

GREAT TRUTHS ON GREAT SUBJECTS

The Brighton Lectures
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Lecture 2 The Atonement or Reconciliation

First published in London, 1858

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. —2 Corinthians 5:19

In beginning the consideration of this important subject, we would, first of all, clearly define what is meant by the Atonement. It is a word made up of three distinct syllables, at-one-ment—the latter part of the word being formed from the Latin *mens*, the mind, and, consequently, the word signifies *at one mind*. This doctrine takes into consideration that God and man—owing to man's having fallen from the state in which God created him, and intended him to live and advance—have become of two minds. Man departed from communion with God's goodness and wisdom, and sank into a state of evil and falsehood, which, in the Scriptures, is meant by death. "To be carnally minded," the Apostle says, "is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). This state of things commenced with the fall, and increased with each transgression as men continued to fall, because they continued to sin.

There was no possibility of bringing these two, God and man, who had become of two minds, into communion, so as to make them of one mind again, except by the work of our Lord Jesus Christ in "reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."

This reconciliation is the Atonement, and the doctrine upon the subject is the doctrine of Atonement, or at-one-ment, or agreement, or reconciliation.

Now, in the first place, I would endeavor to impress upon my hearers that they should never forget, in all their considerations of religious subjects, these great principles: God is Love, God is One, and God is Unchangeable.

These three are all distinctly expressed, both in the Scriptures and in all God's works; in creation, redemption, and providence. If we search the language of the sacred volume, we may take, for instance, the beautiful description of the Apostle, which distinctly says, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16); and "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8). If we turn to other parts of the Sacred Scriptures, we shall find the same truth expressed, perhaps in different language, but quite as emphatically, "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Psalm 145:9).

If we look at these works themselves; if we either regard creation on the grand scale, the universe around us; or if we look at our own little world—at the powers we possess in body

and mind; or at all the Divine care that has been around us from our birth up to the present moment; we see illustrated in all things this great truth, “God is love.” How could any of us have been here, enjoying the blessings of life and health, notwithstanding our shortcomings, our rebellions, our forgetfulness, our incapability of adding anything to him, or paying for the slightest comfort we receive—to say nothing of the millions of millions of blessings we are enjoying and have enjoyed here—but that God is love? It could only be from this glorious principle that creation had its being, and is sustained in being; for if we imagine any other idea, any other principle, we shall find the supposition is absurd.

Creation’s only key is that God is love. God in creation could not have sought any selfish gratification, any addition for himself, because throughout eternity he has been the possessor of all things. Our hymns, our praises, our offerings, add nothing to his glory or renown. They are good for us, and he commands them because they do us good. Whatever we have is derived from him, and we add nothing to his bliss. He could not therefore have had a selfish desire in creation. The common notion that he created all things for his own glory is worthy of fallen man, but not of the God of love. Much less could he have had an evil desire in creation, for all our powers tend to make us happy. It is only man’s perversion of God’s gifts that makes him miserable. There is no part, from the hair of man’s head to the sole of his foot, that does not tend in its natural and orderly condition to well-being and bliss. It could not be from any other purpose, therefore, except the desire of infinite love to bless his creatures that these were made.

He possessed in himself complete happiness, and desired to create ever-increasing multitudes in his own image and likeness—desired from affection to form beings such as we are:

each one of us a little universe of wants, a compound of desires and demands, that from his own fullness he might give us what we want, and bless us thereby. He made the eye that it may be delighted with the glorious scenery with which he adorns the world. He created the ear with its delights of harmony in order that, from the majestic thunder to the feeblest music of the tiniest bird, all sounds might give us harmony and bliss. He has created the tongue with its taste and sense of savors in order that by all the fruits, by all the varieties of human food, with their delicate delights, and with all that constitutes their sufficiency for human taste God might bless us again by that organ. And so throughout our whole being—from the meanest of the delights that the animal nature enjoys to the sublimest desires that the soul has for knowledge, for wisdom, and for the highest love of God—men are so created that God may bless them with satisfactions and make them happy here, and then happy through eternity hereafter. And we cannot suppose for a moment that a Being who has done this can be anything but Infinite Love. Not simply loving, but *love itself*; for we are told, “Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

If this is really true, the more deeply and profoundly we impress it upon our hearts, the better shall we understand all other true religious teaching. Let us never forget, then, these three points: God is love, God is one, and God is unchangeable. “I am the Lord; I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed” (Malachi 3:6).

In my opening lecture I endeavored, as completely as the time would admit, to point out that a true idea of the Divine Trinity does not in the slightest degree impair the idea that God is one. For the Trinity consists of the infinite Love of God understood by the Father;

the manifestation of God understood by the Son, who is his Wisdom, or Logos before the incarnation, and after it his Divine Form, such as made God known in heaven and on earth; and, lastly, the Spirit, outflowing from God, meant by the Holy Ghost—and all these are in the Lord Jesus Christ. He therefore who wishes to find God must come to Jesus Christ, in whom “dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9); it is impossible to see, know, or understand the Father except in him. John said, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). Jesus said, “Ye have neither heard his [that is, the Father’s] voice at any time, nor seen his shape” (John 5:37). “I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). When, therefore, a person would have a true, clear, and certain idea of the God he loves and worships, let him go with all his heart and seek it in the knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the doctrine of the Atonement, as we have said before, is the doctrine which turns our attention to that state and period when man, disobeying his Maker, incurred the penalty attached to his transgression, which says, “in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Then some have imagined that God became angry and indisposed to make man happy any longer because he had become disobedient. But the view that we conceive is taught in the Sacred Scriptures—in harmony with the three grand points upon which we have dwelt—is that although man suffered loss of light, loss of happiness, loss of power for good, loss of communication with God, and loss of that spiritual-mindedness which is called life, and sank into sin and thence into sorrow, God still continued the same. *Man* changed, but *God* did not change,

because he is unchangeable. He followed man with his care, with his kindness, with his messengers, with his Word, with his teaching, with angels and prophets, and at length he himself became as a man upon the earth, under the name of Jesus Christ, in order that he might save man from sin and the unhappiness which invariably attends sin.

