

Spurgeon's doctrine of IMPUTATION and Related Subjects

Richard C. Schadle¹

Introduction

There are various criticisms the proponents of Spurgeon love to level at any criticism of his sermons. One is that because so many of his sermons are extant it's not objective to judge his doctrine by any one or even several sermons. There is some justification for this argument, based on the subject matter involved. At times there is a defined alteration in Spurgeon's doctrine based on when a particular sermon was preached. From what I can determine his views on the atonement, imputation and Duty Faith changed very little if at all. Different emphasis of details does vary from sermon to sermon but the thread through them all does not. Like Andrew Fuller² he tends to use the same Calvinistic sounding words but with more clearly defined unorthodox meanings than Fuller. He constantly professed to be a strong Calvinist while at the same time he rejected key elements of those doctrines. Unlike his predecessor Dr. John Gill, he came out openly in favor of a mixed-up doctrine based on Andrew Fuller and the moral government theory of the Atonement. I use the expression "openly" in a guarded fashion. It is discernible that these are his views. It, however, takes some degree of effort to see this clearly as he constantly gives lip service to Calvinistic teaching at the same time. My goal here is to refer to different sermons on this subject from different time periods. I have delved in some length upon Spurgeon's sermon "The Heart of the Gospel"³ where he preaches on 2 Corinthians 5:20,21. Aside from one quotation from that sermon the references below are on sermons I have not touched upon before. These previous essays do provide additional support for what I'm expressing here.

I will let Spurgeon speak for himself. Unlike Iain Murray in his book on Spurgeon and his supposed battle with Hyper Calvinism I am striving to clearly present what Spurgeon actually believed. In this case specially on the subject of Christ's imputation. This is not an easy task and I leave it up to those who read this essay to decide how well I have succeeded. Individual words can be very important in getting at the facts. For that reason, I consulted two different dictionaries from his time, modern dictionaries and references to the original languages when needed.

Section 1: 2 Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Part 1 The doctrine of the verse correctly explained

The following quotation is from Dr. John Gills commentary on the New Testament. Dr Gill lays out for us the biblical doctrine of imputation and other aspects of the atonement.

¹ Version 1.0 01/18/2023

² See the appendix for more information about Spurgeon's praise of Fuller

³ Sermon number 1910. https://www.surreytavernaclepulpit.com/other_books/Wells_In_Sympathy.html
(Spurgeon on 2 Corinthians 5:20,21 (The Atonement))

Ver. 21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, &c.] Christ was made of a woman, took flesh of a sinful woman; though the flesh he took of her was not sinful, being sanctified by the spirit of God, the former of Christ's human nature: however, he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh; being attended with infirmities, the effects of sin, though sinless; and he was traduced by men as a sinner, and treated as such. Moreover, he was made a sacrifice for sin, in order to make expiation and atonement for it: so, the Hebrew word חטאת signifies both sin and a sin-offering; see Psalm. 40:6 and so αμαρτια, Rom. 8:3; Heb. 10:6. **But besides all this, he was made sin itself by imputation; the sins of all his people were transferred unto him, laid upon him and placed to his account; he sustained their persons, and bore their sins; and having them upon him and being chargeable with, and answerable for them, he was treated by the justice of God as if he had been not only a sinner, but a mass of sin: for to be made sin, is a stronger expression than to be made a sinner: but now that this may appear to be only by imputation, and that none may conclude from hence that he was really and actually a sinner, or in himself so, 'tis said he was made sin; he did not become sin, or a sinner, through any sinful act of his own, but through his father's act of imputation, to which he agreed; for it was he that made him sin: it is not said that men made him sin; not out that they traduced him as a sinner, pretended they knew he was one, and arraigned him at Pilate's bar as such; nor is he said to make himself so, though he readily engaged to be the surety of his people, and voluntarily took upon him their sins, and gave himself an offering for them; but he, his father is said to make him sin; 'twas he that laid, or made to meet on him, the iniquity of us all; it was he that made his soul an offering for sin, and delivered up into the hands of Justice and to die, and that for us. in our room and stead, to bear the punishment of sin, and make satisfaction and atonement for sin; of which he was capable, and for which he was greatly qualified: for he knew no sin; which can't be understood of pure absolute ignorance of sin; for this can't agree with him, neither as God, nor as Mediator; he full well knew the nature of sin, as it is a transgression of God's law; he knows the original of sin, the corrupt heart of man, and the desperate wickedness of that; he knows the demerit, and the sad consequences of it; he knows, and he takes notice of too, the sins of his own people; and he knows the sins of all wicked men, and will bring them all into judgment, convince of them, and condemn for them: but he knew no sin so as to approve of it, and like it; he hates, abhors, and detest it; he never was conscious of any sin to himself; he never knew anything of this kind by, and in himself[...]; nor did he ever commit any, nor was any ever to and in him, by men or devils, though diligently sought for. This is mentioned, partly that we may better understand in what sense he was made sin, or a sinner, which could be only by the imputation of the sins of others, since he had no sin of his own; and partly to shew that he was a very fit person to bear and take away the sins of men, to become a sacrifice for them, seeing he was the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish, typified in this, as in other respects, by the sacrifices of the legal dispensation; also to make it appear that he died, and was cut off in a judicial way, not for himself, his own sins, but for the transgressions of his people; and to express the strictness of divine justice in not sparing the son of God himself, though holy and harmless, when he had the sins of others upon him, and had made himself responsible for them. The end of his being made sin. though he himself had none, was, that we might be made the righteousness**

of God in him; not the essential righteousness of God, which can neither be imparted nor imputed; nor any righteousness of God wrought in us; for 'tis a righteousness in him, in Christ, and not in ourselves, and therefore must mean the righteousness of Christ; so called, because it is wrought by Christ, who is God over all, the true God, and eternal life; and because it is approved of by God the father, accepted of by him, for, and on the behalf of his elect, as a justifying one; it is what he bestows on them, and imputes unto them for their justification; it is a righteousness, and it is the only one which justifies in the sight of God. Now to be made the righteousness of God, is to be made righteous in the sight of God, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Just as Christ is made sin, or a sinner, by the imputation of the sins of others to him; so they are made righteousness, or righteous persons, through the imputation of his righteousness to them; and in no other way can the one be made sin, or the other righteousness. And this is said to be in him, in Christ; which shews, that though Christ's righteousness is unto all, and upon all them that believe, it is imputed to them, and put upon them: it is not anything wrought in them; it is not inherent in them. Surely in ye Lord have I righteousness and strength, says the church, Isa. 45:24 and also, that the way in which we come by this righteousness is by being in Christ; none have it reckoned to them, but who are in him; we are first of God in Christ, and then he is made unto us righteousness. **Secret being in Christ, or union to him from everlasting, is the ground and foundation of our justification, by his righteousness, as open being in Christ at conversion is the evidence of it.**⁴

Secondly A. A. Hodge in his *Outlines of Theology* gives some very helpful information as well. Hodge deals in some length with the false governmental theory of the atonement. At the same time, he lays out for his readers what the scriptural doctrine of the atonement is. As Spurgeon comes the closest to the governmental view, I think it's worthwhile to quote part of what Hodge has to say. The greatest value here is from Hodge's many scriptural references including 2 Corinthians 5:21. His orderly discussion of these doctrines is also of benefit.

Under the heading of "The Nature of The Atonement" he says in part:

6. *What is the Governmental theory as to the nature of the atonement?* The advocates of this theory, which is distinctively New England and New School, agree with the Socinians in their fundamental propositions.

1st. That sin does not intrinsically deserve punishment, *i. e.*, the true end of punishment is rather to prevent sin, than to satisfy vindicatory justice, and, 2d, that there is no principle in God which demands the punishment of all sin for its own sake alone.

On the other hand, they differ from the Socinians in denying that God can consistently forgive sin upon the mere repentance of the sinner, since such a habit, on his part, would be inconsistent with the good government of the universe, by removing all the restraints which fear of punishment presents to sin. They regard the sufferings of Christ, therefore, as designed to make a moral impression upon the universe, by the emphatic display of God's determination to punish sin, and thus

⁴ Gill, J. (1809). *An Exposition of the New Testament* (Vol. 2, p. 792). Mathews and Leigh

to make the forgiveness of sinful men consistent with the good government of the moral universe as a whole.

7. *How may that system be disproved?*

1st This system regards the ill desert of sin as resulting from its tendency to produce disorder in the universe. But it is an ultimate fact of consciousness that virtue intrinsically deserves well, and that sin intrinsically is *ill desert*. (1.) Every awakened conscience feels this. (2.) God constantly asserts it, Jer. xliv., 4 ; Deut. xxv., 16. (3.) It is implied in all punishment. * For any man to be hung for the good of the community is murder, and for any soul to be damned for the sake of an example would be an infinite outrage.

2d. This system resolves the justice of God into a mode of his universal benevolence, and denies that his perfect righteousness unchangeably demands the punishment of all sin, simply as such, in exact proportion to its ill desert. This is contrary to Scriptures, Heb. i. 13 ; Ps. v., 4, 5 ; Prov. xvii., 15 ; Heb. xii, 29, vi., 10 ; Rom. iii., 5 ; 2 Thess. i., 6, 8.

