

# PARTICULAR REDEMPTION

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

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# Particular Redemption

*“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto,  
but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for  
many.”—Matthew 20:28*

When first it was my duty to occupy this pulpit and preach in this hall, my congregation assumed the appearance of an irregular mass of persons collected from all the streets of this city to listen to the Word. I was then simply an evangelist, preaching to many who had not heard the gospel before.

By the grace of God,<sup>1</sup> the most blessed change has taken place, and now, instead of having an irregular multitude gathered together, my congregation is as fixed as that of any minister in the whole city of London. I can from this pulpit observe the countenances of my friends, who have occupied the same places, as nearly as possible, for these many months; and I have the privilege and the pleasure of knowing that a very large proportion, certainly three-fourths of the persons who meet together here, are not persons who stray hither from curiosity, but are my regular and constant hearers.

And observe that my character also has been changed. From being an evangelist,<sup>2</sup> it is now my business to become your pastor.<sup>3</sup> You were once a motley<sup>4</sup> group assembled to listen to me, but now we are bound together by the ties of love. Through association we have grown to love and respect each other. Now you have become the sheep of my pasture and members of my flock; I have now the privilege of assuming the position of a pastor in this place, as well as in the chapel where I labor in the evening.

I think, then, it will strike the judgment of every person that as both the congregation and the office have now changed, the teaching itself should in some measure suffer a difference. It has been my wont to address you from the simple truths of the gospel; I have very seldom, in this place, attempted to dive into the deep things of God. A text that I have thought suitable for my congregation in the evening, I should not have made the subject of discussion in this place in the morning. There are many high and mysterious doctrines that I have often taken the opportunity of handling in my own place, which I have not taken the liberty of introducing here—regarding you as a company of people casually gathered together to hear the Word.

But now, since the circumstances are changed, the teaching will be changed also. I shall not now simply confine myself to the doctrine of the faith or the teaching of believer's baptism; I shall not stay upon the surface of matters, but shall venture, as God shall

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<sup>1</sup> **grace of God** – His unearned favor given freely to those deserving His wrath. Salvation is described in the Bible as “the gift of God...not of works” (Eph 2:8-9).

<sup>2</sup> **evangelist** – a preacher of the gospel (Act 21:8; Eph 4:11; 2Ti 4:5).

<sup>3</sup> **pastor** – shepherd; refers to Christ (Joh 10:14) and His servants who instruct and care for the church (Eph 4:11). Acts 20:17, 28 suggest that “elder,” “pastor,” and “bishop” (or “overseer”) describe the same position. See the qualifications for elders or bishops in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

<sup>4</sup> **motley** – diverse.

guide me, to enter into those things that lie at the basis of the religion that we hold so dear. I shall not blush to preach before you the doctrine of God's divine sovereignty;<sup>5</sup> I shall not stagger to preach in the most unreserved and unguarded manner the doctrine of election.<sup>6</sup> I shall not be afraid to propound the great truth of the final perseverance of the saints.<sup>7</sup> I shall not withhold that undoubted truth of Scripture—the effectual calling<sup>8</sup> of God's elect. I shall endeavor, as God shall help me, to keep back nothing from you who have become my flock. Seeing that many of you have now “tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1Pe 2:3), we will endeavor to go through the whole system of the doctrines of grace,<sup>9</sup> that saints<sup>10</sup> may be edified and built up in their most holy faith (Jude 1:20).

I begin this morning with the doctrine of redemption: “He gave his life a ransom for many” (Mat 20:28; Mar 10:45).

The doctrine of redemption<sup>11</sup> is one of the most important doctrines of the system of faith. A mistake on this point will inevitably lead to a mistake through the entire system of our belief.

Now, you are aware that there are different theories of redemption. All Christians hold that Christ died to redeem, but all Christians do not teach the same redemption. We differ as to the nature of atonement,<sup>12</sup> and as to the design of redemption.

For instance, the Arminian<sup>13</sup> holds that when Christ died, He did not die with an intent to save any particular person; and they teach that Christ's death does not in itself secure, beyond doubt, the salvation of any one man living. They believe that Christ died to make the salvation of all men possible, or that by the doing of something else, any

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<sup>5</sup> **divine sovereignty** – God's kingly authority; His rule is absolute and joined to almighty power, such that His decrees always come to pass (Dan 4:35; Eph 1:11).

<sup>6</sup> **election** – God chooses those He will save before they are born. Being sinners, they all deserve wrath and would never choose Him. This is an essential aspect of salvation by grace (Joh 6; Rom 9; Eph 1).

<sup>7</sup> **perseverance of the saints** – describes God's work in those He chooses and calls to Himself by which He preserves them, maintaining their faith and obedience to the end of their lives (Luk 22:21-34; Joh 10:28-30; Luk 8:15; 1Jo 2, 3).

<sup>8</sup> **effectual calling** – call to faith in Christ by the gospel message in which God works in the hearts of the hearers and causes them to truly believe (Joh 10:16; 6:44-45; 2Th 2:13-14).

