

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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LOST THROUGH ONE; SAVED THROUGH ONE.

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## A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH, 1901,

DELIVERED BY

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“And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.”—Romans v. 16.

My one and only desire, at this time, is to help those who are sincerely seeking salvation, that they may find it, and find it speedily. Ignorance often hinders sinners from coming to Christ. I know that it did so in my own case. I have often thought that, if I had understood the plan of salvation more clearly, I should have accepted Christ sooner than I did; and I feel very little doubt that there are many other anxious enquirers who are a long time looking for what is close to them all the while. They are like Hagar in the wilderness, dying of thirst while a well of water is near their feet. They are asking the way to Zion because they are ignorant of the road.

Even the reading of the Scriptures will sometimes not suffice for the enlightenment of such troubled souls, for they are in the condition of the Ethiopian eunuch, who, in reply to Philip's question, “Understandest thou what thou readeest?” said, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” It needs, sometimes, only just a few words to cast light upon the passage which is not understood, and then the eye sees it, the understanding perceives it, the heart accepts it, and the captive soul is set at liberty. Pray, you who love the Lord, and are rejoicing in free justification through Christ Jesus,—pray that the Lord may direct the sin-smitten where to look. Here is Christ lifted up, as the brazen serpent was set upon a pole in the wilderness; but they look to the right or to the left, above or below, anywhere except to the point where we direct them. Divine Spirit, give them sight, and direct that sight to the Saviour, even while we are speaking about him!

I am not going to enter into any theological subtleties concerning the imputation of the sin of Adam, or even into any questions  
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about the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. I shall try to speak very simply upon the two points to which the apostle here refers, and to show you that, as we are lost through one, so we are saved through one.

It pleased God, of old, to commence the human race with a single pair of individuals. One man, Adam, was the representative of the entire race of mankind, for God determined to deal with men in the mass through one chosen representative. In that one man, they stood in perfection for a while. How long or how short Adam's obedience was, we cannot tell. There are some who think that he stood scarcely for a day. The psalmist says, "Man being in honour abideth not." But, at all events, after a time he was tempted, and he fell. He broke the one commandment which was given him as a test,—by no means a hard one,—by no means savouring of severity or austerity; but he broke it wilfully, and, straightway, our representative was found to be faulty. He was expelled from paradise, and upon all his seed, seeing that they were all represented in him, there came judgment unto condemnation. The result was that, as men grew up, and advanced in years, they died; and from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to this present day, it has been the rule that men should die; so that the sin of Adam has prevailed over the race, and left to it a life of toil and sorrow, by-and-by to end in death. This might cause us the deepest gloom if it were all that we had to tell; but, thank God, there is another and a brighter side to the story.

There are some who cavil at the justice of this representative arrangement, but there are many others who believe in it, and rejoice over it. I always contend that it is a happy circumstance for us that we did fall and were condemned in the bulk in our representative; because, had we, each one of us, been individually put upon the like probation, we should, to a certainty, all of us have fallen. We are none of us better than our first parent was; and if the experiment had been repeated in the case of each one of us, it would have ended in the same sorrowful way. But then it must have ended finally and fatally;—at least, so we believe; for when the angels fell, sinning individually, there was no hope of restoration for them. Whether infinite wisdom might not have devised a plan, consistent with justice, by which the angels who had apostatized might have been restored, is more than we can tell. We know that the Lord did not devise any such plan. They individually sinned, and, sinning, fell past all hope of recovery; and now they are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." No gospel was ever preached to them,—no atonement was ever made for them; but they were left to abide in their sinful condition, willingly to persevere in perpetual rebellion against the Most High.

But we, happily, had fallen through a representative; and, therefore, we could be restored by another Representative; so, in the infinite wisdom and mercy of God, there came into the world the second Adam,—man, really man, though much more than man, for he was also God, and he offered an atonement for the offence com-

mitted against the law,—such an atonement that whosoever believeth in him hath his sins for ever put away. Thus, we rise in the same manner as we fell, only in a very different Person. We fell in the first Adam; we rise in the second Adam; we fell, in the first Adam, through no fault of our own; we rise, in the second Adam, through no merit of our own; it is of the free grace of God that we are received back into his favour.

