

Messrs. Moody and Sankey Defended; or, A Vindication of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately defends the doctrine of justification by faith, emphasizing that true faith in Christ results in a decisive crucifixion of sin and a transformed life.

Scripture: Galatians 5:24, Romans 6:4, John 3:16, Romans 3:28, Ephesians 2:8, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Topics: "Justification By Faith", "Sanctification", "Christian Conversion"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon robustly defends the doctrine of justification by faith against contemporary critics. He affirms that salvation through faith in Jesus Christ is immediate and transformative, producing a genuine crucifixion of sin in the believer's life. Spurgeon also highlights the biblical foundation of this doctrine and its central place in Protestant Christianity, while encouraging believers to demonstrate their faith through holy living and baptism as a public testimony. This sermon is a compelling call to understand and embrace the true nature of saving faith.

Transcript

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."■ Galatians 5:24.

FROM SEVERAL QUARTERS we have heard lately intensely earnest objections to the matter and tenor of the preaching of the evangelists from America, who have been working among us. Of course, their teaching as well as our own is open to honest judgment, and they, we feel sure, would rather court than shun investigation of the most searching sort. Criticisms upon their style of speaking and singing, and so on, are so unimportant, that nobody has any need to answer them, "Wisdom is justified of her children." It is a waste of time to discuss mere matters of taste, for no men however excellent can please all, or even become equally adapted to all constitutions and conditions: therefore we may let such remarks pass without further observation. But upon the matter of doctrine very much has been said, and said also with a good deal of temper not always of the best. What has been affirmed by a certain class of public writers comes to this, if you boil it down■that it cannot really do any good to tell men that simply by believing in Jesus Christ they will be saved, and that it may do people very serious injury if we lead them to imagine that they have undergone a process called conversion, and are now safe for life. We are told by these gentlemen, who ought to know, for they speak very positively, that the doctrine of immediate salvation

through faith in Christ Jesus is a very dangerous one, that it will certainly lead to the deterioration of the public morality, since men will not be likely to set store by the practical virtues when faith is lifted up to so very lofty a position. If it were so it were a grievous fault, and woe to those who led men into it. That it is not the fact we are sure; but meanwhile let us survey the field of battle.

Will you please to notice that this is no quarrel between these gentlemen and our friends Messrs. Moody and Sankey alone. It is a quarrel between these objectors and the whole of us who preach the gospel; for, differing as we do in the style of preaching it, we are all ready to set our seal to the clearest possible statement that men are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, and saved the moment they believe. We all hold and teach that there is such a thing as conversion, and that when men are converted they become other men than they were before, and a new life begins which will culminate in eternal glory. We are not so dastardly as to allow our friends to stand alone in the front of the battle, to be looked upon as peculiar persons, holding strange notions from which the rest of us dissent. So far as salvation through faith in the atoning blood is concerned, they preach nothing but what we have preached all our lives; they preach nothing but what has the general consent of Protestant Christendom. Let that be known to all, and let the archers shoot at us all alike.

Then, further, if this be the point of objection, we should like those who raise it to know that they do not raise it against us merely, and these friends who are more prominent, but against the Protestant faith which these very same gentlemen most probably profess to glory in. The Protestant faith in a nutshell lies in this very same justification by faith which they hoot at. It was the discovery that men are saved by faith in Jesus Christ which first stirred up Luther. That was the ray of light which fell upon his dark heart, and by the power of which he came into the liberty of the gospels. This is the hammer by which popery was broken in the old time, and this is the sword with which it still is to be smitten—the very "Sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Jesus is the all-sufficient Savior, and "He that believeth in him is not condemned." Luther used, in fact, to say—and we endorse it—that this matter of justification by faith is the article by which a church must stand or fall. That so-called church which does not hold this doctrine is not a church of Christ, and it is a church of Christ that does hold it, notwithstanding many mistakes into which it may have fallen. The contest lies really between the Popish doctrine of merit and the Protestant doctrine of grace, and no man who calls himself a Protestant can logically dispute the question with us and our friends.