Hear our text: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Now, mark this: in Scripture not a word is ever said about Christ reconciling his Father to us; *not one word*. It is always that he reconciled us to himself. Let me entreat you to hear the express language. We are exceedingly jealous that the God of love should not be misrepresented as a God of wrath and vengeance—and that in the very arena where the infinite wonders of his love were brought to view.

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. (Romans 5:10)

Our nature was reconciled first in him by his death, when all imperfection was removed, and his humanity became infinitely perfect and the head of all things, the everlasting Mediator to us (Colossians 1:17, 18; 2:10; 1 Timothy 2:5). See again the Epistle to the Ephesians:

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished *in his flesh* the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances; for to make *in himself* of two one new man, that he might reconcile both *unto God* in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. (Ephesians 2:14–16)

Or, according to the marginal and more correct reading, having slain the enmity *in himself*. Still it is reconciling us, both Jew and Gentile, to God. And this he did by destroying in himself the enmity of our common nature. Again:

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things *unto himself* by him, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. (Colossians 1:19–21)

So is it ever, God *reconciling us*, not having himself to be reconciled:

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might *redeem us* from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus 2:13, 14)

This is a great fact; let us not forget it. It is not, as the old theologians stated, that Christ died to reconcile the Father to us, but as our text says, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). In order to effect an atonement, or a reconciliation between man and himself, the Creator came upon earth; God that made the world became our Redeemer; Jehovah, the Father, became the Savior of mankind.

This truth we would as strongly as possible impress upon all minds. We have already endeavored to show that the doctrine of the Old Testament is that Jehovah himself would become the Savior, and we pointed out that the New Testament account of our Lord Jesus Christ was only the fulfillment of the promises that were given in the Old. It is astonishing, to those who have not previously sought through the prophecies to ascertain the truth upon this great subject, how frequently the declaration is made in the Old Testament that Jehovah himself would become the Savior of mankind.

Here, perhaps, we may be met by the reasoning of those who will say—because they attribute the ideas of the natural and unregenerate man to the doings of God—“but when man fell, how could God continue to love him, since he had departed from God’s law, and rendered himself amenable to God’s justice? Inasmuch as God is just, he must, as the moral Governor and Sovereign of the universe, inflict the pains and penalties of disobedience upon mankind.” But we sometimes make a mistake, a very serious mistake, in talking about justice. We speak of justice, but we mean revenge. The man who has had a bond with a fellow creature, and who finds that bond broken—broken, perhaps, through helplessness or ignorance, or perhaps willfully—and who says, “I will have my pound of flesh; I will pursue through legal and all manner of means, every advantage I have,” often calls this justice. But it is not justice; it is revenge. The man who has had some insult offered to him imagines that he must pay back in kind—he must give insult for insult, he must inflict blow for blow—and he calls this justice. It is not justice, it is only the infernal passion of revenge.

Justice is the persevering regard for goodness and right. It seeks goodness and right sometimes by punishment, when it sees that punishment will do the criminal good, and will preserve society from his dangerous crimes. At other times, when it sees that punishment is no longer required, it seeks a goodness and right, by mercy, gentleness, and kindness—by every effort to reclaim. It is the persevering regard for a good and noble end. This is true justice, and it rejoices whenever it can forego punishment, whenever it can put aside pain; it rejoices rather to reform than to punish in any way.

This is justice. And God, when man fell from his law, was under no manner of obligation to descend himself to inflict punishment

and misery, but only still to seek the good of man. Sin punishes, sin pains, sin is the fountain of sorrow. All that is needed when a man sins is to leave him to himself; the sin itself will punish, and he will find the punishment will flow out of the crime itself.

Man disobeyed God's admonition. It was in reality a merciful admonition that God gave, when he said, having made for man every blessing: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16, 17). Many of us are rather negligent in reading, and suppose when it is said the "tree of knowledge," it means a fig tree, an apple tree, or a plum tree; but "knowledge" does not grow on such trees. The "tree of knowledge is a symbol of man's own knowledge, his own wit, his own conceits, when compared with the divine wisdom and intelligence of the Most High. And when a man takes of this tree, instead of being taught to receive God's wisdom as the guide and the light of his life, he eats of the tree of knowledge. As he fell then, so he falls now.

But God guards him against it, cautions him against it—tells him that in the day he eats of it, he will surely die. And he does die. That is to say, he does come into that state which the *Scriptures* call death. For it is very seldom that death in the *Scriptures* means the mere parting from man's body which we call death. The Sacred *Scriptures* make very little of this death, because, in reality, man does not die when we say he dies. Man has two sides; he has his earthly side, which we all see, and he has his spiritual, his inner side, which men do not see with the earthly eye, but which angels see. When we say "a man is dead," they say "a child is born." When we say the outward house is broken, or is dissolved; they say he enters into a high and joyous and happy life—

if he has, by the help of God, built up a heavenly state within. When the material covering of a good man perishes, the Christian mourners say that an angel is rising up to enjoy the higher beatitudes of an eternal world. He has risen a step higher than that on which he formerly was. He has risen; for having lived on this lower stage of being, he has risen to a higher and nobler stage to live more fully, not to die. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me," says the Lord Jesus, "shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:26).

It is not this death, then, that the *Scriptures* have in view when they are speaking about death, pains, and penalties. It is the death of what is holy, what is pure, what is happy and delightful in the soul. This is death. And the moment a man turns himself against the law and wisdom of God, that moment, by a necessity of his being, he dies. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

God's laws execute themselves. They are not like our imperfect laws. They require no constable to be sent to see that they are put into execution. God's laws are self-executive. There never was a happy man, since the world began, who was also a disobedient and a selfish man. In the day he acts against the laws of God, he dies.