<sup>9</sup> **doctrines of grace** – man's utter sinfulness (total depravity), God's choice to save particular unworthy sinners (election), Christ's successful sacrifice fully atoning for their sins (limited or definite atonement), God's bringing them to believe (effectual calling or irresistible grace), and God's preserving His believing people in faith and obedience until the end of their lives (perseverance or preservation of the saints).

<sup>10</sup> **saints** – holy ones; Christians (Rom 1:7; 1Co 1:2; Rev 14:12).

<sup>11</sup> **redemption** – deliverance by payment of a price. Christ redeemed believers by His blood shed as a sacrifice on the cross. Those for whom this sacrifice was offered are delivered from the wrath of God (Gal 3:13; 4:4-5; Ti 2:14; 1Pe 1:18-19; Rev 5:9).

<sup>12</sup> **atonement** – satisfaction of the wrath of God against the violation of His Law, specifically, in the sacrifice of Christ for His people.

<sup>13</sup> **Arminian** – pertaining to the theology of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), Dutch theologian, born in Oudewater, the Netherlands. He rejected the Reformers' understanding of predestination, teaching instead that God's predestination of individuals was based on His foreknowledge of their accepting or rejecting Christ by their own free will.

man who pleases may attain unto eternal life. Consequently, they are obliged to hold that if man's will would not give way and voluntarily surrender to grace, then Christ's atonement would be unavailing. They hold that there was no particularity and speciality in the death of Christ. Christ died, according to them, as much for Judas in hell as for Peter who mounted to heaven. They believe that for those who are consigned to eternal fire, there was as true and real a redemption made as for those who now stand before the throne of the Most High.

Now, we believe no such thing. We hold that when Christ died He had an object in view, and that object will most assuredly and beyond a doubt be accomplished. We measure the design of Christ's death by the effect of it. [Someone may ask] us, "What did Christ design to do by His death?" We answer that question by asking him another: "What has Christ done, or what will Christ do by His death?" For we declare that the measure of the effect of Christ's love is the measure of the design of it. We cannot so believe<sup>14</sup> our reason as to think that the intention of Almighty God could be frustrated, or that the design of so great a thing as the atonement can, by any way whatever, be missed of. We hold—we are not afraid to say what we believe—that Christ came into this world with the intention of saving "a multitude which no man can number" (Rev 7:9-10); and we believe that, as the result of this, every person for whom He died must, beyond the shadow of a doubt, be cleansed from sin, and stand, washed in blood, before the Father's throne (Rev 1:5; 7:14). We do not believe that Christ made any effectual atonement for those who are forever damned. We dare not think that the blood of Christ was ever shed with the intention of saving those whom God foreknew never could be saved,<sup>15</sup> and some of whom were even in hell when Christ, according to some men's account, died to save them.

I have thus just stated our theory of redemption, and hinted at the differences that exist between two great parties in the professing church. It shall be now my endeavor to show the greatness of the redemption of Christ Jesus; and by so doing, I hope to be enabled by God's Spirit to bring out the whole of the great system of redemption, so that it may be understood by us all, even if all of us cannot receive it. For you must bear this in mind: some of you, perhaps, may be ready to dispute things which I assert, but you will remember that this is nothing to me; I shall at all times teach those things that I hold to be true, without let or hindrance from any man breathing. You have the like liberty to do the same in your own places, and to preach your own views in your own assemblies, as I claim the right to preach mine, fully and without hesitation.

Christ Jesus "gave his life a ransom<sup>16</sup> for many"; and by that ransom He wrought out for us a great redemption. I shall endeavor to show the greatness of this redemption, measuring it in five ways. We shall note its greatness, first of all, *from the heinousness of our own guilt*, from which He hath delivered us; secondly, we shall measure His redemption *by the sternness of divine justice*; thirdly, we shall measure it *by the price which He*

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<sup>14</sup> **believe** – contradict.

<sup>15</sup> See Mat 12:31-32; Mar 14:21; Joh 17:9; Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-27.

<sup>16</sup> **ransom** – money paid for the release of slaves or captives.

*paid*, the pangs which He endured; then we shall endeavor to magnify<sup>17</sup> it by noting *the deliverance which He actually wrought out*; and we shall close by noticing *the vast number for whom this redemption is made*, who in our text are described as “many.”

## I. Our Sins

First, then, we shall see that the redemption of Christ was no little thing, if we do but measure it by our *own sins*. My brethren, for a moment look at the hole of the pit whence ye were digged, and the quarry whence ye were hewn (Isa 51:1-2). Ye, who have been washed and cleansed and sanctified, pause for a moment and look back at the former state of your ignorance—the sins in which you indulged, the crimes into which you were hurried, the continual rebellion against God in which it was your habit to live.

One sin can ruin a soul forever; it is not in the power of the human mind to grasp the infinity of evil that slumbereth in the bowels of one solitary sin. There is a very infinity of guilt couched in one transgression against the majesty of heaven. If, then, you and I had sinned but once, nothing but an atonement infinite in value could ever have washed away the sin and made satisfaction for it. But has it been once that you and I have transgressed? Nay, my brethren, our iniquities are more in number than the hairs of our head (Psa 40:12); they have mightily prevailed against us. We might as well attempt to number the sands upon the seashore, or count the drops that in their aggregate do make the ocean, as attempt to count the transgressions that have marked our lives.