There is much that might be said upon this matter; but I only intend, as I have already said, to touch the points mentioned here. So, first, *let us contemplate the contrast which the apostle here sets before us*; and when we have done so, *let us adore the manner of the divine mercy*.

I. First, LET US CONTEMPLATE THE CONTRAST DEPICTED IN THE TEXT.

Paul tells us that, “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” But it is not so with the free gift; one transgression ruined us, but the free gift takes away many transgressions. *It was one offence of one man which brought ruin upon our race*. Adam offended once, and by that one offence he brought us all into disfavour with God, and the race became a judged and condemned race, toiling and ultimately dying. Now, if one offence had such power that the whole race was ruined by it, will you not, with all your hearts, adore the wondrous atoning work of Christ, by which many offences are removed by the free gift of pardon which he has come into the world to bring? When, through Jesus Christ, we obtain the remission of our sins, all the mischief of Adam’s fall is undone. As to any guilt which has fallen upon the race, all the members of that race are set free from guilt as soon as they believe in Jesus Christ.

Adam brought a great mortgage upon our estate, which it would not have been possible for any of us to discharge; but, to every believer, that first and heaviest mortgage is entirely removed, and the estate is free. In addition to this, however, we have, each one of us, sinned. The estate was encumbered at first, but we have encumbered it much more; like an heir, who comes into an encumbered estate, yet straightway beginneth to burden it with debts more and more, multiplying them until the mortgage is a crushing load too grievous to be borne. But whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ may have this for his consolation,—that “the free gift is of many offences unto justification.” Do not try to count your sins, your arithmetic will fail you if you attempt such a task as that; but if it will benefit you to go over the transgressions of your life from your youth up even until now, do so with repentant heart; but when you have added them up as best you can, and tried to conceive the total sum of your iniquities, then write at the bottom, “But the free gift is of many offences unto justification;”—“of many offences,”—however many they may be;—though they should outnumber the sands on the seashore, or the drops that make up the ocean, yet the free gift of divine pardon sweeps them all away.

Think a little of the many forms that sin has taken in this world, —from that crimson sin which startles even the ungodly man himself, such as murder, adultery, fornication, theft, drunkenness, blasphemy, and the like, to the lighter shades of sin, as we are apt

to think them, though it may be that, in God's sight, there is as much evil in these faults as in those more glaring crimes. I will not attempt to catalogue our transgressions. I should have to use a roll like that of the prophet which was written within and without, and it would have to be so long that I know not where space could be found to put it away. Our sins and iniquities are innumerable. They have gone over our heads like the waves of the sea. Personally and individually, there is not one person, who looks at his own character and heart aright, who will not see that his life has teemed and swarmed with sin; yet the free gift of divine love puts all those sins away the moment we believe in Jesus. The Romish Church divides sins into two sorts, sins mortal and sins venial; but, to me, it is of no consequence how the sins of a believer are described, seeing that Christ has taken them as a whole, and cast them into the depths of the sea. You may, if you will, classify sins under various heads,—sins of thought, sins of word, sins of deed;—sins against the first table, which concerns God; or sins against the second table, which concerns man;—sins of ignorance, and sins of wilfulness; the sins of youth, the sins of middle life, and the sins of old age; but though you pile them together, mountain upon mountain, as in the old fable,—Pelion upon Ossa;—yet, still, Christ taketh them all away from all who believe on him. "The free gift is of many offences unto justification."