3d. It represents God as deriving the motives of his acts from the exigencies of his creation, and not from the inherent principles of his own nature, which is derogatory to his sovereignty and independence.

4th. It degrades the infinite work of Christ to the poor level of a governmental adjustment, whereas it was the most glorious exhibition of eternal principles.

5th. This system makes the atonement a theatrical inculcation of principles, which were not truly involved in the case. For if Christ died, not that the sins of his people which he bore should be truly punished in him, but only to manifest to the moral universe that sin must be punished, it is very evident that then sin was not punished in this case, and that Christ's death consequently could not teach the really *intelligent* portion of the universe any such lesson as that sin must be punished, but rather the reverse.

6th. It has no support in Scripture, it is advocated simply on the principles of rational science, so called.

7th. It is absolutely inconsistent with the positive teaching of the Scriptures respecting the work of Christ, Is. liii.; Gal. iii, 13 ; Rom. viii., 3 : 1 Pet. ii., 24 ; **2 Cor. v., 21** ; Heb. ix., 28. For only through this satisfaction to justice was it possible for God to be both just and the justifier of the transgressor, Rom. iii., 26.

8th. If Christ's death is merely designed to produce a moral impression on the universe; if it did not really render satisfaction to divine justice, in what sense can we be said to be united to Christ, to die with him, or to rise again with him? "What is meant by living by faith, of which he is the object? The fact is, this theory changes the whole nature of the gospel; the nature of faith, and of justification, the mode of access to God, our relation to Christ, and the inward exercises of communion with him."—Hodge's Review of Beman on the Atonement.

8. *State the common orthodox doctrine of the atonement.*

The Socinian theory sets forth the sufferings of Christ as designed to produce a moral effect upon the heart of the individual sinner.

The-governmental theory claims that that work was designed to produce a moral effect upon the intelligent universe.

The orthodox view, while embracing both of the above as incidental ends, maintains that the immediate and chief end of Christ's work was to satisfy that essential principle of the divine nature which demands the punishment of sin. This theory embraces the following points:

"1st. Sin for its own sake deserves the wrath and curse of God. 2d. God is disposed, from the very excellence of his nature, to treat his creatures as they deserve. 3d. To satisfy the righteous judgment of God, his Son assumed our nature, was made under the law, fulfilled all righteousness, and bore the punishment of our sins. 4th. By his righteousness, those who believe are constituted righteous, his merit being so imputed to them that they are regarded as righteous in the sight of God."—Hodge's Essays^ p. 131.

9. *In what sense were Christ's sufferings penal, and what is the difference between calamity, chastisement, and punishment?*

Calamity is suffering, which has no relation to sin; chastisement, that suffering which is designed for the improvement of the sufferer; punishment, that which is designed for the satisfaction of justice. The penalty of the law is that suffering which the law demands as a satisfaction to justice for the violation of its commands.—Hodge's Essays, p. 152.

The sufferings of Christ were penal, therefore, because he suffered precisely that kind and degree of evil that divine justice demanded as a complete satisfaction for all the sins of all his people.—Is. liii.; Gal. iii., 13 ; Matt. xx., 28 ; Rom. viii., 3 ; **2 Cor., v., 21**. His sufferings are said to have been penal in distinction, 1st, to calamity or chastisement; 2d, to pecuniary satisfaction.

10. *State the difference between pecuniary and penal satisfaction,*

"1st. In the one case, the demand is upon the thing due; in the other, it is upon the person of the criminal. 2d. In the one, the demand is for an exact equivalent—a piece of money in the hands of a king is of no more value than in the hands of a peasant; in the other case, the demand being upon the person, and for the satisfaction of justice, must be satisfied by very different kinds and degrees of punishment, depending upon the dignity of the person and the conditions of the law. 3d. The creditor is bound to accept the payment of the debt, no matter by whom offered; whereas, in the case of crime, the sovereign is neither bound to provide a substitute, nor to accept one when offered. 4th. Hence penal satisfaction does not *ipso facto* liberate; the acceptance is a matter of free grace and is determined by arrangement or covenant."—Hodge's Essays, pp. 165, 166.

11. *What is the penalty of the law, and in what sense did Christ bear that penalty?*

"The penalty of the law in Scripture is called 'death' which includes every kind of evil inflicted by divine justice in punishment of sin, and inasmuch as Christ suffered such evil, and to such a degree as fully satisfied divine justice, he suffered what the Scriptures call the penalty of the law. It is not any specific kind or degree of suffering. The penalty in the case of the individual sinner involves remorse, despair, and eternal banishment from God; in the case of Christ, they involved none of these. It is not the nature, but the relation of sufferings to the law that gives them their distinctive value." It is not the degree of the sufferings merely, but the dignity of the sufferer also, which determines their sin-atonement efficacy.—Hodge's Essays, p. 152.

Our standards declare that the penalty of the law in the case of Christ includes “the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, the accursed death of the cross, and continuance under the power of death for a time.”

12. *In what sense and on what ground were the sufferings of / Christ equivalent to the sufferings of all his people?*

They were unutterably great, and equivalent to the sufferings of all his people, not in a pecuniary sense as precisely a *quid pro quo*, both in kind and degree; but in a penal sense, as in the judgment of God fully satisfying in their behalf all the penal claims of the law.

The *ground* upon which God judges the sufferings of Christ to be, in a penal sense, equivalent to the sufferings of all his people, is not the nature or degree of that suffering, but the dignity of the sufferer. Those sufferings though endured in a finite nature, were of infinite value, because of the infinite dignity of his person.

13. *In what sense were Christ’s sufferings vicarious, and in what sense was he the substitute of his people?*

A *substitute* is one who acts or suffers in the place of or in behalf of another, and that is, *vicarious* obedience or suffering which is rendered or endured by the substitute in the place of another. In this sense Christ is our substitute, and his sufferings vicarious.—Rom. v., 8 ; Matt, xx , 28 ; 1 Tim. ii, 6 ; 1 Pet. ii, 24; iii., 18; Isa. liii., 6.⁵

The above quotations are just a part of Hodges’ in-depth examination of the Atonement. Spurgeon, as I will go on to show, takes a very different approach. This is important because Spurgeon constantly backtracks upon himself in his desire to make his version of the gospel a gospel that can save all to whom it comes to. It’s up to man to use his ability to accept what God has done and believe what Spurgeon preaches.

Dr. George Ella in his excellent book “The Atonement In Modern Evangelical Thought” explains both truth and error on the doctrine of the Atonement. Among other things he deals with Andrew’s and the Grotain theories of the atonement that Spurgeon is so taken up with. Speaking of verse 21 he says:

2 Corinthians 5:21 clearly teaches that Christ was made sin itself and the Father condemned that sin in His Son’s person. Amartia as a standalone word means ‘sin’ in our Greek New Testament in every single case of its appearance, not a sin-offering. This is also the predominant use in the LXX where its meaning is extended to the burden which sin brings and being smitten with sin like a disease. Christ suffered under this deadly disease. This is the very bones and marrow of the atonement. Christ relieved His elect from the burden, disease, penalty and guilt of sin and took it all on Himself as the Federal Head, Mediator, Substitute and Representative of His people. Albeit amartia is always used of fallen man’s sins but when used in connection with Christ, it is to say that Christ Himself never sinned but was made sin in His Brides stead.

⁵ Outlines of Theology; Rev. A. Alexander Hodge; New York: Robert Carter & Brothers 530 Broadway 1863 Pages 301 to 305

The New Testament writer to the Hebrews clearly distinguishes between the old sin offerings and the one offering to fulfil all former pointers to this act of grace. When Christ offered Himself, He was really and actually, not symbolically, made sin to atone for sin. As the writer says in Hebrews 10:10, was a once for all ‘προσφορᾶς’ offering, not the old often repeated sin-offerings of Leviticus 6:25, 26, and in order to be made such, our sins were actually transferred to Him, and He truly bore the guilt, penalty and shame they brought with them and were made answerable for them. ...⁶

Part 2: Spurgeon on 2 Corinthians 5:21

Example 1

“Christ Made Sin” No. 3203 No date as to when preached. Published in 1910

“For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” — 2 Corinthians 5:21

(Other sermons noted in this one: Nos 141-142; 310; 1124; 1910)

Though I have not been able to find an exact date for when this sermon was first preached it appears to me to be an earlier one.

At the end of his introduction, he says:

You scarcely need that I should explain the words when the sense is so plain. A spotless Savior stands in the room of guilty sinners. God lays upon the spotless Savior the sin of the guilty, so that he becomes, in the expressive language of the text, sin. Then he takes off from the innocent Savior his righteousness and puts that to the account of the once-guilty sinners, so that the sinners become righteousness, — righteousness of the highest and divinest source — the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Of this transaction I would have you think tonight. Think of it adoringly, think of it lovingly; think of it joyfully.

This sounds good as far as it goes but much of what follows shows a false understanding of God, his nature and work of salvation. This immediately begs the question: just what does Spurgeon mean by these fine sounding words? As seen below, in speaking of the justice of God he says, “he would not be unjust, even to indulge his favorite attribute of mercy”. By his very nature God cannot be unjust and he has no “favorite” attribute. Again, God does not simply threaten death but pronounces death as the judgment for his broken law. The question is not of his tarnishing his judgement but of upholding it in all its power and condemnation. The curse of the law in its strict justice must be fulfilled.