Let us go back to our childhood. How early we began to sin! How we disobeyed our parents, and even then learned to make our mouth the house of lies! In our childhood, how full of wantonness and waywardness we were! Headstrong and giddy, we preferred our own way, and burst through all restraints that godly parents put upon us. Nor did our youth sober us. Wildly we dashed, many of us, into the very midst of the dance of sin. We became leaders in iniquity: we not only sinned ourselves, but we taught others to sin. And as for your manhood, ye that have entered upon the prime of life, ye may be more outwardly sober, ye may be somewhat free from the dissipation of your youth; but how little has the man become bettered! Unless the sovereign grace<sup>18</sup> of God hath renewed us, we are now no better than we were when we began; and even if it has operated, we have still sins to repent of, for we all lay our mouths in the dust, and cast ashes on our heads, and cry, “Unclean! Unclean!” (Lev 13:45). And, oh, ye that lean wearily on your staff, the support of your old age, have ye not sins still clinging to your garments? Are your lives as white as the snowy hairs that crown your heads? Do you not still feel that transgression besmears the skirts of your robes, and mars their spotlessness? How often are you now plunged into the ditch, till your own clothes do abhor you! Cast your eyes over the sixty, the seventy, the eighty years during which God hath spared your

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<sup>17</sup> **magnify** – praise.

<sup>18</sup> **sovereign grace** – God’s unmerited favor freely shown as by a king, according to His will (Rom 9:15-18).

lives: can ye for a moment think it possible that ye can number up your innumerable transgressions, or compute the weight of the crimes that you have committed?

O ye stars of heaven! The astronomer may measure your distance and tell your height, but O ye sins of mankind! Ye surpass all thought. O ye lofty mountains! The home of the tempest, the birthplace of the storm! Man may climb your summits and stand wonderingly upon your snows. But ye hills of sin! Ye tower higher than our thoughts. Ye chasms of transgressions! Ye are deeper than our imagination dares to dive. Do you accuse me of slandering human nature? It is because you know it not. If God had once manifested your heart to yourself, you would bear me witness that, so far from exaggerating, my poor words fail to describe the desperateness<sup>19</sup> of our evil. Oh, if we could each of us look into our hearts today—if our eyes could be turned within so as to see the iniquity that is graven as with the point of the diamond upon our stony hearts—we should then say to the minister that, however he may depict the desperateness of guilt, yet can he not by any means surpass it.

How great then, beloved, must be the ransom of Christ when He saved us from all these sins! The men for whom Jesus died—however great their sin—are sanctified from all their transgressions when they believe. Though they may have indulged in every vice and every lust that Satan could suggest, and which human nature could perform, yet, once believing, all their guilt is washed away. Year after year may have coated them with blackness till their sin hath become of double dye, but in one moment of faith<sup>20</sup>—one triumphant moment of confidence in Christ—the great redemption takes away the guilt of numerous years. Nay, more: if it were possible for all the sins that men have done—in thought or word or deed, since worlds were made or time began—to meet on one poor head, the great redemption is all-sufficient to take all these sins away and wash the sinner whiter than the driven snow (Isa 1:18).

Oh, who shall measure the heights of the Savior's all-sufficiency? First, tell how high is sin, and then remember that as Noah's flood prevailed over the tops of earth's mountains, so the flood of Christ's redemption prevails over the tops of the mountains of our sins. In heaven's courts there are today men that once were murderers, thieves, drunkards, whoremongers, blasphemers, and persecutors; but they have been washed—they have been sanctified. Ask them whence the brightness of their robes hath come, and where their purity hath been achieved, and they, with united breath, will tell you that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev 7:14). O ye troubled consciences! O ye weary and heavy-laden ones! O ye that are groaning on account of sin! The great redemption now proclaimed to you is all-sufficient for your wants, and, though your numerous sins exceed the stars that deck the sky, here is an atonement made for them all—a river that can overflow the whole of them and carry them away from you forever.

This, then, is the first measure of the atonement: the greatness of our guilt.

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<sup>19</sup> **desperateness** – hopelessness; seriousness.

<sup>20</sup> Believers are immediately forgiven when they believe, and God gives them grace to continue in faith (Phi 1:6; Luk 22:31-32).

## II. The Sternness of Divine Justice

Now, secondly, we must measure the great redemption by the sternness of divine justice. “God is love,” always loving, but my next proposition does not at all interfere with this assertion.

*God is sternly just*, inflexibly severe in His dealings with mankind. The God of the Bible is not the God of some men’s imagination, who thinks so little of sin that he passes it by without demanding any punishment for it. He is not the God of men who imagine that our transgressions are such little things, such mere peccadilloes<sup>21</sup> that the God of heaven winks<sup>22</sup> at them, and suffers them to die forgotten. No, Jehovah, Israel’s God, hath declared concerning Himself, “I the LORD thy God am a jealous God” (Exo 20:5). It is His own declaration: “[I] will by no means clear the guilty” (Exo 34:7). “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Eze 18:4). Learn ye, my friends, to look upon God as being as severe in His justice as if He were not loving, and yet as loving as if He were not severe. His love does not diminish His justice, nor does His justice, in the least degree, make warfare upon His love. The two things are sweetly linked together in the atonement of Christ.