But God is not only infinitely good, and pure, and infinitely merciful; he is holy. His mercy *cannot* bless the guilty, the impenitent wretch. But it is not for want of God's mercy that he is not blessed. God's mercy and God's justice always go together. In reading the sacred volume, this is a remark worthy of notice. It is not, as we often think, when we are under the influence of the state of mind of which the Psalmist speaks, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself" (Psalm 50:21). When we think of God's justice, we, as I before said, often fancy that

revenge is justice. We think of punishment, of his infliction of terrible torments. But it is not so represented in the Sacred Scriptures. You will find justice and salvation go together there. He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22); "a just God and a Savior; there is none besides me" (Isaiah 45:21). And when the Lord Jesus was announced to come into the world, it is said, "He is just, and having salvation" (Zechariah 9:9). He was executing God's justice, because God's justice means the persevering divine energy that seeks to bless by reconciling man to himself—bringing him back again to right and to order.

This is what God's justice causes him to do. "He is just, and having salvation," and it is for this reason that the Sacred Scriptures present the same glorious God that made the world as coming in the person of Jesus Christ, to save the world. Look at John:

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave them power to become the sons of God. (John 1:10–12)

It was, therefore, the one glorious Jehovah himself who promised, in a vast number of passages in the Old Testament, that he would become a Savior; that he would come to redeem from hell and sin. It was this glorious personage who did come, and enabled the good upon earth to say, in the language of Zacharias: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:68).

Never forget, then, this grand element in considering the true doctrine of the Atonement: that it was the God of love himself, under the name of Jesus Christ, that came to save his people from their sins.

But it will be asked, "What did he come to save them from? If God was not angry, and going to destroy mankind, from what did he come to save them?"

First—and this is the principal part of the doctrine of the Atonement—he came to save mankind from the power of *hell*. There is a law of spiritual affinity. For there are spiritual laws that affect minds in a way that is similar to the natural laws which affect matter. And since, by a law of natural affinity, like bodies come together and form themselves into appropriate masses, so by a law of spiritual affinity like minds come together and form themselves into close connection. This has been expressed in homely language by the old proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together." We see that it is so in the gatherings that take place amongst men. But the Scriptures open up the truth—and experience confirms the same series of facts—that evil men and evil spirits become connected together. Hence, it is stated in the Scriptures that "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34)—that wicked spirits associate with wicked men; so that if a person first endeavors to pay some attention to religion, and to cast the evil spirit out of himself, but after a time begins to go back to his folly again, to wallow in iniquity, "Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first" (Matthew 12:45). Experience confirms this.

Everyone knows that in a bad man there is constantly a series of suggestions being made leading him to be worse; he never shows himself as bad as he feels. There is a stirring from within impelling him to profounder depths of folly and sin. He restrains himself to a great extent to make a decent appearance before men, but there is always a pressure towards a deeper gulf of evil, urging him downwards and

onwards. There is, in fact, a something worse than himself dragging him lower and lower.

Just so, on the other hand, a good man finds something better and better still, leading him higher and higher, because good men on earth and good angels in heaven are united together. He that loves the holy precepts of the Almighty finds himself in that sort of company of which Paul speaks when he says, “Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:22, 23). It is these holy ones that are associated with him of whom Jacob saw the representation in the dream, describing the grades of being under the form of a ladder, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder. The ascending is a representation of continual aspiration unto higher and holier Christian virtues; the good rise, and angels help them upwards. And when they have received the inward blessings of the Almighty they then descend to bring them into life. “They go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:9).

Now, from the operation of this universal law—which we cannot stay to enlarge upon more particularly, but which is full of suggestions of the most practical and noblest character—when men fell from God they associated themselves with wicked spirits. The more men who died and went into the eternal world in this state, the stronger did the influence of hell become, until at length it was impossible for any power but the power of God to break the yoke that was formed between infernal spirits and infernal men. Then God himself descended upon earth, first of all to break down the power of hell and to set men free.

What did he say when he opened the Divine Book in the synagogue?

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. (Luke 4:18; cf. Isaiah 61:1)

The human race at that time had become inveigled by the power of darkness until they were laid prostrate. Judaism in its fallen perverted condition, and Gentilism in its myriad idolatries—everything awful and abominable—threw its infernal influence over human souls, and no power but God’s could break that influence. Hence you will find it said in Isaiah: “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him, and the Redeemer shall come to Zion” (Isaiah 59:19, 20).

This, then, was the first part of the grand work that had to be performed. The power of hell was to be vanquished, and our Heavenly Father was to do it, because he alone *could* do it. He therefore came to be our Savior and Redeemer. In his life you read of this great work; in almost every chapter of the Gospels he was employed in casting out devils. He was removing those terrible diseases that the devils inflicted upon men. He was saying, “Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit” (Mark 5:8), and his divine word was triumphant. In death he was triumphing, as the Apostle says in Hebrews (and in many other places the same truth is stated), “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). In death, therefore, the Lord died for us as he had lived for us, and he rose again for us.

This grand first operation of the Atonement was the destruction in life and in death of all the infernal power that oppressed the human race. By reason of his overcoming the

powers of hell, mankind was then set free, and has since been kept free. You and I are free at this moment—no longer trodden down as men had been by the influence of a power they could not control. From that time to this, the victory of our Savior has made every man free to choose his life and what he will be; to walk onwards, if he chooses, in the path of the regenerate life and be formed into an angel-man. But if he will not, and he chooses the opposite, he has always to remember that if he sins, he must sorrow, and that no fault can be attributed to any other but himself.

This, then, was the first part of the grand operation of the Redeemer God: to *set* free and to *keep* free all mankind from the powers of darkness.

The second part was that he who had assumed a human nature to bring himself near to man might glorify and perfect this nature, raise it into closest union with himself, and keep it as a channel through which his Divine power might forever act in order to keep man free. He perfected his human nature. This is sometimes called “glorifying his humanity.” This was the second operation that was finished in and by the Savior’s death.

As we said before, we must never forget that the Savior lived for us, the Savior died for us, the Savior rose again for us. I would, however, that no soul might depart from this subject without the conviction that this was done, not to satisfy any wrath or vindictive disposition either in himself or any other divine person, but to satisfy his own love, to redeem man from hell and sin. It was done to satisfy, not wrath, but love. It was from love he came into the world; from love he lived for man; from love he died for man; from love he rose again for man; and from love he has been working in you and me to make us fit for heaven and everlasting happiness in eternity.