This thought grows to startling dimensions when you remember that all the sins of each man must be multiplied by the number of men who, being believers in Christ, find in him justification from their many offences. Oh, what a seething mass of sin would lie upon this poor world, in the sight of the living God, if there were none but his own people upon it, had not Christ swept it away by his infinite atonement! One cannot think, without horror, of his own sins alone; but when we think of the sin of all the saints who have ever lived upon the earth, and the sin of all the blood-bought sinners who are yet to be born, and who shall many of them, perhaps, live to old age,—what a heap and mass of sin it is! "But the free gift is of many offences unto justification," and covers the whole vast mass.

As I want practically to use each separate thought, let me say,—Soul, if thou art willing to be saved in Christ,—if thou art willing to be saved in this way in the second Adam as thou art assuredly lost in the first Adam,—let not the number of thy sins confound thee, so as to prevent thee from having hope of eternal salvation in Christ Jesus. Let thy sins so confound thee as to drive thee to despair if thou hast any hope in thyself or in thine own merits, in thine own feelings, or doings, or weepings, or in anything that is thine; but if salvation is to be had through the blood of Another, through the merits of Another, and thou art willing to have it so, then, though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool; and though they be more in number than the hairs of thy head, they shall, in one single instant, be taken from thee never to return. Yes, in a moment shall they disappear, and shall never be mentioned against thee any more for ever. Is not this good news? You do not want

me to embellish it with fine words; you only need to believe it, and to say to yourself, "Yes, there is a possibility of the blotting out of all my transgressions." Say that, thou who hast gone in for sin like a very leviathan who needs the great deep to swim in. If thou hast oceans of iniquity, it mattereth not, in the sight of God, though thou hadst oceans more, for "the free gift" of pardon and eternal life "is of many offences unto justification." One sin has slain us, but Christ's mercy bringeth us the death of all our multitudes of sins.

The second point in our text is that *the one transgression of Adam led to judgment*: "for the judgment was by one." That first sin of our first parent did not go long unjudged. Sometimes, among the sons of men, there is a long period between the commission of a crime and the assizes at which the prisoner is tried; but, in Adam's day, God had short sessions. Ere the sun had gone down, the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day, and he called to Adam, and said unto him, "Where are thou?" Then Adam stood before his Maker in a different relationship from that which he had ever occupied before,—as an offender to be judged; and though there was no great white throne for him to see, yet there was a pure throne of justice there, and his transgression received the condemnation with which God had threatened him; and he went forth from the garden of Eden to toil, and, by-and-by, to return to the dust whence he was taken,—respited, but still condemned,—condemned to drag his chain about, and at last to die. One transgression, then, brought judgment upon Adam, and will bring judgment upon all who are not protected and preserved by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. When the time arrives for the sitting of the Judge of all upon the great white throne, men and angels will be present to watch the distribution of his impartial justice. Then will come the sentence of condemnation against all sin; but the mercy for all who are trusting in Christ is that "the free gift is of many offences unto justification." That free gift has anticipated the judgment, for it says to the believer, "Thou art already condemned in the person of thy Substitute. The verdict in thy case has been given; thy judgment is past already."

Let me repeat what I have often said, for I find that it is still needed. I frequently read in books, or hear ministers say, that we are in a state of probation; but nothing can be more false. We are not in any sense in a state of probation; we are condemned already. The time of probation was over in Adam's day; and, now, we are criminals under sentence of condemnation, or else we have been absolved. God's free gift of pardon implies that we admit our condemnation, that the sentence has already rung in our ears, and that then God has said to each one of us who has trusted to the blood and merit of his Son, "I absolve thee; thy transgressions are all put away for his sake."

Have you, dear friend, ever gone through that experience? Did you ever stand before the judgment-seat of your own spirit? Did you ever judge yourself, that you might not be condemned with the world? Did you ever feel that you were condemned, and then did

you, with trembling faith, accept that free pardon which puts you past the judgment? For, when a man has committed an offence against the law of the land, and the Queen gives him a free pardon for it, he is not afraid that the police will break into his house, and take him off to further trial. No, it is tantamount to this,—that he has had his trial, and passed it, for he has received a free pardon from the highest authority in the country; and, beloved, no child of God needs to stand in fear of the judgment. He has been judged; he has been condemned; what is more, he has been punished; for, in the person of his glorious Representative, the guilt of his transgression has been laid upon his Substitute, and expiation has been made for it so that it is for ever put away, according to that wondrous word of the prophet, “In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.” How can he be amenable to justice who has already acknowledged his transgression, and has received pardon? Does not the divine forgiveness clear him? Ay, that it does; such is the pardon, stamped and sealed with the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, which the Judge of all the earth has given to us who have believed on his Son.

