of conversion. It is, perhaps, I may say, the gate or door of it.\(^1\)

When God says, 'Return', it is plain that he means, 'Turn your face in exactly the opposite direction from that to which it is now turned'....There must be a total, a radical change in you, if you are really to obey the command, 'Return'.\(^4\)

Spurgeon uses another Greek word, \(\mu \epsilon \tau \alpha \pi \epsilon \omega \lambda \delta\), in defining repentance. This word "signifies 'an after-care', a word which has in it something more of sorrow and anxiety, than that which signifies changing one's mind".\(^5\) Thus repentance involves a matter of regret, hence an emotional element partly characterizes it. He denounces any emotional disturbances that are not directed toward God, saying that "the essence of

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2. The Great Meaning of Metanoia, p. 84.
4. Works, 43, p. 591
5. Works, 8, p. 400.
your repentance must be 'toward God'; for the essence of your wrong is toward God'. Thus remorse, or mental sorrow for sin is not repentance. Certainly true repentance is characterized by sorrow for sin and hatred of it, but this worldly sorrow which metamelomai defines as "to repent one's self" or "an after-care", which carries with it regret for a certain action done, and which has a temporary rather than the permanent character of metanoia, can do nothing more than act as an agent toward the change of life involved in metanoia. When no godly sorrow manifests itself in repentance, this is "a repentance which needs to be repented of", but concerning true repentance Spurgeon agrees with Dr. Chamberlain that "Repentance, μετατάξειά, is not only not regret, μετατέθεια, but it is never regretted, μέταμετατέθεια." The sorrow toward God involved in metanoia is the only sorrow which leads to salvation. If repentance is not toward God it is ἡ τοῦ τὸκρούν ἀῤῥήτη rather than ἡ κατὰ θεόν ἀῤῥήτη. While mental sorrow for sin is merely a transitory conviction, it nevertheless acts as an agent in producing true repentance. In other words, saving repentance turns away from self and looks to God, rather than turning in upon self with worldly regret because of sin and its consequences. Worldly sorrow with its element of fear leads to death, whereas true repentance replaces fear with hope.

...the true sorrow which we ought to have, and which saves men instrumentally, is sorrow on account of sin because it is sin against God. That is the very pith of godly sorrow, as penitent David cried, 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight'...

4. W. D. Chamberlain, The Meaning of Repentance, p. 34.  
5. 2nd Cor., 7:10.  
...the only sorrow for sin that is worth having is that which brings me to yield myself up to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to accept God's mercy in God's own way. If you have any sort of sorrow for sin, which does not lead you to believe in Christ, away with it!... A repentance, that does not repent at the cross, is a repentance which will have to be repented of; but true sorrow for sin must be blended with a childlike submission to God, and consequent confidence in Christ; otherwise, it is not 'godly sorrow'.

Spurgeon's treatment of the nature of repentance appears in his sermons under a variety of designations, the most prominent of which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, the turning from sin to righteousness which is involved in metanoia, the most important word in the history of repentance, is an actual and not a fictitious transformation. It is a transition from sin to holiness. This change in the individual is begun by a total abandonment of and a constant hatred of sin. Such an attitude toward sin is synonymous with the antipathy of God toward the same, and it characterizes the entire demeanor of a Christian's life.

There must be a true and actual abandonment of sin, and a turning unto righteousness in real act and deed in every-day life.... Repentance to be true, to be evangelical, must be a repentance which really affects our outward conduct.

The penitent man reforms his outward life. The reform is not partial, but in heart, it is universal and complete. Infirmity may mar it, but grace will always be striving against human infirmity, and the man will hate and abandon every false way.... Divine transformation is not merely in act but in the very soul; the new man not only does not sin as he used to do, but he does not want to sin as he used to do.... A glorious transformation is wrought by a gracious God. His penitence has become so real and so complete that the man is not the man he used to be. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus.

In his second characteristic of repentance, Spurgeon discusses its completeness. By completeness he means the acknowledgment of all sin in "the whole mass" without reservation. "We repent of the sin of our

2. Works, 2, p. 418.
3. Works, 6, p. 345.
nature as well as of the sin of our practice."¹ There is a definite time when sin is relinquished. "The actual point of the conversion is instantaneous"; "whenever I actually turn there is a critical moment when I turn."² Initially the requirement is confession and renunciation of sin in its entirety, but this is not to be a once-for-all confession. It is not to terminate with point action but is to be a continuous part of the Christian life.

...let me tell you, it is not the giving up of one sin, nor fifty sins, which is true repentance; it is the solemn renunciation of every sin. If thou dost harbour one of those accursed vipers in thy heart, thy repentance is but a sham.³

...there is a repentance which is partial...But repentance toward God is repentance of sin as sin, and of rebellion against law as rebellion against God. The man who only repents of this and that glaring offence, has not repented of sin at all.⁴

A third element constituting the nature of repentance is immediate repentance. This urgent act should follow after the Spirit has brought a man to a realization of his sinful nature by the illumination of his mind. The urgency of immediate repentance lies in God's command to "Repent...and believe the gospel".⁵ In stressing that "now" is man's time for a change of heart, Spurgeon emphasizes the renunciation of sin in simple, yet dramatic appeals.

Down with them, man! every one of them. Down, sir, down with them, and down with them now! You must not keep one of them; throw them down at once! The gospel challengeth him that he believe in Jesus now! So long as thou continuest in unbelief thou continuest in sin, and art increasing thy sin; and to give thee leave to be an unbeliever for an hour, were to pander to thy lusts; therefore it demandeth of thee faith, and faith now, for this is God's time, and the time which holiness must demand of a sinner. Besides, sinner, it is thy time. This is the only time thou canst call thine own.⁶

¹. Works, 35, p. 127.
². Works, 20, p. 382.
³. Works, 2, p. 419.
⁵. Mark, 1:15.
⁶. Works, 8, pp. 405-406.
The fourth element of repentance, called heart repentance, excludes pretentious and hypocritical sorrow for sin and directs a heartfelt repentance toward God.

A man may renounce every outward sin, and yet not really repent. True repentance is a turning of the heart as well as of the life; it is the giving up of the whole soul to God....it is a renunciation of the sins of the heart as well as the crimes of the life.1

The godly sorrow in 2nd Cor. 7:102 is the heart-felt sorrow which Spurgeon preaches and any other he regards as a sham. He believes such repentance involves not only love for Christ but a faith which weeps over sin.

I am desperately in love with repentance; it seems to me to be the twin-sister to faith. I do not...understand much about dry-eyed faith; I know that I came to Christ by the way of Weeping-cross.3

Spurgeon defines legal repentance as that which is characterized by fear of judgment and damnation, whereas gospel or evangelical repentance is characterized by abandonment of sin, followed by forgiveness. Grace is the distinguishing characteristic of the gospel, since it offers forgiveness as opposed to damnation under the law. Worldly repentance instigated by an emotional upset produces fear and temporary confession. Spurgeon summarizes the state of momentary and legal impenitents by saying that "They shake because of their sins, but they are not shaken out of their sins".4 In carnal repentance the will to sin continues to dominate the heart even though a superficial repentance is manifested. Here again, worldly regret, evidenced in metamelomai leaves the individual under the dominion of sin.

Judgment may produce a carnal repentance—a repentance that is of the flesh, and after the manner of the sinful nature of men. In this

1. Works, 2, p. 419.  
2. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."  
repentance the depravity of the heart remains the same in essence, though it takes another form of showing itself. Though the man changes, he is not savingly changed: he becomes another man, but not a new man. The same sin rules in him, but it is called by another name...This carnal repentance is caused by fear...This is the kind of repentance which the terrors of the Lord will work in men's minds unless they are altogether hardened and under the special dominion of the devil.¹

Lastly, repentance is characterized by its perpetuity. Spurgeon denounces as heretical any interpretation which intimates that repentance toward God is one definite act in which the individual abandons and repents of his sins, saying that "Repentance is the daily and hourly duty of a man who believes in Christ".² Repentance is a life-process of repenting and believing. Repentance, like faith, cannot be perfect in this life, but, like faith, it can grow.

Repentance...is never perfect in any man in this mortal state....Repentance is...a continual life-long act. It will grow continually. I believe a Christian on his death-bed will more bitterly repent than ever he did before...Sinning and repenting...make up a Christian's life. Repenting and believing in Jesus...make up the consummation of his happiness.³

Spurgeon emphasizes the inability of the individual to initiate a single aspect of the conversion process. He denies that repentance is a "preparation" for faith, or a condition of salvation, and, like faith, he treats it as a gift from God. Thus repentance is conceived of as a grace, and is a work of the Holy Spirit who produces repentance in the soul. The gift of repentance, which enables one to change one's attitude toward God and man, is to be preached not "on the authority of the Church of Christ, but...on the authority of the Church's ascended Head".⁴

'Repentance' is a grace. Some people preach it as a condition of salvation. Condition of nonsense! There are no conditions of salvation. God gives the salvation himself...³

¹. Works, 34, p. 639.
³. Works, 1, p. 335.
⁴. Works, 56, p. 556.
All true conversion is the work of the Holy Ghost. You may rightly pray in the words of the prophet, 'Turn thou us, and we shall be turned;' for until God turn us, turn we never shall; and unless he convert us, our conversion is but a mistake.¹

Faith and repentance complement each other. It is inconceivable even to think of separating them.

Repentance and faith must go together to complete each other. I compare them to a door and its post. Repentance is the door which shuts out sin, but faith is the post upon which its hinges are fixed. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder; and these two he has made inseparable—repentance and faith.²

Faith and repentance are so intertwined that the human mind is wholly incapable of a dogmatic statement testifying the first appearance of either in the soul. Yet, if it should be a matter of necessity, Spurgeon would place faith first. Faith and repentance are compared to Siamese twins. They enter the soul simultaneously. There is such a close relation between faith and repentance that Spurgeon cannot conceive of them as living apart. They are born together, progress together, and die together. In spite of Spurgeon's tendency to hold that faith comes first in the conversion process, it cannot be said that he holds this as an absolute dogma.

Repentance and faith are born of the same Spirit of God. I do not know which comes first; but I fall back on my well-worn image of a wheel—when the cart starts, which spoke of the wheel moves first? I do not know. Repentance and faith come together.³

Another sentence shows that he does not believe that repentance comes first; "It is wrong to tell a man he must repent before he may trust Christ, but it is right to tell him that, having trusted Christ, it is not possible for him to remain impenitent."⁴ In this connection Wheeler Robinson says, "We misrepresent Christian repentance when we suggest that it is something more or less complete before faith can begin."⁵ The

1. Works, 14, p. 196.
3. Ibid., p. 129.
following passage further interprets Spurgeon's idea of faith and repentance.

I believe they are like the Siamese twins; they are born together, and they could not live asunder, but must die if you attempt to separate them. Faith always walks side by side with his weeping sister, true Repentance. They are born in the same house at the same hour, and they will live in the same heart every day, and on your dying bed, while you will have faith on the one hand to draw the curtain of the next world, you will have repentance, with its tears, as it lets fall the curtain upon the world from which you are departing....where faith lives, repentance must live with it. They are so united, so married and allied together, that they never can be parted, in time or eternity.¹

Thus faith is the correlative of repentance or vice versa, and Spurgeon insists that the one necessitates the other, and that both are the result of Christ's death, and are obtained at the foot of the cross. In his book Essays Towards a New Theology, Robert Mackintosh summarizes faith and repentance by saying that "Repentance, the correlate in us of Christ's atonement, is itself a manifestation of faith".² In conversion, Spurgeon remarks, "Faith looks to the throne, and repentance loves the cross".¹ Thus faith and repentance counterbalance each other in the light of the throne and the cross. "When faith is tempted to climb into presumption, repentance calls it back to sit at Jesus' feet."¹ In the following passage, Spurgeon has shown the relationship between faith and repentance. It will be seen here that repentance acts as the negative side of faith in its ejection of sin, and that faith, which converges on Christ, acts as the positive side of the Christian experience as it builds up what repentance destroys. The ultimate result of the two is eternal salvation.

The repentance that ejects sin as an evil tenant, and the faith which admits Christ to be the sole master of the heart; the repentance which purges the soul from dead works, and the faith that fills

¹. Works, 35, p. 131.
². Robert Mackintosh, Essays Toward a New Theology, p. 52.
the soul with living works; the repentance which pulls down, and the faith which builds up; the repentance that scatters stones, and the faith which puts stones together; the repentance which ordains a time to weep, and the faith that gives a time to dance—these two things together make up the work of grace within, whereby men's souls are saved. Be it, then, laid down as a great truth...that the repentance we ought to preach is one connected with faith, and thus we may preach repentance and faith together without any difficulty whatever.¹

A believer grows in both faith and repentance, but neither of these ever reach perfection in the Christian life.

...there are degrees of faith, and yet the least faith saves; so there are degrees of repentance, and the least repentance will save the soul if it is sincere....Repentance moreover, is never perfect in any man in this mortal state. We never get perfect faith so as to be entirely free from doubting; and we never get repentance which is free from some hardness of heart.²

Spurgeon condemns self-examination by the standards of men and makes Christ the criterion of true repentance. In heart-repentance the standard of judgment is the righteousness and holiness of God whose perfect law forbids self-measurement by the imperfections of the creature.

True repentance...judges itself by God. God's perfect law is the transcript of his own perfect character, and sin is any want of conformity to the law and to the character of God. Judge yourselves by the perfect holiness of the Lord God, and, oh, how you must despise yourself! There is no deep repentance until our standard is the standard of perfect rectitude, till our judgment of self is formed by a comparison with the divine character.³

The study of repentance concludes with the peace of God. The prerequisite to this peace is repentance toward God and faith in Christ. Peace inevitably follows repentance, the condition on which God bestows this blessing.

...wherever repentance is, there cometh also with it, peace....If thou wouldst slake the thirst of thy soul, repentance must be the cup out of which thou shalt drink, and then sweet peace shall be the blessed effect. Sin is such a troublesome companion that it will always give thee the heartache till thou hast turned it out by repentance, and then thy heart shall rest and be still....Sweet peace repentance ever yields to the man who is the possessor of it.⁴

¹. Works, 8, pp. 401-402.
². Works, 1, p. 335.
⁴. Works, 6, p. 347.
CHAPTER VIII

THE DOCTRINES OF FORGIVENESS, REGENERATION, JUSTIFICATION, AND ADOPTION
FORGIVENESS

Spurgeon always credits God with everything, regardless of its sublimity or mediocrity. In emphasizing the divine nature of pardon, he stresses that "it is a pardon from God himself," and that "it is a pardon from him who is offended." In this connection George Adam Smith says, "In giving pardon God gives Himself". God forgives sin, not on account of any spark of goodness that may be in human nature, but "for mine own sake". Sin is forgiven to "purify" the sinner and to make the sinner "holy". Thus, in the forgiveness of sin, the purpose of God is to make men like Christ. "He forgives our sins with the design of curing our sinfulness." The Lord aims at working in thee the likeness of his dear Son." Spurgeon's sermons on the "nature of sin" and "forgiveness" are harmonious. In these he demonstrates that one of the most glorious aspects of God's sovereignty is His ability and willingness to forgive sin. Before his conversion experience, Spurgeon could not understand how violators of God's law could be forgiven by the same One against whom the offence was committed. The inexplicable mystery is solved on the basis of God's mercy.

The entire motive of God for forgiving sin lies within himself: 'For mine own sake'....By his grace forgiven men are made to do better

2. The Forgiveness of Sins, p. 23.
3. Isaiah, 43:25.
4. Works, 33, p. 381.
...That cannot be a motive, for if they do better, their improvement is his work in them... if God pardons, not because of anything he sees in the man, but because of what he finds in himself, it remains a possibility for God to pardon the vilest of the vile, and the truth revealed in the Bible makes it certain that God will forgive such if they turn unto him...  

Thus the pardon of sin comes out of grace, which supersedes both nature and law. The entire plan of forgiveness is based on the Atonement. "The Lord Jesus came and pardoned us when that act of grace was unsolicited; before we had thought of mercy he had thoughts of mercy toward us."2 Again, "God has forgiven us because of the representative character of Christ".3 Forgiveness is linked with redemption. "The sequel to redemption is pardon".4 The gratuitous acts of both forgiveness and justification are results of the satisfaction of God's justice, which was made possible through the work of Christ. But justice does not override mercy.  

...forgiveness of sins is a matter of grace, and yet it is connected with the price paid by our Redeemer... but the fact of Christ having paid a price and having satisfied justice does not remove the pardon of sin out of the region of pure grace.5  

"Power to forgive resides nowhere but in the great Supreme"6 who after He has once forgiven will never again condemn. "God himself can bring no charge against me, since he cannot punish me for that which he laid upon his own Son."7  

Spurgeon teaches on the one hand that a sinner cannot know all his sins, and on the other hand that the extent and full knowledge of all sin must be known before complete pardon can be effected. The believer must rely wholly upon the omniscient God to blot out those sins of which he is aware, and those of which he is unaware.
...the pardon does not rest with our knowledge of the sin, but with God's knowledge of the sin; and, therefore, that pardon is complete which comes from the all-seeing God.¹

An interesting quotation from G. B. Stevens on this thought follows:

Of course it is true that all human penitence is imperfect in the sense that men never adequately realize the evil of sin and the worth of goodness. But is it not the very nature of the grace of God to accept us in our imperfect desires and intentions—not because of what they are in themselves, but for what they promise and are capable of becoming?²

Faith and forgiveness are inseparable. Forgiveness is dependent upon faith in the finished work of Christ, whose Atonement stands as the basis of both faith and pardon.

The point wherein faith comes into contact with pardon is when faith believes that the Son of God did come and stand in the sinner's stead, and when faith accepts that substitution as a glorious boon of grace, and rests in it, and says, 'Now I see how God is just, and smites Christ in my stead.'³

"If sin is not a terrible fact to you, pardon will never be more than a notion."⁴ When sin is experienced and recognized as such, and then forgiven, godly sorrow for and hatred of sin is more intense after than before a realization of forgiveness. "Repentance precedes a sense of forgiveness in some measure, but it follows forgiveness in a larger measure, and it is not the cause, though it is the attendant, of remission."¹

From the human point of view, faith and repentance come first in the order of the Christian experience, but from God's viewpoint forgiveness comes first. God's sovereignty is manifested in the forgiveness of sin before there is a knowledge of sin. The "pardon of sin comes first, that it may be seen to be an act of pure grace."⁵ Forgiveness, then, remains

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3. Works, 25, p. 64.
4. Works, 26, p. 482.
5. Works, 25, p. 496.
in the realm of "pure grace" leaving no room for self-glory and human merit. A conscious realization of forgiveness comes into the soul only "after a full confession of sin". 1

The forgiveness is first, and the returning to the Lord is urged as a consequence of that forgiveness. Pardon is not first in the matter of our personal experience, but it is first as a matter of fact with God. Oh! the mercy of the Lord Christ, that before we know our sin he has made atonement for it by his own precious blood. 2

Forgiveness of sin is an instantaneous act which has an "irreversible certainty". 3 It is a "once-for-all" forgiveness with the stamp of immutability placed upon it. "Until God can change or lie, he never will bring to mind again the sin of that man whom he hath pardoned." 4

...you may judge the greatness of the forgiveness by the greatness of the sin which God forgives in a single moment...if thou believest in the Lord...this very instant the whole mass of thy sin will disappear for ever. 5

Of what nature is the remission? It is pardon, freely given, acting immediately, and abiding for ever, so that there is no fear of the guilt ever being again laid to the charge of the forgiven one. 6

How is such a pardon obtained? The blood of Jesus effects this. "The secret lies in the vicarious or substitutionary character of our Lord's suffering and death." 6

On God's part, forgiveness for the sinner is a permanent state and is continuous. It is "daily forgiveness for daily sin". 3 God is always forgiving the sins of a believer. Since the complete and irreversible pardon bestowed upon the believer is on God's part, the "once-for-all" forgiveness should not negate the daily petition of the believer for the remission of sins. The Christian life is characterized by a daily confession of sin.