⁶ Page 156. Available at <https://go-newfocus.co.uk/>

Looking in more detail then, under his first part “Look at it with devout adoration” he starts this way:

I. When you look at the great doctrine of substitution, you especially who are concerned in it, and can see your sins laid upon Christ, I want you to LOOK AT IT WITH DEVOUT ADORATION.

Lowly and reverently adore the justice of God. **God set his heart upon saving your souls, but he would not be unjust, even to indulge his favorite attribute of mercy.** He had purposed that you should be his; he had set his love upon you, unworthy as you are, before the foundation of the world. Yet, to save you, he would **not tarnish his justice.** He had said, “The soul that sinneth it shall die;” and **he would not recall the word, because it was not too severe, but simply a just and righteous threatening.** Sooner than he would **tarnish his justice,** he bound his only-begotten Son to the pillar, and scourged and bruised him. Sooner than sin should go unpunished, he put that sin upon Christ, and punished it, — oh, how tremendously, and with what terrific strokes! Christ can tell you, but probably, if he did tell you, you could not understand all that God thinks about sin, for God hates it, and loathes it, and must and will punish it; and upon his Son he laid a weight tremendous, incomprehensible, till the griefs of the dying Redeemer utterly surpassed all our imagination or comprehension. Adore, then, the justice of God, and think how you might have had to adore it, not at the foot of the cross, but in the depths of hell! O my soul, if thou hadst had thy deserts, thou wouldst, have been driven from the presence of God! Instead of looking **into those languid⁷ eyes which wept for thee,** thou wouldst have had to look into his face whose eyes are as a flame of fire. Instead of hearing him say, “I have blotted out thy sins,” I might have heard him say, “Depart, thou cursed one, into everlasting fire.” **Will you not pay as much reverence to the justice of God exhibited on the cross as exhibited in hell? Let your reverence be deeper. It will not be that of a slave, or even of a servant; but let it be quite as humble.** Bow low, bless the justice of God, marvel at its severity, adore its unlimited holiness, join with seraphs, who surely at the foot of the cross may sing, as well as before the throne, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.”

To understand Spurgeon’s doctrine of imputation it is of absolute necessity to understand what he said above. First, he sets two attributes of God against each other even making one preeminent over the other. Secondly, he makes the immutable God mutable. To fulfill his own will God must respond to man’s sin. He was at the mercy not only of man but of inherent conflicts within himself. He has to find some way to satisfy his own overwhelming desire to be merciful but at the same time find some way to save face and show the sinfulness of sin. Thirdly, he speaks of our great God-man mediator as being a mere, near dead human. Christ is with “languid” eyes weeping for

⁷ Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1913 Languid 1. Drooping or flagging from exhaustion; indisposed to exertion; without animation; weak; weary; heavy; dull. “Languid, powerless limbs.” Armstrong. Fire their languid souls with Cato's virtue. Addison. 2. Slow in progress; tardy. “No motion so swift or languid.” Bentley.

3. Promoting or indicating weakness or heaviness; as, a languid day.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary: 1. Flagging; drooping; hence, feeble; weak; heavy; dull; indisposed to exertion. The body is languid after excessive action, which exhausts its powers. 2. Slow; as languid motion.

3. Dull; heartless; without animation.

sinner. Please see the definitions of languid from Spurgeon's time in the footnote. The truth is that scripture itself specifically tells us that Christ himself choose exactly when and how to die. He was in absolute full control: see Mark 15:23, Luke 23:46 and John 19:30. Spurgeon is clearly speaking of a false Christ of his own sick imagination. Fourthly, in direct contrast to the scriptures, he explicitly says that our reverence to the justice of God (which is of course inseparable from his very nature), will not be as a slave or a servant, only it should be as humble. The apostles saw themselves as servants (bond slaves), see for example Colossians 3:11, 2 Peter 1:1, Romans 1:1 etc. Should we not follow in their footsteps?

This is so important that I give the following quotes from Hodge's Outlines of Theology for the readers consideration.

24. What is meant by the immutability of God?

By his immutability we mean that it follows from the infinite perfection of God; that he cannot be changed by anything from without himself; and that he will not change from any principle within himself. That as to his essence, his will, and his states of existence, he is the same from eternity to eternity.

Thus he is absolutely immutable in himself. He is also immutable relatively to the creature, in so much as his knowledge, purpose, and truth, as these are conceived by us and are revealed to us, can know neither variableness nor shadow of turning.—James L, 17.

25. Prove from Scripture and reason that God is immutable.

1st. Scripture: Mal. iii., 6; Ps. xxxiii., 11; Isa. xlvi., 10; James i., 17. 2d. Reason: (1.) God is self-existent. As he is caused by none, but causes all, so he can be changed by none, but changes all (2.) He is the absolute being. Neither his existence, nor the manner of it, nor his will, are determined by any necessary relation which they sustain to anything exterior to himself. As he preceded all and caused all, so his sovereign will freely determined the relations which all things are permitted to sustain to him. (3.) He is infinite in duration, and therefore he cannot know succession or change. (4.) He is infinite in all perfection, knowledge, wisdom, righteousness, benevolence, will, power, and therefore cannot change, for nothing can be added to the infinite nor taken from it. Any change would make him either less than infinite before, or less than infinite afterwards.⁸

Later Spurgeon asks his audience to consider the wisdom of God from a very narrow human perspective, He says:

But, ah! at the foot of the cross, wisdom is concentrated; all its rays are concentrated there as with a burning-glass. We see God there reconciling contrary attributes **as they appear to us**. We see God there “glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders,” and yet “forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.” He smites as

⁸ Hodge pages 110-111

though he were cruel; he forgives as though he were not just; he is as generous in passing by sin as if he were not the Judge of all the earth; he is as severe to punish sin as if he were not the tender Father who can press the prodigal to his bosom. Here you see love and justice embrace each other in such a wondrous way that I ask you to imitate the seraphs who, now that they see what they once desired to look into, veil their faces with their wings, adoring the only wise God.

In the previous quotation from Spurgeon there was no indication that he was speaking of God's attributes "as they appear to us". The overreaching impression given in both quotes is that only God's wisdom could find a way to conquer the irreconcilable differences. As I showed above, he does not give the glory to the Lord Jesus that he deserves, rather the opposite. In order to contrast what the scriptures teach to his false teaching I give the following interpretation and reflections by Robert Hawker. With reference to Psalm 85:10-11 (Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Hawker says:

Reader, behold what a meeting is here! All the divine attributes, indeed, all the Persons of the GODHEAD, for man's salvation. All center in the person of CHRIST. Is not JESUS himself emphatically called Mercy, and the mercy promised? Luke 1:72. And is he not Truth itself? John 14:6. And is he not Righteousness, yea, the LORD our righteousness? Jeremiah 23:6; 1 Corinthians 1:30. And is he not the Peace of his people? Isaiah 9:6; Ephesians 2:14, 17; Micah 5:5. And where did ever those seemingly opposite attributes meet, so as to concur and unite for the salvation of sinners, but in the person of JESUS? Mercy inclines to pardon: Truth must stand; and GOD said, the soul that sinneth it shall die. Righteousness admits of no abatement: Peace by the cross satisfies every demand. Was there ever an assemblage of divine qualities so brought together, and so illustriously displayed for man's salvation, as here in the person of our CHRIST? Oh! thou EMMANUEL! Oh, thou LORD our righteousness! did truth spring out of the earth, and didst thou look down from heaven, yea, come down on thy blissful errand to save sinners, to reconcile all things to thyself? Oh give me to see that all the divine perfections are now eternally satisfied by thy wonderful and mysterious meeting; and that JEHOVAH hath now glorified himself, and made thy church eternally and everlastingly happy, in the perfect salvation of thy blood and righteousness.⁹

Then in his reflections on these verses he says:

MY soul, read again and again this blessed Psalm; and so, read and meditate concerning the most glorious things spoken of in it, until thy whole affections are led out in holy rapture, praise, and love, to the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the wonders of redemption so beautifully and largely set forth in it. See, my soul, how all the attributes of JEHOVAH meet to accomplish salvation, by the union of what nothing but divine love could have proposed, and nothing but divine power could have accomplished! See how all the sacred Persons assemble

⁹ Hawker, R. (n.d.). Poor Mans Commentary Old Test. Hawker.

to crown JESUS, King of Glory! Here GOD and man meet in one person, CHRIST. Here law and gospel, justice and mercy, are found harmonizing! Here heaven and earth are brought together, rather than poor man shall be lost! Here a covenant of works and a covenant of grace meet in the wonderful person of JESUS! And here we learn an evident proof, that GOD can be just to his own glory, and yet gracious to a poor sinner's transgressions, in justifying the ungodly.¹⁰

In the middle of the two quotes from Spurgeon given above, he stresses just the physical punishment:

And here, while I ask you to adore, I feel inclined to close the sermon, and to bow myself in silence before the grace of God in Christ Jesus. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" **Behold it in the sweat of blood which stained Gethsemane! Behold it in the scourging which has made the name of Gabbatha a terror! Behold it in "the pains, and groans, and dying strife" of Calvary!** Bow, did I say? Prostrate your spirits now! Lift up your sweetest music, but let your soul feel the deepest abasement as you see this super abounding grace of God in the person of the only-begotten of the Father, making him, to be sin for us who knew no sin!