We shall go somewhat further than this. The objection is not against Messrs. Moody and Sankey, but against all evangelical ministers; not against them only, but against our common protestantism; and yet more, it is against the inspired word of God; for if this book teaches anything under heaven, it certainly teaches that men are saved by faith in our Lord Jesus. Read the Epistle to the Galatians, and your judgment may be very perverse, but you cannot, by any common wresting of words, expel that doctrine from the Epistle. It was written on purpose to state that truth plainly, and defend it fully. Neither can you get rid of that doctrine from the whole New Testament. You shall find it not merely seasoning all the epistles, but positively saturating them, in, as you take chapter by chapter, you may wring out of them, as out of Gideon's fleece, this one truth, that justification before God is by faith, and not by the works of the law. So that the objection is against the Bible; and let those who shoot their errors understand that they fight against the Eternal Spirit of God and the witness which he has borne by his prophets and apostles. Deny inspiration, and you have ground to stand on; but while you believe the Bible you must believe in justification by faith.

But now let us look this matter in the face. Is it true or not that persons who believe in Jesus Christ do become worse than they were before? We are not backward to answer the inquiry, and we stand in a point

of observation which supplies us with abundant data to go upon. We solemnly affirm that men who believe in Jesus become purer, holier, and better. At the same time I confess that there has been a good deal of injudicious and misleading talk at times by uninstructed advocates of free grace. I fear, moreover, that many people think that they believe in Jesus Christ, but do nothing of the sort. We do not defend rash statements, or deny the existence of weak-minded followers; but we ask to be heard and considered. Some persons say, "You tell these people that they will be saved upon their believing in Christ." Exactly so. "But will you kindly tell me what you mean by being saved, sir?" I will, with great pleasure. We do not mean that these people will go to heaven when they die, irrespective of character: but, when we say that if they believe in Jesus they will be saved, we mean that they will be saved from living as they used to live—saved from being what they now are, saved from licentiousness, dishonesty, drunkenness, selfishness, and any other sin they may have lived in. The thing can readily be put to the test, if it can be shown that those who have believed in the Lord Jesus have been saved from living in sin, no rational man ought to entertain any objection to the preaching of such a salvation. Salvation from wrongdoing is the very thing which every moralist should commend and not censure, and that is the salvation which we preach. I am afraid that some imagine that they have only to believe something or other, and they will go to heaven when they die, and that they have only to feel a certain singular emotion, and it is all right within them. Now, if any of you have fallen into that error, may God in his mercy lead you out of it, for it is not every faith that saves, but only the faith of God's elect. It is not any sort of emotion that changes the heart, but the work of the Holy Ghost. It is a small matter to go into an inquiry-room and say, "I believe"; such an avowal as that proves nothing at all, it may even be false. It will be proved by this, if you have rightly believed in Jesus Christ you will become from that time forward a different man from what you were. There will be a change in your heart and soul, in your conduct and your conversation; and, seeing you thus changed, those who have been honest objectors will right speedily leave off their objections, for they will be in the condition of those who saw the man that was healed standing with Peter and John; and therefore they could say nothing against them. The world demands facts, and these we must supply. It is of no use to cry up our medicine by words, we must point to cures. Your change of life will be the grandest argument for the gospel, if that life shall show the meaning of my text, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Let us discuss this text in an apologetic manner, hoping to overcome prejudice, if God permit.

Notice, first of all, that THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST BY FAITH IS, IN ITSELF AN AVOWAL THAT WE HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH THE AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS. If faith be such an avowal, why say that it is not connected with holy living?

Let me show that this is the case. Faith is the accepting of Jesus Christ. In what respects? Well, principally as a substitute. He is the Son of God, and I am a guilty sinner. I deserve to die: the Son of God stands in my stead and suffers for me, and when I believe in him I accept him as standing for me. To believe in Jesus was very beautifully set forth in the old ceremony of the law, when the person bringing a sacrifice laid his hands upon the head of the bullock or the lamb, and hereby accepted the victim as standing in his place, so that the victim's sufferings should be instead of his sufferings. Now, our faith accepts Jesus Christ as standing in our stead. The very pith and marrow of faith's confidence lies in this—

"He bore, that I might never bear, His Father's righteous ire."

Christ for me, Christ in my room and stead.