This second part of the great work of reconciliation, namely, perfecting his humanity, is oftentimes mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures. Take, for instance, Luke, “Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected” (Luke 13:32). Not that his Divine nature needed any perfecting. That was perfect in itself, and always had been. But the human nature in which he became like his brethren—*that* needed perfecting.

So, again, when he had risen from the dead, and his disciples were mourning and sorrowing, they thought all their hopes were baffled. They were like us, my brethren: they looked at things as the natural man looks at them, and they thought that because Christ did not enter into their feelings and make a kingdom in which they might be prime ministers and dignitaries, all was lost. They said, “We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21); but when they saw him crucified, they supposed that everything had become blighted. But Christ answered them, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter his glory?” (Luke 24:25, 26).

Christ entered into his glory through suffering and death, and there is no way of entering into glory for any of us except by following his blessed footsteps and suffering likewise. By dying to sin and living to righteousness he perfected his human nature, going through all that his creatures have to go through—going through struggles in life and death. But he did it by his own power, because he was God as well as man; because he was the Father as well as the Son. And therefore he said, as you may read in John, “And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19).

The second part, therefore, was the sanctification of his human nature—the making of it perfect, glorious, in all respects the fit body of his divinity, and then raising it with him to heaven. “For to this end,” the Apostle Paul says, “Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living” (Romans 14:9). He was Lord of the dead and the living from eternity as Jehovah, but his humanity became “Lord of the dead and living” when it was glorified and perfected, and made one in all respects with his inward divinity. And he, from this humanity, poured out his Holy Spirit, because his human nature formed a channel between the Divine and us. His human nature joined hands, as it were, between mankind and Divinity; it was the “mediator between God and man,” and it thus forms the eternal link by which the power of the infinite God flows forth to purify fallen men, and bring them into the likeness of himself, reconciling them to him.

The third part of the Atonement is the absolute conquering, in each case, of man’s sins both of nature and practice, so far as man will cooperate with him: absolutely overcoming man’s evils, so that he is really reconciled to God. This is the third part: “Be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Christ has done his part. That was all perfectly done, completely done; but when that was done, then came the part in which man had to cooperate with him. “Thou shalt call his name *Jesus*, for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). The third part of the grand work of salvation is absolute deliverance from sin. “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Now this is a part that I would especially urge upon the attention of all; for there is often a great mistake made upon this point. It is supposed by some that we are saved by only believing in what God has done for us; and

when they are told that this is not so, sometimes they think we do not believe that God has done this for us. But what we mean to say is that God always does his part perfectly and completely—that is always sure to be well done, rightly done, unmistakably done, and done so that it cannot possibly be mended. But God has formed us free agents. He has given us the power to cooperate with himself so that we shall not be made happy slaves, but happy freemen.

In fact, slaves cannot be happy, even with golden chains on. It is quite impossible. Happiness is the blessedness that comes from man’s freely adopting the principles that make him happy. There is a great difference between pleasure and happiness. A sensual man may be pleased for a little time; a mere savage can be pleased with a feather and tickled with a straw; and very much of what the world calls happiness is little better than this. The pleasures of eating and drinking, and of sensuality, gross or refined—none of these are happiness. They are pleasures. They may be voluptuousness, but they are short-lived, and are gross and impure; they are often the gilded cup that contains a deadly poison.

God intends us to be pleased, but he intends us to be more than pleased: he intends us to be happy. And happiness comes from adopting God’s principles within—from becoming like God. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (Psalm 1:1). It is not in riches or in rank, it is not in position or in power, that happiness consists. It is in communion with God that a holy heart possesses happiness, “These things have I spoken unto you,” said the Redeemer, “that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:11).

This is happiness. And to become happy, we must not only believe as facts that God is, and that Christ came, and that Christ died for us; we must not only believe these historical facts, but we must believe them so as to include in the belief not only in Christ's death, but in his life and his sayings; we must believe him altogether, not partially believe him—and believe him so as to *love* and *be* what we believe. No faith but this is a saving faith; and this saving faith begins when, as we before said, we believe Christ in his speech, in his life, in his death.

And if we do verily believe him, we shall immediately begin to fight against the sin that he teaches us is deadly. The belief of a large number of persons is nothing more than *saying* they believe. As soon as they really believe, they begin to look for the sin that is in them, and to fight against it. It is not enough for a man to say "I am a miserable sinner," to join the Church, and to say, "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us" (see Matthew 23:23; Romans 7:14–20; Psalm 38:3, 7).

The lips of many say these weighty words, when yet they have no real and heartfelt belief in them. If another person meets such a confessor half an hour afterwards and tells him what may be the very truth—that he is a great sinner, for he has a vile temper, or is unjust, and thus he is a great sinner—if he is an insincere Christian he will at once throw the charge back and say that he is nothing of the sort; that he is as good as his accuser—and perhaps a little better. That is not the way saving faith acts.

Saving faith is an inward light which shows a man that he is a sinner. And every man *is* a sinner, not only in nature but in practice, before the Spirit of Christ is born in him and begins to make him a new man. He who takes

the light of heaven and holds it over his spirit will find that if he does not sin in being a bad-tempered man, he may sin in being a drunkard; or if he does not in either respect disgrace himself, his name, and his character, he may sin in overreaching others. And if he looks closely, he will find that he has the terrible root of self-love in him—though in him it may be somewhat different from what it is in his neighbors. The sin of selfishness is the old serpent that deceiveth the whole world.

Now, just as Christ himself trod upon the serpent's head—that is to say, subdued the power of hell, the great mass of selfishness—so when his holy principles descend into the human spirit he comes to give the power to conquer selfishness by might derived from him. "Behold, I give you power," he says, "to tread upon serpents and scorpions; and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luke 10:19).

Now, this is the grand influence of true religion. It is a thing we oftentimes overlook, but our grand life work is to overcome selfishness in ourselves in order to make us like-minded with Jesus. His whole life was the manifestation of love and impartiality. He was the embodiment of the infinite desire to bless others.