Later: Without mentioning election, the covenant of redemption or the covenant of grace he concentrates on what man must do to make salvation possible. He tells us: "If God should put away sin, and accept the sinner, he declares that it should only be through that sinner putting his trust in the sacrifice offered once for all by the Lord Jesus Christ upon the tree." However, scripture teaches us that Christ came not to make salvation possible but to actually save his elect: Luke 19:10 "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Spurgeon then says:

When you have thus thought of his justice, his wisdom, and his grace, like a silver thread running through the whole, I want you once more to adore his sovereignty. What sovereignty is this, that angels who fell should have no Redeemer, but that man, insignificant man, being fallen, should find a Savior in heaven's only-begotten! See this sovereignty, too, that this precious blood should come to some of us, and not to others! Millions in this world have never heard of it. Tens of thousands, who have heard of it, have rejected it. Ay, and in this little section of the world's population encompassed now within these walls, **how many there are who have had that precious blood preached in their bearing, and presented to them with loving invitations, only to reject it and despise it!** ... But the part of sovereignty which astonishes me most is that God should have been pleased to make him to be sin for us who knew no sin," **that God should be pleased to ordain salvation by Christ as our Substitute. A great many persons rail at this plan of salvation; but if God has determined it, you and I ought to accept it with delight.** "Behold," saith God, "I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious." The sovereignty of God has determined that no man should be saved except by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. **If any man would be clean, Jehovah declares that he**

¹⁰ Ibid Hawker

must wash in the fountain which Jesus filled from his veins. If God should put away sin, and accept the sinner, he declares that it should only be through that sinner putting his trust in the sacrifice offered once for all by the Lord Jesus Christ upon the tree. Admire this sovereignty, and adore it by yielding to it. Cavil not at it. Down, rebellious will! Hush, thou naughty reason, that would fain ask, “Why?” and “Wherefore! Is there no other method?” Yield, my heart! “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.”

Even while speaking of God’s sovereignty, he debases God and elevates fallen man’s powers. Man must yield before God can act. As I shall show this is a constant theme to Spurgeon.

Under point II, “Look Lovingly” This time speaking of the elect, he again says something that sounds correct, **but what meaning does he put behind these words? Does he mean actual and judicial imputation?** With regard to justice, he does seem to imply this below (“There was before the bar of justice an **absolute** transfer made of guilt from his elect to himself.”)

Do not fritter that away by putting in the word “offering”, and saying “sin-offering.” The word stands in apposition — what if I say opposition? — to the word “righteousness” in the other part of the text. **He made him to be as much sin as he makes us to be righteousness; that is to say he makes him to be sin by imputation, as he makes us to be righteousness by imputation.** On him, who never was a sinner who never could be a sinner, our sin was laid. Consider how his holy soul must have shrunk back from being made sin, and yet, I pray you, do not fritter away the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” He bore our transgressions and carried our sins in his own body on the tree. **There was before the bar of justice an absolute transfer made of guilt from his elect to himself.** There he was made sin for us, though he knew no sin personally, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” As you think of his pure, immaculate nature, and perfect life, love him as you see him bearing the burden of sins not his own, for which he came to atone.

Coming back to the question of actual and judicial imputation; what does his immediately following discussion reveal? It puts meat on the bones so to speak. Here is what he goes on to say:

Will not your love be excited when you think of *the difficulty of this imputation?*¹¹ “He hath made him to be sin.” None but God could have put sin upon Christ. It is well said that there is no lifting of sin from one person to another. There is no such thing as far as we are concerned; but things which are impossible with man are possible with God. Do you know what it means for Christ to be made sin? **You do not, but you can form some guess of what it involves;** for, when he was made sin, **God treated him as if he had been a sinner,** which he never was, and never could be. God left him as he would have left a sinner, till he cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” God smote him as he would have smitten a sinner, till his soul was “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” **That which was**

¹¹ Spurgeon own emphasis.

due from his people for sin, or an equivalent to that, was literally exacted at the hands of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was made a debtor for our debts, and he paid them. You **may guess** what it was to be a debtor for us by the smart which it cost to discharge our liabilities. He that is a surety shall smart for it, and Jesus found that proverb true. When justice came to smite the sinner, it found him in the sinner's place, and smote him without relenting, laying to the full the whole weight upon him which had otherwise crushed all mankind forever into the lowmest hell. Let us love Jesus as we think he endured all this.

The quote above and the one below go straight to the heart to the “actual” part of “actual and judicial” question I posed above. Remember the bible, including the verse under consideration teaches us that Christ bore the actual guilt and punishment that was his elects. It was a full redemption, the actual price for his elect and for them alone was paid.

First then, let's look at the perplexing way Spurgeon describes the sin bearing of our Lord Jesus Christ in the quote above. He says: “you can form some guess of what it involves” “That which was due from his people for sin, or an **equivalent** to that, was **literally** exacted at the hands of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” He tells us twice that we can only guess at what Christ did to remove sin: “you can form some **guess** of what it involves” and “**may guess** what it was to be a debtor for us” So to Spurgeon imputation for sin can be something equivalent to the real penalty while at the same time be something literal but all this leaves us guessing what was actually paid. In fact, according to Spurgeon it's something that cannot be known. Add to these the deliberately vague and general terms he uses. To whatever extent he can he pushes the idea that all men are savable if only they will choose to obey. Gods' choice in election is left out.

Dealing with the same subject Spurgeon goes on in in Part III of his sermon to say specifically that the imputation of the sins of those for whom Christ suffered was not actual but only figurative (in its effects only). He says:

III. And now, let us **VIEW THE GLORIOUS FACT OF SUBSTITUTION JOYFULLY.** And here I will commence with the observation that, till our sin as a believer is gone, and till, as a believer, Christ's righteousness is at present your glorious dress, your salvation is in no sense realized by yourselves. It is not dependent upon your frames and feelings. Your sins are not put away through your repentance. That repentance becomes to you the token of the pardon of sin; but the true cleansing is found, not in the eyes of the penitent but in **the wounds** of Jesus. **Your sins were virtually^{12, 13} discharged upon the accursed tree.** You stand this day accepted, not for anything you are, or can be, or shall be, but entirely and wholly through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. We cannot state this truth, it seems to me, too boldly. **This is the very doctrine of the Reformation,** —

¹² Webster's 1828 Dictionary: VIR'TUALLY, adv. In efficacy or effect only; by means of some virtue or influence, or the instrumentality of something else. Thus the sun is virtually on earth by its light and heat. The citizens of an elective government are virtually present in the legislature by their representatives. A man may virtually agree to a proposition by silence or withholding objections.

¹³ Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1913: Vir''tu·al·ly, adv. In a virtual manner; in efficacy or effect only, and not actually; to all intents and purposes; practically

justification by faith, or rather **the basic doctrine upon which it rests**; and I am persuaded the more plainly it is preached the better, for it is the gospel of salvation to a lost and ruined world.

Spurgeon was a man endowed with many gifts and abilities. His vocabulary and power of expression and persuasion can hardly be surpassed. In other words, he chose his words with great care, knowing full well what they meant. In the most important sentence from the quote above he used the word “virtually” because that is exactly how he believed God dealt with our sins. I have given two dictionary references from Spurgeon’s time for the meaning of ‘virtually’. Both say the same thing only in very slightly different ways: “in efficacy or effect only, and not actually” He boldly says that this virtual atonement is, “This is the very doctrine of the Reformation, — justification by faith, or rather the basic doctrine upon which it rests; and I am persuaded the more plainly it is preached the better.” His doctrine as he has preached it is NOT the doctrine of the Reformation. Knowing this, he does not preach in plain (manifest) doctrine, but only reveals his false version of the truth in a few well-hidden words.

I can now answer the question I raised under my part II above where I said:

he again says something that sounds correct, but what meaning does he put behind these words? **Does he mean actual and judicial?** With regard to justice, he does seem to imply this below (“There was before the bar of justice an absolute transfer made of guilt from his elect to himself.”)

Because of his “virtual” atonement Spurgeon denies both the judicial and actual work of Christ in the atonement which of necessity includes the imputation of sin and righteousness. To him, Christ did not fully, or even really fall under the just demands of the God’s holy law. God, Spurgeon says, accepted something less than absolute justice and the full demands of the law. Indeed, what Christ did is so nebulous we are told that we have to “guess” at what was actually done. As evidenced in this sermon and as will be shown from other sermons, Spurgeon’s doctrine of the imputation of our sins to Christ has no law fulfilling, wrath abating value at all. Sinners believing this false gospel will only be saved if the Holy Spirit reveals something of the true gospel to them.

Imputation of course, involves both the transfer of our sin and debt to Christ and his righteousness, from his active and passive obedience, to his elect. Spurgeon deals directly with the second half of his chosen verse (“that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”) in a rather bizarre way. First because he devotes almost no space or time in his sermon to this part of the verse. Secondly, just as he puts his emphasis on what man must do to be saved (his duty or duty faith) he ignores the Holy Spirit’s witness within a true believer. Instead of that he again stresses what man must do: “I trust you will endeavor to realize this position of yourselves ...” etc.