5. Works, 49, p. 616.
...this present mercy is perpetually bestowed...Never fall into the notion of some that the one forgiveness which we received at the first has rendered it unnecessary for us to seek new forgiveness, and unnecessary for us to offer new confession. It is not so. The Lord is always forgiving, and it is for us still to be seeking that blessing.  

Forgiveness is to be measured, not by personal sin, nor by the depth of sin, and neither by one's faith, but by the grace of the Offended.  

...the measure of forgiveness is the riches of God's grace...The pardon to be hoped for is not to be measured by you, and what you are, but by God and what he is.  

Pardon has no boundaries. It is full and complete the moment it is given, and, it is a pardon "which shall effectually protect you from accusation and punishment". With the exception of the sin against the Holy Spirit, all sin will not only be forgiven but annihilated. "Here is annihilation—the only annihilation I know of—the absolute annihilation of sin through the pardon which the Lord gives to his people." On one occasion Spurgeon made the definite statement, "I do not know what the unpardonable sin is, and I do not think that any man understands it". Whatever it is, it occurs in the realm of resisting the power of the Holy Spirit. Men may continually reject and strive against the influences of the Spirit until they cannot recognize His voice. Finally there is no desire for God, and no desire for pardon. This comes from unbelief. It is quite clear that Spurgeon interprets the unpardonable sin as the sin of "unbelief". Christ died for all sins but the sin of unbelief which "is the damning sin". This "is the damning exception—he had no faith".

2. Works, 26, p. 483.  
5. Works, 1, p. 32.  
6. Ibid., p. 22.  
7. Ibid., p. 23.
There is a sin against the Holy Ghost which shall never be forgiven, but that is unpardonable only for this reason,—that where once it is committed the man never seeks forgiveness, nor desires it; that sin kills his conscience, for it is a sin which is unto death, and the sinner henceforth goes gaily down to destruction, never seeking forgiveness.

Not only is the forgiveness of sin limitless, but the very act of pardon effects a state of "absolute freeness". The greatest blessing that God can give you is to part you and your sins. Or, as Mackintosh would say, "He separates between the sinner and his sins", observing that such a supernatural act is possible only to God. Spurgeon takes further this thought, saying not only that "Divine pardon is the only forgiveness possible", but that forgiveness from any other source is "abominable blasphemy". He maintains without question the priesthood of all believers. Concerning "absolute freeness", it is further observed by Mackintosh that it is in this sense of liberty that men become complete personalities in the true sense of the term.

Forgiveness, imparted by God's love, is indeed the act by which we are constituted persons in the full sense—not things, or links in a chain, but free men.

The paramount importance Jesus gave to forgiveness is seen as a first observation in His teachings. When faith was exercised, there was first the forgiveness of sin followed by the healing of disease. Like Karl Heim, Spurgeon is fully aware that forgiveness precedes healing: "we never enjoy a mercy as a mercy from God till we receive the forgiveness of sins". He points particularly to Mark 2:10 where Jesus first forgave the guilt of the paralytic, after which "the man's immediate cure was effected.

2. Ibid., p. 488.
3. Works, 40, p. 146.
5. Works, 1, p. 185.
In fact, healing without forgiveness preceding would be inconsistent with the nature of God. There is nothing in God's nature that necessarily compels Him to bestow mercies upon one while he is in a state of condemnation.

Brethren, there are many mercies which are not given at all, and cannot be given until first of all the pardon of sin has been bestowed, it would be out of place and inconsistent to give the blessings of the covenant to unpardoned sinners. For instance, why should God heal the diseases of a man under condemnation for sin?...We cannot expect God to crown a man with lovingkindness and tender mercies while still he is dead in sin...pardoned sin must clear the road for the march of grace, this jungle of iniquity must be removed to make a highway for our God....Pardon never comes alone, troops of blessings attend it.

**REGENERATION**

Spurgeon considers regeneration not as a change which touches only the surface of human nature, but as a "radical change" in which a new creature, an "absolutely...new creation" is made. This radical internal change which initiates the beginning of a new life is "beyond all power of man" to perform. Thus man is passive in the new birth, while the Spirit of God brings him to Christ through faith and repentance. After a Christian emerges from the dynamic of this new creation, he will readily acknowledge his inability to initiate this new disposition and principle of life that has turned him from sin to righteousness. Here again, the source of salvation is in God and it is all of grace. Spurgeon denounces the Arminian and Pelagian views of regeneration as self-reformation on the ground that they believe it to be accomplished by man's own will. Both of these views deny the inability of man. Spurgeon holds that man is a receptive agency, totally incapable of exerting the least influence toward God. Man must be "willing" to be saved, but he cannot "will" to be saved. Therefore the influence of the Spirit over the will is necessary to draw

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it by Divine love to God.

Herein lies the difference between discovery and invention on the one hand and the finding of God in Christ on the other. In the former the initiative is entirely with man. Nature is passive awaiting the questing mind and the creative hand. It is entirely otherwise in the realm of grace. As a seeker a man may feel all the initiative is with him in a quest for a God who seems elusive. But once God is found He is seen as the One who has been seeking all along. "Ye have not chosen me. I have chosen you."

To give a man a new heart and a new spirit is God's work, and the work of God alone....Oh, beloved, there never was a man yet, that did so much as the turn of a hair towards making himself a new heart. He must lie passive there—he shall become active afterwards—but in the moment when God puts a new life into the soul, the man is passive; and if there be aught of activity, it is an active resistance against it, until God, by overcoming, victorious grace, gets the mastery over man's will.

King Lear asked the question, "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" And Robert Browning, in Halbert and Hob, made the reply, "O Lear, That a reason out of nature must turn them soft, seems clear". Spurgeon adequately answers King Lear's query by stating that the reason for hate and sin lies within a depraved nature, while the reason out of nature that makes the hearts of men tender is a divine and radical change which man cannot effect for himself.

I do not urge you to look within, to try and see whether this new birth is there. Instead of looking within thyself, look thou to him who hangs on yonder cross, dying the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

In his Systematic Theology, Strong gives the following passage from H. L. Martensen's book on Christian Ethics:

2. Works, 4, p. 382.
5. Works, 38, p. 271.
When Kant treats of the radical evil of human nature, he makes the remarkable statement that, if a good will is to appear in us, this cannot happen through a partial improvement, nor through any reform, but only through a revolution, a total overturn within us, that is to be compared to a new creation.¹

Kant's doctrine of the "radical evil of human nature" cannot be disputed on the ground of natural depravity per se. Spurgeon agrees with Kant that "a revolution in the mind (a transition to the maxim of holiness of mind)"² is required, and appears to agree with Kant that a man "can only become a new man by a kind of new birth, as it were by a new creation and a change of heart".² However this apparent agreement is only in language, since Spurgeon means more by his doctrine of the new birth than does Kant. Spurgeon's doctrine of human depravity, followed by his doctrine of regeneration in which there is deliverance from an evil nature by the new birth, is differentiated from that of Kant in that it prescribes a new life by means of a new birth, whereas Kant's doctrine of depravity has no corresponding remedy called regeneration.

Do you see... how very searching the word is here... 'a new creature,' absolutely a new creation. It is a root and branch change; not an alteration of the walls only, but of the foundation... a renewal of the fabric itself. Regeneration is a change of the entire nature from top to bottom in all senses and respects. Such is the new birth, such is it to be in Christ and to be renewed by the Holy Ghost.³

This "total overturn within us" comes not by the remaking or by the renewal of present faculties, but by an absolutely new creation which is the result of the activity of the Spirit of God. Further, this totally new creation does not absorb the old nature, but rather suppresses it. Therefore there are two natures in every believer, and while they exist together, the new nature is perpetually at war with the old nature, bringing

2. I. Kant, Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics, p. 355.
it into submission. "Every new man is two men; every believer in Christ is what he was and not what he was..."¹ Thus Spurgeon would say with Stearns:

Not that the sinful nature itself is gone...But its power is broken. Sin...is no longer the power that dominates the life. It has been thrust from the centre to the circumference.²

To prove that the spiritual change in regeneration is not a rebirth of the old nature, Spurgeon quotes Job 14:4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one". The tendency to sin remains in the old nature, whereas

That new nature cannot sin, it is as pure as the God from whom it came, and like the spark which seeks the sun, it aspires always after the holy God from whom it came...it utterly hates and loathes that which is evil...the new life struggles against the old death...The enmity is irreconcilable and lifelong....Neither nature can make peace with the other.³

Regeneration is not a moral or physical change. The new creation in Christ is sufficient to re-make a man. All other changes necessary for the Christian life naturally follow in the path of the second birth. This new birth actually puts a man "in Christ," and the inner change wrought thereby is the very antithesis of outward reformation. There are no new intellectual qualities added to one's life by the new birth, but the implantation of a new affection for God heightens the present emotional and intellectual faculties of the life, giving them a new direction which leads to God and to holiness. It is certainly evident that Spurgeon thinks of the new nature as something "new" imparted to the believer; at least whatever it is, it has not previously existed in the soul. It has already been noted that regeneration to Spurgeon is not an intrinsic change of the old heart making it better, and neither is it the prolongation of the natural life into eternal life. It is the impartation of the divine life of God

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Himself, communicated to the soul by means of His Spirit. With the new nature coming from God and consisting of His very essence the new life is as eternal as God Himself. The regenerate life cannot die because the Spirit perpetually infuses into it the life of Christ. In "regeneration there is a life, not merely created, but communicated, even the very life of God, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope". Ultimately the Adamic nature will be destroyed but in regeneration God gives Himself to the believer, therefore God must perish before the Divine life given to the new birth can die.

The new life cannot die, because God is pledged to keep it alive. "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish"...

Spurgeon considers the change from death to eternal life to be instantaneous. Although he believes there are preparatory influences leading the soul to a regenerate life, he does not confuse these internal exertions of the Spirit with sanctification, thus relating regeneration to sanctification, which he explains as a gradual and progressive work characterizing the entire life of a believer. Both Luther and Calvin closely relate regeneration with sanctification but Spurgeon considers it as instantaneous. There is a line of demarcation which definitely determines when one is quickened into a spiritual life. "To sanctify a man is the work of the whole life; but to give a man a new heart is the work of an instant." 

...salvation must be an instantaneous thing. It may be, it will be, surrounded by a good deal that seems to lead up to it, and makes it appear to be gradual; but, in reality, if you get to the root of the matter, there is a turning-point, well-defined and sharp, and if not clear to you, it is clear to the Great Worker, who has wrought in the heart that is changed from death to life, and from condemnation through sin to justification through Jesus Christ.

2. Ibid., p. 406.
The absolute necessity of regeneration is stressed by the words, "Ye must be born again". All men are born with the capacity to receive God, and all men stand as possibilities for the restoration of the image of God by means of the new birth, but "a man who is not born again has no spiritual capacity". Thus the new birth is necessary to create a spiritual capacity for the reception of spiritual things.

Only the spiritual can receive the spiritual. You must then be born again to have a spirit by which spiritual things are discerned and received.

The primary reason for the necessity of regeneration is grounded in human depravity, out of which emanate the evils that vitiate and destroy the soul. Holiness, an indispensable qualification of Christian character, cannot be produced by a man's own endeavor by the very nature of his birth. Spurgeon considers untenable any view that entertains the idea that infants are born good. Contrary to the belief of some present day theologians that Psalm 51:5 is correctly interpreted to mean that one is not actually born with sin but rather he comes into the presence of sin, and his actions determine his participation in sin, Spurgeon believes that an infant does not come into the world pure and holy, but even in infancy he is unclean. The infant has not sinned, but nevertheless he does not possess a perfect nature because the sin of the race is upon him. The tendency to sin is innate in all men, and sooner or later this inherent evil manifests itself. Thus all men are, by their very nature, the children of wrath, until they have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. However, all who die in infancy are saved since they have not had an opportunity to sin against God, but at the same time it is impossible "that there should be born into this

1. **John** 3:7.
3. Ibid., p. 58.
4. "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."
world a pure child, perfectly holy in nature, from impure parents".1

Whatever the new-fangled teaching may say about the old-fashioned doctrine that we are shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin, that doctrine is true. It matters not who may deny its truth, it stands fast, for it is founded upon the rock of the Inspired Word of God. I have seen little children turn black in the face through passion; yet, when reason comes to them, they will learn somewhat to control themselves. The tendency to evil is there all the while; and according to the disposition of the child, it displays itself sooner or later.... evil is inherent in the heart of man, and, being there, in due time it cometh out of him.1

Thus there is no possibility of a pure nature emanating from a depraved nature. The hopelessness of self-purification lies in the Adamic nature. Spurgeon thinks of human nature as Aristotle did, i.e., man is born on an inclined plane, always subject to the moral inconsistencies of life. But whereas Aristotle leaves man a subject of downward gravitation, Spurgeon offers him a new nature by proclaiming the doctrine of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born anew."2 The original nature of man will always prove a source of evil. Therefore another creation, a divine spiritual rebirth, is necessary before entrance into the kingdom of God.

"Faith", declares Spurgeon, "is always in connection with regeneration."3 He never treats these two doctrines as separate occurrences but believes that they belong together. Faith in Jesus necessitates regeneration, i.e., an experiential birth of God, and, "wherever it exists it is the proof of regeneration".4 These two soteriological elements working together break the power of sin in the life trusting in Christ. Thus in the moment of faith there is exhibited in the believer a newly created and childlike nature which is akin to primitive innocency. The great significance of this new nature is its assumption of the character of holiness.

1. Works, 47, p. 315.
3. Works, 60, p. 571.
...there never was a soul yet that truly believed in Christ, but at the same time it underwent the change called the new birth or regeneration. Christians have often been asked about which is first, faith or regeneration, belief in Christ or being born again. I will tell you when you will answer me this question,—When a wheel moves, which spoke moves first? 'Oh, they all start together!'...So these other things all start together...when the wheel moves, it all moves at once.¹

By nature, men are "almost like the devil,"² but by regeneration they become like unto God. "Thou art dust and Deity combined, for the Holy Ghost dwells in thee."² In all respects, regeneration is the indispensable work of the Holy Spirit. The new life is not latent in the individual, nor is it something to be developed by education and cultivation. Regeneration is not reformation. A "new life must be received, and no improving the present life will suffice in its stead".³

The life within you must be as fresh a creation as was the light when God spoke it, or as was the world when God formed it out of nothing. A work of divine power must be exercised upon you equal to that which raised the Lord Jesus from the dead and gave him glory.⁴

Spurgeon interprets such Scriptural phrases as "a new creature" and "born anew" literally and not metaphorically. He does not underestimate truth as contained in the Word, but he realizes the powerlessness of truth without the agency of the Holy Spirit who uses truth instrumentally, i.e., the Spirit does not illuminate truth, but rather the mind, that it can perceive the truth as revealed by the Spirit who is responsible for centering the affections on God.

Spurgeon is not concerned with the debatable question whether or not God works this new spiritual change, which in every respect produces a moral effect that brings about an intense hatred of sin, in man's conscious or sub-conscious mind. In fact, he does not specify either, but simply

¹. Works, 41, p. 235.
³. Works, 25, p. 50. 
⁴. Ibid., p. 51.
thinks of the life of God Himself as being imparted to the individual. "I cannot tell you with what part of man the Holy Spirit begins; but this I can tell you, he changes the whole man."¹ He admits that there is an inexplicable mysteriousness in the way the change from sin to righteousness is effected and often quotes John 3:8² to prove the incomprehensibleness of the Spirit's activity. This Scripture, of course, does not confine the actions of Deity to any sphere but leaves the way open for the Spirit to operate upon the mind in whatever region He chooses, and Spurgeon leaves the work of the new life entirely to the operation of the Spirit with the emphatic statement that "A supernatural work of the Holy Ghost must be wrought in every one of us, if we would see the face of God with accept- ance".³

That we are born again we know, but how, we cannot tell....we must leave this among the secret things which belong unto God. The Holy Ghost worketh, but the manner of his operation is not to be comprehended.⁴

The very thought of regeneration causes believers to bow in humiliation before God. There is much comfort to be derived from the words "Our Father": "we that are born from above cry 'Abba, Father,' from the very fact that we are regenerated".⁵ "Adoption gives us the rights of children, but regeneration alone gives us the nature of children".⁵ Again, it is through the Spirit of Christ that a Christian is allowed to cry "Abba, Father". These words result from adoption into the family of God. "Because we are sons, God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry 'Abba, Father'."⁵

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¹ Works, 53, p. 294.
² Works, 15, p. 405.
³ Works, 25, p. 54.
⁴ Works, 15, p. 405.
⁵ Works, 7, p. 402.
The great result which occurs simultaneously with regeneration is an eternal union with Christ. It is through the divine impartation and active participation of the Triune God in the new nature that the immortality of the soul is proclaimed. This "mysterious union between Christ and his people...[which is] not to be defined but to be experienced", is "practically and experimentally wrought in us by faith".¹ Spurgeon does not disregard the natural union of Christ with humanity, but rather stresses that "Christ was joined to us when he took upon himself our nature".² This is not the doctrine, however, that he is here emphasizing. The union here discussed is one by which the believer gives himself by faith to Christ, and as a consequence of being "in Christ", he is permitted by an act of appropriation, to partake of the whole Godhead. This union is differentiated from natural associations. "The union is a spiritual one",³ and it constitutes a union "'in Christ Jesus'".⁴ This union, divested of all natural relationships and sympathies, is an indissoluble union whereby the believer's position is actualized into "one with Christ by living experience".⁵ This "oneness" in spirit has a mystical signification and is "a matter to be understood only by the spiritual mind".⁶ Spurgeon refuses to delve into the mystery which he accepts as true.

Christ and his saints actually are one spirit. Oh, the depth! Your contemplation, if aided by the heavenly Interpreter, may assist you; as for me, I should but darken counsel by words without knowledge, if I tried to open up what these words rather conceal than reveal.⁷

The vitality of this union, which is illustrated by metaphorical figures such as the vine and the branches, is Christ, whose life becomes the dominating principle in the believer by virtue of His imparted life.