But, mark, we can never understand the fullness of the atonement till we have first grasped the scriptural truth of God’s immense justice. There was never an ill word spoken, nor an ill thought conceived, nor an evil deed done for which God will not have punishment from some one or another. He will either have satisfaction from you, or else from Christ. If you have no atonement to bring through Christ, you must forever lie in eternal misery, paying the debt which you never can pay; for as surely as God is God, He will sooner lose His Godhead<sup>23</sup> than suffer one sin to go unpunished, or one particle of rebellion unrevenged.

You may say that this character of God is cold, stern, and severe. I cannot help what you say of it; it is nevertheless true. Such is the God of the Bible. Though we repeat it is true that He is love, it is no more true that He is love than that He is full of justice, for every good thing meets in God and is carried to perfection. Whilst love reaches to consummate loveliness, justice reaches to the sternness of inflexibility in Him. He has no bend, no warp in His character; no attribute so predominates as to cast a shadow upon the other. Love hath its full sway, and justice hath no narrower limit than His love.

Oh, then, beloved, think how great must have been the substitution of Christ, when it satisfied God for all the sins of His people (Heb 9:13-15). For man’s sin God demands eternal punishment; and God hath prepared a hell into which He casts those who die impenitent.<sup>24</sup> Oh, my brethren, can ye think what must have been the greatness of the

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<sup>21</sup> **peccadilloes** – small sins or faults.

<sup>22</sup> **winks** – overlooks; disregards. The word is used in Acts 17:30 to describe God’s forbearance, but, though He has great patience, no sin will be left unjudged. Either Christ has borne the punishment or the unbelieving sinner will.

<sup>23</sup> **Godhead** – divine nature.

<sup>24</sup> **impenitent** – without repentance.

atonement which was the substitution for all this agony that God would have cast upon us, if He had not poured it upon Christ.

Look! Look! Look with solemn eye through the shades that part us from the world of spirits, and see that house of misery which men call hell! Ye cannot endure the spectacle. Remember that in that place there are spirits forever paying their debt to divine justice, but though some of them have been there these four thousand years,<sup>25</sup> sweltering in the flame, they are no nearer a discharge than when they began. And when ten thousand times ten thousand years shall have rolled away, they will no more have made satisfaction to God for their guilt than they have done up till now.

Now can you grasp the thought of the greatness of your Savior's mediation<sup>26</sup> when He paid your debt, and paid it all at once so that there now remaineth not one farthing of debt owing from Christ's people to their God, except a debt of love? To justice the believer oweth nothing, though he owed originally so much that eternity would not have been long enough to suffice for the paying of it. Yet, in one moment Christ did pay it all, so that the man who believeth is entirely sanctified<sup>27</sup> from all guilt and set free from all punishment through what Jesus hath done. Think ye, then, how great His atonement [is] if He hath done all this!

I must just pause here and utter another sentence. There are times when God the Holy Spirit shows to men the sternness of justice in their own consciences. There is a man here today who has just been cut to the heart with a sense of sin. He was once a free man, a libertine, in bondage to none; but now the arrow of the Lord sticks fast in his heart, and he has come under a bondage worse than that of Egypt. I see him today; he tells me that his guilt haunts him everywhere. The Negro slave, guided by the pole star, may escape the cruelties of his master and reach another land where he may be free; but this man feels that if he were to wander the wide world over he could not escape from guilt. He that hath been bound by many irons can yet find a file that can unbind him and set him at liberty; but this man tells you that he has tried prayers and tears and good works, but cannot get the gyves<sup>28</sup> from his wrist. He feels as a lost sinner still, and emancipation, do what he may, seems to him impossible. The captive in the dungeon is sometimes free in thought, though not in body; through his dungeon walls his spirit leaps and flies to the stars, free as the eagle that is no man's slave. But this man is a slave in

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<sup>25</sup> This implies Spurgeon was what we call today a "young earth creationist." His mention of 4,000 years for the age of the earth is comparable to the estimate of 6,000 common in our day. Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published the year after this sermon was preached. About 27 years later (July 25, 1886) Spurgeon preached, "Philosophically the dogma of evolution is a dream, a theory without a vestige of proof!...It is not only deceptive, but it threatens to be mischievous in a high degree. There is not a hair of truth upon this dog from its head to its tail, but it rends and tears the simple ones. In all its bearings upon scriptural truth, the evolution theory is in direct opposition to it! If God's Word is true, evolution is a lie! I will not mince the matter—this is not the time for soft speaking."

<sup>26</sup> **mediation** – reconciliation between two disagreeing or opposed parties.

<sup>27</sup> **entirely sanctified** – as is clear from the context, the author here is not contending that Christians in this life enjoy sinless perfection, but rather a perfect forgiveness.