Now, try to catch the following thought.■When you believe, you accept Christ as standing instead of you, and profess that what he did he did for you, but what did Christ do upon the tree? He was crucified and died. Follow the thought, and note well that by faith you regard yourself as dead with him■crucified with him. You have not really grasped what faith means unless you have grasped this. With him you suffered the wrath of God, for he suffered in your stead: you are now in him■crucified with him, dead with him, buried with him, risen with him, and gone into the glory with him■because he represents you, and your faith has accepted the representation. Do you see, then, that you did, in the moment when you believed in Christ, register a declaration that you were henceforth dead unto sin. Who shall say that our gospel teaches men to live in sin, when the faith which is essential to salvation involves an avowal of death to it? The convert begins with agreeing to be regarded as dead with Christ to sin: have we not here the foundation stone of holiness?

Observe also that, if he follows the command of Christ, the very first step which a Christian takes after he has accepted the position taken up by the Lord Jesus on his behalf is another avowal more public than the first, namely, his baptism.

By faith he has accepted Christ as dead, instead of him, and he regards himself as having died in Christ. Now, every dead man ought to be buried, sooner or later; and so, when we come forward and confess Christ, we are "buried with him in baptism unto death, that like as Jesus Christ rose from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also might rise to newness of life." Though baptism does not avail anything as a ceremony, having no power or efficacy in and of itself, yet as a sign and symbol it teaches us that true believers are dead and buried with Christ. So, you see, the two ways in which, according to the gospel, we actually and avowedly give ourselves to Christ, are by faith and baptism. "He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved." Now, the essence of faith is to accept Christ as representing me in his death: and the essence of baptism is to be buried with Christ because I am dead with him. Thus at the very doorstep of the Christian religion, in its first inward act and its first outward symbol, you get the thought that believers are henceforth to be separated from sin and purified in life. He who truly believes, and knows what it is to be really buried with Christ, has begun■nay, he has, in a certain sense, effected completely■what the text describes as the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts. For, dear friends, let it never be forgotten that the grand object for which we lay hold on Christ is the death of sin. Who among us has believed in Christ that he might escape the pangs of hell? Oh, brother, you have but a very poor idea of what Jesus Christ has come into the world to do: he is proclaimed to be a Savior who "shall save his people from their sins." This is the object of his mission. True, he comes to give pardon, but he never gives pardon without giving repentance with it; he comes to justify, but he does not justify without also sanctifying. He has come to deliver us, not from thee, O death, alone! nor from thee, O hell, alone! but from thee, O sin, the mother of death, the progenitor of hell! The Redeemer lays his axe at the root of all the mischief, by killing sin, and thus, as far as we are concerned, he puts an end to death and hell. Glory be to God for this! Now, it does seem to me that if the very commencement of the Christian faith be so manifestly connected with death to sin, they do us grievous injustice who suppose that in preaching faith in Jesus Christ we ignore the moralities or the virtues, or that we think little of sin and vice. We do not so, but we proclaim the only method by which moral evil can be put to death and swept away. The reception of Christ is an avowal of the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts, what more can the purest moralist propose? What more could he avow himself?

II. But secondly, AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE DECEPTION OF CHRIST IS ATTENDED WITH THE CRUCIFIXION OF SIN. I shall now state my own experience when I believed in Jesus; and while I am

doing so I rejoice to remember that there are hundreds, if not thousands in this place who have experienced the same, and millions in this world, and millions more in heaven, who know the truth of what I declare. When I believed that Jesus was the Christ, and rested my soul in him, I felt in my heart from that moment an intense hatred to sin of every kind. I had loved sin before, some sins particularly, but those sins became from that moment the most obnoxious to me, and, though the propensity to them was still there, yet the love of them was clean gone; and when I at any time transgressed I felt an inward grief and horror at myself for doing the things which aforetime I had allowed and even enjoyed. My relish for sin was gone. The things I once loved I abhorred, and blushed to think of.