¹ Works, 15, p. 399.
² Works, 16, p. 638.
³ Ibid., p. 639.
⁴ Works, 32, p. 473.
⁵ Ibid., p. 474.
⁶ Works, 16, p. 640.
Christians are "living branches because Christ lives, and we live in him, and his life flows into us". This organic union with Christ is a union in which all believers participate in the fellowship of Christ. The perpetuity of this spiritual union is assured by the eternal aspect of the Godhead; when one believes in Christ, one partakes of the divine and eternal essence of God. There "is a real relationship between us and Christ Jesus and the divine Father, for we are made 'partakers of the divine nature'."

A vital and spiritual union is meant in the text, a union which is matter of living experience, and is wrought in us when we are born again...From the moment of our regeneration, we who were once the branches of the wild olive, are grafted into the good olive...and become one with Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the union here spoken of, and he that is joined unto the Lord in that way by a work of the Holy Spirit radically and thoroughly changing him, and renewing him, and bringing him into oneness with Christ, is said to be 'one spirit'.

Spurgeon holds in contempt any idea that union with Christ is mediated through or conditional upon participation in the sacraments. It is heresy to substitute the symbol for reality. Though baptism symbolizes union with Christ true union with Him comes by a baptism into the Holy Spirit. "Ye may be baptized in water, but unless ye are baptized into the Holy Ghost, ye know not what union with Christ is." This places union with Christ on an experiential basis. He remarks that "our realized union with Christ is set forth in baptism, not so much as a doctrine of our creed as a matter of our experience". He also denies that participation in the Lord's Supper establishes union with Christ. "To eat the visible bread is not to be one with his mystical body."

Spurgeon thus summarizes the result of union with Christ:

2. Works, 25, p. 54.
3. 1st Cor. 6:17, "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."
5. Ibid., p. 641.
Now see the result of this union; thus Christ meets all our needs. For instance, I bring my sin; but against that he sets his atonement. I bring my bondage; but against that he sets his redemption. I bring him death; but he brings his resurrection. I bring him my weakness, and he meets it with his strength. I bring him my wickedness, and he is made of God unto me righteousness. I bring him my evil nature, and he is made of God unto me sanctification.¹

JUSTIFICATION

Spurgeon defines justification, which he bases on faith, as that state in which the forgiven stand uncondemned before God: "we stand in the sight of God as though we had never been guilty".² Unlike sanctification, justification is an instantaneous act which is completed the moment true faith in God is exercised. In contrast to a continuous state of forgiveness, justification is not only a present act but a permanent state before God. It will be noted in the section on adoption, that Spurgeon considers justification as the means of introducing the filial relationship.

...justification is an instantaneous act. The moment God gives me faith, I become justified; and being justified by faith, I have peace with God. It takes no time to accomplish this miracle of mercy. Sanctification is a lifelong work, continuously effected by the Holy Ghost; but justification is done in one instant. It is as complete the moment a sinner believes, as when he stands before the Eternal.³

Justification is a declarative act of God by which the unrighteous are declared righteous. It is an irreversible act of God which happens at the beginning of the Christian life and is never to be repeated.

...one of the greatest blessings about this mercy is, that it is irreversible. The irreversible nature of justification is that which makes it so lovely in the eyes of God's people. We are justified and pardoned, and then the mercy is that we never can be unpardoned,—we never can be again condemned.⁴

Man is justified by God the Justifier, hence justification is an act on God's part for man, who having received this gift remains in a state

2. Works, 7, p. 113.
4. Ibid., p. 413.
of "continual justification". Justification is not an acquittal, since on the basis of the law alone, man is imperfect. The sense of the term "justification" is "to declare a person to be just". As Justifier, God can declare the guilty not guilty, and at the same time retain His justness. This is possible only by "a way of substitution and imputation" whereby the sins of believers are transferred to Christ, and His righteousness imputed to the believer. "The righteousness which belongs to the Christian is the righteousness of our God and Saviour, who is 'made of God unto us righteousness'."

The root words of justification and righteousness, which are used interchangeably, have essentially the same significance. In the Old Testament פָּדָה "to be right, [or] straight" and in the Piel "to declare any one just", has the same idea as the New Testament Ἰσολόγησις, the general rendering usually being "to declare" or to be "righteous". For a complete understanding of the doctrine of justification, the righteousness of God, which throughout the Old Testament is interpreted as God setting things right in the world, must be rightly understood. Righteousness is an act and not an attribute of God. Men are saved by Christ's righteousness. They appropriate His merits by faith. They are justified through the imputation of Christ's righteousness. The righteousness of God is that act which establishes the right relationship between God and man. Justification is grounded solely in the righteousness of Christ and His vicarious death. Ultimately justification is a judicial act of God in which a guilty man is declared not guilty, hence his freedom from condemnation, and his restoration to Divine favor. The "Lord looks upon the

L. Works, 7, p. 113.
2. Works, 61, p. 566.
4. S. P. Tregelles, Gesenius's Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, p. DCCII.
believing sinner as though he were righteous;"¹ but the believing sinner "has no righteousness of his own".¹

'He that believeth on him is not condemned!'... 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?'... They are so completely freed from condemnation, that not the shadow of a spot upon their soul is found... They stand before God... whiter than snow... Our unrighteousness is covered; from condemnation we are entirely and irrevocably free.²

Reflecting again upon the imputed righteousness of Christ, Spurgeon writes:

'Soul, thou art free from sin, for Christ has borne thy sin in his own body on the tree. Soul, thou art righteous before God, for the righteousness of Christ is thine by imputation.'³

This emphasizes in a dramatic fashion that an enduring peace has been obtained through justification. Christ, having satisfied the demands brought against the sinner, has perfected this peace which "We do not get... before we are justified".⁴

The justified, or those who are declared innocent are out of the jurisdiction of punishment as such. Sin committed by the justified will be punished, but not as a civil or criminal penalty. There is a transition from punishment, according to the standard of the Law, to chastening love, the purpose of which is perfection through sanctification.

...you are never liable as a believer to punishment for your sins... Your Father may often punish you as he punisheth the wicked. But never for the same reason. The ungodly stand on the ground of their own demerits... But your sorrows do not come to you as a matter of desert; they come to you as a matter of love... Believe this... never shall God's anger in a judicial sense drop on you. He may give you a chastening stroke, not as the result of sin, but rather as the result of his own rich grace, that would get the sin out of you, that you may be perfected in sanctification, even as you are now perfect and complete before him in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.⁵

1. Works, 25, p. 64.
4. Ibid., p. 67.
On the basis of Scriptural proof, Spurgeon maintains that justification resides in faith, which "always justifies whenever it exists, and as soon as it is exercised". In discrediting works as meriting justification he cites the example of Abraham who was justified not by works but by faith. In view of the perfect obedience of Christ, Spurgeon denies the ceremonial and moral obedience of Abraham to the law, as a ground for his justification, at the same time rejecting any idea which would lead to the belief that faith is equivalent to justification. Faith is the instrumental cause of, but not the efficient cause of justification. Grace, the antithesis of works, is the immediate cause of justification, while the meritorious cause is Christ's righteousness. It is through the universal principle of faith that Christ's work is accepted and applied to the individual life. "Faith accepts and appropriates for itself the whole system of divine righteousness which is unfolded in the person and work of the Lord Jesus." Self-righteousness is "the enemy of the cross". It "does despite to the blood of Jesus".

...if faith be, as we are told, counted to us for righteousness, it is not because faith in itself has merit which may make it a fitting substitute for a perfect obedience to the law of God, nor can it be viewed as a substitute for such obedience...according to the great principle of the New Testament, even faith, as a work, does not justify the soul. We are not saved by works at all or in any sense, but alone by grace...Faith cannot be its own righteousness, for it is of the very nature of faith to look out of self to Christ.

John Bunyan, in the story of his life, reveals a significant experience after a realization of the true meaning of righteousness.

But one day, as I was passing into the field, and that too with some dashes on my conscience, fearing lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul: Thy righteousness is in heaven. And methought, withal, I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus

1. Works, 14, p. 674.
2. Works, 29, p. 615.
Christ at God's right hand; there, I say, was my righteousness; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, he wants my righteousness, for that was just before him. I saw also, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse, for my righteousness was Jesus Christ himself, 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

In virtue of the Atonement of Christ, Spurgeon carries this same sentiment to his audiences, declaring that "The Lord appoints Jesus to be your righteousness". Pharisaic self-righteousness is self-justification; the only condition of justification rests on faith in Christ's righteousness which alone is sufficient for sinners.

When Spurgeon cast out self-confidence and self-righteousness from his own life, he writes,

He fell upon my neck, and kissed me; He took off my rags, and did clothe me with His righteousness, and caused my soul to sing aloud for joy; while in the house of my heart, and in the house of His Church, there was music and dancing, because His son that He had lost was found, and he that had been dead was made alive again.

ADOPTION

Spurgeon accepts the Pauline statement that all men are "the offspring of God", but he detests any view that holds to what is commonly known as the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. In rejecting the idea of this doctrine, he contends that the advocates of it attempt to affirm their belief on this Pauline statement in Acts, concerning which he says that "no idea of Fatherhood in the majestic sense of the term" is expressed. In a discourse on "The Fatherhood of God", in which he uses the text "Our Father which art in heaven", Spurgeon elaborates upon "the

2. Works, 33, p. 263.
5. Works, 6, p. 423.
double relationship mentioned in the text. It is a relationship which involves sonship, thus entitling a true son to say "Father", and at the same time those who can say "Father" are conjointly permitted to say "Our Father", with the consequent result of a common brotherhood of adopted believers.

There is sonship—'Father;' there is brotherhood, for it says, 'Our Father;' and if he be the common father of us, then we must be brothers; for there are two relationships, sonship and brotherhood.

Though Spurgeon distinguishes between the brotherhood of Christians and that of the world, he certainly believes that every man is his brother's keeper; but to say that every man is, by virtue of his creation, a spiritual son of God by adoption, is a position which he holds as untenable. His one objection to that doctrine is that "it is perfectly untrue and utterly unfounded, having not the slightest shadow of a pretence of being proved by the Word of God". The "sons" of God are described by a three-fold characterization. They are "believers, penitents, and spiritual men". In other words, those who are adopted as sons of God were once "by nature the children of wrath," whereas by the grace of God they have now been

...translated out of the evil and black family of Satan, and brought actually and virtually into the family of God; so that they take his name, share the privileges of sons, and...are to all intents and purposes the actual offspring and children of God.

In objecting to "God the Universal Father, and all men universal sons," Spurgeon writes:

Some say that the Fatherhood of God is universal, and that every man from the fact of his being created by God, is necessarily God's son, and that therefore every man has a right to approach the throne of God, and say, 'Our Father which art in heaven.' To that I must demur. I believe that in this prayer we are to come before God,

1. Works, 4, p. 386.
2. Works, 6, p. 422.
3. Works, 7, p. 98.
looking upon him not as our Father through creation, but as our Father through adoption and the new birth....I have never been able to see that creation necessarily implies fatherhood...and I must demur to the idea that mere creation brings God necessarily into the relationship of a Father.1

It is thus seen that Spurgeon never conceives of all men indiscriminately as sons of God by universal adoption. All men are constituted to be sons of God and every man is a potential candidate for sonship, but such a privilege and position is conditional upon faith in Christ, and its corresponding attendant, regeneration. A son of God by adoption is one who has received the grace of God through faith. "As unbelievers we know nothing of adoption."2 Faith "is the mark of sonship in all who have it",3 "We are called sons of God because of our new nature."4 Thus "Adoption gives us the rights of children," while "regeneration gives us the nature of children".5 These two conditions having been met, a believer in Christ has the right to call himself a son of God by adoption, since through faith "Jesus...bestows on us the status of sons,"6 and this "is an act of pure grace".7

Spurgeon links justification and adoption together, each of which he says "comes to us by redemption".3 As justification is an irretrievable and permanent act, even so adoption is irrevocable. "Sonship is a settled fact and never can be altered under any possible circumstances."8 "The relationship never can be severed as long as time shall last."9

Faith worketh in us the spirit of adoption, and our consciousness of sonship, in this wise: first, it brings us justification....Justification and adoption always go together. 'Whom he called them he also justified,' and the calling is a call to the Father's house, and to a recognition of sonship.2

1. Works, 4, p. 386.
2. Works, 24, p. 531.
3. Ibid., p. 532.
5. Works, 24, p. 530.
7. Works, 7, p. 98.
This filial relationship by which men and women enter into the family of God as sons and daughters, is one in which the believer progressively develops in the moral and spiritual likeness of God. When no similarities to the character of God are manifest, there is no filial relationship. A partaker in the Divine nature will become like God in "Moral...and spiritual qualities".\(^1\) The same power which constitutes one a son will also make him "like to God".\(^1\) By adoption a believer becomes a partaker of Christ's nature, and this is a sufficient reason why the character of a saint should become like Christ's in this life.

We cannot be like God in many of his divine attributes, for they are unique and incommunicable. We can imitate God, however, in many of his attributes; mainly those of a moral and spiritual kind. We must in these qualities be 'imitators of God as dear children,' or our heavenly pedigree cannot be made out.\(^2\)

Spurgeon, recognizing the inability of the believer to maintain properly the vital godliness and holiness which, of necessity, the filial relationship must sustain toward God, states that the Holy Spirit enables a saint to maintain his privilege of sonship by constantly leading him in the paths of God.

...the Holy Ghost leads the saints to prayer, which is the vital breath of their souls. The Holy Spirit leads them to search the word, and opens their understandings to receive it; he leads them into fellowship with himself and with the Son of God. He lifts them right away from worldly cares into heavenly contemplations.\(^3\)

Spurgeon equates the "Spirit of Adoption" with the "spirit of liberty" and in this sense a son by adoption should have supreme confidence in God who has delivered him from the bondage of sin to freedom in Christ. Freedom, the antithesis of bondage, is the principle upon which the filial cry of "Abba, Father" can be made by a son.

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1. Works, 21, p. 31.
2. Ibid., p. 121.
3. Ibid., p. 126.
...it is clear that the Spirit of adoption is in the highest sense the spirit of liberty. If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed....the apostle said, 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear'....He should have added...'but ye have received the Spirit of liberty by which ye have confidence.'

1. Works, 30, p. 20.
CHAPTER IX

THE BAPTISMAL REGENERATION CONTROVERSY
Before the most widely circulated sermon of Spurgeon's career, Baptismal Regeneration,¹ is discussed, his concept of true baptism must be explained. "The great prerequisite for baptism", says Spurgeon, is "'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest' be baptized."² It was his policy to awaken the conscience to personal faith in Christ without which he believed union with Him impossible. The first requirement for admission into the Church of Christ is faith, and when one receives baptism without this confident trust in Christ, whatever service one may try to render in Christ's name is "whitewashed sin".² When a candidate for baptism came to the baptistry, Spurgeon boldly said, "I entreat you to retire from this pool if you do not believe in Christ".³ Thus he made plain "that no one has a right to this ordinance of baptism until he is a believer in Christ".⁴

Spurgeon insists that only believers should be baptized. And, in answer to the question, "Should a person be baptized as soon as he believes?",⁵ he says, "As a rule, yes; but there may be good reasons why he should not be".⁵ He takes into consideration the possibility of "practical reasons for delay"⁶

¹ Works, 10, pp. 313-328.
² Works, 47, p. 354.
³ Ibid., p. 355.
⁴ Ibid., p. 350.
⁵ Works, 36, p. 460.
⁶ Ibid., p. 461.
but basing his argument on the baptism of the Philippian jailor\(^1\) he emphasizes the immediateness of baptism as an act which should not be neglected.

As to the mode of baptism, Spurgeon, speaking from Romans 6:3-4,\(^2\) declares immersion (\(\varphi\upiota\upiota\upiota\upiota\alpha\nu\)) to be the true form of Christian baptism.

If any persons can give a consistent and instructive interpretation of the text, otherwise than by assuming believers' immersion to be Christian baptism, I should like to see them do it. I myself am incapable of performing such a feat... I am content to take the view that baptism signifies the burial of believers in water in the name of the Lord, and I shall so interpret the text.\(^3\)

Baptism is a simple pictorial testimony in which a believer symbolically commemorates and spiritually participates in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. "Baptism sets forth the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and our participation therein.\(^4\) Baptism is the committal of the life to a new order. It is the result of a change in the whole personality of man. Baptism has nothing to do with regeneration which is effected prior to baptism. The baptized person actually "bears a testimony against baptismal regeneration in his being baptized as professedly an already regenerate person".\(^5\) Baptism is a testimony to one's faith. The connection between baptism and faith is that "baptism is the avowal of faith...a testimony of...faith [and] Faith's taking her proper place".\(^6\) Immersion is the only form of baptism that properly portrays "our being buried with Christ, and our rising again in newness of life with him".\(^6\)

\(^1\) Acts 16:33. "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

\(^2\) Romans 6:3-4. "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."

\(^3\) Works, 27, p. 617.

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 618.

\(^5\) Works, 10, p. 326.

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 327.
The two ordinances of our holy religion were intended, I take it, to
sum up the teaching of Christ. The one is baptism, which represents the
cleansing of the conscience as the body is washed with water, the death
of the soul to the old carnal life, its burial with Christ, and its
resurrection to a life of holiness. Then comes the ordinance of the Lord's
supper, which sets forth, in the broken bread and the poured-out wine, the
great truth of Christ's atonement, the fact that he has, by his death,
perfected for ever all those who have been set apart unto him.¹

Spurgeon looks upon the physical act of baptism as something accom-
plished by the hand of man. "Baptism is the outward expression of the inward
faith."² His greatest emphasis centers on the spiritual baptism from the realm
of heaven (άνεξάρτητος). Nevertheless he never depreciates the ordinance of
baptism which he considers as "the test of obedience".³

We should greatly err if we believed in baptismal regeneration, or even
in the efficacy of washing in water for the removal of sin; but, on the
other hand, we are not to place in the background an ordinance which, by
the language of Scripture, is placed in the forefront.⁴

He denies that baptism is a saving efficacy, and at the same time he remonstrates
with those who refuse baptism on the ground that it is non-essential. Baptism
is essential not only from the standpoint of obedience but on the basis of a
Divine command. From the Scripture, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be
saved",⁵ Spurgeon stresses "that baptism follows faith",⁶ with the warning,
"Never neglect the order of things in the Bible".⁶

It becomes essential as soon as Christ commands it. It is in this way
that baptism, if not essential to your salvation, is essential to your
obedience to Christ. If you have become his disciple, you are bound hence-
forth to obey all your Master's commands: "Whatsoever he saith unto you,
do it."⁷

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3. Ibid., p. 607.
5. Mark 16:16.
7. Ibid., p. 608.
In the year 1859, five years before the great controversy, while preaching on the subject, "Who Should be Baptized?",¹ Spurgeon assured his hearers "that I do not introduce this topic in any controversial spirit, for that I would abhor...";² but in the year 1864 he acknowledged that this subject, contrary to his desire, had become with him a matter of controversy.