The one offence, then, brought man to judgment; but the glorious free gift of grace takes away from us even the fear of that tremendous day when Christ shall come in his glory; for, in that day, who shall lay anything to our charge? That man need not fear to go to the last great assize who feels that he can walk into the court and say, “Who is he that can even bring a charge against me?” and who feels, in addition, that if the devils in hell were base enough to fabricate a charge, yet, “it is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?” Since Christ hath died, and risen again, and now sitteth at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us, what judgment have we to fear? Glory be to God for that free gift!

Note, also,—I have already partly anticipated this point,—that *the one transgression not only led to judgment, but it led to condemnation.* Adam must have felt that when he picked up the first dead bird, and when he saw the deer lie bleeding beneath the paw of the lion. He must have realized it still more painfully when he gazed upon the pale face of Abel, smitten to death by his own brother; ay, and when Adam had to pause in his work because he felt weary, or that he might wipe the sweat from his brow, he felt more and more that he was under condemnation. When he could no longer walk through Eden’s garden, and converse with God,—when he saw the fiery sword uplifted at the gate of what had once been his own *pleasaunce* and place of delight, and when he knew that he could never again enter there, he understood what it was to be under condemnation.

That condemnation, dear friends, is a thing to tremble at; but our text tells us that “the free gift is of many offences unto justification.” What a glorious word that word “justification” is! It means the opposite of “condemnation.” When God comes, in infinite mercy, and gives a free pardon to a guilty soul, through

Christ, he makes that man to be the same as if he were perfectly just. Instead of standing there condemned, he is absolved;—nay, more than that,—he is justified, made just, and to be treated now as though he never had sinned at all, but had always been a just and righteous man. Oh, wondrous change of condemnation into justification! Just as thou hast trembled when God has condemned thee, so do thou with as much force rejoice when God justifies thee; for, if he says thou art just, then just thou art,—so just that, as I have already said, none shall ever dare to lay anything to thy charge.

This, too, is a matter of present possession. As soon as we believe in Jesus, we are justified,—made righteous,—“made the righteousness of God in him.” It is a very wonderful thing; it is, perhaps, the grandest doctrine that could possibly be proclaimed; but it is true. Hark, thee, friend; dost thou understand that, just as, in Adam, thou wast condemned, and so came under the sentence of death, so, if thou believest in Jesus Christ, thou shalt be cleansed altogether from thy many offences, and God will look upon thee as perfectly just in Christ Jesus. Thou shalt, by faith, have peace with God, and there shall be a reason for that peace, for everything which made God angry with thee shall have been put away, and thou shalt sing,—

“I will praise thee every day!  
Now thine anger’s turned away;  
Comfortable thoughts arise  
From the bleeding sacrifice;”—

and that may be done now, at this very moment. It need not take thee a day, a month, a year; but, in an instant, God can speak the pardoning word, strike his pen through the long list of thy sins, and write thee in his book as “Righteous,” and righteous thou shalt be there and then. Oh, wondrous grace! Shall we ever be able to say sufficient to express our gratitude for it?