What brought him down upon earth but this? Though infinitely rich, for our sakes he became poor. He chose not to live in majesty, but as a poor man—as the head, the God, the ruler of the good and the wise. He chose to suffer scorn and contumely, disdain, wounding, and death—a death far more terrible than anything that a mere human being could experience, for there was not only gathered around his cross all that men could inflict, but all that devils could inflict besides. And yet from that cross of suffering no word of vindictiveness, of reproach, or of condemnation came, but,

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

He came to inaugurate in us, by his power and by his example, this grand effort of overcoming selfishness in us and in the world, and thus to form a community fit for heaven. And it is only just so far as Christ’s salvation becomes embodied in us that we fight against selfishness, overcome it, and are saved. It is impossible that the selfish man can be happy—and it is because we have not understood this subject that very often the Christian profession has not effected its grand end. Men, under the name of being Christians, have often cherished as much selfishness as if they bore no such name at all, so that it has often been remarked that “professors of religion are as selfish as other people.” So far as they are selfish, so far they are not possessors of religion.

This overcoming of selfishness is a great business. It is a difficult battle to fight. It is a work which can only be performed in conjunction with our Savior, step by step. But until we are reconciled to him it is not even begun. He has done his part, but we have not done ours. It is impossible to make a number of selfish spirits happy. If we do not conquer selfishness in our lives, if we continue to be selfish, we cannot be happy anywhere; we have not been happy before death, and we shall not be happy after death.

But many say, “If I can but get into heaven at last—just get in—I shall be so happy.” You won’t, unless you get into a heavenly state before you go. An owl is not happy when it gets into the sunshine, but the dove rejoices in the beautiful light of heaven. Why? Because the owl’s nature is contrary to the nature of light and beauty. It is just so with a selfish spirit. For what is selfishness? It is the desire to have everything for ourselves, and nothing for anyone else.

Suppose there are twelve selfish persons put together and placed in a palace, with every enjoyment at their disposal, but each one is trying to get the whole for himself. Every one of them has eleven enemies constantly looking out to see how they can overreach him. And how can persons so principled possibly be happy? On the other hand, let the Spirit of Christ rule—let a man be saved from his sins by fighting against his selfishness, and he will be happy anywhere.

How often we forget this, and think it is only believing in certain propositions that is the work of religion. It is believing in such a way that we conquer our selfishness; and if we do not conquer it, our religion is a sham. “He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of Me” (Matthew 10:38). “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24).

Does anyone say, “I can’t do it; if I don’t look after myself, who would look after me. In this world it is everybody for himself and God for us all”? But this is the very reason the world is such a miserable world. So many act upon this principle still, though in every age it has failed. Although the world has tried all sorts of schemes; has put bad men into grand palaces; yet they have been unhappy. The rich and the noble have tried all plans to make themselves happy; have built great houses; have had a large number of servants; yet some of these are amongst the most miserable of mankind. Though in ever-so-splendid mansions, if the spirit is not right, there will be no happiness.

That is why we have so much yet of which to complain. One thinks and believes his creed to be the right one; another says that *his* view is right; a third thinks that *neither* of their creeds is right, but that *his* view is the one to make people happy.

It is not, however, a *belief* in any creed or no creed that makes people happy, but to *act* upon this, which is the essence of all belief. *This* is the belief in Jesus Christ—as when he says, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37–40). He who believes these so as to embody them in himself, and subdue everything in himself that is contrary to them; he who believes, and shows his belief by doing; he that passes his days in the effort to form his soul into the image of Jesus Christ, by power from Jesus Christ; he is the manly worker who is completing the work of atonement—of being saved from his sins.

This is actual salvation, and he finds it in being a better man, a kinder man, a juster man, and a happier man, every day that he lives. He cannot accomplish it at once. It is not a dream or a fancy; it is the work; it is the battle of life. It is the Christian campaign against whatever is opposed to happiness and heaven. It is the battle which each man must fight. And as he conquers in it, he will become a little heaven in himself. “Neither shall they say, ‘Lo here!’ or ‘Lo there!’ For behold the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). There is the kingdom of God, and it descends into man’s soul in proportion as the spirit of Jesus conquers in him the spirit of selfishness in all its ramifications. As he advances step by step, getting victory after victory, over every passion, every temper, every thought—everything, in short, that tends to make unhappiness within and unhappiness at home—he will know he is on the way to heaven, because heaven is in him.

Many there are who have thought only fancifully about religion, who still say, “If I did

but know that I should go to heaven, all would be right; I could bear anything then.” Why, it is not a difficult thing to know that! You are sure to go to heaven when you die if you get heaven in you while you live. It is not a difficult thing for you to tell. How do you act? “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16). How do you act? Are you peevish with your husband or your wife? Are you fretful or anxious, constantly craving that others should make you happy, instead of trying to make them happy? It is not likely you know anything about going to heaven; you have no heaven within you. You must at once commence the work of struggling against sin, not in name or in fancy, but the sin in you. Find out what there is wrong in you.

We are often very particular indeed, but too often we direct our attention to the wrong place. We are bent in finding sin out, and we find it out in everybody but ourselves. We complain that everyone is wrong except number one. Yet real religion thinks but lightly of the faults of others, remembering that we can never really tell how faulty others are. What we take in them as wrong may be intended to do us good; but whether they intend it or not, God will make it good for us if we are right. Joseph, when he was put into the pit, and made a slave of, did not know that that was the right way—that God would make everything work together for his good. But it was so.

And so it is with us. Let us look to the Lord and see what he is and what he says. Let us pray to him to give us wisdom to believe him and agree with him, and power to work out his will in us, and then we shall have a saving faith which will really save us from our sin—our selfishness. And as darkness goes out, light will come in; as misery is cast out, joy will descend; as selfishness is banished, the love of God will come down; and we shall know that “in doing

his commands there is great reward” (Psalm 19:11). “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14).