I do not think that mere controversial preaching will do much, though it must be used; it is grace-work we want; it is bringing you to Christ, it is getting you to lay hold of him—it is this which shall put the devil to a nonplus and expand the kingdom of Christ.³

Controversy, however, was a matter of extreme disgust to Spurgeon. At the beginning of the controversy, he said, "I have been loath enough to undertake the work..." ⁴

The Baptismal Regeneration Controversy could have begun as easily in 1859 as in 1864. The only reason its beginning was delayed was because no one seemed to be offended by Spurgeon's remarks against the advocates of baptismal regeneration. The Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel,⁵ an Anglican clergyman, who in 1848 became a Baptist minister, and who took a stand against Spurgeon's sermon on Baptismal Regeneration in 1864, could have readily taken the same position against his sermon in 1859 on "Who Should be Baptized". An extract from this sermon follows.

The gospel appeals to men's understanding and heart...I am amazed that an unconscious babe should be made the partaker of an ordinance which, according to the plain teaching of the Scriptures, requires the conscious acquiescence and complete heart-trust of the recipient. Very few, if any, would argue that infants ought to receive the Lord's Supper; but there is no more Scriptural warrant for bringing them to the one ordinance than there is for bringing them to the other...The Church of England Catechism is quite right when it says that repentance and faith are required of persons to be baptized, but its practice is not in accordance with that Scriptural teaching. The godfather and godmother of the child, when they

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2. Ibid., p. 349.
4. Ibid., p. 314.
5. B. W. Noel had been President of the Baptist Union in 1855 and was again elected in 1867 after this controversy.
bring him to the font, promise in his name that he shall repent and believe, and that he shall renounce the devil and all his works; this is more than the child himself could promise to do, and more than I could promise to do; or, if I did say so, I should be a liar to God and to my own soul, since it would be utterly impossible for me to fulfill such a promise.1

It is not the purpose here to review in detail this controversy, except from the standpoint of soteriology. It may be said, however, after reviewing several volumes of pamphlets collected by Spurgeon on his controversies, and now in the private library of the Rev. A. C. Burley of Bournemouth, that the sum and substance of this controversy lies within the bounds of soteriology, and the information given in this study summarizes this doctrinal controversy.

On the morning of June 5, 1864, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, Spurgeon preached a sixteen page sermon on Baptismal Regeneration,2 which had the largest circulation of any of his discourses. This sermon focused attention on the doctrines of faith and baptism, the latter considered the least important in the plan of salvation. In the discourse, Spurgeon forcefully restated the position he had always maintained on the doctrine of Scriptural baptism, namely, that there is no saving efficacy in baptism which is no more than a public confession of one's spiritual participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, which baptism by immersion symbolically pictures. There was no new doctrine set forth in this controversial sermon. The history of Baptists has never shown belief in baptismal regeneration, and Spurgeon, fearing the inculcation of this belief within the realm of Baptists, reminded them that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit and is effected before baptism which has nothing to do with regeneration. This sermon was directed against anyone who believed in baptismal regeneration, but in particular it was directed against the Church of England and her Book of Common Prayer.

1. Works, 47, p. 351.
2. Works, 10, pp. 313-328.
The contents of this homily would have gone unnoticed, as the rest of his sermons on this subject, had it not been for one man, B. W. Noel, who felt that he should bring public condemnation upon the sermon "not so much to accuse you [Spurgeon] as to justify myself". Noel believed that the pride of certain ministers in the Church of England had been infringed upon by this striking argument against that Church, and that as brethren in the Evangelical Alliance, laboring for a common cause, such accusations against the Church of England were not in order. It is possible that Noel voiced such sentiments in the fear that the Baptist cause in Britain would be checked. Forceful arguments within both denominations continued for over a year and when the fever of controversy ended the status quo of each denomination remained unchanged. However, the insatiable desire of this nonconformist preacher, who was attracting the attention of multitudes with his rare oratorical and homiletical abilities, to make truth stand before error, was compensated by his public condemnation of baptismal regeneration. His satisfaction lay in the removal of the burden of the Lord from his soul after he had made known what he called "the great error ...of baptismal regeneration".

In opposition to baptismal regeneration, Spurgeon preached the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. His purpose was to destroy any faith one might have in the efficacy of water. When questioned about discouraging prospective believers on the ground of baptism, he made known that his purpose in standing for spiritual baptism was to discourage the erroneous belief of self-salvation. "That is the very thing that I want to do," he said; "I would like not only to discourage them from attempting that impossible task, but to cast them into despair concerning it."

2. Works, 10, p. 315.
The text of this controversial discourse was Mark 16:15-16, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Delving into the heart of the controversy, in which Spurgeon preached "that baptism without faith saves no one", he attacked the Church of England with the words, "it openly, boldly, and plainly declares this doctrine [baptismal regeneration] in her own appointed standard, the Book of Common Prayer". Then he proceeded to condemn the new birth as taught in the Catechism of the Church of England by denying that anyone could be born again and made a member of the body of Christ by "baptismal regeneration, whether in adults or infants, or ascribed to sprinkling, pouring, or immersion". In another sermon he said:

I was sprinkled when I was a child, but I know that I was not thereby made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. I know that nothing of the kind took place in me, but that, as soon as I could, I went into sin, and continued in it. I was not born again, I am sure, till I was about fifteen years of age, when the Lord brought salvation to my soul through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and so I was enabled to trust in Jesus as my Saviour.

In all his controversies, Spurgeon never attempted to offend or undermine anyone in a malicious way. He was candid, honest, and open-minded. He hated dishonesty, and for that reason he could not understand why certain ministers in the Church of England remained in that Church when actually, they did not believe in baptismal regeneration. Spurgeon openly repudiated doctrines he did not approve and his firm conviction was that others should rigidly adhere to dogmas they truly believed. The following passage adequately illustrates the spirit of Spurgeon in controversy.

1. Works, 10, p. 315.
2. Ibid., p. 316.
If baptism does regenerate people, let the fact be preached with a trumpet tongue, and let no man be ashamed of his belief in it. If this be really their creed, by all means let them have full liberty for its propagation. My brethren, those are honest Churchmen in this matter who, subscribing to the Prayer Book, believe in baptismal regeneration, and preach it plainly. God forbid that we should censure those who believe that baptism saves the soul, because they adhere to a Church which teaches the same doctrine. So far they are honest men; and in England, wherever else, let them never lack a full toleration. Let us oppose their teaching by all Scriptural and intelligent means, but let us respect their courage in plainly giving us their views. I hate their doctrine, but I love their honesty; and as they speak but what they believe to be true, let them speak it out, and the more clearly the better. Out with it, sirs, be it what it may, but do let us know what you mean. For my part, I love to stand foot to foot with an honest foe-man.  

In denouncing baptismal regeneration, Spurgeon did not deprecate baptism per se. Regeneration and baptism each have their importance but the major emphasis is placed on regeneration by the Spirit which results from faith in Christ. The controversy with the Church of England was brought to light, he said, "for the good of others."  

Spurgeon held that there is a connection between faith and regeneration but not between regeneration and baptism. He thought of the latter as a mechanical salvation having its origin in ceremony.  

His first reason why he thought men were not saved by baptismal regeneration was "that it seems out of character with the spiritual religion which Christ came to teach, that he should make salvation depend upon mere ceremony."  

Spurgeon did not object to ceremony as such. It was the teaching which that ceremony imparts and concerning which, in the beginning of his controversy, he said, "The burden of the Lord is upon me, and I must deliver my soul. I have been loath enough to undertake the work, but I am forced to it by an awful and overwhelming sense of solemn duty."  

When regeneration by ceremonial baptism was taught as an essential requisite for salvation, it was condemned as the teaching of a counterfeit church.

2. Ibid., p. 314.
The operation of water-baptism does not appear even to my faith to touch the point involved in the regeneration of the soul. What is the necessary connection between water and the overcoming of sin? I cannot see any connection which can exist between sprinkling, or immersion, and regeneration, so that the one shall necessarily be tied to the other in the absence of faith....If this be your teaching, that regeneration goes with baptism, I say it looks like the teaching of a spurious Church, which has craftily invented a mechanical salvation to deceive ign Export...minds..."1

To prove his second argument "that the dogma is not supported by facts", Spurgeon reminded those who doubted his position on baptismal regeneration that some of those whom he had baptized were never regenerated and were living in deepest sin. He also asked other denominations to ascertain the validity of the conversion of those whom they had baptized, and advised them to obtain a statistical report from the prison authorities before they concluded that baptismal regeneration was essential to saving faith.

Are all persons who are baptized children of God?...Let us mark their resemblance to their glorious Parent! Am I untruthful if I say that thousands of those who were baptized in their infancy are now in our gaols? ...Do we find—we who baptized on profession of faith, and baptize by immersion in a way which is confessed to be correct, though not allowed by some to be absolutely necessary to its validity—do we who baptize in the name of the sacred Trinity as others do, do we find that baptism regenerates? We do not....we confess it with sorrow...that we have seen those whom we have ourselves baptized, according to apostolic precedent, go back into the world and wander into the foulest sin, and their baptism has scarcely been so much as a restraint to them, because they have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Facts all show that whatever good there may be in baptism it certainly does not make a man "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven'...2

Spurgeon's third reason for condemning baptismal regeneration lay in his persuasion "that the performance styled baptism by the Prayer Book is not at all likely to regenerate and save".3 He denied the right of parental proxy to confess faith and to keep promises for the child. "I cannot understand gracious, godly people, standing at the font to insult the all-gracious Father with vows

1. Works, 10, p. 316.
2. Ibid., pp. 316-319.
3. Ibid., p. 319.
and promises framed upon a fiction, and involving practical falsehood". He boldly asserted that some of those who made vows for their children were sinners and on the basis of unregenerate parents, as well as the inability of the child to think for himself, he decried as ungodly such a baptism without faith and the operation of the Spirit.

Totally irreligious they are, but yet they promise for the baby what they never did, and never thought of doing for themselves—they promise on behalf of this child, 'that he will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy Word, and obediently keep his commandments.' My brethren, do not think I speak severely here....You cannot believe in regeneration by this operation whether saints or sinners are the performers....But you will say 'Why do you cry out against it?' I cry out against it because I believe that baptism does not save the soul, and that the preaching of it has a wrong and evil influence upon men. We meet with persons who, when we tell them that they must be born again, assure us that they were born again when they were baptized. The number of these persons is increasing, fearfully increasing, until all grades of society are misled by this belief. How can any man stand up in his pulpit and say 'Ye must be born again' to his congregation, when he has already assured them, by his own 'unfeigned assent and consent' to it, that they are themselves, every one of them, born again in baptism.2

With continued vigor of condemnatory language, Spurgeon in his next point attacked Catholicism, saying, "in no age since the Reformation has Popery made such fearful strides in England as during the last few years".3 He attributed the advance of the Church of Rome in England to false faith and baptismal regeneration, counting these as "stepping-stones to make it easy for men to go to Rome".3 His independent attitude and his dogmatic position on baptismal regeneration appear in this excerpt:

Call a man a Baptist, or a Presbyterian, or a Dissenter, or a Churchman, that is nothing to me—if he says that baptism saves the soul, out upon him, out upon him, he states what God never taught, what the Bible never laid down, and what ought never to be maintained by men who profess that the Bible, and the whole Bible, is the religion of Protestants....I do beseech you to remember that you must have a new heart and a right spirit, and baptism cannot give you these. You must turn from your sins and follow after

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1. Works, 10, p. 320.
2. Ibid., p. 321.
3. Ibid., p. 322.
Christ; you must have such a faith as shall make your life holy and your speech devout, or else you have not the faith of God's elect, and into God's kingdom you shall never come. I pray you never rest upon this wretched and rotten foundation, this deceitful invention of antichrist. O, may God save you from it, and bring you to seek the true rock of refuge for weary souls.¹

In the latter part of this great sermon, the circulation of which numbered over one-fourth of a million copies, Spurgeon discussed "the indispensable requisite to salvation",² namely faith, the doctrine of which has already been treated in this thesis.

The controversy resulted in Spurgeon's temporary withdrawal from the Evangelical Alliance. The secretary of this Alliance had written to Spurgeon to the effect that it was the desire of the Alliance that he should repudiate his opinions expressed in the sermon on Baptismal Regeneration or withdraw from the Evangelical Alliance. Believing that this was the desire of the Alliance, Spurgeon withdrew his membership. However, he learned later that the action of the Secretary of the Alliance, Mr. James Davis, was unofficial, and that it expressed only his personal desire. Several years later Spurgeon rejoined the Alliance and remained a member until his death in 1892.

¹ Works, 10, p. 323.
² Ibid., p. 324.
CHAPTER X

THE DOCTRINES OF SANCTIFICATION AND PERSEVERANCE
SANCTIFICATION

Immediately upon the regeneration of a soul, a separating work known as sanctification begins. The new nature given in regeneration is constantly in conflict with the old or Adamic nature. Spurgeon calls this perpetual warfare of the soul, in which the new nature unceasingly attempts to extirpate sin in order that holiness may persist, progressive sanctification, or that process "whereby the man of God is removed farther and farther from all fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, and is changed...into an ever-growing likeness of his Lord".¹ He considers "the making of the people of God holy"² as the deeper meaning of the term "sanctification", which he further describes as a process of vivification by mortification, or the life-death principle begun by the Spirit in the new birth. Thus, unlike the instantaneous acts of regeneration and justification, sanctification is a linear process in which continual progress is made toward holiness and purity of life. This gradual work which separates a believer from sin, and which in every respect produces holiness, is to continue until perfection in glory.

Justification is perfect the moment it is received; but sanctification is a matter of growth...To make us holy is a life work, and for it we should seek the divine operation every hour.³

2. Ibid., p. 149.
3. Ibid., p. 151.
Sanctification begins in regeneration....This work...is carried on in two ways, by vivification and by mortification; that is, by giving life to that which is good, and by sending death to that which is evil in the man...This is carried on every day in what we call perseverance, by which the Christian is preserved and continued in a gracious state, and is made to abound in good works unto the praise and glory of God; and it culminates or comes to perfection in 'glory', when the soul being thoroughly purged is caught up to dwell with holy beings at the right hand of the Majesty on High.¹

In sanctification the believer is led by the Spirit to discover and eliminate sin with a view toward perfect conformity to the standard of Christ. This road toward Christ's likeness is "as an elevation to be reached only by preceding stepping-stones",² which he specifies as calling and justification. In other words, in the soteriological plan, sanctification does not begin until one experiences Christ.

Spurgeon relates sanctification in several vital ways to the initial conversion experience. Concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, who is the agent over the entire process of salvation, he states that it is His office to perfect the new moral character which has begun in regeneration. He relates faith, the primary condition of salvation, to sanctification by saying that "sanctification grows out of faith in Jesus Christ".² By connecting sanctification with regeneration, Spurgeon shows that "Sanctification begins in regeneration",¹ and that its works are manifested by the expulsion of sin in order "that his people should be perfectly delivered from evil".³ In associating sanctification with justification, Spurgeon states that "all the justified are by a work of the Holy Ghost sanctified, and made meet to be afterwards glorified with Christ Jesus".²

I speak of consecration, but it is not as a first thing...for a man must be justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus, or he will not possess the grace which is the root of all true sanctity; for sanctification grows out of faith in Jesus Christ. Remember holiness

1. Works, 8, p. 92.
2. Works, 14, p. 685.
is a flower, not a root; it is not sanctification that saves, but salvation that sanctifies. A man is not saved by his holiness, but he becomes holy because he is already saved... Note then the due order of heavenly benefits, consecration to God follows calling and justification.¹

In stressing the different shades of meaning between the Greek verbs ἅγιος to make holy or to sanctify, and ἁρυφότιος to purify, it appears on a prima facie view that Spurgeon's interpretation of sanctification fails to take into consideration the perfect of ὅρκας, Ὑλόμεθα in John 17:19, which indicates completed action. This, according to some theologians casts out the idea of gradual or progressive sanctification which Spurgeon holds. Spurgeon, however, does not neglect to take Ὑλόμεθα into account. His idea is that on the part of God the believer is now perfectly sanctified in Christ, but on the part of the one believing, a continuous life-process of purging and purifying accompanies him until the glorification of the body.

We may speak of believers as those who are sanctified by God the Father... They were set apart before they were created, they were legally set apart by the purchase of Christ, they are manifestly and visibly set apart by the effectual calling of the Spirit of grace. They are, I say, in this sense at all periods sanctified; and speaking of the work as it concerns God the Father, they are completely sanctified unto the Lord for ever.²

Spurgeon in his ministry concentrated on practical as well as spiritual results. He endeavored to promote holiness of life by disturbing complacent minds with the thought that grace and faith stimulate rather than retard holy living.

I desire to maintain always a balance in my ministry, and while combating self-righteousness to war perpetually with loose living.... We must remember that though we are saved by grace, yet grace does not stupify us, but rather quickens us into action; and though salvation depends upon the merits of Christ, yet those who receive those merits receive with them a faith which produces holiness.³

By inculcating in the believer a desire for Christ's likeness,

¹ Works, 14, pp. 685-686.
² Works, 8, p. 88.
³ Works, 16, p. 385.
the Holy Spirit, while expelling sin from the heart, prepares the way for fellowship with God. Fellowship with God is a most essential result of sanctification. Here Spurgeon amplifies the fundamental principle of love which identifies God with man by relating sanctification to love. As the love of sin is divorced from the believer, his love for Christ increases to the same degree, and to the same extent the believer identifies himself with the love and purpose of God. In emphasizing that love is the principal motive for holiness, Spurgeon remarks:

When the Lord fills his servant full of his love, and makes him to be joyed and overjoyed with the sweet consciousness that he is the Beloved's, and that the Beloved is his, then a holy jealousy burns within the soul, and the heart cries, 'Is there anything that can grieve the Beloved? Let it be slain!'

Without excluding the work of the Father and the Son, Spurgeon attributes the chief work of sanctification to the Holy Spirit. From an overall point of view, however, he conceives of it as the work of God: "sanctification is a work of God from its earliest stage".

While we may without the slightest mistake speak of sanctification as the work of the Spirit, yet we must take heed that we do not view it as if the Father and the Son had no part therein. It is correct to speak of sanctification as the work of the Father, of the Spirit, and of the Son.

It was "the eternal will ordained of old by the Father...that a people whom he chose should be sanctified and set apart unto himself". This "will by which we are sanctified was performed of the ever blessed Son". The work of the Son "must be applied to us by the Holy Spirit". Thus Spurgeon recognizes the co-working of the Trinity in effecting individual sanctification.