Now I want you to notice that *this one offence involved death*, as well as judgment and condemnation; for we find, in the next and succeeding verses, that “death reigned.” The apostle puts it very strongly. “By one man’s offence death reigned by one;” he sat upon his throne swaying his grim sceptre over the entire race of mankind, and he even claimed, as his victims, babes “that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,” and their little bodies were laid in the grave. Oh, the awful power which sin had thus to turn the world into one vast cemetery, and to slay the whole human race! But, beloved, when Jesus Christ comes to your soul and mine, he takes away the punishment,—not merely of that one offence of Adam, but of “many offences.” Sin brought death into the world, with all its woe, but Christ comes, and takes death away, removing all punishment for sin; so that whosoever believeth in him will, for his sake, never be punished, and cannot be for this best of reasons,—that it is not consistent with divine justice that there should be two punishments for the same offence; and as God accepted Christ as the Substitute for all of us who believe in him, he cannot afterwards punish us for the sin that was laid upon

him. There can never be such injustice as that which would be perpetrated by the Judge of all the earth if he took Christ to stand vicariously to suffer in the believer's stead, and then caused the believer to suffer, too.

"But," someone asks, "will not the believer be afflicted and chastened?" Yes, but that is quite another thing from being punished for his guilt. Not penally, as with the severity of a judge; but lovingly may he be chastened by his Father who takes him into his family. There is a great difference between punishing for an offence and chastening for it. Punishment looks at the guilt of it; but chastening comes from a Father who has already forgiven it, and who chastens with a view to the profit of the child, that he may not offend again. There is and always must be a grave distinction between the rectorial character of God as a judge, and the paternal character of God towards his own people; and you and I, who have received Christ, are dealt with as children, no more to be punished in the penal sense, but as dear children who must be scourged that we may no more offend him.

Do you understand this, poor seeking sinner,—that you need not dread the punishment of your sin if you will but trust in Jesus? You need then have no dread of hell; for, if you believe in Jesus, and so prove that you are one of those who are in Jesus, and that he stood as the Substitute for you, and made atonement for you, there is for you no sword of vengeance, for you there are no flames of hell, for you there is no wrath of God. You are free from condemnation; and, as a natural result, you must be free from punishment.

I will only just mention two or three things on which I meant to have spoken at greater length, and then leave this point. The first is this, that *the one offence brought condemnation immediately*. As soon as ever Adam committed the offence, he underwent the sentence of spiritual death which God had threatened as the result of disobedience. In like manner, the free gift, the instant it is bestowed, brings justification immediately.

"The moment a sinner believes,  
And trusts in his crucified God,"—

he is as much justified as he ever will be even in heaven. He is clean in God's sight; he is cleared of all guilt by that one act of God's free grace as soon as he believes in Jesus.

Next, *the offence of one was manifested very speedily*. Adam felt ashamed of his nakedness. Very soon, he realized what toil meant, and he saw the signs of death's dominion, for the graves began to multiply. Now, in the same fashion, the free gift soon manifests itself. It does not give us a something merely to dream about, but it gives us a justification which our spiritual senses are able to perceive, for "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." When God puts away our sins, he gives us a manifest joy,—not a thing that is hidden or wrapped up, but a joy that can be seen by all whose eyes are open.

Further, *the one offence operated universally*. All who were represented by Adam have had to feel the consequence of his trans-

gression; and, in like manner, the free gift operates universally upon all who receive it. There was never a sinner yet, who trusted in Christ, who did not receive strength, life, absolution, and justification; neither shall anyone ever trust in Christ, and yet be left to perish.

And *the one offence acted completely and fatally*. It slew the whole race; see how they have died! Ask every hill or valley whether still it doth not hold the relics of the slain. And, in similar but more blessed fashion, the free gift operates effectually and finally. In the first case, God overrides its effects; but, in the second case, he never will do so. He whom God justifies is justified for ever, and so shall he stand, as long as he lives, and throughout eternity, a just man in the sight of God. This just man shall live by his faith; he shall hold on his way, and wax stronger and stronger. What a glorious piece of news is this that I have to tell to every soul that feels its need of such a great salvation! Would God that you would all believe it, and trust the Saviour whom I thus proclaim unto you!

II. My time has fled, so I can only tell you very briefly what I meant to have said at greater length upon my second head, which is, LET US ADORE THE MANNER OF DIVINE MERCY.