Then I began to search out my sins. I see now a parallel between my experience in reference to sin, and the details of the crucifixion of Christ. They sent Judas into the garden to search for our great substitute, and just in that way I began to search for sin, even for that which lay concealed amid the thick darkness of my soul I was ignorant, and did not know be sin, for it was night in any soul; but, being stirred up to destroy the evil, my repenting spirit borrowed lanterns, and torches, and went out as against a thief. I searched the garden of my heart through and through, with an intense ardor to find out every sin; and I brought God to help me, saying, "Search me, O God, and try me, and know my ways;" nor did I cease till I had spied out my secret transgressions. This inward search is one of my most constant occupations; I patrol my nature through and through to try and arrest these felons, these abhorred sins, that they may be crucified with Christ. O ye in whom iniquity lurks under cover of your spiritual ignorance, arouse yourself to a strict scrutiny of your nature, and no longer endure that your hearts should be the lurking-places of evil. I remember when I found my sin. When I found it I seized it, and I dragged it off to the judgment-seat. Ah, my brethren, you know when that occurred to you, and how stern was the judgment which conscience gave forth. I sat in judgment on myself. I took my sin to one court, and to another. I looked at it as before men, and trembled to think that the badness of my example might have ruined other men's souls: I looked at my sin as before God, and I abhorred myself in dust and ashes. My sin was as red as crimson in his sight and in mine also. I judged my sin, and I condemned it■condemned it as a felon to a felon's death. I heard a voice within me which, Pilate-like, pleaded for it■"I will chastise him and let him go; let it be a little put to shame; let not the wrong deed be done quite so often; let the lust be curbed and kept under." But, ah, my soul said, "Let it be crucified! Let it be crucified!" and nothing could shake my heart from this intent, that I would slay all the murderers of Christ if possible, and let not one of them escape for my soul hated them with a deadly hatred, and would fain nail them all to the tree. I remember, too, how I began to see the shame of sin. As my Lord was spit upon, and mocked, and despitefully used, so did my soul begin to pour contempt upon all the pride of sin, to scorn its promises of pleasure, and to accuse it of a thousand crimes. It had deceived me, it had led me into ruin, it had well nigh destroyed me, and I despised it, and poured contempt upon its bribes, and all it offered of sweetness and of pleasure. O sin, how shameful a thing didst thou appear to be! I saw all that is base, mean, and contemptible concentrated in thee. My heart scourged sin by repentance, smote it with rebukes, and buffeted it with self-denials. Then was it made a reproach and a scorn. But this sufficed not■sin must die. My heart mourned for what sin had done, and I was resolved to avenge my Lord's death upon myself.

Thus my soul sang out her resolve■ "Oh, how I hate those lusts of mine That crucified my God; Those sins that pierced and nail'd his flesh Fast to the fatal wood! Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die; My heart was so decreed: Nor will I spare the guilty things That made my Savior bleed."

Then I led forth my sins to the place of crucifixion. They would fain have escaped, but the power of God prevented them, and like a guard of soldiery, conducted them to the gibbet of mortification. The hand of

the Lord was present, and his all-revealing Spirit stripped my sin as Christ was stripped; setting it before mine eyes, even my secret sin in the light of his countenance. Oh, what a spectacle it was as I gazed upon it! I had looked before upon its dainty apparel, and the colors with which it had bedizened itself, to make it look as fair as Jezebel when she painted her face: but now I saw its nakedness and horror, and I was well nigh ready to despair; but my spirit bore me up, for I knew that I was forgiven, and I said "Christ Jesus has pardoned me, for I have believed in him; and I will put the flesh to death, by crucifying it on his cross." The driving of the nails I do remember, and how the flesh struggled to maintain its liberty. One, two, three, four, the nails went in, and fastened the accursed thing to the wood with Christ, so that it could neither run nor rule; and now, glory be to God, though my sin is not dead, it is crucified, and must eventually die. It hangs up there; I can see it bleeding out its life. Sometimes it struggles to get down, and tries to wrench away the nails, for it would fain go after vanity; but the sacred nails hold it too fast, it is in the grasp of death, and it cannot escape. Alas, it dies a lingering death, attended with much pain and struggling: still it dies, and soon its heart shall be pierced through with the spear of the love of Christ, and it shall utterly expire. Then shall our immortal nature no more be burdened with the body of this death, but, pure and spotless, it shall rise to and behold the face of God for ever.