<sup>28</sup> **gyves** – fetters or shackles.

his thoughts: he cannot think one bright, one happy thought. His soul is cast down within him; the iron has entered into his spirit, and he is sorely afflicted. The captive sometimes forgets his slavery in sleep, but this man cannot sleep: by night he dreams of hell, by day he seems to feel it; he bears a burning furnace of flame within his heart, and do what he may, he cannot quench it. He has been confirmed, he has been baptized, he takes the sacrament, he attends a church or he frequents a chapel, he regards every rubric<sup>29</sup> and obeys every canon,<sup>30</sup> but the fire burns still. He gives his money to the poor, he is ready to give his body to be burned, he feeds the hungry, he visits the sick, he clothes the naked, but the fire burns still, and do what he may, he cannot quench it.

O ye sons of weariness and woe, this that you feel is God's justice in full pursuit of you, and happy are you that you feel this, for now to you I preach this glorious gospel of the blessed God. You are the man for whom Jesus Christ has died;<sup>31</sup> for you He has satisfied stern justice. Now all you have to do to obtain peace and conscience is just to say to your adversary who pursues you, "Look you there—Christ died for me! My good works would not stop you, my tears would not appease you, [but] look you there! There stands the cross; there hangs the bleeding God! Hark to His death-shriek! See Him die! Art thou not satisfied now?" And when thou hast done that, thou shalt have the peace of God which passeth all understanding, which shall keep thy heart and mind through Jesus Christ thy Lord,<sup>32</sup> and then shalt thou know the greatness of His atonement.

### III. The Price He Paid

In the third place, we may measure the greatness of Christ's redemption by the price He paid.

It is impossible for us to know how great were the pangs of our Savior, but yet some glimpse of them will afford us a little idea of the greatness of the price that He paid for us. O Jesus, who shall describe Thine agony?

*Come, all ye springs,  
Dwell in my head and eyes; come, clouds and rain!  
My grief hath need of all the wat'ry things,  
That nature hath produc'd. Let ev'ry vein*

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<sup>29</sup> **rubric** – rule for religious service; liturgical procedure.

<sup>30</sup> **canon** – rule of a religious organization.

<sup>31</sup> But we should remember that conviction does not equal conversion. It is not necessary to tell a convicted yet unconverted sinner that Christ died for him specifically. If he never believes, it is certain Christ did not die for him. Rather we may assure him with certainty of forgiveness of all sin if he believes in Christ (Act 13:38-39; Joh 6:37-40).

<sup>32</sup> Not that all believers at all times in this life enjoy freedom from inward trouble. Christ did not (Mar 14:33-34). Therefore, some troubles of this sort are not sinful. Still, Christ did give His peace to His people and instructed them not to let their hearts be troubled or afraid (Joh 14:27). Unbelieving anxiety is sinful and should be resisted. Paul prayed the Roman Christians would be filled with joy and peace in *believing* (Rom 15:13). Faith is manifested in refusing to be ruled by anxiety and rather coming to God in believing prayer. Take note to whom the peace of God is promised in Philippians 4:6-7.

*Suck up a river to supply mine eyes,  
My weary weeping eyes; too dry for me,  
Unless they get new conduits, new supplies  
To bear them out, and with my state agree.*

O Jesus! Thou wast a sufferer from Thy birth, a man of sorrows and grief's acquaintance (Isa 53:3). Thy sufferings fell on Thee in one perpetual shower, until the last dread hour of darkness. Then not in a shower, but in a cloud, a torrent, a cataract<sup>33</sup> of grief Thine agonies did dash upon Thee. See Him yonder! It is a night of frost and cold, but He is all abroad.<sup>34</sup> It is night; He sleeps not, but He is in prayer. Hark to His groans! Did ever man wrestle as He wrestles? Go and look in His face! Was ever such suffering depicted upon mortal countenance as you can there behold? Hear His own words: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Mat 26:38). He rises; He is seized by traitors and is dragged away.<sup>35</sup>

Let us step to the place where just now He was engaged in agony. O God! And what is this we see? What is this that stains the ground? It is blood! Whence came it? Had He some wound which oozed afresh through His dire struggle? Ah, no! "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luk 22:44). O agonies that surpass the word by which we name you! O sufferings that cannot be compassed in language! What could ye be that thus could work upon the Savior's blessed frame, and force a bloody sweat to fall from His entire body? This is the beginning; this is the opening of the tragedy.

Follow Him mournfully, thou sorrowing Church, to witness the consummation of it. He is hurried through the streets, first to one bar<sup>36</sup> and then to another; He is cast and condemned before the Sanhedrin;<sup>37</sup> He is mocked by Herod (Luk 23:11), and He is tried by Pilate. His sentence is pronounced: "Let him be crucified!" (Mat 27:15-26). And now the tragedy cometh to its height. His back is bared; He is tied to the low Roman column; the bloody scourge ploughs furrows on His back (Psa 129:3), and with one stream of blood His back is red—a crimson robe that proclaims Him emperor of misery. He is taken into the guard room; His eyes are bound, and then they buffet Him, and say, "Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?" (Luk 22:64). They spit into His face; they plait a crown of thorns and press His temples with it; they array Him in a purple robe; they bow their knees and mock Him (Mar 15:16-20).

All silently He sits; He answers not a word. "When he was reviled, [he] reviled not again," but committed Himself unto Him Whom He came to serve (1Pe 2:23). And now they take Him, and with many a jeer and jibe they drive Him from the place, and hurry

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<sup>33</sup> **cataract** – flood.