This is the completion of the great work of atonement. Each man is really reconciled to his Savior. “Abide in me, and I in you” (John 15:4). Christ only descends into us as we enter into the spirit of Christ, by living faith, by real love, by earnest obedience to his commandments. “If a man love me,” Jesus says, “He will keep my words” (John 14:23).

“I cannot keep the commandments!” say many. Well then, either you or the Savior is wrong. Which of the two is it, think you? “Well, I cannot keep the commandments and at the same time do as other people do.” Of course you cannot! “I cannot keep the commandments and be in a great hurry to be rich.” Possibly not. “I cannot keep the commandments and get the fame and applause of everyone.” Perhaps not. But let Christ be true, and let our conceits perish.

The reason why the world has made so little progress in being happy is that the world has been so unwilling to accept him. We are never reconciled to Christ while we keep selfishness ruling within us; we keep the Spirit of Christ away from us. We are never reconciled to Christ while our minds continue unchanged—although we may sing and talk, and perhaps read and pray. We may speak of the means of grace, but forget grace itself. These things are means of grace, but they are nothing but means. “The goal of the commandment,” as the Apostle says, “is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Timothy 1:5)—a real obedience to Christ.

This is the goal; the other things are only the means. The singing, the praying, attending chapel, Sunday School teaching, and all the various things in which piety indulges—these

are all good and essential as means. But they are only means; they are not the goal. The goal is the formation in the soul of a little heaven; it is driving out of the soul those tempers that make it a little hell; and especially, it is overcoming self-love, which is the great devil that reigns there.

Let all of us ask ourselves what there is in us that the Spirit of Christ requires to be rejected, driven out, renounced. And if a man cannot find out any fault, let him ask his next door neighbor. If he cannot see anything wrong, let him ask his wife; she can see! Let a woman ask her husband; he can tell her! The likelihood is that they will find that they have to bring themselves into the right, as the Lord Jesus teaches us and insists upon it.

And when they have done so they will find that his glorious Spirit will give them inward happiness. And although they may have the storms of life to contend with; although they may have sometimes the earthquake which will shake the ground beneath them; although they may have trials and troubles; although they may have the tempest howling over them, and the sea beating around them; let them then say:

We'll welcome the earthquake, the wind,
and the storm,

For these to the spirit of Jesus conform.

It is Jesus, the possessor of heaven and earth, that asks us to do this. Our experience tells us that happiness is found in no other way. We have many of us had to experience all the different shades of the business of life, and have not found happiness in anything. Let us follow him, the great head and Captain of our salvation. And as he fought against and overcame hell for us, let us fight against and overcome sin from his power within ourselves. Then we shall grow up “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear” (Matthew

4:28), and God will give us the blessing of his Divine approbation.

When the young prodigal decided to go back to his father, the father, it is said, saw him, and ran out to meet him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him (Luke 15:20). It is just so with our Savior-Father. When we rise up and endeavor to go back from our sins to him, he always comes forward to meet us, and he will kiss us, and give us his benediction, peace, and happiness. We shall find that there is no room for doubt that we are on the heavenly path. Heaven descends within us, blesses us in our undertakings, fills all our efforts with the joy of the Lord.

And if we do not become rich, what matter? Whether we do or not depends upon whether the Savior sees that it is good for us or not. There are good men who are rich men, as well as good men who are poor men; the grand business of life is to aim at being a *good* man—at being a heavenly and wise man, and leaving the Lord to do the rest. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

We are as soldiers, ordered to keep guard in the outward wilderness for a time, to see that no robbers break in. And if the soldier does his duty—performs his work as his master gives him commission and power—then death will not be regarded as a sad shade, a dark cloud, a dismal land, but as God’s permission to go home. It will be regarded as the great Captain’s allowance to leave the battle-wilderness in which we have been keeping guard. We are to go into his glorious palace, where all is happy, both within and without; where the images of God will reflect his glory in themselves and around themselves; where every angel will find every other angel delighting to make him blessed. It is a palace where true happiness must be because everyone is, like himself, a

lover of God and of each other, as well as or better than himself. Consequently his happiness will be multiplied by as many angels as there are in heaven. Whatever glory, whatever blessing, whatever gift the angels have, they desire to give that glory and excellency to the rest. Thus every angel has as many friends as there are angels in heaven, and he becomes as happy as these can make him. He is blessed within and blessed without. It is from the spirits of the angels and from the blessing of God that heavenly happiness exists—and where such happiness is, there must be heaven; there must be bliss.

Let it be, then, our work to look up to the great Savior as perfect in all his doings; to cooperate with him; to let him work in us; and as he saved the world, to save us until we become likeminded with him. Then we will welcome life in all its varied forms; welcome death, come when it will; welcome eternity. The herald that calls us thither will be the messenger of everlasting love. Let us adore the great Savior, who will meet us and bless us there—he who said, “Where I am, there also shall my servant be” (John 12:26).

The Discussion

Question. Now, sir, I want to know something more on the subject you have treated tonight. You have said very little about Christ’s bloodshedding. Now, I read that “without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). Will you explain this?

Answer. Very willingly. First, it is literally true that if the Lord Jesus had not died, the world would not have been redeemed; his Humanity would not have been glorified; death would not have been conquered; and man’s love would not have been won. “We love him because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19), and “God commendeth *his love* toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us”

(Romans 5:8). In relation to all these great works, then, “without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

There is also a spiritual sense in which this text has an important meaning. The Lord said, before he had shed his natural blood at all, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life. . . . For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed” (John 6:53–55). The Lord’s Divine goodness and wisdom are his divine flesh and blood. His goodness is the bread of life, and his wisdom is the blood of the New Testament. Unless the Lord gave his wisdom to show us our sins, and to give us power to overcome them, they could never be put away.

“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Sometimes our sins are said to be put away by the Word: “Now ye are clean by the word that I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3). Sometimes it is by the truth: “Sanctify them by the truth; thy Word is truth” (John 17:17). Sometimes it by water: “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you” (Ezekiel 36:25). And, at others, it is said we are cleansed by blood: “These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14). All these expressions—Word, truth, water, blood—mean the wisdom of the Lord seen in different aspects; and without the shedding of this divine blood, there is no remission.