Let us, first, *thank God that he treats us representatively*. I was pleased with a passage, which I met with in the writings of Dr. Chalmers, where he rejoices that he fell in Adam, that so it became possible for God to raise him up again in the same way that he fell, that is, representatively. Because, my dear brethren, if you and I were standing now in perfect innocence, we should always have to feel that there was a possibility that we might fall; nay, more than that, by this time we should all have fallen, whatever our age or position may be. Even these dear girls and boys would have fallen into some sin or other. It would always be an insecure standing if we had to stand by ourselves upon our own merits. But, now, although we have fallen in Adam, and have been broken to shivers, we who have believed in Jesus have been lifted up again in him who never can or will fall. Do you see him up yonder in glory? Never did the so-called everlasting hills stand upon their solid basis as firmly as he stands at the right hand of God. What power can ever remove him? And he stands there for me,—for you, my brother or sister,—for every soul that believeth on him; and until he falls, you will never fall. You will never perish until he perishes, for you form a part of his mystical body, as the apostle Paul puts it, “we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” There are some people who think that Christ may lose certain of his members. In fact, according to their representations of the theory of falling from grace, you would think that he was like a lobster, or some other creature that sheds its limbs, and grows new ones. But our Lord Jesus represents himself as a man, and a man will not willingly lose so much as his little finger. If he did, he would be imperfect; and Christ will not lose the humblest, meanest member of his mystical body, for, as the apostle says, that body is his fulness, “the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” Oh, what

a standing it is to be made to stand in Christ! He raised me from the gates of gaping hell, and made my standing more secure than ever it was even before Adam fell, and I fell in him, blessed be his holy name!

The next thing for which we ought to adore the method of God's mercy is, that *it is all a free gift*: "The free gift is of many offences." "The free gift." I like Paul's way of putting those two words together,—“free” and “gift.” A gift, of course, is free, so this expression is tautological; but it is blessedly tautological. Someone asked me once, “Why do you say ‘free grace’? Of course, if it is grace, it is free.” “Oh, well!” I replied, “I do so to make assurance doubly sure.” We will always call it, not only grace, but free grace, to make it clear that God gives his grace freely to sinners,—the undeserving and ungodly. He gives it without any condition. If, in one place, he says that he requires repentance, in another place he promises it; if he demands faith at one moment, he bestows it at another. So grace is always God's free gift, and that suits a man who has not a penny in his pocket. I have walked—as I dare say some of you have—by the goldsmiths' and jewellers' shops in the Palais Royal at Paris, and seen the vast amount of wealth that is exhibited there; and many of you have gone along the great streets of our city, and seen perfect mines of wealth displayed, and you have said to yourself, “Ah! I cannot purchase any of these things, because there is a little ticket hanging down below with certain pounds marked on it, and I cannot afford to buy them. It is all I can do to get bread and cheese for those who are at home, so I must leave these luxuries to others.” But if I should ever pass by a goldsmith's shop, and see a ticket bearing the words, “Free gift!” I should be willing to take a few things at that price. I am glad that you smile at that expression, because those are my Master's terms. He has treasures worth more than the most glorious jeweller's shop ever contained, and they are all free gifts to all who trust him. I dare not laugh at you, but I shall have to blame and condemn you, if eternal life be God's free gift, and yet you will not say, “I will take it, and have it for ever.” You would like to take jewellery for nothing, but you will not accept everlasting life and pardon for nothing by simply trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lastly, we ought specially to adore the love and mercy of God in that *his plan is to save us by Christ Jesus*. To my mind, it makes every blessing all the sweeter because it comes through him; the very glory of our salvation is that we are saved in him, “saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” I have sometimes thought, when I have seen a ship beautifully fitted up,—a fast-sailing clipper,—that I would like to go to sea in her, not simply for the sake of the place to which I should be going, but because I should like to be in such a ship, with such company, and under such-and-such a captain. Well, here is Jesus, the great Captain of the glorious ship of salvation; and who does not feel that, while it would be well to go to heaven anyhow, it is best of all to go with him and in him? Oh, to be linked with him,—with God's darling Son,—with the delight of the angels,—with the Father of all the ages,—the

Wonderful,—the Counsellor,—the Mighty God,—the Altogether-lovely,—the Best-beloved of our soul! It makes the sweetness of salvation all the sweeter because it comes to us by Christ Jesus.