<sup>34</sup> **all abroad** – outdoors.

<sup>35</sup> See Luke 22:47-54. It was not against His will, as "dragged" might imply. He knew all that would come upon Him and went out to meet them (Joh 18:4-11). He actively gave His life a ransom for many (Mar 10:45; Gal 4:4-5).

<sup>36</sup> **bar** – place of judgment.

<sup>37</sup> **Sanhedrin** – Jews' civil council in Jerusalem; highest Jewish authority in pre-A.D. 70 Palestine.

Him through the streets. Emaciated by continual fasting, and depressed with agony of spirit, He stumbles beneath His cross. Daughters of Jerusalem! He faints in your streets.

They raise Him up; they put His cross upon another's shoulders, and they urge Him on, perhaps with many a spear-prick, till at last He reaches the mount of doom. Rough soldiers seize Him, and hurl Him on His back; the transverse wood is laid beneath Him, and His arms are stretched to reach the necessary distance. The nails are grasped, and four hammers at one moment drive four nails through the tenderest parts of His body; there He lies upon His own place of execution, dying on His cross. It is not done yet. The cross is lifted by the rough soldiers. There is the socket prepared for it. It is dashed into its place; they fill up the place with earth, and there it stands.<sup>38</sup>

But see the Savior's limbs, how they quiver! Every bone has been put out of joint by the dashing of the cross into that socket (Psa 22:14)! How He weeps! How He sighs! How He sobs! Nay, more, hark how at last He shrieks in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mat 27:46). O sun, no wonder thou didst shut thine eye and look no longer upon a deed so cruel (Mat 27:45; Mar 15:33)! O rocks, no wonder that ye did melt and rend your hearts with sympathy when your Creator died (Mat 27:50-54)! Never man suffered as this man suffered. Even death itself relented, and many of those who had been in their graves arose and came into the city (Mat 27:52-53).

This, however, is but the outward. Believe me, brethren, the inward was far worse. What our Savior suffered in His body was nothing compared to what He endured in His soul. You cannot guess, and I cannot help you to guess, what He endured within. To repeat a sentence I have often used, suppose the eternal torment of a man who has passed into hell could all be brought into one hour, and then suppose it could be multiplied by the number of the saved, which is a number past all human enumeration. Can you now think what a vast aggregate of misery there would have been in the sufferings of all God's people, if they had been punished through all eternity? And recollect that Christ had to suffer an equivalent for all the hells of all His redeemed (2Co 5:21). I can never express that thought better than by using those oft-repeated words: it seemed as if hell was put into His cup, He seized it, and, "At one tremendous draught of love, He drank damnation dry." There was nothing left of all the pangs and miseries of hell for His people ever to endure. I say not that He suffered the same, but He did endure an equivalent for all this, and gave God the satisfaction for all the sins of all His people, and consequently gave Him an equivalent for all their punishment. Now can ye dream, can ye guess, the great redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ?<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See Mat 26-27; Mar 14-15; Luk 22-23; Joh 18-19. Realize that the author is attempting to give us a vivid picture of the biblical scenes with details not recorded in Scripture, some of which may or may not accurately portray the events as they were.

<sup>39</sup> Reader, behold the sufferings of Jesus for sinners and reflect anew on the words, "God so loved the world" (Joh 3:16).

#### IV. The Glorious Deliverance He Effected

I shall be very brief upon the next head.<sup>40</sup> The fourth way of measuring the Savior's agonies is this: we must compute them by the glorious deliverance that He has effected.

Rise up, believer, stand up in thy place, and this day testify to the greatness of what the Lord hath done for thee! Let me tell it for thee. I will tell thy experience and mine in one breath. Once my soul was laden with sin; I had revolted against God and grievously transgressed. The terrors of the Law got hold upon me; the pangs of conviction seized me. I saw myself guilty. I looked to heaven, and I saw an angry God sworn to punish me; I looked beneath me and I saw a yawning<sup>41</sup> hell ready to devour me. I sought by good works to satisfy my conscience, but all in vain. I endeavored by attending to the ceremonies of religion to appease the pangs that I felt within, but all without effect. My soul was exceeding sorrowful almost unto death. I could have said with the ancient mourner, "My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life" (Job 7:15). This was the great question that always perplexed me: "I have sinned; God must punish me—how can He be just if He does not? Then, since He is just, what is to become of me?"

At last mine eye turned to that sweet word that says, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1Jo 1:7). I took that text to my chamber;<sup>42</sup> I sat there and meditated. I saw One hanging on a cross. It was my Lord Jesus. There was the thorn-crown, and there the emblems of unequalled and peerless misery. I looked upon Him, and my thoughts recalled that word which says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1Ti 1:15). Then said I within myself, "Did this Man die for sinners? I am a sinner; then He died for me."<sup>43</sup> Those He died for He will save. He died for sinners. I am a sinner; He died for me; He will save me." My soul relied upon that truth. I looked to Him, and as I "viewed the flowing of His soul-redeeming blood," my spirit rejoiced, for I could say,

*Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to this cross I cling;  
Naked look to Him for dress;  
Helpless, come to Him for grace!  
Black, I to this fountain fly;  
Wash me, Savior, or I die!*

And now, believer, you shall tell the rest. The moment that you believed, your burden rolled from your shoulder,<sup>44</sup> and you became light as air. Instead of darkness you had

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<sup>40</sup> **head** – heading; section.