I hope our friend in offering his question is thinking of the remission or putting away of sin, and not thinking of pacifying the wrath of God by the blood. I hope he is not thinking of the verse of Watts:

Sweet were the drops of Jesu’s blood
That calmed his frowning face;
Which, sprinkled o’er the burning throne,
Have turned the wrath to grace.

This is a libel on our Heavenly Father, whose love redeemed us. The passage says, not that “without shedding of blood there was no pacifying of the Father” but “no remission of sin.” The Lord’s blood acts upon man to redeem and purify him—not upon God, who is already love itself and mercy itself. The Lord himself says, “This is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). It is always the same: to cleanse us, and to remit our sins.

Q. But you have not explained to my satisfaction how the justice of the Father was satisfied. Man sinned, God must punish him. How could God forgive without his justice receiving an atonement? Either Christ, or us, or justice must die; and Christ died for us.

A. Will our friend tell me who satisfied Christ’s justice. He was just, and the Holy Ghost was just too. According to our friend’s scheme, the three Divine Persons are alike in mind: “None is before or after another, none is greater or less than another” (The Athanasian Creed). If the Father’s justice required someone to be put to death, why did not the Son’s justice require the same, and why did not the justice of the Holy Ghost require a similar sacrifice? If the justice of two of the Divine Persons could do without any death to appease them, why could not the justice of the first person be satisfied in the same way? In fact, true justice never requires death, but life; never destruction, but salvation. You say either justice, or us, or Christ must die. Now, man did die, “for to be carnally minded is death,” the Apostle said (Romans 8:6). The Lord came in his love to make him alive again. The death of the Lord was not to affect another Divine Person—for there is no other. But

as our text says, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Q. What have you got to say about Christ’s intercession? The Apostle says, “he ever liveth to make intercession for us” (Hebrews 7:25). He pleads for us, sir, with his Father,

A. Yes, the Apostle says he intercedes for us, and he explains where and how. It is the spirit of Christ in us that intercedes by inspiring us to cry “Abba, Father,” suggesting our desires and prayers. You will find it especially alluded to in Romans 8:

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Romans 8:9)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father. (Romans 8:14, 15)

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26, 27)

Thus you see the intercession the Apostle means is that secret inspiration of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, helping our infirmities, and leading us to ask for those blessings which he waits to give. In any other sense of interceding, what a strange view it gives of the Father! According to the old doctrine, his justice was satisfied on the cross; man’s whole debt was paid. Why, then, need Christ intercede?

Q. Christ was made a sacrifice for us; he was “our Passover” (1 Corinthians 5:7). What do you make of that?

A. A sacrifice is whatever is dedicated to God. The “sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a

broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:17). The exhortation of the Apostle is to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). To be a sacrifice does not mean to be punished, but to be dedicated to God; and our Lord’s humanity became a whole burnt sacrifice because it was altogether offered up, dedicated, and consecrated to do the divine will—and this from the most burning love.

Q. How do you understand the passage, “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”? (1 John 2:1).

A. It ought to be translated, “we have a *Comforter* with the Father.” The word is *paracleton*, the same as that employed in the Gospel when the Holy Ghost is called the Comforter. The Lord’s humanity is the Comforter with the Father, not to comfort *him*, but to comfort *us*. He is the “new and living way” (Hebrews 10:20) by which we approach to God, and God descends to us. If the deity were still as he was before the incarnation—unknown and unapproachable—we should have had no comfort. But by the humanity with the Father, the comfort of God descends to us. Through him we have redemption; through him we have regeneration and every blessing. He is the door, he is the Comforter. “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man—the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Titus 2:5). The humanity, the man, is the Mediator, the Comforter, because “in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). And as we come to a man’s soul by the medium of his body, so we come to God by the medium of his humanity.

Q. Is not my guilt imputed to my Savior, sir, and his righteousness imputed to me? If it is not so, how am I to get to heaven? Is it not

said, “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all”? (Isaiah 53:6).

A. The doctrines of imputed sin and imputed righteousness are essentially false, and unworthy of God. They are doctrines of deception and make-believe. God, who is Truth itself, cannot view anything different from what it really is. He cannot regard anyone as guilty of a sin of which he is not guilty; nor impute to anyone a righteousness which he has not done. “Just and right is he” (Deuteronomy 32:4).

The idea that God imputed Adam’s sin to all his unborn posterity that he might condemn all, and then imputed the whole to the Lord Jesus Christ—punishing him for it and pretending that this was the doing of justice—is one of the most unjust conceptions imaginable. It is utterly contrary to the love of God, the truth of God, the order of God—in fact, to everything Godlike. It is written, “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, these both are an abomination unto the Lord” (Proverbs 17:15).

It is true, as Isaiah states, “He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5) because he went through a sorrowful life and death for us—that is, on our account and for our sakes. The warrior who dies for his country suffers for his country’s good—but not because his country’s crimes are imputed to him.

“The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). That is, he took into his human nature the iniquity which is our inheritance. Our proneness to evil he took from his mother, because he was to be “tempted in all points like as we are” (Hebrews 4:15). He then met all our evils and overcame them all. He “bore the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:28), and removed them away. It is not said the Lord laid on him the *punishment* of us all, but only the

iniquity. Our nature had become iniquitous by hereditary defilement from father to son, and he took it in its most defiled condition and met our evils there. He conquered them, overcame the hells which were in connection with them, and sanctified his humanity. But this was only done by the intensest suffering, which he endured from love for our sakes. “It pleased the Lord to bruise him, to put him to grief” (Isaiah 53:10) because this was the only way in which man could be saved; his infinite love would not spare him a pang or a sorrow. But they were sorrows experienced by himself in his humanity for man’s salvation, *not laid upon another to gratify his wrath*. By the stripes his love endured we are healed.