Now, I am not talking allegorically of things which ought to be realized, but as a matter of fact remain mere ideas. I am describing in figure what happens in reality; for every man who believes in Jesus immediately bestirs himself to get rid of sin; and you may know whether he has believed in Jesus Christ or not by seeing whether there is a change in his motives, feelings, life, and conduct. Do you say that you doubt this? You may doubt what you like, but facts speak for themselves. There will come before me, I dare say, before this week is over, as there have almost every week of my life, men who have been slaves to intoxication made sober at once by believing in Jesus Christ; women, once lost to virtue, who have become pure and chaste by believing in Jesus; men who were fond of all manner of evil pleasures, who have turned instantly from them, and have continued to resist all temptation, because they are new creatures in Christ Jesus. The phenomenon of conversion is singular, but the effect of conversion is more singular still; and it is not a thing done in a corner, it can be seen every day. If it were merely an excitement in which men felt a distress of mind, and then by-and-by thought they were at peace, and became happy because self-satisfied, I should not see any particular good in it; but if it be true that regeneration changes men's tastes and affections, that it, in fine, changes them radically, making them altogether new creatures; if it be so, I say, then may God send us thousands of conversions! And that this is so we are quite sure, for we see it perpetually.

III. Thirdly, we go a step farther, and say that THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST INTO THE HEART BY SIMPLE FAITH IS CALCULATED TO CRUCIFY THE FLESH.

When a man believes in Jesus the first point that helps him to crucify the flesh is that he has seen the evil of sin, inasmuch as he has seen Jesus, his Lord, die because of it. Men think that sin is nothing; but what will sin do? What will it not do? The virus of sin, what wilt it poison? Ay, what will it not poison? Its influence has been baleful upon the largest conceivable scale. Sin has flooded the world with blood and tears through red-handed war; sin has covered the world with oppression, and so has crushed the manhood of many, and broken the hearts of myriads; sin begat slavery, and tyranny, and priestcraft, and rebellion, and slander, and persecution; sin has been at the bottom of all human sorrows; but the crowning culminating point of sin's villainy was when God himself came down to earth in human form—pure, perfect, intent on an errand of love—came to work miracles of mercy, and redemption. Then sinful man could never rest till he had crucified his incarnate God. They coined a word when the Parliamentary party executed the

king in England, and called the king's destroyers "regicides," and now we must make a word to describe sin: sin is a deicide. Every sinner, if he could, would kill God, for he says in his heart, "No God." He means he wishes there were none. He would be rejoiced indeed if he could learn for certain that there was no God. In fact, that is the bugbear of his life, that there is a God, and a just God, who will bring him into judgment. His secret wish is that there were no religion and no God, for he might then live as he pleased.

Now, when a man is made to see that sin in its essence is the murderer of Emmanuel, God with us, his heart being renewed, he hates sin from that very moment. "No," he says, "I cannot continue in such evil. If that be the true meaning of every offense against the law of God—that it would put God himself out of his own world if it could—I cannot bear it." His spirit recoils with horror, as he feels—

"My sins have pulled the vengeance down Upon his guiltless head: Break, break, my heart, oh burst mine eyes! And let my sorrows bleed. Strike, mighty grace, my flinty soul, Till melting waters flow, And deep repentance drown mine eyes In undissembled woe."

Then the believer has also seen in the death of Christ an amazing instance of the great grace of God; for if sin be an attempt to murder God—and it is all that—then how wonderful it is that the creatures who committed this sin were not destroyed at once. How remarkable that God should consider it worth his while to devise a plan for their restoration; and yet he did, with matchless skill, contrive a way which involved the giving up of his only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Though this was an expense unequalled, yet he did not withdraw from it. He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life:" and this for a race of men who were the enemies of their good and gracious God. "Henceforth," saw the believer in Christ, "I can have nothing to do with sin, since it does despite to so gracious a God. O, thou accursed sin, to drive thy dagger at the heart of him who was all grace and mercy! This makes sin to be exceedingly sinful."