<sup>41</sup> **yawning** – wide open.

<sup>42</sup> **chamber** – bedroom.

<sup>43</sup> But there are sinners for whom Christ did not die. This is a major point of this sermon. The promise of forgiveness belongs to *believing sinners* and none other (Joh 3:18, 36; 8:24; 1Jo 5:10). Believing the gospel is how we are assured that Jesus died for us (Joh 20:31; Rom 3:24-26; 15:13; 1Jo 5:13).

<sup>44</sup> An allusion to John Bunyan's allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) where, by a sight of the cross, the burden Pilgrim carried fell from his back. He says, "Blest cross! blest sepulcher! Blest rather be, The Man that there was put to shame for me!" Available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

light; for the garments of heaviness you had the robes of praise. Who shall tell your joy since then? You have sung on earth hymns of heaven, and in your peaceful soul you have anticipated the eternal Sabbath of the redeemed. Because you have believed, you have entered into rest (Heb 4:1-11). Yes, tell it the wide world over—that they [who] believe are justified by Jesus' death from all things from which they could not be freed by the works of the Law (Act 13:39). Tell it in heaven—that none can lay anything to the charge of God's elect (Rom 8:33). Tell it upon earth—that God's redeemed are free from sin in Jehovah's sight.<sup>45</sup> Tell it even in hell—that God's elect can never come there; for Christ hath died for them, and who is he that shall condemn them (Rom 8:34)?

## V. The Extent of the Design of Redemption

I have hurried over that [in order] to come to the last point, which is the sweetest of all. Jesus Christ, we are told in our text, came into the world “to give his life a ransom for *many*.” The greatness of Christ's redemption may be measured by the extent of the design of it. He gave His life “a ransom for many.”

I must now return to that controverted<sup>46</sup> point again. Those of us who are commonly nicknamed by the title of Calvinists—and we are not very much ashamed of that [as] we think Calvin, after all, knew more about the gospel than almost any uninspired man who has ever lived—are often told that we limit the atonement of Christ. [This is] because we say that Christ has not made a satisfaction for all men, or all men would be saved. Now, our reply to this is that...our opponents limit it; we do not.

The Arminians say, “Christ died for all men.” Ask them what they mean by it. Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They say, “No, certainly not.” We ask them the next question: Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer, “No.” They are obliged to admit this if they are consistent. They say, “No, Christ has died [so] that any man may be saved if”—and then follow certain conditions of salvation. We say—we will just go back to the old statement—then Christ did not die so as beyond a doubt to secure the salvation of anybody, did He? [An Arminian] must say, “No”; you are obliged to say so, for you believe that even after a man has been pardoned, he may yet fall from grace<sup>47</sup> and perish. Now, who is it that limits the death of Christ? Why, you! You say that Christ did not die so as to infallibly secure the salvation of anybody. We beg your pardon: when you say we limit Christ's death, we say, “No, my dear sir, it is you that do it.” We say Christ so died that He infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ's death not only may be saved, but are saved, must be saved, and cannot by any possibility run the hazard

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<sup>45</sup> **free from sin** – completely forgiven. Christ has made full atonement for all the sins of the redeemed (Rom 3:20-5:21; 2Co 5:21; Gal 4:4-5; 1Jo 4:9-10). True believers still commit sin, but not as a habitual practice or lifestyle (1Jo 1:5-2:17).

<sup>46</sup> **controverted** – disputed.

<sup>47</sup> **fall from grace** – the false teaching that one may be truly saved by God and then lose that salvation. Christ keeps His own (Joh 10; Rom 8). How then shall we view those that appeared at one time to be true Christians that later abandon Christ? 1 John 2:19 provides the answer.

of being anything but saved. You are welcome to your atonement; you may keep it. We will never renounce ours for the sake of it.<sup>48</sup>

Now, beloved, when you hear anyone laughing or jeering at a limited atonement, you may tell him this. General atonement<sup>49</sup> is like a great wide bridge with only half an arch [that] does not go across the stream; it only professes to go half way, [which] does not secure the salvation of anybody. Now, I had rather put my foot upon a bridge as narrow as Hungerford,<sup>50</sup> which went all the way across, than on a bridge that was as wide as the world, if it did not go all the way across the stream.

I am told it is my duty to say that all men have been redeemed, and I am told that there is a scriptural warrant for it: “Who gave himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time” (1Ti 2:6). Now, that looks like a very, very great argument indeed on the other side of the question. For instance, look here: “The world is gone after him” (Joh 12:19). Did all the world go after Christ? “Then went out to him...all Judea...and were baptized of him in Jordan” (Mat 3:5-6). Was all Judea, or all Jerusalem baptized in Jordan? “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1Jo 5:19). Does “the whole world” there mean everybody? If so, how was it, then, that there were some who were “of God”? The words *world* and *all* are used in some seven or eight senses in Scripture; and it is very rarely that *all* means all persons, taken individually. The words are generally used to signify that Christ has redeemed some of all sorts—some Jews, some Gentiles, some rich, some poor, and has not restricted His redemption to either Jew or Gentile (see also 1Ti 2:1-2).