It pleases every good man to follow the Lord—to suffer also, to drink of the cup that he drank of, not for his own purification only, but for the good of others. Our friend asks if Christ’s righteousness will not be imputed to him. I answer, only as much as is imparted to him. Let him receive the Lord’s righteousness by doing his commandments. For as John says, “he that doeth righteousness is righteous” (1 John 3:7), and then heaven will be formed in him by regeneration, and he will go to heaven. All the righteousness he has will be imputed to him, and “he who is righteous shall be righteous still, and he that is holy shall be holy still” (Revelation 22:11).

Q. An old lady addressed the lecturer and said: I was very much pleased last evening, but this evening you have made it appear that our Savior’s work is not complete. You have given man something to do. But you know, sir, man cannot keep God’s law, and his law must be kept by someone, and so he kept it himself.

A. Many who speak of God’s law do so without reflecting that God’s law consists of those wise regulations that are essential to man’s happiness. God’s law is what God’s wisdom has

prescribed for man's good. God has ordained that man should eat that he may be strong; but does our friend imagine that if somebody else eats his dinner for him, it will do just as well? God's law ordains that man should walk and work that he may be useful and healthful; does our friend imagine that if a lazy person believed that our Savior walked and worked, it would do just as well for his health as if he did it himself? Righteousness is as necessary to the soul's health as walking is to that of the body—but no righteousness will do the soul good if man himself does not perform it. Our Lord says, "Whoso shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall *in no case* enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19, 20).

Our friend seems distressed at the idea that the Lord's work should be represented as not completed until man is finally rejoicing in heaven. But we should remember that salvation consists of two parts: God's operation and man's cooperation. God's operation is always perfectly done; it is man's cooperation which is imperfect. Failure is there. The Lord Jesus did his part completely in redemption. He made every man free, and keeps every man free. He "has the keys of heaven and of death" (Revelation 1:18). He "opens and no man shuts; he shuts and no man opens" (Revelation 3:7). His work is perfect.

But if man still is not to be governed by God's laws, he will still be miserable. The Lord struck off his fetters and opened his prison doors; but if man won't walk out, the Lord will not force him to do so. It is precisely illustrated by railway engineering. The engineers undertake to make an excellent road, satisfactory carriages, and proper stations. They do so, and the works are finished. But he would be a very

simple person who expected to perform a journey by believing that the railway was completely finished and well done. If he would not go to the station, and take a ticket; if he would not get into the carriage and persevere to the end of the journey, the best made railway in the world would not serve his purpose.

So with salvation. The Lord redeemed mankind, and opened and maintains a new and living way between his own precious nature and fallen man. But we must use this way or the Lord will say to us, as he said to the Jews, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not*" (Matthew 23:37). *He* would, but *we* would not. *He* died, but *we* did not. "Ye are my friends if ye *do* whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14).

The circumstance which our respected friend names—that the Lord kept his law himself—shows its perfect and indispensable character. If anyone might have dispensed with keeping the divine law, surely the Most High might. But no, he kept it himself, to show man there was, and could, be no exception.

What is this law which our friend thinks the Lord kept, that man might not have to keep it? It is essentially "*to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*" (Micah 6:8). But can anyone dispense with these and be happy? Can the unjust go to heaven? Assuredly not. He who is unjust shall be unjust still, and he who is holy shall be holy still (Revelation 22:11). Any society formed of unjust men could not possibly be happy. They would overreach each other, filch from each other, and be intense enemies interiorly, however they might seem. The Apostle says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10), and we may all take it for granted that no real salvation will be ours until we can say, as John said, "We know that we have passed from

death to life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14).

Q. Do you think we obtain any merit by our good works?

A. Not in the least. We have no merit either in our faith or in our work. All merit belongs to the Lord. We soonest discover our demerits when we strive in all things to do the Lord’s will. “Ye, when ye shall have *done* all those things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants’” (Luke 17:10).

Q. Do you find, sir, that this doctrine of the atonement is as practical in awakening love to God, and obedience to Christ from love, as the common doctrine?

A. Undoubtedly—far more powerful and far more practical. Let the friend who asks the question look around on what is called Christian society, and notice how little there is in reality of a life of practical love, justice, and self-denial. Let our million of paupers, our twenty thousand criminals, our frauds and adulterations, our ill-will abounding, and our hundreds of thousands of drunkards answer. Are these fruits of the religion of Jesus? No. They are the fruits of that perversion of his divine religion which says:

Believe, and all your sin’s forgiven;
Only believe, and yours is heaven.

They are the fruits of that system which says you can be saved *at any time*, and from being as black as a fiend, become as pure as an angel in five minutes or one minute. This terrible delusion, setting at naught all God’s laws and all the training of life, has deluged the land with poison. Multitudes run after the spiritual opium which produces a fond delirium while it saps the spirit’s health and makes the nation and its religion a derision and a byword.

Let it, however, be proclaimed by faithful, loving men, themselves exemplifying their

doctrine, “The Lord loves all his children, and has created and redeemed men that they may have power to become his spiritual sons and daughters, and be happy forever.” Let them declare without equivocation that happiness is not possible except by obeying the truth. There is no neutral ground; heaven or hell is in every act.

Keep the commandments from a spirit of love, and soon would a change be felt. The habits of life would become habits of order, of health, of gentleness, and of right. The operations of commerce and trade would be transfused by the spirit of rectitude, of openness, and of sincerity. Fraud would be repelled as a destructive serpent, and business would become a religious work of constant delight. This great nation, transparent with justice and faith, sending out her sons, the exemplifications of her fairness, kindness, intelligence, and usefulness, repudiating any intrigue or any advantage at the expense of others, would make the gigantic crimes of war impossible. Men would be reconciled to God and to each other.

While, however, we wait and work for these great changes, in which “old things will pass away, and all things become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17), we have one present duty. This duty is to fight against our own evils. We know them; and we can never be happy except by their overthrow and expulsion. The Lord made us to be happy. He lived and died for us on earth to save us from unhappiness. His spirit is constantly with us, to enlighten and to strengthen us. Let us “work out our salvation with fear and trembling” at first (Philippians 2:12), but soon to enter into states of love and joy. Soon shall we be able to say, “We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *we have now received the atonement*” (Romans 5:11).