Further, the believer has had a view of the justice of God. He sees that God hates sin intensely, for when his only begotten Son took sin upon himself, God would not spare even him. That sin was not his own, in him was no sin, but when he voluntarily took it upon himself, and was made a curse for us, the Judge of all the earth did not spare him. Down from his armoury of vengeance he took his thunderbolts and hurled them at his Son, for his Son stood in the sinner's stead. There was no mercy for the sinner's substitute. He had to cry as never one cried before or since, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Torrents of woe rushed through his spirit; the condemnation of sin overwhelmed him; all God's waves and billows went o'er him.

Now, when a man sees this wonderful fact he can no longer think lightly of transgression. He trembles before the thrice holy Jehovah, and cries in his secret heart, "How can I sin if this be God's opinion of it? If in his justice he smote it so unsparingly, even when it was only laid by imputation upon his Son, how will he smite it when its actual guilt lies on me? O God deliver me from it."

The believer has also had one more sight which, perhaps, more effectually than any other changes his view of sin. He has seen the amazing love of Jesus. Did you ever see it, my hearer? If you have seen it you will never love sin again. O think, that he who was master of all heaven's majesty came down to be the victim of all man's misery! He came to Bethlehem, and dwelt among us, offering thirty years and more of toilsome obedience to his Father's will; and at the close he reached the crisis of his griefs, the crowning sorrow of his incarnation—his bloody sweat and death agony. That was a solemn Passover which he ate with his disciples, with Calvary full in view. Then he arose and went to Gethsemane,

"Gethsemane, the olive-press, (And why so called let Christians guess,) Fit name, fit place, where vengeance strove, And griped and grappled hard with love. 'Twas there the Lord of life appeared And sighed, and groaned, and prayed, and feared; Bore all incarnate God could bear With strength enough, and none to spare."

Behold how he loved us! He was taken to Pilate's hall, and there was scourged■scourged with those awful Roman whips weighted with little bullets of lead, and made of the intertwisted sinews of oxen, into which they also inserted small slivers of bone, so that every blow as it fell tore off the flesh. Our beloved Lord had to suffer this again and again, being scourged often as that verse seems to intimate which says, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Yet he loved us, loved us still. Many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it. When they nailed him to the tree, he loved us still. When, every bone being dislocated, he cried in sad soliloquy, "I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint," he loved us still. When the dogs compassed him and the bulls of Bashan beset him round, he loved us still. When the dread faintness came upon him till he was brought into the dust of death, and his heart melted like wax in the midst of his bowels, he loved us still. When God forsook him, and the sun was blotted out, and midnight darkness covered the midday, and a denser midnight veiled his spirit■a darkness like that of Egypt, which might be felt, he loved us still. Till he had drunk the last dregs of the unutterably bitter coo, he loved us still. And when the light shone on his face, and he could say, "It is finished," that light shone on a face that loved us still. Now, every man to whom it has been given to believe in Jesus, and to know his love, says, "How can I offend him? How can I grieve him? There are actions in this life which I might otherwise indulge in, but I dare not now, for I fear to vex my Lord." And if you say "Dare not, are you afraid of him?" the answer will be, "I am not slavishly afraid, for into hell I can never go." What am I afraid of, then? I am afraid of that dear face, on which I see the gutterings of tears which he once shed for me. I am afraid of that dear brow which wore the thorn-crown for me; I cannot rebel against such kindness, his bleeding love enchains me. How can I do so great a wickedness as to put my dying Lord to shame? "Do you not feel this, my beloved brother? If you have ever trusted the Lord Jesus, you crouch at his feet, and kiss the prints of his nails, for very love; and if he would use you as a footstool, if it would raise him any higher, you would count it the highest honor of your life. Ay, if he bade you go to prison and to death for him, and would say it himself, and put his pierced hand on you, you would go there as cheerfully as angels fly to heaven. If he bade you die for him, though the flesh is weak, your spirit would be willing; ay, and the flesh would be made strong enough, too, if Jesus did but look upon you, for he can with a glance cast out selfishness and cowardice, and everything that keeps us back from being whole burnt-offerings to him. Is it not so?

"Speak of morality! Thou bleeding Lamb The best morality is love to thee!"