Here is this part of his sermon in full taken from Part II:

Beloved in the Lord, there is one more string of your harp I would like to touch, and it is the thought of what you now are, which the text speaks of. You are made the righteousness of God in Christ. God sees no sin in you, believer. He has put your sin, or that which was yours, to the account of Christ, and you are innocent

before him. Moreover, he sees you to be righteous. You are not perfectly righteous; the work of his Spirit in you is incomplete as yet; but he looks upon you, not as you are in yourselves, but as you are in Christ Jesus, and you are “accepted in the Beloved;” you are in his sight without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. What Jesus did is set to your account. He sees his Son in you, and then he loves you as he loves his Son. He has put you into union with his Son, and you are now him with Christ in God. **I trust you will endeavor to realize this position of yourselves as made the righteousness of God in Christ, and when you do, surely you will love the Savior who has done all this for you,** undeserving, helpless, dying, guilty mortals. Oh, that the Lord Jesus would now send fire into all your souls, and make you love him, for, surely, if you have but the sense of what he has done, and how he did it, and what it cost him to do it, and who he is that has done it, and who you were for whom he has done it, you will surely say, “Oh, for a thousand hearts that I may love thee as I would, and a thousand tongues that I may praise thee as I should!”

Example 2

“Substitution” No 141 and 142 Sunday morning July 19th, 1857, Music Hall Royal Surrey Gardens¹⁴

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” — 2 Corinthians 5:21

Whatever the actual date of the first sermon above was, this combined sermon is from very early on in his ministry. His doctrine is the same, but it is craftily hidden from his audience. Like ‘Where’s Waldo’ and similar artwork, once you see it you can’t miss it. However, it takes varying degrees of difficulty to see it the first time. Knowing this then the way Spurgeon laid out the points of this sermon become very important to understand his doctrine. Before taking each in more detail I’m listing a summary here:

Introduction: God in nature first and the doctrine of salvation called “the great philosophy of salvation,”

Part 1 heading: The doctrine. **Leaving out the Holy Spirit** but including God, Christ and the sinner (as shown below Paul is addressing the elect at Corinth and not sinners in general).

Part 1 Point 1: Stressing the sovereignty of God at the expense of God’s own attributes. In other words, God as an absolute dictator.

¹⁴ It’s very important to know some facts about the music hall where Spurgeon preached this sermon. It was built the year before. It could easily hold more than 10,000 people. It is highly probable that Spurgeon was preaching to many thousands who were unsaved. Many may have never heard a ‘gospel’ sermon before.

Part 1 Point 2: A false view of Jesus Christ presented

Part 1 Point 3: The sinner, presented so that each person present is part of the “we” in 2 Corinthians 5:21

Part 1 Final point: Upon false doctrines above he has now “finished the explanation of the text” he asks those present to: “remember the consequences of this great substitution.”

Part 2: In Arminian fashion he applies 2 Corinthians 5:20 (“Now, then, we are ambassadors for God, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God, for “) to all those present.

Part 3: Briefly but falsely encouraging the believer. (God as the accuser)

Part I Introduction

Oddly and with what I can only presume is meant to mollify his audience, he starts with an odd description of what he sees as a display of common grace or common love in fallen nature. He says for example:

He hath not given us broad acres overspread with flowers, for they were not needed in such abundance, but he hath spread the fields with corn, that thus the absolute necessities of life might be supplied. We needed most of the thoughts of his providence; and he hath quickened our industry, so that God’s providential care may be read as we ride along the roads on every side.

Lowering the great truths of the Bible including Jesus Christ at the center of all, he turns to the Bible saying:

Now, God’s book of grace is just like his book of nature; it is his thoughts written out. This great book, the Bible, this most precious volume is the heart of God made legible; it is the gold of God’s love beaten out into leaf gold, so that therewith our thoughts might be plated, and we also might have golden, good, and holy thoughts concerning him. And you will mark that, as in nature so in grace, the most necessary is the most prominent.

The apostle Paul in the clearest presentation of the Gospel in his letter to the Romans teaches the opposite as being a fundamental starting point. He declares both Jew and Gentile under the condemnation of a broken law. This is of course that teaching of the Bible from cover to cover.

Spurgeon expands on thoughts about salvation saying:

Here and there a bed of flowers, but broad acres of living corn of the gospel of the grace of God. You must excuse me, then, if I very frequently dwell on the whole

topic of salvation. But last Sabbath I brought you one stock of this wheat, in the fashion of Christ's promise, which saith, "He that calleth on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." And then I sought to show how men might be saved. I bring you now another shock cut down in the self-same field, teaching you the great philosophy¹⁵ of salvation, the hidden mystery, the great secret, the wonderful discovery which is brought to light by the gospel; how God is just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly.

With all this he is directing his subjects' minds towards his own explanation of the gospel and particularly of substitution. That he is funneling them down a particular path to a particular end becomes increasingly obvious.

Part 1 heading:

Leaving out the Holy Spirit and to all practical purposes the trinity he says:

I. First, THE DOCTRINE. There are three people mentioned here. "He (that is God) hath made him (that is Christ) who knew no sin, **to be sin for us (sinners) that we** might be made the righteousness of God in him." Before we can understand the plan of salvation, it is necessary for us to know something about the three people, and, certainly, unless we understand them in some measure, salvation is to us impossible.

This supposed stanch Calvinist takes the Arminian view of the often-quoted passages from chapter 15. Paul is writing to the Church at Corinth and the surrounding area, the elect who have been saved. He says this clearly in Chapter 1, verse 1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:" Ignoring this fact Spurgeon strives to give the "us" and "we" the widest possible range "us (sinners)" while in actual fact it is only to the elect.

Notice also, how he speaks of God only as a person and Christ as a separate person. All this is seeking to bring God down to man's level.

Part 1 Point 1: What needs to be known about God

Continuing in this vein he explicitly defines God as having **just** three "great" attributes. These he says are sovereignty, "**infinite** justice" and a God of grace (graciousness). Limiting God in this way is flat out heresy deserving condemnation. Not content with his handywork Spurgeon, continues to set Gods justice and mercy as being opposed to each other! To him only his false view of God's sovereignty can reconcile the conflict he sees in God himself. I realize that my reader may be shocked or even offended by what I just said. However, these are not my ideas, I am not putting words into Spurgeon's mouth. All I wish to do is to let Spurgeon speak for himself so that the reader can see these things in a clear and balanced way. Also, as I showed in the previous

¹⁵ This term seems odd, but I believe he is using it as a synonym of theology. It's use may have caused a misunderstanding to some of his audience.

sermon above this is how Spurgeon views God. Remember he said: “God set his heart upon saving your souls, but **he would not be unjust, even to indulge his favorite attribute of mercy.**

Before verifying what Spurgeon said, I first want to review several scriptures in which God defines himself and then secondly briefly show some of God’s attributes from A.A. Hodge’s Out Lines of Theology. First then some scriptures.

4And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. **5And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. 8And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. 9**And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance. 10And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a **terrible** thing that I will do with thee.¹⁶

Looking over these verses we can just on the surface, as it were, see that Gods mercy and justice is in perfect harmony with each other. Among all the other attributes of God (what has been revealed in the Bible to us about God) these should lead us to a holy fear of God. Note Moses instant reverence and fear of God. The English word translated as “terrible” in the King James bible is the Hebrew word yr’ means fear, be afraid, fear God; be feared, be honored; terrible, dreaded and awesome.

Earlier in Exodus God tells us that he is a jealous God.¹⁷

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: **for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Among other passages, in Isaiah 42 God goes into more details of his nature including this attribute.

¹⁶ Exodus 34:4-10

¹⁷ Exodus 20:4,5, 6

5Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: 6I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. **8I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.** 9Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. 10Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. 11Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.

God wrath is upon all who take away his glory, either by giving it to man or to any created thing as well as making any of his attributes into something false. One of the reasons for the delay in Lord Jesus return to judge the world is that God's wrath against human sin is not full yet. As Paul so clearly tells us in Romans 9 God is longsuffering to fully reveal his wrath:

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 **What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:** 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Secondly a few words from A.A. Hodge.¹⁸ He is dealing in this section with the attributes of God. There are various books available today with deal with this subject. I am not even scratching the surface here, only dealing with a few points to show the difference between what Spurgeon teaches and what the Bible has actually reveled to us.

THE WILL OF GOD.

40. What is meant by the will of God?

¹⁸ I frequently use this particular book because Spurgeon himself used it for his students. I am quoting from the 1866 edition.

The will of God is the infinitely and eternally wise, powerful, and righteous essence of God willing. In our conception it is that attribute of the Deity to which we refer his purposes and decrees as their principle.

41. In what sense is the will of God said to be free, and in what sense necessary?

The will of God is the wise, powerful, and righteous essence of God willing. His will, therefore, in every act is certainly and yet most freely both wise and righteous. The liberty of indifference is evidently foreign to his nature, because the perfection of wisdom is to choose the most wisely, and the perfection of righteousness is to choose the most righteously.

On the other hand, the will of God is from eternity absolutely independent of all his creatures and all their actions.¹⁹

Here it is clearly stated that God is eternally and absolutely independent of what Adam or any other human does or does not do. He is the actor but is never acted upon. This is essential to his sovereignty. It's also shows that God by his very essence and attributes has some limitations: he cannot be unjust, he cannot sin, he cannot condone sin, he cannot lie etc.