1. Works, 27, p. 3.
2. Works, 32, p. 152.
3. Works, 8, p. 85.
4. Works, 26, p. 158.
5. Ibid., p. 159.
Spurgeon, using the words of Jesus, states that the believer is sanctified "through thy truth" which is the Word of God, and which is the visible agent of sanctification. The Word or truth acts as a "sanctifier". "The truth is the sanctifier and if we do not hear the truth, depend upon it we shall not grow in sanctification."¹ The word of God is effectively applied to the believer by the Spirit, the author of sanctification, who is "the great fire that burns in Zion to purge believers from the love of sin".²

The primary agents of sanctification, however, are designated by Spurgeon as the Son and the Spirit. Actually, Spurgeon thinks of the Spirit and the Son as equal Co-workers in the process of sanctification, though he often speaks of the Spirit as the primary agent. "Now, this work, though we commonly speak of it as being the work of the Spirit, is quite as much the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as of the Spirit."³ Without the work of Christ the Spirit's office is unnecessary. The merits of Christ are the means of sanctification. The Holy Spirit "is the immediate agent of our sanctification".⁴ The Spirit takes that which Christ has provided in His death for the removal of sin, and effectively applies it to the believer. Referring to the blood of Christ as the separating or distinguishing mark between the godly and ungodly, Spurgeon observes that "the more the blood is applied...the more shall we become sanctified in spirit, and soul, and body, by the power of the Holy Ghost".⁵

Sanctification is a work in us, not a work for us. It is a work in us, and there are two agents: one is the worker who works this sanctification effectually—that is the Spirit: and the other, the agent, the efficacious means by which the Spirit works this sanctification is—Jesus Christ and his most precious blood.⁶

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1. Works, 8, p. 94.
2. Works, 27, p. 3.
3. Works, 8, p. 92.
5. Works, 60, p. 102.
6. Works, 8, p. 93.
Though Spurgeon practically equates the work of Christ and that of the Spirit in the sanctifying process, he nevertheless holds that sanctification is chiefly the work of God's Spirit. "Real sanctification is entirely from first to last the work of the Spirit of the blessed God, whom the Father hath sent forth that he might sanctify his chosen ones."¹ The Spirit cultivates those virtues in the Christian that lead to perfection. The work of the Spirit in sanctification is summarized thus:

> Every work of the Spirit of God upon the new nature aims at the purification, the consecration, the perfecting of those whom God in love has taken to be his own.²

Spurgeon takes the footwashing ceremony mentioned in John 13:8 "to mean one thing, namely, purification through the Lord Jesus".³ In his analysis of this phrase, he elaborates by saying that this disputed and misinterpreted Scripture means "daily pardon for sin through faith in Jesus",³ and "the continual sanctification which faith in Jesus Christ carries on within us by the power of the Holy Spirit".⁴

In like manner Spurgeon interprets the water and the blood mentioned in 1st John 5:6 and John 19:34, as truths involving the nature of sanctification. He never separates the work of Christ from the work of the Spirit who applies the atoning work of Christ to the believer.

> It is very important that we should always carry in our minds the remembrance of these two truths; first, that Jesus Christ 'came by water,' that is, it was his divine purpose to purify his people, and make them holy; and secondly, that Jesus Christ 'came by blood,' that is, it was his grand aim and object to deliver his people from the guilt of sin.⁵

Grace is ever flowing from God toward man. It is always "free" and belief in Christ puts a man fully within its pale. After one has been

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¹ Works, 32, p. 152.
² Ibid., p. 153.
³ Works, 16, p. 220.
⁴ Ibid., p. 221.
⁵ Works, 57, p. 254.
saved by grace, the love of God for him has reached its height. In this sense, the love of God exhausts itself, its depth having been fathomed, as it were, when one enters into the compass of grace through belief in Christ. A Christian grows in grace, but elective grace remains constant and never varies because God is eternal and cannot increase nor decrease.

There is a vast difference between grace growing and our growing in grace. God's grace never increases; it is always infinite... It cannot be more; and, in the nature of God, it could not be less... We cannot be more in it than we are, or than we always have been.1

A believer in Christ becomes complete in grace the moment of his reliance upon Him. At the moment of trust he receives all the justifying mercy and pardoning grace that he will ever obtain. In this sense the Christian is already perfect in Christ. But though the grace of God toward man does not increase nor diminish there is a development of it in the Christian life. "It is certain that, while the grace of God toward us does not grow, yet there is such a thing as the development of grace."2

Growth in grace is in Christ alone, and this growth consists of an increased knowledge of Him. This development in grace is a continuous process known as sanctification, which is the term used to define growth in grace. If "growth in grace...does not mean progressive sanctification, then I do not understand the term 'growth in grace' at all".2

...there is a sense in which there is no such thing at all as growth in grace. If you understand the word grace as signifying free favour, and the love of God towards his people, there is not, and there cannot be, any growth in that at all....As soon as ever I have a vital connection with the Lamb of God, I am 'in grace'. Let me live on, let my grace grow, let my faith increase...yet I shall not be more 'in grace' than I was before. God will not love me more... than he has the very first moment when I turn to him....We never grow in the grace of election.1

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1. Works, 46, p. 530.
2. Ibid., p. 531.
PERFECTIONISM

On Scriptural, as well as experiential grounds, Spurgeon repudiates the view of Christian perfection during the course of a believer's life. In answer to the question, "'Can a Christian man be perfect in this life?'

1 Spurgeon gives a definite "'No'".1 In the cosmic order it is "absolutely impossible" to attain a state of sinless perfection, though every believer should strive for "our glorious aim: 'Be thou perfect'."2

Such perfection envisages a life of faith and constant communion with God.

The way to be transformed into the likeness of God is to live in the company of God. That which thou lookest upon, thou wilt soon be like; and if thine eyes look on God, thy character will become like God.2

Perfection is the object of sanctification. "The great object of his refining is that he may deliver us from all evil, and make us perfect",3 but this perfection is a future and not a present reality. It is a state to be attained, and a goal toward which progress in perfection is made. Perfection, as has been pointed out, is reached at the death of the believer.

...I feel perfectly persuaded, that perfection is absolutely impossible to any man beneath the sky; and yet, I feel sure, that to every believer future perfection is an absolute certainty. The day shall come, beloved, when the Lord shall not only make us better, but shall make us perfectly good...That day, however, I believe, shall not come until we enter into the joy of our Lord, and are glorified together with Christ in heaven.4

Contrary to the belief of W. N. Clarke that "Not even at death can sanctification end,"5 Spurgeon says that this purging and purifying process ends at death. He furthermore maintains that its thoroughness is sufficient for eternity and that a purgatorial purification is unnecessary to attain perfection.

2. Works, 18, p. 657.
This fire-process is intended to be thorough, that it may be abiding. The work is done, and done thoroughly. The purifications of God will last throughout eternity. Have you ever reflected upon the fact that when Christ's refining work is done upon us there will never be any need for it again? Blessed be God, there is no purgatorial fire. Believers are taken up to heaven at once as soon as they quit this world.1

It has already been pointed out that Spurgeon holds that on God's part, a believer is now perfect in Christ. Using the phrase "perfect in Christ Jesus", he observes that "The doctrine of our text is that every man who is 'in Christ' is perfect". From the human point of view, however, "Our standing, in our own conscience, is imperfection".4

In having access to God, perfection is absolutely necessary. God cannot talk with an imperfect being. We come before God in our station, not in our character, and therefore, we may come as perfect men at all times...for in this sense Christ hath perfected for ever, every consecrated vessel of his mercy...when I come before the throne of God, I feel myself a sinner, but God does not look upon me as one... I feel that I am unworthy in myself; but I am not unworthy in that official standing in which he has placed me. As a sanctified and perfected thing in Christ, I have the blood upon me; God regards me in my sacrifice, in my worship, ay, and in myself, too, as being perfect.5

PERSEVERANCE

Spurgeon attaches paramount importance to the continuance of the Christian life. It was not his policy to preach one doctrine more than another, but if the weight should rest on any particular doctrine, the doctrine of perseverance would have the pre-eminence; "if there is one doctrine I have preached more than another, it is the doctrine of perseverance of the saints even to the end".6 Another consideration arising from this doctrine, and one which proved most significant in his personal life, concerned his conversion.
Do you know... that one of the great leading thoughts of my young life, the master thought that brought me to the Saviour, was belief in the doctrine of final perseverance? 1

It is not surprising, especially in view of a strict Calvinistic background, that Spurgeon should bring into his discussion on perseverance the doctrine of predestination. His idea of perseverance is not inconsistent with his doctrine of election. There are two distinct features noted in his concept of perseverance. The first has to do with the faithfulness of God. It is not in the nature of God to save a man and then later withdraw His grace with the consequent result of damnation.

'God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent.' When he putteth forth his hand to save he doth not withdraw it till the work is accomplished... The apostle would have us ground our confidence of perseverance upon the confirmation which divine faithfulness is sure to bestow upon us. 2

The second feature, which has been discussed elsewhere in this thesis, involves man's freedom and responsibility. In his freedom man may either cooperate with or oppose the will of God in salvation. His submission to God is purely voluntary. Perseverance is emphasized as a doctrine of grace. Faith in this doctrine is as essential as belief in any other doctrine, and where real spiritual life exists, God in His faithfulness will give sufficient grace to permit a believer faithfully to endure until he is received in glory. Strictly speaking, these two points, God's faithfulness, and man's free response, constitute the cardinal thought of Spurgeon, not only on perseverance but also on predestination.

We believe that God has an elect people whom he has chosen unto eternal life, and that truth necessarily involves the perseverance in grace. We believe in special redemption, and this secures the salvation and consequent perseverance of the redeemed. We believe in effectual calling, which is bound up with justification, a justification which ensures glorification. The doctrines of grace are like a chain—if you believe in one of them you must believe the next, for

1. Works, 18, p. 347.
each one involves the rest; therefore I say that you who accept any of the doctrines of grace must receive this also, as involved in them.\(^1\)

In the following passage, a combination of man's responsibility and voluntary continuance of the Christian life is seen. Herein the "new" or "moderate" type of Calvinism is manifested in Spurgeon's thought. There was no doubt in his mind that God's purpose would be accomplished, but he would not follow the extreme Calvinists by omitting man's freedom and responsibility from the plan of salvation. It has already been pointed out that Spurgeon found it impossible to have a doctrine of predestination that ignores the free will of man. A truly regenerate man will persevere to the end, but when one wilfully forsakes his Christian experience, or when he lives inconsistently with Christian principles, God will not ultimately save him. A truly regenerate man, however, will not turn from his Christian experience. No man in Christ will be lost, but his life must be morally consistent with the divine government of God. In other words, Spurgeon does not hold the doctrine that God is determined unconditionally to preserve a believer regardless of his demeanor. But God is determined to keep those who continue in the faith. If it should be possible for a truly regenerate man to forsake Christ, there is no hope for him.

Once entered upon the way of life, the pilgrim must persevere in it or perish, for thus saith the Lord, 'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.' Perseverance is the path of faith and holiness, is a necessity of the Christian, for only 'he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.'\(^2\)

According to the Arminian view, man assumes total responsibility for the continuance of the Christian life, irrespective of God's grace. Contrary to the extreme view of the Calvinists, and the deistic tendency of the Arminians, Spurgeon's position is that if the believer perseveres

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2. Ibid., p. 361.
to the end, it is by grace on the part of God, and by faith coupled with prayer and other Christian virtues, on the part of the believer, and these lead to a consecrated life. Thus on the human side of perseverance, Spurgeon advocates a constant activity on the believer's part to strive against the Adamic nature, with the consequent result of holiness. This comprehends sanctification, which he places on the divine side of the Christian experience, with perseverance on the manward side as its counterpart. Spurgeon calls the internal conflict of the soul with sin, discussed in sanctification, perseverance. Faith in Christ "is the highest possible incentive to make a man struggle with the corruptions of the flesh, and seek to persevere according to God's promise".\(^1\) When the Spirit of holiness is absent, faith in Christ is simply a delusion.

The Scripture does not teach that a man will reach his journey's end without continuing to travel along the road; it is not true that one act of faith is all, and that nothing is needed of daily faith, prayer, and watchfulness. Our doctrine is the very opposite, namely, that the righteous shall hold on his way; or, in other words, shall continue in faith, in repentance, in prayer, and under the influence of the grace of God. We do not believe in salvation by a physical force which treats a man as a dead log, and carries him whether he will it or not towards heaven. No, 'he holds on,' he is personally active about the matter, and plods on up hill and down dale till he reaches his journey's end. We never thought, nor even dreamed, that merely because a man supposes that he once entered on this way he may therefore conclude that he is certain of salvation, even if he leaves the way immediately.\(^2\)

In view of the above, Spurgeon examines the problem of apostasy in Hebrews 6:4-6.\(^3\) In his analysis he points out that, contrary to the belief of some, the people described in these passages were "true

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1. Works, 15, p. 299.
3. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."
believers”. In his interpretation of the passage he differentiates between "falling away" and "falling". The distinction made between "falling away" and "falling" is that the former admits no possibility of soul renewal, whereas the latter is simply the equivalent of slipping into sin, hence capable of restoration. Spurgeon believes that when a man is truly saved, he is always saved.

What is falling away? Well, there never has been a case of it yet, and therefore I cannot describe it from observation; but I will tell you what I suppose it is. To fall away, would be for the Holy Spirit entirely to go out of a man—for his grace entirely to cease; not to lie dormant, but to cease to be—for God, who has begun a good work to leave off doing it entirely—to take his hand completely and entirely away, and say, "There, man! I have half saved thee; now I will damn thee!" That is what falling away is. It is not to sin temporarily....Falling away would involve God's grace changing its living nature, God's immutability becoming variable, God's faithfulness becoming changeable, and God, himself, being undeified, for all these things falling away would necessitate.

Thus, Spurgeon does not believe that a true follower in Christ can fall away, but if he should, "it is impossible for him to be renewed". On the doctrine of apostasy Spurgeon further observes:

...that if grace be ineffectual, if grace does not keep a man, then there is nothing left but that he must be damned. And what is that but to say, only going a little round about, that grace will do it?

Again, "You shall be preserved, but, mark you, it is stated as a promise, and therefore it is not at all a matter of necessity".

Spurgeon maintains that Hebrews 6:4–6 is given as a warning to Christians. "Apart from grace you are in fearful danger of apostasy.”

He is in perfect agreement with the following words of A. B. Bruce:

Every fall involves a risk of apostasy, and the higher the experience fallen from the greater the risk. The deeper religion has gone into a man at the commencement of his Christian course, the less

2. 1st John 2:1.
4. Ibid., p. 175.
5. Works, 12, p. 700.
hopeful his condition if he lapse. The nearer the initial stage to a thorough conversion the less likely is a second change, if the first turn out abortive. The brighter the light in the soul, the deeper the darkness when the light is put out.  

Three encouraging reasons are given for the foregoing disputed portion of Scripture. The first acts as a means of prevention, the second as confident reliance on God, and the third involves the element of godly fear. The three reasons are stated thus:  

First...it is put in to keep thee from falling away. God preserves his children from falling away; but he keeps them by the use of means; and one of these is, the terrors of the law, showing them what would happen if they were to fall away...It leads the believer to greater dependance on God, to a holy fear and caution, because he knows that if he were to fall away he could not be renewed...It is calculated to excite fear; and this holy fear keeps the Christian from falling.  

Other doctrinal truths are pointed out as an assurance that a Christian will persevere to the end. Concerning the nature of the new life imparted at regeneration, Spurgeon says, "it is a divine principle, which cannot die nor be corrupt".  

In relation to faith and perseverance, Spurgeon speaks of faith as "a conquering principle" with "no hint given that it can ever be defeated". The continuance of this life is stressed on the ground of union with Christ. "It is not a partnership which may be dissolved, or a connection which may be severed." Again, "But what is the value of union to Christ, if that union does not insure salvation?" From the standpoint of perseverance and justification, Spurgeon asks, "O beloved, how then shall the man that believeth in Christ be condemned—condemned for the sin that has been pardoned?" Of adoption, he remarks, "Adoption is surely a grand proof that the Lord's people shall be kept and

2. Works, 12, p. 700.  
4. Ibid., p. 365.  
6. Works, 10, p. 95.  
7. Works, 18, p. 343.
preserved; that there shall be an unbroken family of God in heaven." To cover all the arguments for the continuance of the Christian life, the blood of Christ is presented as the true atoning efficacy whereby perseverance is made possible. "Where is the efficacy of the precious blood, if it does not effectually redeem?" "The righteousness of Jesus Christ will make the saint who wears it so fair that he will be positively faultless." Again, "It is blessed to believe that all God's people shall persevere; but the essence of delight is to feel that I shall persevere through him."

ASSURANCE

In his discussions on the doctrine of assurance, Spurgeon always prominently displays the faith factor as the primary idea attaching itself to the assurance of salvation. To the objection that infallible assurance is impossible, he replies, "It is not only possible, but has certainly been enjoyed by the people of God". The possibility of knowing, यह खोजना is "to experience him" without which "assurance is not possible till you are born again". Salvation and assurance are not inseparable, but since salvation is conditioned on faith, it takes precedence over assurance, which is not deemed essential in the soteriological plan. The saving efficacy of faith is stressed without ascribing any merit to assurance.

This faith is essential to salvation. Assurance is not essential, but no man can be saved unless he trusteth in the Lord Jesus Christ. You may get to heaven with a thousand doubts and fears...but you cannot get there without the life-giving grace of faith.

1. Works, 18, p. 344.
2. Works, 10, p. 95.
8. Works, 10, p. 555.
We are not saved by assurance; we do not even live by assurance. The vital principle is couched in faith. That is the shell which holds the kernel of the inner spiritual life. I may be saved though I never had assurance; but even if I fancied I had assurance, I could not be saved if I had not faith.1

Assurance and the "sealing" of the believer by the Holy Spirit are described as synonymous terms. However, "faith" and "sealing", as referred to in Ephesians 1:13,2 carry different meanings. Faith comes first and is followed by "sealing" or assurance. Faith is an activity of the mind, whereas in "sealing" the believer is passive.

There is a distinction between the two things....In faith the mind is active....'ye trusted,'....but when it comes to sealing it uses quite another verb: 'ye were sealed.' I am active in believing—I am passive when the Holy Spirit seals me. The witness of the Spirit is a something which I exercise as well as receive....Faith is a duty as well as a privilege, but assurance is a privilege only.3

Spurgeon very frequently refers to Christ as his "Beloved," and in a sentence of exhortation he urges his people to "seek to reach the blessed heights of full assurance, that each one of you may be able to say of Christ, 'This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend'".4 He states that "assurance follows faith,"1 and that "many souls get full assurance with faith,"1 but as seen above, it is possible to be saved and never receive assurance. The source of both faith and assurance resides in Christ.

"The virtual means of my faith is Christ himself and the virtual means of my assurance must be the same."5

Although assurance is not essential to salvation, nevertheless "it is essential to satisfaction"6 which is to be had, not by "personal

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1. Works, 10, p. 558.
2. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."
5. Works, 10, p. 559.
6. Works, 34, p. 266.
revealing***-but by the Word of God."^ The Spirit and the Word are the only effective means of true assurance. Speaking of the "infallible Scripture", he remarks: "These things are written that you may have it; and we may be sure that the means used by the Spirit are equal to the effect which he desires".2

True Christian assurance is not a matter of guesswork, but of mathematical precision. It is capable of logical proof, and is no rhapsody or poetical fiction. We are told by the Holy Ghost that, if we love the brethren, we have passed from death to life....Do you feel that you love the ways of God, that you desire holiness, and follow after it joyfully? Then...you have eternal life, and these are the sure evidences of it. Obedience, holiness, delight in God never came into a human heart except from a heavenly hand.3

The three witnesses, "the spirit, and the water, and the blood"4 give full assurance to one's salvation. In the following thought based on 1st John 5:7-8,4 Spurgeon is confident that full assurance of eternal life can be obtained.