When we once are filled with love to thee, O Jesus, sin becomes the dragon against which we wage a lifelong warfare; holiness becomes our noblest aspiration, and we seek after it with all our heart and soul and strength. If candid minds will but honestly consider the religion of Jesus Christ, they will see that Christian men must hate sin if they are sincere in their faith. I might go farther into that, but I will not.

IV. The last thing of all is this. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS WITH THE GOSPEL, AND WHERE HE IS HOLINESS MUST BE PROMOTED.

Let it never be forgotten that■while the reception of Jesus Christ by simple faith is an avowal of death to sin, and does bring with it an experience of hating sin, and is calculated to do so■there in one thing more.

If, dear friends, in any work of revival, or ordinary ministry, there was nothing more than you could see or hear, I think that many criticisms and cavils might be, at least, rational, but they are not so now; for one grand fact makes them for ever unreasonable. Wherever Jesus Christ is preached, there is present One sublime in rank and high in degree. You will not suppose that I am speaking of any earthly potentate. No, I am speaking of the Holy Ghost—the ever blessed Spirit of God. There is never a gospel sermon preached by an earnest heart but what the Holy Ghost is there, taking of the things of Christ and revealing them unto men. When a man turns his eye to Jesus, and simply trusts him—for we adhere to that as being the vital matter—there is accompanying that act—nay, I must correct myself, there is as the cause of that act—a miraculous, supernatural power which in an instant changes a man, as completely as if it flung him back into nothingness and brought him forth into new life. If this be so, then believing in Christ is something very marvellous. Now, if you will turn to the third chapter of John's gospel, and also to his Epistles, you will see that faith is always linked with regeneration, or the new birth, which new birth is the work of the Spirit of God. That same third of John which tells us, "Ye must be born again," goes on to say, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Wherever there is faith in Jesus Christ a miracle of purification has been wrought in the heart. Deny this and you deny the testimony of the Scriptures, which say plainly, that "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." "And whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Wherefore do you doubt, for we who are personal examples can assure you that it has been so in our case? I mean not that myself and one or two others affirm this, but the witnesses may be met with by hundreds and thousands, and they all agree in asserting that the power of the Holy Ghost has changed the current of their desires, and made them love the things which are holy, and just, and true. Therefore, sirs, whether you believe it or not, you must be so kind as to understand one thing from us very decidedly, namely, that if to preach salvation through faith be vile we purpose to be viler still. Surely you cannot blame us for acting as we do if our stand-point be correct. If the preaching of the cross, though it be to them that perish foolishness, be to them that believe in Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God, we shall not give up preaching Christ for you. If it be so that men are made new creatures—that, while others are talking about morals, our gospel plants and produces them—we shall not give up work for talk, nor the efficient agency of the gospel for the inventions of philosophy.

To the front, my brethren, with the cross, more and more; in your schools and in your pulpits set forth Christ crucified as the sinner's hope more and more plainly. Bid the sinner look to Jesus! Look and live! The gospel is the great promoter of social order, the great reclamer of the waifs and strays of society, the elevator of the human race; this doctrine of free pardon and gracious renewal, freely given to the most worthless upon their believing in Jesus, is the hope of mankind. There is no balm in Gilead, and never was; but this is the balm of Calvary, for there is the true medicine, and Jesus Christ is the infallible Physician. Do but try it, sinners! Do but try it! Look to Jesus, and the passions which you cannot else overcome shall yield to his cleansing power. Believe in Jesus, and the follies which cling to you, and crush you as the snakes engirdled Laocoon and his sons, you shall be able to untwist. Yea, they shall die at Jesus' glance, and shall fall off from you. Believe in Jesus, and you have the spring of excellency, the fath of purity, the source of virtue, the destruction of evil, the bud of perfection.

God grant us still to prove the power of the Lord Jesus in ourselves, and to proclaim his power to all around us.

"Happy if, with our latest breath, We may but gasp his name; Preach him to all, and cry in death Behold behold, the Lamb!"

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON■Galatians 5.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"■278, 317, AND 432; and "Safe in the Arms of Jesus."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/messrs-moody-and-sankey-defended-or-a-vindication-of-the-doctrine-of-justification-by-faith/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net