The Lord bless you, beloved, and give you to know all this in your own souls, for his dear Son's sake! Amen.

## Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

ROMANS V. 6—21.

Verse 6. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

This is one of the most surprising sentences on record. If it had not been inspired, there are many who would cavil at it. Indeed, many do cavil at it even now, for it is still currently believed that Christ must have died for the righteous. Yet thus is it written: "In due time Christ died for the ungodly." And this is the commendation of that death, and of the love which suggested it:—

7. *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:*

For a merely just man, scarcely would anybody die.

7. *Yet peradventure for a good man—*

For a benevolent man—

7, 8. *Some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

It is under that aspect that Christ is to be regarded as dying for the ungodly, dying for sinners. Ungodly man, guilty sinner, is there not hope for you in this blessed truth? Does anyone say, "I shall be lost, for I am ungodly; I must necessarily perish, for I am a sinner"? Your logic is at fault, dear friend. "Christ died for the ungodly;" "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" therefore, the ungodly—sinners—may be saved because of his death, and all who trust him shall be saved.

9. *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

Did he die for us while we were sinners? Will he not, then, surely keep us now that we are saved? Yes, that he will.

10. *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

What an invincible argument this is for the safety of all true believers in Jesus! Did he die for them, and reconcile them unto his Father by his death, when they were enemies? Then, will he not certainly save them now that they are reconciled, seeing that he ever lives to intercede for them? Will he not save them by his life? Assuredly, he will.

11. *And not only so,—*

We cannot get to the end of these priceless boons. These precious pearls are too numerous even for the apostle to count, although he was a man who knew how to "reckon" up spiritual treasures: "And not only so,"—

11—14. *But we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned—*

Personally—

14. *After the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

So that the sin of Adam took effect upon the human race before the law came, and even upon those who had no personal transgression,—unconscious infants, I mean,—causing them to die.

15—17. *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence—*

By Adam's one sin,—the sin of one man,—

17, 18. *Death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

That is to say, upon the "all" who are in Christ, as the condemnation came upon the "all" who were in the first Adam. He who believeth not in Jesus has no part in "the free gift unto justification of life;" but he who believeth is a partaker of the glorious justification which comes by Christ.

19, 20. *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound."*

It was the practical result of the giving of the law that men became greater sinners than they were before, and it was the design of the law that they should see themselves to be greater sinners than before. The law is the looking-glass in which we see our spots, but it is not the basin in which we wash them away. The law has a provoking power, for such is the perversity of our nature that, no sooner do we hear the command, "You shall not do so-and-so," than at once we want to do it. Our nature is very much like quicklime. Throw cold water upon it, and straightway it generateth heat; acting, as it were, against the nature of that which is cast upon it. So, the more God says to a man, "Thou shalt," the more the man says, "I will not;" and the more God says to him, "Thou shalt not," the more doth the man resolve that he will. "The law entered, that the offence might abound." It reveals the depravity and disobedience of human nature, and lays us low before God as convicted criminals.

20. *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

Blessed be God for that! Sin may be a river, but grace is an ocean. Sin may be a mountain, but grace is like Noah's flood, which prevailed over the tops of the mountains fifteen cubits upward.

21. *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Do you know, dear friends, by personal experience, all about this of which we have been reading? I know that many of you do. Would God that all did,—that they understood, by a living faith, what it is to be justified, having first understood, by sorrowful experience, what a sense of condemnation the guilty soul must feel. The Lord bring you all to himself, by Jesus Christ! Amen.