If the Spirit of God be in you, he is the earnest of your eternal inheritance. If the water has washed you, then you are the Lord's....If the precious blood has cleansed you from the guilt of sin, you know that it has also purchased you from death, and it is to you the guarantee of eternal life. I pray that you may from this moment enjoy the combined light of these three lamps of God—'the spirit, and the water, and the blood,' and so have full assurance of faith.5

The "assured" must maintain a constant vigilance against sin lest they should commit an offence against God. This is a warning to those who would infringe upon the privilege of assurance. Spurgeon leaves a question mark in the mind of one who presumes assurance without a strong tendency to combat sin and strive for holiness.

There are none so cautious as those who possess full assurance,

1. Works, 34, p. 266.
2. Ibid., p. 267.
3. Ibid., pp. 268-269.
4. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."
5. Works, 34, p. 269.
and there are none who have so much holy fear of sinning against God, nor who walk so tenderly and carefully as those who possess the full assurance of faith. Presumption is not assurance, though, alas! many think so. No fully assured believer will ever object to being reminded of the importance of his own salvation.\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1} Works, 17, p. 429.
CHAPTER XI

ESCHATOLOGY
It has been seen that the perfect moral nature of God is opposed to sin. God hates sin and its punishment is inevitable. Sin as sin must be punished. The law expressed the nature of God. Man violated the perfect law of God. He thus incurred the penalty of death. Through the love of God, Christ kept the law perfectly, thus fulfilling man's obligation to it. The penalty of the immutable law of God has no claim upon the individual in Christ, but for the individual who has neglected the gift of God in Christ, the death penalty of the law remains unchanged. God sent Christ to die as man's Substitute. When a man refuses this fullest expression of God's love, the attitude of God toward him must forever be confirmed by the Scriptural declaration which unqualifiedly asserts that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die".  

There is a moral governor. Men are accountable, and will be brought to account at the last great day, when they shall all be either rewarded or punished....That governor is armed with power; he is soon coming to hold his assize, and every responsible agent upon the face of the earth must appear at his bar and receive, as we are told, 'according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil'....Now...we know that this moral governor is God himself, who has an undisputed right to reign and rule....He is the Judge of all, who must do right from a necessity of his nature....His throne is founded in right and supported by might. You have justice and truth to settle it, but you have omnipotence and wisdom to be its guards, so that it cannot be moved.

Spurgeon contends that all regenerate men, at death, go immediately into the presence of God. He considers false the Roman doctrine of the purgation of souls, and says, "The moment that a man dies his spirit goes before God",¹ and "The moment that the soul leaves the body, the believing soul, the justified soul is in glory".²

After death, we shall abide awhile in the separate, disembodied state, and we shall know as to our soul what it is to be still with the Lord; for what saith the apostle? 'Knowing that when we are absent from the body we are present with the Lord.'³

These disembodied souls exist in a conscious state, and this state of being is simply "a continuance of our present spiritual state".⁴ The intermediate state of the righteous is a state of rest and happiness in which believers are asleep in Christ. Spurgeon does not interpret 1st Corinthians 15:6 "some are fallen asleep" in Jesus, as meaning an unconscious state.

...the word 'sleep' is not to be regarded as implying that the souls of the departed lie in a state of unconsciousness...it is unconsciousness as to the things of time and sense, but a blessed consciousness as to another and a fairer and brighter and better world than this.⁵

Though the spirits of the righteous dead are with Christ, this blessed state is incomplete, since the body is absent from the spirit. Thus he does not regard the intermediate state as final.

The angels shall guard our bodies; all that is essential to complete the identity of our body shall be securely preserved, so that the very seed which was put into the earth shall rise again in the beauty of efflorescence which becomes it: all, I say, that is essential shall be preserved intact, because it is still with Christ.⁶

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4. Ibid., p. 518.
The thought of Spurgeon now proceeds to the much argued question relating to the post-mortem state of the soul that fails to receive the reconciliation of Christ. He believes that "the wicked have the beginning of their heritage at death, but the dread fulness of it is to be hereafter".\(^1\) By "hereafter" he means the time of the consummation of the ages when all unsaved men will hear "that dreadful sentence—'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels'".\(^2\) At the moment of physical death, Spurgeon holds that the unbelieving soul appears before God, and is then cast into prison, or "Hell", where all "lost spirits" are kept until the final judgment. In this prison lost spirits suffer the wrath of God but not to the fullest extent. "Their bodies do not suffer",\(^2\) therefore it is a suffering in spirit. The suffering in body is to follow the final judgment.

The moment that a man dies his spirit goes before God. If without Christ that spirit then begins to feel the anger and the wrath of God. It is as when a man is taken before a magistrate. He is known to be guilty, and therefore he is remanded and put in prison till his trial shall come. Such is the state of souls apart from the body: they are spirits in prison, waiting for the time of their trial. There is not, in the sense in which the Romanist teaches it, any purgatory; yet there is a place of waiting for lost spirits which is in Scripture called 'Hell,' because it is one room in that awful prisonhouse in which must dwell for ever spirits that die finally impenitent and without faith in Christ. But those of our departed countrymen and fellow citizens of earth who die without Christ, have not yet fully tasted of death, nor can they until the advent of the Lord.... The ungodly know that their present state is to have an end at the judgment, but after the judgment their state will have no end; it is then to go on...unchanged and unchangeable.\(^2\)

**THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST**

Spurgeon teaches a visible and personal return of Christ to this earth. He stresses that Christ's coming "in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"\(^3\) is not a coming in some mystical sense, but a literal

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return in person.

'This same Jesus' will literally come again. He will descend in clouds even as he went up in clouds; and 'he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth' even as he stood aforstime....he is literally and actually coming, and he will literally and actually call upon you to give an account of your stewardship.¹

He deories any dating of the return of Christ, but holds that "There is an end appointed of the Most High, and it will surely come".² Therefore an attitude of constant expectancy must be maintained.

The destruction of the wicked is a consequence of the parousia. The separation of the wicked from the just "is a matter of necessity in which his spirit takes no delight,"³ but this separation is not the main object of the parousia. The chief object of Christ's return is for Christ "'To be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in them that believe'".³ The "chief point in which Christ will be glorified, will be—the absolute perfection of all the saints",⁴

The crowning honour of Christ will be seen in his people, and this is the design with which he will return to this earth in the latter days, that he may be illustrious in his saints and exceedingly magnified in them....The full glorification of Christ in his saints will be when he shall come a second time, according to the sure word of prophecy.⁵

With the second coming of Christ, there will not be a simultaneous resurrection of all men. A "literal resurrection of the saints of God"⁶ will precede the literal resurrection of the wicked, which will not occur until the millenial reign of Christ and His saints has ended. Spurgeon is not certain "whether the thousand years are literal years, or a very long period of time"⁶ but postulates that there is no reason why there should not be a thousand years reign on earth between the first

¹. Works, 31, p. 23.
². Works, 32, p. 159.
⁴. Ibid., p. 319.
⁵. Ibid., p. 314.
resurrection and the consummation. Referring to the place of the saints during this millennial reign, he says, "I believe they are to reign with him [Christ] upon this earth".¹

...there are two literal resurrections...one of the spirits of the just, and the other of the bodies of the wicked; one of the saints who sleep in Jesus, whom God shall bring with him, and another of those who live and die impenitent, who perish in their sins.²

Spurgeon admits that there is room for honest argument on pre- and post-millennialism. He does not attempt to make a controversial issue on this subject. His primary emphasis is on the certainty of Christ's return and the preparation of the individual for that return, and the consequent reign of Christ. Spurgeon declared that his ministry was not prophetic but evangelistic, and that "in seeking to win souls" and "in endeavouring to contend with the common errors of the day,"³ he had "scarcely ventured to land upon the rock of Patmos, or peer into the dark recesses of Daniel and Ezekiel".³

The presence of Christ characterizes and separates the millennial age from the former age. In the millennium, "Christ is to be the light thereof, and all its glory is to proceed from him".³ This period is summarized as:

...a time of glory, and peace, and joy, and truth, and righteousness. But what is to be the glory of it? Why this, 'Jehovah-shammah, the Lord is there!' The Lord Jesus Christ will come, and begin his personal reign on earth...and his glorious presence shall fashion the golden age, the thousand years of peace.⁴

In the apocalyptic paragraph following, Spurgeon definitely declares his position as a pre-millennialist.

1. Works, 7, p. 349.
2. Ibid., p. 346.
4. Works, 37, pp. 5-6.
...the day will come, when the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel and the voice of God. Some think that this descent of the Lord will be post-millennial—that is, after the thousand years of his reign. I cannot think so. I conceive that the advent will be pre-millennial; that he will come first; and then will come the millennium as the result of his personal reign upon earth. But whether or no, this much is the fact, that Christ will suddenly come, come to reign, and come to judge the earth in righteousness.1

THE RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

Spurgeon attaches supreme importance to the resurrection, speaking of it as the "corner-stone" and the "arch of Christianity". He considers the resurrection as the foundational basis upon which the Christian hope and ministry rest.

The resurrection of our divine Lord from the dead is the corner-stone of Christian doctrine. Perhaps I might more accurately call it the keystone of the arch of Christianity, for if that fact could be disproved the whole fabric of the gospel would fall to the ground.... It is not possible that any historical fact could have been placed upon a better basis of credibility than the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. This is put beyond all dispute and question, and of purpose is it so done, because it is essential to the whole Christian system.2

Believers in Christ arise with Him in two ways: representatively and spiritually. First, they arise with Him representatively. Then the spiritual resurrection, which is consonant with the regeneration of the soul, follows. Contrary to some modern theologians, Spurgeon maintains that this spiritual resurrection is not final. At the second coming of Christ there will be a resurrection of the body, at which time the soul which has been separated from the body in the intermediate state, will unite with the body. "Do not misunderstand me as if I thought the resurrection to be only spiritual, for a literal rising from the dead is yet to come".3

1. Works, 11, p. 249.
3. Ibid., p. 195.
They are risen in two ways. First representatively. All the elect rose in Christ in the day when he quitted the tomb. Next to this representative resurrection comes our spiritual resurrection, which is ours as soon as we are led by faith to believe in Jesus Christ. The resurrection blessing is to be perfected by-and-by at the appearing of our Lord and Saviour, for then our bodies shall rise again, if we fall asleep before his coming. He redeemed our manhood in its entirety, spirit, soul, and body, and he will not be content until the resurrection which has passed upon our spirit shall pass upon our body too.1

The just will be raised to eternal life, receiving spiritual and glorified bodies like unto that of Christ. Christians who are alive at the parousia shall not pass through death, but they shall "undergo a sudden transformation...and by that transformation, our bodies shall be made meet to be 'partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light'".2

It is only a natural body now, fit for the soul; but hereafter it shall be a spiritual body, adapted to all the desires and wishes of the heaven-born spirit...We shall find in the risen body a power such as the spirit shall wish to employ for the noblest purposes.3

Regardless of how a body is destroyed, its various parts will be united in the resurrection. The spirit of each body will be clothed with unmistakable identity, but not the "identical particles" of the original body. "The difference shall be extraordinary, yet shall the body be still the same."4 Again it is observed that "while the identity is real, the transformation is glorious".5 The transformed body with its original identity "shall be the true result and development of this...flesh and blood".6 Spurgeon answers the objectors of this theory by stating that God alone can transform bodies and preserve their true identity. "Ten thousand objections have been raised against this, but they are all readily answerable....Omnipotence and Omniscience could do it."6 The

2. Works, 30, p. 496.
4. Works, 6, p. 158.
5. Ibid., p. 160.
6. Ibid., p. 159.
transformed body is described in Pauline terminology as incorruptible, honorable, and powerful. This body is a personality and capable of activity. The resurrection is a day in which "our bodies will admirably serve our spirits". Speaking of the resurrection unto eternal life, Spurgeon writes:

This does not mean mere existence...but 'life' means, when properly understood, happiness, power, activity, privilege, capacity...ours shall be a life in life—a true life; not existence merely, but existence in energy, existence in honour...in peace...in blessedness...in perfection.

The moral and spiritual process which begins in regeneration has its consummation on the resurrection day. The resurrection, which is made possible only by the redeeming work of Christ, is a day in which "our nature, our whole humanity, will be perfected."

Our entire nature shall be redeemed unto the living God in the day of the resurrection. After death, until that day, we shall be disembodied spirits; but in the adoption, to wit, the redemption, of the body, we shall attain our full inheritance. We are looking forward to a complete restoration...Thus shall our humanity be completely delivered from the consequences of the fall.

Resurrection is not immortality. Every soul is immortal and shall have a "kind" of life after death. Contrary to the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul, Spurgeon contends that Christian immortality is that God-kind of life, or that "essence" of God which is imparted to the believer in regeneration and which is as eternal as God Himself. Since the soul is immortal, the resurrection cannot refer to immortality but to the body. The bodies of all men, both the righteous and the unrighteous, will be resurrected. The righteous are resurrected to "eternal life"; the unrighteous to an "eternal existence". The resurrection, then, refers to the body and not to immortality.

But immortality is not resurrection; and the immortality of the soul is very different from the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body. We believe that the soul is immortal, and shall last for ever; but we believe something more than that. We believe that the body is immortal, too, and that after this body shall have been sown in the grave, in the Lord's good time, it shall be raised again; and shall either be translated to heaven, there to enjoy bliss eternally, or else be sent down to hell, to suffer for ever and ever.

A student of Spurgeon asked: "What is your view about the term 'eternal life'?

Spurgeon replies:

I do not think that 'eternal life' means merely eternal existence; nor do I believe that existence and life are the same thing, any more than I believe that death and annihilation are the same thing. I believe that a person may exist in perpetual death, and that he may not really be living at all and yet be continually existing. In that familiar passage in John iii. 36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him,' there is no notion of mere existence in the word life, otherwise the whole passage would become meaningless. I never confuse the idea of existence with that of life; but many do, even among those whom one might expect to know better. A tree has a measure of life, an animal has another measure of life, a man has a still higher measure of life, and God has a yet higher measure of life, even that eternal life which He has given to all who believe on His Son, Jesus Christ.

The "wicked dead shall rise at the second resurrection, after the interval between the two resurrections shall have been accomplished". The unjust will be literally raised and given incorruptible bodies, i.e., bodies which cannot be consumed. Although these bodies will probably conform to the likeness of Satan, they will maintain their identity and be recognizable. The purpose of the resurrection of the wicked is to pronounce upon them eternal condemnation, as well as to clothe them with a body suitable to their sinful nature. "As for the ungodly there is a resurrection to damnation, by which their bodies and souls shall come manifestly under the condemnation of God; to use our Saviour's word, shall be damned." This is the second death which excludes hope. The second death

1. Works, 44, p. 50.
3. Ibid., pp. 194-195.
is defined as "a literal death...because its main terror is spiritual, for a spiritual death is as literal as a carnal death."¹

Brethren, the wicked must rise again from the dead....Be not deceived; you sinned in your body, you will be damned in your body. When you die your spirit must suffer alone, that will be the beginning of hell; but your body must rise again, then this very flesh in which you have transgressed the laws of God, this very body must smart for it. It must lie in the fire and burn...throughout eternity. Your body will be raised incorruptible, otherwise the fire would consume it. As I spoke of the righteous having such great power, so shall you have; but it will be power to agonise, power to suffer, power to die, and yet to live, uncrushed by the stern foot of death....But further, remember that while your body shall be identically the same, yet it too will be transformed...What your body will be like I cannot tell, but perhaps as the body of the righteous will come to be like Christ, yours may become like the body of the devil, whatever that may be—the same hideous conformation, the same demon gaze and hellish stare which characterize that proud archangel shall characterize you...let me remind you...that there will be in you an undoubted personality; you will be known in hell.²

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

"The Resurrection is the immediate prelude to the Judgment."³

The cross is the reason for the judgment. Sin was judged on the cross. Men are also judged by the standard of the cross. Men will be judged and punished if the warning of the cross, and the merits of Christ are neglected. The Atonement is the necessitating reason for the justice of God in the "final and irreversible"⁴ separation of men, whose consciences are "a testimony to a coming judgment".⁵

The background of the cross is the judgment-seat of Christ. We had not needed so great an atonement, so vast a sacrifice, if there had not been an exceeding sinfulness in sin, an exceeding justice in the judgment, and an exceeding terror in the sure rewards of transgression.⁶

It is emphasized "that there will be a judgment, and that this judgment will be conducted by the man Christ Jesus".⁷ Actually the final

2. Works, 6, p. 164.
5. Ibid., p. 304.
judgment is one in which God judges the world in Christ. As Mediator between God and man, Christ will exercise His lawful authority in judging nations. The vindication of the cross comes by this final judgment.

God will judge the world; but it will be through his Son, whom he has ordained and appointed actually to carry out the business of that last tremendous day...Jesus Christ, therefore, being mediatorial king and sovereign, all power being given unto him in heaven and in earth, he will take unto himself his great power at the last, and will judge the nations...0 cross, whatever of shame there was about thee shall be wiped out for ever among the sons of men, for this man shall sit upon the throne of judgment!

Although Spurgeon believes that "A judgment is going on daily" both upon individuals and nations, he, nevertheless, declares "that a day is appointed in which the Lord will judge the secrets of men". He explains the appropriateness of Christ as Judge on the basis of His relationship to God and man. Christ's ability to judge men is grounded on the fact that He was the "Son of man", and having come under the law, He could adequately administer justice without partiality. Christ was tempted in all points as men, therefore He knows them, and for this reason He is "the Judge of all, who must do right from a necessity of his nature".

Now the Lord God will judge men, but...it will be in the person of Jesus Christ the man. Men shall be judged by a man. He that was once judged by men shall judge men. Jesus knows what man should be;—he has been under the law himself in deep humility, who is ordained to administer the law in high authority. He can hold the scales of justice evenly, for he has stood in man's place and borne and braved man's temptations; he therefore is the most fit judge that could be selected.