Returning to Spurgeon's sermon and what he says on God being sovereign:

The God of Scripture is a sovereign God; that is, he is a God who has **absolute authority, and absolute power to do exactly as he pleaseth. Over the head of God there is no law, upon his arm there is no necessity**; he knoweth no rule but his own free and mighty will. **And though he cannot be unjust, and cannot do anything but good, yet is his nature absolutely free; for goodness is the freedom of God's nature.**

As I stated above, I am not putting words in Spurgeon's mouth. This is how he began his statements about God being sovereign. Taking just one phrase to start with: "Over the head of God there is no law, ..." If plain words have any meaning at all, this means that God's law, as in Exodus, Psalm 119, Jesus' teaching in Matthew and all the rest of the Bible is for mankind only. Rather than being a blessed reflection of our being made in the image of God it's all just an arbitrary moral standard of what God requires of men. God is above it all! This concept is very important to Spurgeon as it leaves God free to ignore the law and justify men to appease his mercy by a lower standard.

Keeping in mind that Spurgeon has defined God as having only three "great" attributes (sovereignty, infinite justice, and graciousness (a God of grace)) it no surprise that he singles out the latter two of these "great" attributes while explaining the former. It's also no wonder that he must find some way to limit God while professing the opposite. He does this in the peculiar sentence: "And though he cannot be unjust, and cannot do anything but good, yet is his nature absolutely free; for goodness is the freedom of God's nature."

¹⁹ Pages 116-117

He then goes on to give some biblical teaching about God's sovereignty over men: "And if any of them resent his acts, he saith unto them: — 'Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?'" Sadly, he later portrays God as longing to forgive man's sin but having first to find a way to be just and merciful. In other words, as I will show God had to react to man's actions which means in effect that God is not sovereign.

Having backed himself into something of a conner he makes this statement: "The monarchy of this world, is no constitutional and limited monarchy; **it is not tyrannical**, but it is **absolutely** in the hands of an all-wise God. The fact that he must excuse God from being a dictator or tyrant shows just how above his own law God is to Spurgeon.

While starting in of the "infinite justice" of God he does exactly what I mentioned above. He makes God's sovereignty, as he explained it to be the basis of God's infinite justice in Christ's substitutionary work on the cross. He says:

But, again, the God who is here mentioned, is a **God of infinite justice. That he is a sovereign God, I prove from the words, that he hath made Christ to be sin. He could not have done it if he had not been sovereign.** That he is a just God, I infer from my text; seeing that the way of salvation is a great plan of satisfying justice. And we now declare that the God of Holy Scripture is a God of inflexible justice; he is not the God whom some of you adore.

To Spurgeon it was not Christ's taking on the actual sins of his elect and perfect and complete fulfilling of the Law but at act of God above the law that made Christ sin. It centers around the "sufferings of Christ". This is why he had to define God's sovereignty in the way he chose. This is also why a little later, quoting one of scriptures referenced above, he says:

The God of Scripture is one who is inflexibly severe in justice, and will by no means clear the guilty. "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power; and will not at all acquit the wicked." The God of Scripture is a ruler, who, when his subject's rebel, marks their crime, and never forgives them until he has punished it, either upon them, or upon their substitute. He is not like the god of some sectaries, who believe in a god without an atonement, with only some little show upon the cross, which was not, as they say, **a real suffering of sin.**

At the end of his brief treatment of God's "infinite justice" he says:

The God of the Bible is as severe as if he were unmerciful, and as just as if he were not gracious; and yet he is as gracious **and as merciful as if he were not just — yea, more so.**

Here Spurgeon makes another blasphemous statement about God. He tells us plainly that God's justice is infinite. The first three definitions of the word infinite in the online Merriam-Webster dictionary are:

1 : extending indefinitely : ENDLESS

infinite space

2: immeasurably or inconceivably great or extensive : INEXHAUSTIBLE

infinite patience

3: subject to no limitation or external determination

After applying this adjective to God's justice, he tells us that God's mercy is beyond infinite. For this to be true, which it cannot be, God's justice would in some way be inferior to God's mercy. This denies the perfection of God, making mercy an idol.

He concludes this point (part 1, point 1) again raising one attribute above others in order to secure his personal opinions. He says:

And one more thought here concerning God, or else we cannot establish our discourse upon a sure basis. The God who is here means, is a God of grace: think not that I am now contradicting myself. The God who is inflexibly severe, and never pardons sin without punishment, is yet a God of illimitable love. **Although as a Ruler he will chastise, yet, as the Father God, he loveth to bestow his blessing. "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth; but had rather that he should turn unto me and live."** God is love in its highest degree. **He is love rendered more than love.** Love is not God, but God is love; he is full of grace, he is the plenitude of mercy, — he delighteth in mercy. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are his thoughts of love above our thoughts of despair; and his ways of grace above our ways of fear. This God, in whom these three great attributes harmonize — illimitable sovereignty, inflexible justice, and unfathomable grace — these three make up the main attributes of the one God of heaven and earth whom Christians worship. It is this God, before whom we must appear; it is he who has made Christ to be sin for us, though he knew no sin

Much could be said about these closing words to point 1, but I will concentrate on the two bolded parts above. Taking the latter first he says, "He is love rendered more than love." This is not only meaningless, but it is again blasphemous. Scripture clearly defines what God being love means. In 1 John 4:7-21 it is stated twice that "God is love". The context makes it obvious what the apostle John means by these statements. I do not think it could be put in clearer terms than those of William Hawker in his comments on this section of scripture. In part he says:

I include all these under one reading, that in a Poor Man's Commentary I may not trespass. The two great points here dwelt upon are, first, the love of GOD to his people. And, secondly, our love to him, and to each other, the members of CHRIST'S body the Church, as flowing from it GOD'S love the cause. Our love the effect. A word or two I would beg to offer upon each.

And, first. GOD'S love to the Church in CHRIST. In which is included the love of the whole Persons of the GODHEAD. Put as the source is in GOD, and wholly resulting from himself; it is impossible to trace it but in the effects. What the

Apostle here saith, of our ignorance of GOD, is very highly in proof. No man hath seen GOD at any time. And how then shall he describe the source of GOD'S love? Indeed, it is never attempted to be shewn, but by effects. In this was manifested the love of GOD. In what? He gave his only begotten SON. Herein is love. Not that we loved him; but that he loved us. So that the first thing laid down for our contemplation, is the love of GOD. GOD is love. And, from all eternity, he hath been giving out demonstrations of that love, in the streams and effects of it CHRIST is the first edition of that love: and all the subsequent works are with him, and in him, and through him, and by him. Our Adam-fall gave occasion for the greater display of that love. But CHRIST and his Church were one in the womb of GOD'S love, before the Adam- fall, or even the foundation of the earth was laid.

There are two verses in scripture, one in the Old Testament, and the other in the New, which, if read together, will shew more of this love of GOD in its antiquity and eternity, and in all its bearings through time and eternity, than all the wisdom of men in all ages of the world can come up to in description, if they were to unite together, to furnish volumes for this purpose. The first is Jeremiah 31:3. The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, Saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee: or as the margin renders it therefore have I extended loving kindness unto thee. Here, we have GOD himself declaring, that his love to the Church hath been from everlasting; that is as GOD himself. For his love, as is himself, is everlasting. No space could have been before either; for in that case it could not be said to have been from everlasting. So that GOD himself, and his love to the Church, are expressed by the same words, from everlasting. The second verse is in Ephesians 2:7. That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through CHRIST JESUS. Here we have declared, the ultimate object of that love; and which proves, that as it began from everlasting, so it hath ran through, and still continues to run through, the whole time-state of the church, to everlasting; like rivers, arising out of the ocean, and running back into it again, everlastingly connected, and for ever flowing. By uniting these glorious scriptures in one view, they for a complete circle, to shew, that GOD'S love to the Church in CHRIST from everlasting, hath been one and the same; and his first design, and last execution, is to shew forth that love, or, as it is here called, the exceeding riches of his grace, in that glory resulting from that love, into which the Church is to be brought, and continue in everlastingly. Well might the Apostle say: Herein is love! for all other, in comparison, is nothing!

Secondly. Our love to GOD in CHRIST, and to the Church on CHRIST'S account. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that all that we can call love or affection in us, either to GOD or his people, are but the mere effects from him, and his love to us as the cause. We love him, (saith the Apostle in this very scripture,) because he first loved us²⁰.

²⁰ Hawker, R. (n.d.). Poor Mans Commentary New Test. Hawker.

This is the classic Calvinist understanding of the love of God or God being love. Spurgeon either ignores or rejects this view to take his own unique viewpoint. Though perhaps not always in exact words but definitely in spirit, he wants to present a God who loves more than just the elect.