Leaving controversy, however, I will now answer a question. Tell me then, sir, who did Christ die for? If you will answer me a question or two, I will tell you whether He died for *you*. Do you want a Savior? Do you feel that you need a Savior? Are you this morning conscious of sin? Has the Holy Spirit taught you that you are lost? Then Christ died for you, and you will be saved. Are you conscious this morning that you have no hope in the world but Christ? Do you feel that you of yourself cannot offer an atonement that can satisfy God’s justice? Have you given up all confidence in yourself? And can you say upon your bended knees, “Lord, save, or I perish”? Christ died for you.<sup>51</sup>

If you are saying this morning, “I am as good as I ought to be; I can get to heaven by my own good works,” then remember, the Scripture says of Jesus, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mar 2:17). So long as you are in that state, I have no atonement to preach to you. But if this morning you feel guilty, wretched, conscious of your guilt, and are ready to take Christ to be your only Savior, I can not only say to you

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<sup>48</sup> See also the author’s sermon *For Whom Did Christ Die?* available as a booklet from Chapel Library.

<sup>49</sup> **general atonement** – the unbiblical idea that Christ died for everyone without exception even though this is not sufficient for their forgiveness.

<sup>50</sup> **Hungerford bridge** – a foot bridge in London opened in 1845 (about 13 years prior to the preaching of this sermon) connecting the south bank of the Thames river with the Hungerford market on the north.

<sup>51</sup> Remember, conviction does not equal conversion. Unbelievers may receive many spiritual benefits and remain unconverted (Heb 6:4-9). The promise of salvation belongs to believers, who may rest in the knowledge that Christ died for them (Gal 2:20).

that you may be saved, but what is better still, that you will be saved. When you are stripped of everything but hope in Christ, when you are prepared to come empty-handed and take Christ to be your all, and to be yourself nothing at all, then you may look up to Christ, and you may say, “Thou dear, Thou bleeding, Lamb of God! Thy griefs were endured for me: by Thy stripes I am healed, and by Thy sufferings I am pardoned.”

And then see what peace of mind you will have—for if Christ has died for you, you cannot be lost. God will not punish twice for one thing. If God punished Christ for your sin, He will never punish you. “Payment, God’s justice cannot twice demand—first, at the bleeding surety’s hand, and then again at mine” (see Rom 3:24-26; 1Jo 1:9). Today, if we believe in Christ, we can march to the very throne of God, stand there, and, if it is said, “Art thou guilty?” we can say, “Yes, guilty.” But if the question is put, “What have you to say why you should not be punished for your guilt?” We can answer, “Great God, Thy justice and Thy love are both our guarantees that Thou wilt not punish us for sin. For didst Thou not punish Christ for sin for us? How canst Thou, then, be just—how canst Thou be God at all,<sup>52</sup> if Thou dost punish Christ the Substitute, and then punish man himself afterwards?”

Your only question is, “Did Christ die for me?” And the only answer we can give is, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ came into the world to save sinners” (1Ti 1:15). Can you write your name down among the sinners—not among the complimentary<sup>53</sup> sinners, but among those that feel it, bemoan it, lament it, seek mercy on account of it? Are you a sinner? That felt, that known, that professed, you are now invited to believe that Jesus Christ died for you,<sup>54</sup> because you are a sinner; and you are bidden to cast yourself upon this great immovable rock, and find eternal security in the Lord Jesus Christ.



## Questions for personal reflection and group discussion

*The following questions are designed to reinforce understanding and application.*

1. Why is an atonement of infinite value necessary even for just one sin of one sinner?
2. How are men sanctified from *all* their transgressions? Why is this sufficient?
3. How great is Christ’s redemption when measured by the sins of His people? Why?
4. How is God as severe in His justice as if He were not loving (and as loving as if He were not severe)?

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<sup>52</sup> This should not be taken as irreverence but an attempt to magnify the righteousness of God.

<sup>53</sup> **complimentary** – flattering (themselves, in this context).

<sup>54</sup> It should be noted that God *commands* belief in the Lord Jesus Christ (Mar 1:15; Act 17:30; 1Jo 3:23). This should be obeyed regardless of what one feels or does not feel.

5. Why does the believer owe to God's justice absolutely nothing? How is this possible?
6. How great is Christ's redemption when measured by the severity of His justice? Why?
7. Describe the vast aggregate of misery if *all* God's people had been punished for *all* their sins for *all* eternity in hell (2Co 5:21).
8. How great is Christ's redemption when measured by His suffering?
9. Describe the glorious deliverance that Christ has effected.
10. How great is Christ's redemption when measured by the glorious deliverance that He has effected? Why?
11. Trace the logic of the author's argument comparing the Calvinist and Arminian understanding of "limiting" the atonement.
12. What is your personal answer:
  - a. For whom did Christ die?
  - b. Did He die for you?