All responsible beings shall be the subjects of the judgment. This is affirmed by the Scriptural evidence, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ". The works of both the righteous and the

3. Ibid., p. 376.
5. Works, 18, p. 583.
6. 2nd Cor. 5:10.
wicked will be judged. Spurgeon comments that the judgment upon the righteous will consist of a "public acquittal from the mouth of the great Judge".\(^1\) After this acquittal the saints are to take their "seat upon the judgment bench with him [Christ]".\(^2\)

In setting forth the object of judgment, Spurgeon claims that "The judgment is with a view to the thereafter—'That every man may receive the things done in his body'.\(^3\) In other words, the judgment does not terminate simply with the words "acquittal" or "condemnation" but its consequences are permanent. The rule of judgment is according to the "actions" done in the body: "our actions will be taken in evidence at the last, and every man shall receive according to what he hath done in the body".\(^4\) Thus the object of judgment is to distribute rewards and punishments in proportion to the "actions" of the body. Rewards are to be received according to one's good works, and punishment is to be "meted out in proportion to the transgression,"\(^3\) and the "development" of its evil consequences. In other words, when an unbeliever commits a sin he cannot be fully punished for his sin until the deeds of that sin have been calculated at the consummation of the ages. Hell is "a place for the development of sin".\(^5\) In the judgment all the works of an individual are taken into account and considered by the Judge. The motives of the heart and its personal character are revealed. A man's character is judged on the ground that he is a responsible moral agent. In stressing that God is the "personal and real moral governor of the world,"\(^6\) and that His moral law is the standard of conduct for man, Spurgeon observes:

\(^{1}\) Works, 18, p. 580.
\(^{2}\) Works, 23, p. 521.
\(^{3}\) Works, 18, p. 587.
\(^{4}\) Ibid., p. 584.
\(^{5}\) Works, 7, p. 352.
\(^{6}\) Works, 12, p. 506.
The character of man equally involves a judgment, for he is evidently a responsible being...[and] where there is responsibility there is law, and where there is a law there must, some day or other, be rewards for well-doers, and punishments for malefactors.¹

THE FINAL STATES OF HEAVEN AND HELL

"Christ is heaven", said Spurgeon, "and heaven is Christ."² Heaven is that place where believers shall be forever with the Lord. The central attraction of heaven is Christ, who shall be "the eternal joy to all the saints".³

Although heaven "is a state",⁴ more emphasis is given to it as a place, and this place, whether on a purified earth, or some other abode, is one of a "never-ending state of bliss, which God has prepared for his people".⁵ This bliss constitutes a never ending fellowship with God. The imperfections and limitations of this earthly life are to be removed, and the saint shall receive a glorified body which shall be perfectly adapted to his new environment. "Our ultimate abode will be a state of blessedness, but it must also be a place suited for our risen bodies".⁶ The purified character of the saints is heaven's "brightest glory". "The brightest glory that really can come to anyone is the glory of character."⁷ The saints, having become conformable to God's holiness, are "perfectly accepted with God".⁸ Thus heaven is a place where all Christians "enjoy perfect sinlessness before God".⁸ The height of man's heavenly glory is "the enjoyment of God himself".⁹ The true reward of all Christians is "God".

2. Works, 19, p. 571.
7. Ibid., p. 282.
This soul of ours, when it is glorified, will be made like to God....The soul shall be made like unto the Spirit of God in true holiness and righteousness. The glory of the soul will lie much in its absolute perfection. Whatever a soul ought to be, whatever a soul can be, that our soul shall be; it shall be rid of all sin, all tendency to sin, all liability to sin, all possibility of sinning....I do not doubt also that the glorified soul will be greatly enlarged, and all its powers much increased,—its ability to know, its ability to understand, its ability to enjoy, its ability to love, its ability to serve....Our glory will also very much consist in happy intercourse with God, in a very near and dear fellowship with the Most High.*

Spurgeon’s description of heaven is presented briefly in various aspects. He represents it not only as a place of sinlessness, where man’s redeemed nature has received the character of perfect holiness, but as that place where relief from earthly sorrow and rest from life’s labor are enjoyed. In heaven “perfect provision...is made by Christ for his saints above”, therefore should there be necessitites in heaven, "those necessitites shall never cause a pang”, and will be provided instantly. Again, heaven is pictured as a place of realized activity. "It would be an unhappy heaven in which there should be nothing for our activities to spend themselves upon". Such labor is not toil, but happiness. Thus Spurgeon concludes that heaven is a place where the spiritual capacity of the saint is enabled to grow. "It may be that the saints in heaven progress in knowledge—that is possible". "Good works follow Christians, and they will be rewarded", but nevertheless, before God all the saints are the same.

We believe, then, that the condition of glorified spirits in heaven, is that of nearness to Christ, clear vision of his glory, constant access to his court, and familiar fellowship with his person. Nor do we think that there is any difference before the throne between one saint and another. We believe that all the people of

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1. Works, 43, p. 54.
2. Works, 30, p. 509.
5. Works, 8, p. 171.
God...shall all have the same place near the throne, where they shall for ever gaze upon their exalted Lord, and for ever be satisfied in his love.\(^1\)

Hell is a place of eternal reality; it is not fictional, but it is a "positive hell"\(^2\) where souls now exist.

I speak not of fiction, but a dread reality. There is, somewhere,—God wots where it is,—a place where the fire of Gehenna shall torture bodies for ever, and where unutterable misery shall pain souls. And oh! tremble, ye heavens, and shake, ye hills! O earth, let thy solid ribs of brass shake, and let thy bowels be dissolved! It is a fact, and a fearful fact, that there is a hell.\(^2\)

"Hell is but sin full-grown,"\(^3\) and "a place of absence from God".\(^4\) Inter-communication between heaven and hell is impossible. "There is no communion with God in hell."\(^5\) "As nothing can come from hell to heaven, so nothing heavenly can ever come to hell."\(^5\) Again, "There is only one thing that I know of in which heaven is like hell—it is eternal."\(^6\)

Contrary to much of the modern nineteenth and twentieth century thought, Spurgeon holds that the state of the unregenerate is punishment in a hell of literal fire. Sin merits eternal punishment. Hell, as well as the cross, is a demonstration of God's estimate of sin. Hell is a proof of God's holiness. Those who undervalue the punishment of sin, also underestimate the Atonement.

Think lightly of hell, and you will think lightly of the cross. Think little of the sufferings of lost souls, and you will soon think little of the Saviour who delivers you from them.\(^7\)

Both the body and the soul suffer in hell. There is no consolation in assuming the belief that there is no literal fire in hell. If there is no "fire" it is certain that the "agonies" of the soul will far

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1. Works, 8, p. 172.
5. Works, 9, p. 381.
6. Ibid., p. 382.
surpass bodily pain. In fact, "soul punishment" or mental agony "is the very soul of punishment", and Spurgeon ironically asserts that "if there be no material fire...this will be sorry consolation for a soul on flame with woe". It is denied that hell is a purifying process which will ultimately end in the restoration of the soul. "If the woosings of Christ's wounds cannot make you love Christ, do you think the flames of hell will?"

We believe that the souls of the wicked are already tormented, but this judgment will cast both body and soul into the lake of fire....This much we know, that hell is a place of absence from God—a place for the development of sin, where every passion is unbridled, every lust unrestrained.

To have a part in that fire is the second death. When Jesus speaks of the fire of hell, he does not say that annihilation is effected by it, but speaks on this wise: 'shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be (not annihilation, but the signs of conscious misery) weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth'....Some suppose that instead of annihilation, restoration awaits the lost....Scripture does not speak of the fire of hell as chastening and purifying, but as punishment which men shall receive for deeds done in the body.

Death stabilizes one's character in the same state in which it is at the moment of death.

Death does not change but fixes character; it petrifies it. 'He that is holy let him be holy still; he that is filthy let him be filthy still.' The lost man remains a sinner and a growing sinner, and continues to rebel against God.

**Eternal Punishment**

Spurgeon does not hesitate to say that one who refuses to be in union with God has voluntarily "exposed himself to the wrath of God" from which he cannot escape. While he maintains that "the process of divine judgment...is continually going on", working itself out against the
unbeliever in this life, he specifically states that "the wrath of God does not end with death", and that a man's unforgiven sin follows him in judgment, as an immortal testimony against his rejection of Christ and his pursuit of evil. His idea of the sinner's punishment is that it will last as long as God Himself.

The eternity of punishment is a thought which crushes the heart. You have buried the man, but you have not buried his sins. His sins live, and are immortal: they have gone before him to judgment, or they will follow after him to bear witness as to the evil of his heart and the rebellion of his life. The Lord God is slow to anger, but when he is once aroused to it, as he will be against those who finally reject his Son, he will put forth all his omnipotence to crush his enemies. 'Consider this,' saith he, 'ye that forget God. lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.' It will be no trifle to fall into the hands of the living God. He will by no means clear the guilty. For ever must his anger burn. We have nothing in Scripture to warrant the hope that God's wrath against evil doers will ever come to an end. Oh, the wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath which after ages and ages will still be to come, and still to come, and still to come!

It has been pointed out that at death, Spurgeon contends that the wicked enter upon a state of conscious suffering. "We believe that the soul is immortal", and although "death is the natural result of all sin", such death is not the annihilation of the soul. Certainly "annihilation would be no punishment [but] the cessation of all punishment". The "only annihilation I know of—the absolute annihilation of sin through the pardon which the Lord gives to his people".

Dying does not mean ceasing to exist, for Adam did not cease to exist, nor do those who die. The term 'death' conveys to me no such idea as that of ceasing to exist, or how could I understand that word in 1 John iii. 14: 'He that loveth not his brother abideth in death'? How could a man abide in annihilation?

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2. Ibid., pp. 652-653.
5. Works, 12, p. 176.
Spurgeon, though he would pray, "O God, cut not down the sinner!" maintains that the eternal punishment of the wicked is "the most natural result of slighted mercy". Again, "My [God's] love yearns for your salvation, but my reason approves of your ruin, foresees it, and expects it speedily except you turn unto the Lord and live". Spurgeon is constrained to believe that the impenitent himself, will, unwillingly, approve his damnation.

...the sentence which shall go forth from this great white throne, shall be so consistent with justice that even the condemned culprit himself must give his unwilling assent to it. 'They stood speechless,' it is said; speechless because they could neither bear the sentence nor in any way impugn it.

The most striking statement Spurgeon utters concerning the future state of the wicked is that "Death is the separation of the soul from God". In a conversation with Ruskin, Spurgeon asked: "What is death?" He answered his own query thus: "Death is the resolution into its original elements of any compound substance which possessed life." "That is the most extraordinary definition of death that I ever heard, but it is true", said Ruskin. Then, Ruskin asked: "what do you mean when you talk of the death of the soul?" To this, Spurgeon replied:

I mean...the separation of the soul from God; it was originally with God, and when it is separated from Him, it dies to God, that is its death, but that death is not non-existence. The separation of the soul from the body is the separation from itself of that which quickened it, and it falls back into its original condition.

The sinner is "Lost to God", and to "the joys of God's presence". Spurgeon denies the possibility of another probation after death, as well as the ultimate restoration of all men by stating in a pungent phrase that

without Christ the sinner "has lost all hope" after physical death. If a
sinner refuses to accept Christ:

What loses he then? The harps of heaven and the songs thereof;
the joys of God's presence and the light thereof. He has lost peace
and immortality, and the crown of life; nay, he has lost all hope,
and when a man has lost that, what remaineth to him? His soul sinks
never to recover itself into the depths of dark despair, where not a
ray of hope can ever reach him. Lost to God; lost to heaven; lost to
time...lost to the mercy-seat; lost to the blood of sprinkling; lost
to all hope of every sort; lost, lost, for ever!¹

In consideration of the punishment of both body and soul,
Spurgeon insists upon the justice of God, declaring that He will not punish
men arbitrarily.

The sinner in hell shall not endure one iota more than he de-
serves; he shall have the due reward of his deeds—no more. God is
not unjust to punish men arbitrarily,—I know of no arbitrary condem-
nation. There is no such thing as sovereign damnation; it will be
justice—inflexible, I grant you, but yet not such as shall pass the
bounds of due and right desert.²

God is just in His retributory punishment, and this punishment
is not inconsistent with His goodness.

Some have staggered over the doctrine of eternal punishment, be-
cause they could not see how that could be consistent with God's
goodness. I have only one question to ask concerning that or any
other doctrine,—Does God reveal it in the Scriptures? Then, I be-
lieve it, and leave to him the vindication of his own consistency.
I am sure that he will not inflict a pain upon any creature which
that creature does not deserve, that he will never cause any sorrow
or misery which is not absolutely necessary, and that he will glorify
himself by doing the right, the loving, the kind thing, in the end.
If we do not see it to be so, it will be none the less so because we
are blind.³

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1. Works, 10, pp. 577-578.
CONCLUSION
Without a doubt Spurgeon's Christology was Chalcedonian. He accepted Chalcedonian theology in its entirety. He believed that the historical Jesus was in every respect "Very God of Very God".

For Spurgeon the doctrine of salvation was not only important and vital, but it was the center of all things and overshadowed all things. All things were created with respect to the "Person" of persons. God's major purpose is redemptive. Creation is subordinate to it. "Redemption is the drift of creation, and the hinge of providence." Spurgeon's theology was indeed a theology of salvation. The supreme purpose of his ministry was to preach Christ in such a way that men could see Him and desire Him. It was not his purpose to study the Bible critically, but to present its truths in the language of the people so that the simple-minded and the cultured could understand the message of Christ. All his efforts toward evangelization were to bring "all glory to God" through the conversion of souls.

The love of God in Christ Jesus was Spurgeon's theme. God's love excludes none, but includes all who "believe" and "accept" the "atonning love" of Christ. The central note of Spurgeon's ministry was "free grace" and "dying love". Love and grace were used synonymously. God's love is "universal" and His grace is as "free" as the "air". God is always seeking men. He seeks them before they even begin to seek Him. From the beginning to the end, salvation is "all of grace". It may be said that Spurgeon's theology was a theology of experience, and on this premise, if no other, he invited all men to accept by faith the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The love of God for sinful men is unfathomable. None but God can know its depth. God's love for men is a "vast condescension" and an "incomprehensible mystery". In His love "God provided God" for the salvation of mankind. God "chose" to love men and the cross is
the "proof" of His love. The cross is the "meeting-place" where God becomes reconciled to men. God and man can "meet" in Christ and "agree".

Men must respond to God's love in Christ if they are to be saved. Election is based entirely on the grace of God. Men do not elect themselves, they are elected "in Christ". There is a potential election for all men, but it is an election to "faith" and "holiness". Spurgeon emphasized that Christianity has a definite ethical content. God is holy and He expects and must find holiness in His elect. "Faith" and "holiness" are the marks of one's election. Spurgeon did not preach election in the Calvinistic fashion. The basis of election is grace. It is an election of love. No one can be faithful to the mind of Spurgeon without recognizing that he made very definite progress in checking the erroneous belief that God "elects" some to salvation and "dams" the rest for His glory. Man has a free will. He is responsible for all his actions. If he is damned, it is because he has not favorably responded to the love of God in Christ. God is holy, and His holiness necessarily excludes sinful men from His presence. There is no salvation apart from "faith" and "holiness". An inner change, known as regeneration, must be effected by the Holy Spirit, who by a process of sanctification, leads the believer toward the goal of perfection.

Spurgeon knew more about the Bible than about theology. His doctrinal approach to the Bible is given in two short sentences. "If he [God] says it, it is so. Believe it."¹ In other words, "It makes no difference whether or not I can understand all Biblical truth. My faith tells me the Bible is true". Spurgeon did not present any new doctrines, but interpreted in his own original way the doctrines of the Bible. He was faithful to the Bible. For him, every

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¹Works, 24, p. 98.
doctrine and every text in it is true. "I like to read my Bible so as never to have to blink when I approach a text. I like to have a theology which enables me to read it right through from beginning to end, and to say, 'I am as pleased with that text as I am with the other."¹ For Spurgeon, to give up one doctrine in the Bible would be to give up all. All truth is consistent. There are no contradictions in the Bible. Apparent contradictions are simply frailties of the human mind. Man's responsibility and God's sovereignty never contradict. Spurgeon was consistent in the presentation of his theology. It is true that to the end of his life he believed in "irresistible grace", but this was more a matter of experience than of doctrine. His sermons, and a personal statement that all men could not have the same experience as he, clarify his position on "irresistible grace". Spurgeon took pride in saying that he was a Calvinist, but not a hyper-Calvinist. "Hyperism is too hot-spiced for my palate." He was a "moderate" Calvinist, i.e., his Calvinism was modified to include in the plan of God's grace "whosoever" should "choose" to become identified with Christ. The love of God as revealed in the Atonement of His Son is for all men, i.e., for as many as will "receive the reconciliation" by personally trusting in Christ whose blood was shed for the remission of sin. There was no place in his theology for a "limited Atonement".

Spurgeon's conception of Christ's death is that it was vicarious. He dogmatically asserted that there could be no other interpretation of Christ's death other than the penal-substitutionary theory. The substitutionary death of Christ is the "pith" and the "marrow" of his theology. Considering all other doctrines, when he viewed the doctrine of substitution he felt "more sure" of his position on the vicarious death of Christ than at any other point in his theology. Christ is the "Sin-Bearer" and His death fully satisfied, and honored,

¹. Works, 10, p. 237.
and magnified the righteous law of God. Spurgeon believed in an eternal Atone-
ment. The Atonement has always had an eternal present effect. The blood of
Christ removes sin continually. The historical Atonement was simply a manifes-
tation of an eternal action which took place within the heart of God before the
foundation of the world.

What is Spurgeon's value for today? If he should return to the
Metropolitan Tabernacle, what would be his message? Without a doubt, and in
spite of his hatred of controversy, he would more vehemently than in 1887,
declare that the Church is on the "Down Grade". The great criticism brought
against the Church today is on the point of "difference" between the Christian
world and the non-Christian world. The world says: "Where is the difference?"
The Church has the answer, but it is not demonstrated to the fullest extent by
those who call themselves Christians. That which makes the "difference" between
the Church and the world is what Spurgeon called "distinguishing grace". Christ
makes the difference, and Spurgeon, whose ministry was characterized by sincerity
and an undying love for Christ, would say to the Church today: "Return to your
first love and pursue holiness of life, and thus prove your calling and your
election". In other words: "Live as Christians should live".

If Spurgeon were here today, he would say to ministers of the gospel:
"Preach not about yourselves, nor about human philosophies, but about Christ.
The gospel that does not bear Christ "in the saddle" is no gospel at all.
Again, "Do not preach Christ apart from the 'blood of sprinkling,' and apart
from His substitutionary death". His advice to his students would be his
advice to the ministerial world today: "Preach Christ, always and evermore".
And, as a closing exhortation to ministers, and to all who preach the gospel,
Spurgeon would say: "Be sincere". "Study". "Live for Christ". And, to use
his own words, "Never be many minutes without actually lifting up [your] hearts
in prayer".
In this most unusual period of world history when Christianity is meeting an aggressive foe in Communism, and when men seem to be prepared for, and even expectantly awaiting, as it were, the announcement of another world catastrophe, if Spurgeon were here his advice to Christendom and the world at large would be: "Have faith in God". From his conversion onward, Spurgeon’s life was a life of faith, and he recommends that all men should exercise the "gift" of faith which is the "foot" and the "hand" and the "eye" and the "wing" of the soul. In this dark period of history when the faith that men have in God is being tried and tested, Spurgeon would say today, as he said in the middle of the nineteenth century when there was a marked religious depression: "Take care of your faith... it is the foot which carries the soul".  