Secondly, this can be seen, in his use of Ezekiel 18:23 and the parallel passage in 33:11: “As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth; but had rather that he should turn unto me and live.” Very often when there is a verse or passage that can have an Arminian interpretation like the one above, he takes that approach rather than the straightforward Calvinist doctrines of grace meaning. He separated God into two parts: “**Although as a Ruler he will chastise, yet, as the Father God, he loveth** to bestow his blessing. “As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth; but had rather that he should turn unto me and live.” God is love in its highest degree. **He is love rendered more than love:**” This is again plain heresy. For reference here is an example of the scriptural understanding of these passages:

When the LORD puts the question, Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, and not that he should return from his ways and live? We cannot suppose that the sense is, the LORD hath no pleasure in securing the honour and glory of His holy name, by the destruction of sin and evil. This cannot be the case, for all the parts of scripture prove the reverse. But the sense is, that while sinners, whose hearts are savingly turned by grace to the LORD, are his glory and delight, the incorrigible and unreclaimed, when punished, are fearful monuments of his justice. So, in like manner, when it is said, when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. This cannot be said of a righteous man in CHRIST; and, strictly and properly speaking, there can be none righteous but in CHRIST; and from this righteousness he cannot turn, neither can it be lost, for the LORD hath said, My salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Isaiah 51:6. Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. Isaiah 45:17. But the sense is, when the moral man and one that counteth himself righteous, turneth from it, as that he will sooner or later, and lose all his vain confidence and proud boasting, when such an one falls into trespasses, he hath no resource in CHRIST, no hope of salvation in his blood and righteousness; and therefore dies in his iniquity, unwashed, unregenerated, unrenewed in the spirit of his mind. This point is more plainly shown in the parallel passage, Ezekiel 33:13. where the LORD denoteth this self-righteousness a trusting to it; so that, by comparing both together, the reader may be able, under divine teaching, to discern the poor, imperfect, law righteousness of men, which never did, nor ever will save a soul, and that rich and all-perfect gospel righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, which becomes the believer's most complete and justifying robe of salvation before the LORD JEHOVAH, in grace here, and glory forever. Isaiah 45:24, 25.²¹

Part 1 Point 2: The second person the Son of God

²¹ Hawker, R. (n.d.). Poor Mans Commentary Old Test. Hawker.

On this subject, Spurgeon takes little time and there is only one part that I want to draw the readers' attention to. Because of his false view of the atonement and substitution he needs to portray Christ in a false way. Forgetting or ignoring the fact that as both God and man Christ knew God's law perfectly, he says:

Not God humanized, not man Deified; but God, purely, essentially God; man, purely man; man, not more than man; God, not less than God, — the two standing in a sacred union together, the God-Man. **Of this God in Christ, our text says that he knew no sin. It does not say that he did not sin; that we know: but it says more than that; he did not know sin; he knew not what sin was. He saw it in others, but he did not know it by experience. He was a perfect stranger to it.** It is not barely said that he did not take sin into his heart; but, he did not know it. It was no acquaintance of his. He was the acquaintance of grief; but he was not the acquaintance of sin.

This detracts from Christ and takes away some of his glory. I quoted from Dr. John Gill on this passage at the beginning of this essay. To refresh the readers memory, here is what he said on Christ "who knew no sin"

... it was he that made his soul an offering for sin, and delivered up into the hands of Justice and to die, and that for us. in our room and stead, to bear the punishment of sin, and make satisfaction and atonement for[...]; of which he was capable, and for which he was greatly qualified: **for he knew no sin; which can't be understood of pure absolute ignorance of sin; for this can't agree with him, neither as God, nor as Mediator; he full well knew the nature of sin, as it is a transgression of God's law; he knows the original of sin, the corrupt heart of man, and the desperate wickedness of that; he knows the demerit, and the sad consequences of it; he knows, and he takes notice of too, the sins of his own people; and he knows the sins of all wicked men, and will bring them all into judgment, convince of them, and condemn for them: but he knew no sin so as to approve of it, and like it; he hates, abhors, and detest it; he never was conscious of any sin to himself; he never knew anything of this kind by, and in himself[...];** nor did he ever commit any, nor was any ever to and in him, by men or devils, though diligently sought for. This is mentioned, partly that we may better understand in what sense he was made sin, or a sinner, which could be only by the imputation of the sins of others, since he had no sin of his own; and partly to shew that he was a very fit person to bear and take away the sins of men, to become a sacrifice for them, seeing he was the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish,

Part 1 Point 3: The third person

Instead of biblically recognizing the elect alone as the subject of this verse Spurgeon applies it in two different ways at the same time. First to everyone:

3. Now I have to introduce the third person. We will not go far for him. The third person is the sinner. And where is he? Will you turn your eyes within you, and look for him, each one of you? He is not very far from you.

He then immediately starts to narrow this down to certain people only. Desiring them to decide for Christ he concludes this brief section saying:

Thou hast broken the commandments of God, thou hast despised God's love, thou hast trampled on his grace, thou hast gone on hitherto until now, the arrow of the Lord is drinking up thy spirit; God hath made thee tremble, he hath made thee to confess thy guilt and thy transgression. Hear me, then, **if your convictions are the work of God's Spirit, you are the person intended in the text**, when it says, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we" — that is you — "might be made the righteousness of God in him."

This is a good example of his seeking to appeal to both his Arminian and Calvinistic sides.

Part 2: "What is the use of this doctrine?"

In part two, which is rather long, he immediately leaves verse 5:21 and switches to 2 Corinthians 5:20, the previous verse. He hides from his audience the fact that the two verses are intimately connected as well as the previous verses. As the Arminians do he starts off by applying verse 20 to his whole audience (all who hear the gospel). He tells them:

Turn to the Scriptures and you will see. "Now, then, we are ambassadors for God, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, for " — **here is our grand argument** — "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin." Men and brethren, I am about to pray to you; I am about to beseech and exhort you; may the Spirit of God help me to do it with all the earnestness which becomes me. You and I shall face each other soon before the bar of the great judge, and I shall be responsible in the day of account for all I preach to you; not for my style or talent, or want of talent, **I shall only be responsible for my earnestness and zeal in this matter. And now, before God, I entreat you most earnestly to be reconciled to him, you are by nature at enmity with God; you hate him, you neglect him, your enmity shows itself in various ways. I beseech you now be reconciled to God.**

This entreaty, in these words, are applied to all present "Men and brethren," Equally certain is the fact the God has done all he can: he must wait now for man to react. Spurgeon has done all he can by forcing the issue with all his might. Not content he goes even further into heresy in the next paragraph saying:

I beseech thee be reconciled to God, because in this there is proof that God is loving you. Thou thinkest God to be a God of wrath. Would he have given his own Son to

be punished if he had hated thee? Sinner if God had anything but thoughts of love towards thee, I ask, would he have given up his Son to hang upon the cross? Think not my God a tyrant; **think him not a wrathful God**, destitute of mercy. His Son, torn from his bosom and given up to die, is the best proof of his love. Oh, sinner, I need not blame thee if thou didst hate thy enemy, but I must blame thee, call thee mad, if thou dost hate thy friend. Oh, I need not wonder if thou wouldst not be reconciled to one who would not be reconciled to thee; but inasmuch as thou wilt not by nature be reconciled to the God who gave his own Son to die, I must marvel at the stupidity into which thine evil nature hath hurried thee. God is love; wilt thou be unreconciled to love? God is grace; wilt thou be unreconciled to grace.

Here we see even more clearly the fruit of Spurgeon's false view of imputation. He is speaking to sinners, who by his own statements are not saved. He is telling them God loves them, God wrath is not upon them, God is only love to them. As is his custom he starts limiting his appeal to the "woken sinner", as I said before the very thing hyper Calvinists are accused of doing²². He, however, fully realizes this is pure Arminianism and that he is hiding behind a false idea of what Calvinism is for he say a little later:

I cannot plead as I could wish. Oh! If I could, I would plead with my heart, with my eyes, and my lips, **that I might lead you to the Savior. You need not rail at me and call this an Arminian style of preaching; I care not for your opinion, this style is Scriptural.** "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Poor brokenhearted sinner, God is as much preaching to you this morning, and bidding you be reconciled, as if he stood here himself in his own person; and though I be a mean and puny man by whom he speaketh, **he speaketh now as much as if it were by the voice of angels, "Be reconciled to God." Come, friend, turn not thine eye and head away from me; but give me thine hand and lend me thine heart whilst I weep over thine hand and cry over thine heart, and beseech thee not to despise thine own mercy, not to be a suicide to thine own soul, not to damn thyself.** Now that God has awakened thee to feel that thou art an enemy, I beseech thee now to be his friend.

By ignoring the context of his chosen verses Spurgeon has God weeping and beseeching sinners to decide to accept the salvation Christ accomplished. This is not only in Arminian style it is pure Arminianism. A system of doctrine condemned by the scriptures as a false gospel.

Part 3: His sweet enjoyment to the believer

This, the last part of his sermon is very short. The fact, however, that his doctrine of imputation is erroneous becomes even more obvious. He says:

Ah, when thou comest to die, **thou shalt challenge God; for thou shalt say, "My God, thou canst not condemn me,** for thou hast condemned Christ for me, thou hast punished Christ in my stead. 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died,

²² In most cases this is a totally false attack on those who hold to the doctrines of grace.

yea, rather, that is risen again, who also sitteth on the right hand of God and maketh intercession for us:”

This makes God the accuser and lays necessity upon the dying believer to show that he was once already pardoned. The passage in context, however, shows the opposite: Romans 8:31-37 reads as follows:

31What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

To Spurgeon the atonement and all that makes it such, including imputation and substitution were an act of God above the law. Something that was not an exact fulfillment of the law but was by a sovereign act of God taken as sufficient punishment. The believer has to remind God of God's own sovereign act because it was a make-believe satisfaction only.