If we hope to win the day, does it not well become us to pray, 'Increase our faith'... Faith is of the utmost importance to a Christian. There is nothing of which we should have a greater and a more earnest concern than our faith... everyone of us should become deeply anxious as to whether we have a real vital faith which unites us to the Lamb and brings salvation to our souls... God gives his salvation to faith and not to any other virtue... Faith is the saving grace—it is the connecting-link between the soul and Christ... Faith is the root-grace; all other virtues and graces spring from it... who can have courage if he has not faith... Faith engages on my side the omnipotence of Jehovah... It makes me march triumphant over the necks of my enemies... O then, Christian! Watch well thy faith; for with it thou canst win all things... but without it thou canst obtain nothing... With thee, O faith, I cast the gauntlet to the world, secure of victory... Tremble, ye foes of God, for faith must overcome. And O ye servants of the living God, guard well your faith, for by this shall ye be victorious; and shall stand like rocks, unmove by the storms, unshaken by the tempests of persecution... O ye active Christians, be full of faith! ye busy Christians, be sure to guard that!... If that fails where are you then?... Take care of your faith, Christian, take care of your faith; whatever you leave out of doors of a night, do not leave that little child of faith; whatsoever plant is exposed to the frost, be sure to put faith within... Faith is the foundation stone; prayer comes next. Prayer without faith would be an empty mockery; it would win nothing of God... Faith gives wings to the soul... Faith gives eyes to the soul... Faith is the hand of the soul... Sinner! thou canst not enter into heaven without faith... What, then, will ye do?... God give faith to those that have none; and as for others, may he increase their faith!

The voice of Spurgeon is not dead. "He being dead yet speaketh."

CONVERSION EXPERIENCE

That happy day, when I found the Saviour, and learned to cling to His dear feet, was a day never to be forgotten by me. An obscure child, unknown, unheard of; I listened to the Word of God; and that precious text led me to the cross of Christ. I can testify that the joy of that day was utterly indescribable. I could have leaped, I could have danced; there was no expression, however fanatical, which would have been out of keeping with the joy of my spirit at that hour. Many days of Christian experience have passed since then, but there has never been one which has had the full exhilaration, the sparkling delight which that first day had. I thought I could have sprung from the seat on which I sat, and have called out with the wildest of those Methodist brethren who were present, 'I am forgiven! I am forgiven! A monument of grace! A sinner saved by blood!' My spirit saw its chains broken to pieces, I felt that I was an emancipated soul, an heir of Heaven, a forgiven one, accepted in Christ Jesus, plucked out of the miry clay and out of the horrible pit, with my feet set upon a rock, and my goings established. I thought I could dance all the way home. I could understand what John Bunyan meant, when he declared he wanted to tell the crows on the ploughed land all about his conversion. He was too full to hold, he felt he must tell somebody....The clock of mercy struck in Heaven the hour and moment of my emancipation, for the time had come....Thus had the eternal purpose of Jehovah decreed it; and as, the moment before, there was none more wretched than I was, so, within that second, there was none more joyous. It took no longer time than does the lightning-flash; it was done, and never has it been undone. I looked, and lived, and leaped in joyful liberty as I beheld my sin punished upon the great Substitute, and put away for ever.1

As I saw Jesus on His cross before me, and as I mused upon His sufferings and death, methought I saw Him cast a look of love upon me; and then I looked at Him, and cried,—'Jesu, lover of my soul, Let me to Thy bosom fly.' He said, 'Come,' and I flew to Him, and clasped Him; and when He let me go again, I wondered where my burden was. It was gone! There, in the sepulchre, it lay, and I felt light as air; like a winged sylph, I could fly over mountains of trouble and despair; and oh! what liberty and joy I had! I could leap with ecstasy, for I had much forgiven, and I was freed from sin. With the spouse in the Canticles, I could say, 'I found Him;' I, a lad, found the Lord of glory; I, a slave to sin, found the great Deliverer...I had found Christ...He was my Saviour, He was my all; and I can heartily say, that one day of pardoned sin was a sufficient recompense for the whole five years of conviction....Blessed be Thou, O God, for ever, who by those black days, like a dreary winter, hast made these summer days all the fairer and the sweeter!...The frown of God no longer resteth upon me; but my Father smiles, I see His eyes,—they are glancing love; I hear His voice,—it is full of sweetness. I am forgiven, I am forgiven, I am forgiven!2

2. Ibid., p. 110.
After Spurgeon became a Baptist, his Grandfather expressed his desire that he should "not be one of the tight-laced, strict-communion sort". In that," writes Spurgeon, "we are agreed." Believers in Christ were never rejected from the Lord's Supper under Spurgeon's ministry. He always held an open communion service. Referring to unbaptized Christians, he remarks, "I think they are mistaken," but they should never be excluded from participating in the Lord's death. In a sermon on "The Common Salvation" it is emphasized that "this common salvation forbids a monopolizing spirit". By a "monopolizing spirit," Spurgeon refers to "strict" or "closed" communion, and in arguing against this "exclusive" Christianity, he observes:

Who are we that we should cut off from fellowship with us those whose fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ? Yet we have those around us who make it a point of Christianity to be exclusive....Shut that door! seems to be the one great command of their house...In many forms this spirit has been among our denominations, but I do not believe in it....Beloved brethren, our Lord hath a people that are on other points as right as right can be who on the point of baptism are as wrong as wrong can be; but, for all that, they are his people, and in other respects are sound in the faith and valiant for the Lord our God.

Communion is a "personal" and "perpetual remembrance" of the death of Christ. It is not an ordinance to be held at stated intervals but a divine institution which should be conducted weekly. "We cannot be satisfied once a month with communion with Christ, and methinks we hardly ought to be satisfied with the sign itself so seldom." Spurgeon

1. Autobiography, Vol. 1, p. 125. New Park Street Chapel had adopted open communion during the ministry of Spurgeon's predecessor, Joseph Angus. None were admitted to membership of the Church unless baptized as believers.
2. Works, 27, pp. 193-204.
usually held communion at the end of the evening worship service. He maintains that this frequent observance of the Lord's Supper had an "apostolic precedent".\(^1\) He objected to strict Baptists going "on the other side of the road"\(^2\) when invited to participate in the Memorial Supper of believers in Christ. His "more enlarged principles"\(^2\) led him to establish the communion service on the basis of one's love for God and the fellowship (κοινωνία) rather than on denominational prejudice.\(^3\) Spurgeon insists that "a large part of the meaning of the Lord's Supper, [is] the communion of saints with each other as well as the communion of the saints with Christ".\(^4\)

The Lord's Supper was meant to be a frequent feast of fellowship. It is a grievous mistake of the church when the communion is held but once in the year, or once in a quarter of a year; and I cannot remember any Scripture which justifies once in the month. I should not feel satisfied without breaking bread on every Lord's-day. It has come to me even oftener than once a week; for it has been my delight to break bread with many a little company of Christian friends....We cannot think of that death too often.\(^5\)

The great prerequisite to communion with Christ is a regenerate life, a life that is characterized by obedience to Christ and a holy walk with God. It has been pointed out that in Spurgeon's personal opinion one should be baptized by immersion and have church membership before receiving communion. However he does not make this a prerequisite to communion for

\(^1\) Works, 9, p. 549.
\(^2\) Works, 49, p. 149.
\(^3\) When denominationalism interfered with Spurgeon's conception of truth, he adhered not to his denomination, but to what he believed to be Biblical truth. He believed in baptism by immersion, else he would have been a Congregationalist, but he was not so much a Baptist as to attempt to make all converts Baptists. On one occasion he was asked to go to Ireland. The invitation was refused on the ground that its purpose was to "greatly increase the Baptist denomination". Spurgeon endeavored to make men Christians, not Baptists. "I would not go across the street, much less across the sea," he said, "merely to make people Baptists." (Works, 47, p. 349.)
\(^4\) Works, 38, p. 378.
\(^5\) Works, 33, p. 376.
others. His great insistence is that communicants should say, "Christ's death is our life." There is no saving efficacy either in baptism or the Lord's Supper. A believer is saved before either of these ordinances become his privilege. In spite of Spurgeon's lenient attitude in communion, he holds that the Biblical and apostolical prerequisites to communion are a regenerate life, an obedient and holy life, baptism, and church membership. In other words, there must be "union" with Christ and "communion" with His fellowship. "We must...first enjoy union with Christ, and with his Church, or else we cannot enjoy communion." The Lord's Supper "means communion: communion with Christ, communion with one another".2

Union lies at the basis of communion. We must be one with Christ in heart, and soul, and life; baptized into his death; quickened by his life, and so brought to be members of his body, one with the whole Church of which he is the Head. We cannot have communion with Christ till we are in union with him; and we cannot have communion with the Church till we are in vital union with it.2

The Lord's Supper is a divine ordinance instituted by Christ. "The great meaning of 'The Lord's Supper,' as we call it, is that we show the Lord's death till he come." The Supper not only commemorates Christ's sufferings and death, but proclaims it to the world and to the Christian fellowship. The elements of the Supper are bread and wine. Communicants must receive both elements else there can be no Lord's Supper. The whole of Christ is not represented in either element taken separately. Both elements must be taken, first the bread, then the wine.

Bread, the flesh; wine, the life, the blood. Flesh and blood, then, when separated, are both dead, so that the cup and the bread together distinctly signify the actual death of our Lord. There is no such thing as a Lord's Supper with the bread alone nor with the cup alone, nor with the bread and wine mingled. They must both be distinct. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, and until the blood has been poured forth, the flesh still

2. Works, 58, p. 146.
remains and retains its life. But put the two distinctly, and you get the idea of death as clearly as you can have it.\textsuperscript{1}

Bread and wine are symbols of Christ’s death and not His actual body and blood. The belief in transubstantiation is a “superstition which is a disgrace to those who hold it in this enlightened land”.\textsuperscript{2}

We believe in the real presence, but not in the corporeal presence. We believe that Jesus Christ spiritually comes to us and refreshes us, and in that sense we both eat his flesh and drink his blood; but as to any such literal feast as some believe in, we reject the thought with horror and with contempt.\textsuperscript{3}

The institution of baptism, as well as the Lord’s Supper, points to the death of Christ. “Baptism shows us that participation in Christ’s suffering by which we begin to live; the Lord’s Supper shows us that participation in Christ’s suffering by which that life is sustained.”\textsuperscript{4}

In a sermon on “A Question for Communicants”,\textsuperscript{5} the Lord’s Supper is defined as a “Memorial” held “in remembrance of Christ’s cross and passion, his precious death and burial;” as an “Exhibition” in which participation in the Supper proclaims the “Lord’s death till he come;” as a “Communion” with Christ and the saints; as a “Covenanting” in which “we... take Christ to be our God in covenant;” and as a “Thanksgiving” in which “we come to this feast to testify our joy in Christ”.\textsuperscript{5}

Referring to the bread and wine as emblems of Christ’s death, Spurgeon observes:

...the broken bread is an admirable emblem of that precious body of our Lord Jesus Christ into which all sorts of griefs were condensed till the ‘Man of sorrows’ was utterly consumed by them.\textsuperscript{6}

...the wine in the cup...means the death of Jesus in our stead. It means the blood poured out from the heart of the incarnate God, that we might have fellowship with God, the sin which divided us being expiated by his death.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1} Works, 59, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., pp. 37-38.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 38.
\textsuperscript{4} Works, 33, p. 375.
\textsuperscript{5} Works, 38, pp. 373-381.
\textsuperscript{6} Works, 44, p. 531.
"All my soul was dry and dead
Till I learned that Jesus bled;—
Bled and suffer'd in my place,
Bearing sin in matchless grace.

"Then a drop of Heavenly love
Fell upon me from above,
And by secret, mystic art
Reached the centre of my heart.

"Glad the story I recount,
How that drop became a fount,
Bubbled up a living well,
Made my heart begin to swell.

"All within my soul was praise,
Praise increasing all my days;
Praise which could not silent be:
Floods were struggling to be free.

"More and more the waters grew,
Open wide the flood-gates flew,
Leaping forth in streams of song
Flowed my happy life along.

"Lo! a river clear and sweet
Laved my glad, obedient feet!
Soon it rose up to my knees,
And I praised and prayed with ease.

"Now my soul in praises swims,
Bathes in songs, and psalms, and hymns;
Plunges down into the deeps,
All her powers in worship steeps.

"Hallelujah! O my Lord,
Torrents from my soul are poured!
I am carried clean away,
Praising, praising all the day.

"In an ocean of delight,
Praising God with all my might,
Self is drowned. So let it be;
Only Christ remains to me."

Beloved friends, there is no Jesus if there is no blood of sprinkling; there is no Saviour if there is no sacrifice. I put this strongly, because the attempt is being made nowadays to set forth Jesus apart from his cross and atonement. He is held up as a great ethical teacher, a self-sacrificing spirit, who is to lead the way in a grand moral reformation, and by his influence to set up a kingdom of moral influence in the world. It is even hinted that this kingdom has never had prominence enough given to it because it has been overshadowed by his cross. But where is Jesus apart from his sacrifice? He is not there if you have left out the blood of sprinkling, which is the blood of sacrifice. Without the atonement, no man is a Christian, and Christ is not Jesus. If you have torn away the sacrificial blood, you have drawn the heart out of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and robbed it of its life. If you have trampled on the blood of sprinkling, and counted it a common thing, instead of putting it above you upon the lintel of the door, and all around you upon the two side-posts, you have fearfully transgressed. As for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, since to me that cross is identical with Jesus himself. I know no Jesus but he who died the just for the unjust. You can separate Jesus and the blood materially; for by the spear-thrust, and all his other wounds, the blood was drawn away from the body of our Lord; but spiritually this 'blood of sprinkling' and the Jesus by whom we live, are inseparable. In fact, they are one and indivisible, the selfsame thing, and you cannot truly know Jesus, or preach Jesus, unless you preach him as slain for sin; you cannot trust Jesus except you trust him as making peace by the blood of his cross. If you have done with the blood of sprinkling, you have done with Jesus altogether; he will never part with his mediatorial glory as our sacrifice, neither can we come to him if we ignore that character.  

We are singular enough to believe in substitution. The blood upon the lintel said, 'Some one has died here instead of us.' We also hold and rest in this truth, that Christ died, 'the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.' We believe that 'he was made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' The belief in the greatness of sin distinguishes Christians from Pharisees, and all other self-justiciaries; and the belief in substitution separates Christians from all those philosophic adulterators of the gospel who are willing to hold up Christ's example, but cannot endure his expiatory sacrifice, who will speak to you of Christ's spirit and the power of his teaching but reject his vicarious death. We do not subscribe to the lax theology which teaches that the Lord Jesus did something or other which, in some way or other, is, in some degree or other, connected with the salvation of men: we hold as vital truths that he stood in his people's stead, and for them endured a death which honoured the justice of God, and satisfied his righteous laws. We firmly believe that he bore the penalty due to sin, or that which, from the excellence of his person, was fully equivalent thereto. My brethren, this is and always will be assailed, but it is the keystone of the gospel arch. As at Waterloo all the battle seemed to rage around the chateau of Hogoumont, so does the conflict centre around the doctrine of the atoning death of our great Substitute; but we are not going to shift our ground for a moment, nor to adopt any other phraseology. We stand to the literal substitution of Jesus Christ in the place of his people, and his real endurance of suffering and death in their stead, and from this distinct and definite ground we will not move an inch. Even the term 'the blood,' from which some shrink with the affectation of great delicacy, we shall not cease to use, whoever may take offence at it, for it brings out that fundamental truth which is the power of God unto salvation. We dwell beneath the blood mark, and rejoice that Jesus for us poured out his soul unto death when he bare the sin of many....But we believe more...we believe that we died in Jesus....So, when Jesus died his chosen died in him, and their sins received the vengeance due in that day when on the accursed tree he yielded up his life a ransom for many. How can we die? We are dead in him already, and have been buried with him by virtue of our union with his blessed person. This is a most precious truth, and those who hold it are thereby distinguished from the rest of mankind.\(^1\)

Attacks have often been made upon the central doctrine of the gospel, namely, the doctrine of redemption or atonement, for it is well known to be the Redan of the gospel. These onslaughts have in many instances been very craftily made; they have professed to be mere corrections of our phraseology, but were essentially assaults upon the truth itself. When we speak very plainly upon this point certain pretentious divines, whose custom it is to sneer at the old theology, at once raise objections to what they are pleased to call 'the mercantile theory of atonement.' With weak minds an ugly phrase stands for argument; but in this case there is really nothing horrible in the description, even if it be allowed all its force. There may have been among us certain persons who carried ideas of the shop and the counter into their notion of redemption, but we maintain that even these were nearer the truth than those who reduce the ransom paid by the Lord Jesus to nothing, and make his redemption a meaningless figure of speech. Within the idea of purchase lies hidden the essence of the Saviour's work, and therefore it is to be adhered to. Paul was not afraid of the mercantile theory... for he writes, 'Ye are... bought with a price.' If it means anything it must mean that a price was paid for us. There was a substitutionary sacrifice presented on the behalf of his people by Jesus Christ, who thus redeemed his chosen from their lost estate. This was a matter of fact, and an efficacious action, actually ransoming those who were redeemed. We do not believe in a cloudy, phantom-like atonement, which did something or nothing, and was a mere exhibition without results; but we believe that Jesus did actually redeem his people by a ransom, which ransom was his suffering and death in their stead, by which the justice of God was satisfied and his law was honoured. The fact is, the objection is not merely to the mercantile expression; the objection is to the very idea of substitution and vicarious sacrifice. The pretence is that mistaken words are criticised, but it is a mere pretence; the gun is aimed at Christ's bearing divine wrath in our stead—this is the doctrine which they cannot endure. No truth within the circle of theology is so eminently consolatory to souls burdened with sin as the great fact that Jesus Christ bare the sins of many and carried away on his own shoulders the transgressions of his people.  

Now, the gospel is that reconciliation, is made for every soul that believes in Jesus....God is not reconciled to anybody who will not believe in Christ, but he is reconciled to every soul that trusts in Jesus. No wrath remains against a believer in Jesus; to such God is all love and tenderness. For all sinners who receive Christ by faith Jesus was a true and effectual substitute, he suffered in their stead, and bore that they might never bear the divine wrath that was due to sin. Now, be very clear about this, for though we preach it every Sunday we have need to repeat it still. Many teach that Christ has made an equal atonement for all men; but, since a great number of men are lost, it is evident that their guilt was not effectually removed, neither were they actually reconciled. If those men were all reconciled to God and yet were cast into hell, there is little to be desired in so useless a reconciliation. An atonement for all which does not save all is not in itself an effectual atonement; it is clear that if it of itself saved one for whom it was offered it would save all: the same cause if complete within itself would always produce the same effect. An atonement said to be universal is also admitted to be ineffectual, unless all are reconciled to God by it. The fact is, there is no redemption worth having but the particular redemption by which the Lord Jesus redeemed his own people only, that is to say, made for all who believe in him an effectual sacrifice. Now, if you can receive that truth cordially it will mightily help you;—God is reconciled to every believer.1

The work of this thesis rests almost entirely upon the original writings of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. They are as follows:

All of Grace, New York; N.D.


Commenting & Commentaries, London, 1876.

Feathers for Arrows, London, 1895.

John Ploughman’s Talk, London, N.D.

Lectures to my Students, First Series, London, 1876.

Lectures to my Students, Second Series, London, 1877

Lectures to my Students, Third Series, London, 1922

Morning by Morning, London, N.D.

Pictures from Pilgrim’s Progress, London, 1905.


Spurgeon’s Pamphlets, (An 8-Volume set of privately collected pamphlets from many sources), N.D.


The King’s Highway, London, 1905.

The New Park Street and the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit

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