The eminent Dr. George M. Ella comes very near to Spurgeon's doctrine when speaking about the Moral Government theory of Atonement. Under the heading "Christ, a benevolent probation office" he says:

Rather than view Christ as the One who bore our exact penalty for breaking an absolute law, Grotius sees Him as a Probation Officer who gives God an opportunity of displaying benevolence to His Adam-like probationers. Christ defense on behalf of the probationers is not what He has done to settle the score for this in the vicarious penal and jurat²³ sense of ransom and remission. It is a plea for a removal of man's obligations through God's benevolent discretion. God on his part, does not demand that the whole law, spirit, and letter, be kept in any way by anyone but especially not His Son. He simply requires some symbolic act or token should be performed in order to demonstrate that man's obligations have been cancelled. This token demonstration is claimed by Grotius as being a true satisfaction. He sees no point in Christ's putting Himself under the Law on our behalf, this both nulling and establishing the law. Indeed, He lifts the entire doctrine of the atonement out of its spiritual, theological and moral philosophy and governmental speculation, shunning the revealed Word. Grotius can thus sum up the atonement by saying "There is no unconditional absolute; there is no payment of the exact debt; there is no substitution of a new obligation; but there is a

²³ a certificate added to an affidavit stating when, before whom, and where it was made

remission in consequence of a precedent satisfaction.” This satisfaction was merely a nominal or token one, in Grotius’ view, though he was quick to add that there was no inherent necessity for God to supply this, but he thought it was the best way to make sure that his administration was shown to be unquestionable. The main thrust of Grotius’ theology is, however, that remission of sin comes via relaxing the law. Thus, Christ’s death was in no way retributive but, in accordance with Socinianism, merely exemplary²⁴.

Spurgeon does see a retributive aspect in the atonement by Christ actually being punished. However, whatever he means by this is still above the law and far below what the scriptures actually teach. I will examine this aspect later in this essay.

Before leaving this sermon, I want to end on a positive note. Just two years after Spurgeon James Wells preached a sermon titled “He Died For All”. His verse was 2 Corinthians 5:15. Perfectly understanding the context of chapter 15 he said in part:

You observe that all through the Scriptures, wherever the death of Christ is spoken of in connection with the people for whom he died, you will always find that the Word of God puts his death and their eternal welfare inseparably together: they are nowhere separated, If his death be called a redemption, then in connection with this truth it is said, that “the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and shall come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be unto them.” And if his death be called an offering, then it is said that, “He has by his one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified.” And if his death be spoken of as the fulfilment of his suretyship-responsibility in his pastoral character, then you will find that he places the laying down of his life, as the Good Shepherd, is inseparably connected with the eternal life of the sheep. You will find, therefore, all through the Scriptures that the death of Christ, and the eternal welfare of the people for whom he died, are placed inseparably together. There are plenty of people in the world who say there are some in hell for whom Christ died; but they have never yet been able to bring a Scripture to prove that; they are persuaded that it is so merely on the ground of their own inference; but they have never yet found a Scripture to prove it, and they never will. Thus then, if you look at the fact, friends, that the apostle is here speaking to the Corinthians, those who were the church of God and were saints at Corinth, you will see that his meaning is, that Christ died for all these; and that Christ's death and their coming to Zion; Christ's death and their eternal perfection; Christ's death and their eternal life, are inseparably placed together. How, then, do men become members of the true church of God? I will begin, with this assertion, that man has no hand whatever in making himself a member of the Church; man can have no hand in it whatever. There is but one way in which a man can become a member of the church of the living God; and that way is described in the Scriptures under various forms, upon which I will not now enlarge; suffice it to say this, that regeneration is the only way into the church of the blessed God. You read in the first chapter of Peter, of being “Born again of an incorruptible seed, that lived and abided forever.” I will ask this one question in the presence of this assembly this morning. Look for one

²⁴ The Free Offer and the call of the Gospel, George M. Ella, Go Publications 2017

moment at the soul dead in trespasses and sins; the soul under the grasp of God's eternal law, the soul under the omnipotent wrath of the everlasting God, dead in trespasses and in sins; and that the only remedy is, that that immortal soul shall be born of an incorruptible seed, that lives and abides forever. Why, infant sprinkling and confirmation, and various other ceremonies that are set forth by men as having something to do with making a man a Christian, I boldly assert this morning, in your presence, that infant sprinkling and their formality of confirmation, their consubstantiation, their transubstantiation, whatever ceremonies they use, I make no hesitation in saying that these ceremonies have no more hand in making a Christian, than these ceremonies helped to make the world. I suppose no one would start the proposition that sprinkling helped to create the world; you would at once see how absurd it was if anybody should start the idea that some ceremony had something to do with the formation of the first Adam. And yet the making of a Christian is compared to the creation; "Created of God in Christ Jesus." So then, my hearer, if you are not a member of the church of the blessed God by being born of God, you cannot be a member in any other way. What does a member mean? A member means one that is one sympathetically with the body, with the main body; the members of the body literally sympathize one with the other. And so, if you are born of God, you will have the same soul trouble, the same convictions, the same discouragements, the same castings down, the same trembling's, and the same fears, which all the members of the church of God in all ages have experienced; and you will have the same longings after mercy, you will have the same illuminations; your mind will be enlightened; you will see that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes; and you will see that you must be saved from first to last by grace; and thus you will begin to sympathize with the man that is like yourself; you will presently meet a man that is all ceremony, and you have no sympathy with him; you meet with some free-will person that says Christ died for all, but only some are saved, and you have no sympathy with him, because his religion cannot save you; **and then you meet with another, with a self-contradictory gospel, that tells you there is an elect, and the others might be saved, if they pleased; and a little soul trouble will turn you away from that; and you will begin to weep with them that weep; and when the Lord enlightens your mind, seals home the word with power, and brings you to realize your election of God; then you rejoice with them that do rejoice.** That is the way that men become members of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bring me as many such men as you please of this character; bring me thousands, bring me millions, billions, trillions, go to the very height of all the powers of arithmetic; I care not how many you bring, I will grasp them all in the language of our text, and say, Christ died for all these; there is not a man among them all for whom Christ did not die; the very circumstance of their being brought to feel their need of his death is a proof that he died for them. So, then, he died for them; that henceforth, they which live in this way, should not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again.

Section 2: Spurgeon on Isaiah 53:11 and Hebrews 12:24, 25

Example 1: “The Suffering Christ Satisfied” No. 3465 Preached March 29th, 1888
Published on July 1st 1915

“He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.” Isaiah 53:11

One of the major problems in seeking to define any of the doctrines Spurgeon preached is the fact that he uses common terms but applies false or different meanings to them. For example, in the sermons quoted above he refers to Christ being punished many times. However, in this sermon there are no references to Christ being punished. There are two references to man not being punished but that is all. Both words, punishment, and suffering, as well as others have specific meaning to Spurgeon. Meanings that differ from those who preach the gospel correctly. I personally do not believe that his basic understanding of The Atonement and its related doctrines was ever truly orthodox. Sometimes the underlying falsehoods were frankly admitted and preached as gospel truths even though they are in fact “another gospel”. Other times he was ambiguous in the extreme and great care must be taken to get to the bottom of what he is teaching. His overwhelming desire to move people to “believe in Christ” / “accept Christ” / “look to Christ” / “heed the invitation” etc. was all important. When I say “move people” I mean anyone he is preaching to. I believe that the end justified whatever means were used. His use of scripture was more to prove what he wanted at any given moment and not to harmonize scripture with scripture to find out the actual truth. He died in 1892 so this sermon is from near the end of his life. It is an excellent example of Spurgeon’s glorying in heresy.

In his introduction he attributes the work of salvation to all three members of the trinity. In other words, he acknowledges the Holy Spirit. As James Wells and others noticed, this was something lacking in many of his earlier sermons. Sadly, he does not portray their parts in the covenant of grace as the scriptures do. At the end of his preface, he gives the impression that what he is about to preach is the one and only true gospel. He says:

Brother Christians, live much in contemplation upon the God of your salvation. Magnify Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Shun that ministry which dishonors either of these blessed persons and seek to be fully built up and instructed in the gospel teaching, which glorifies Father, Son, and Spirit in divine equality, and leads your own hearts into “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.”

In part 1, “Our Lord’s pangs and suffering, by which he made an atonement for our sins.” He starts immediately into the heart of the matter as he sees it. At the beginning he wildly contradicts himself. He says that his audience knows the meaning of the word “travail” and then says:

I will not explain it; I will rather do with it as the painter who drew the picture of Agamemnon and the sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia²⁵. He painted Agamemnon, but he threw a veil over his face, for he felt he could not express the grief that was in the father's face, and, therefore, the face was delicately concealed. **Let us do the same.**

Contradicting himself he then immediately goes on to explain it saying:

It may suffice for us to say that whenever in Holy Scripture a forcible word is wanted to express fear, overwhelming pain, distraction, and confusion, the word "travail" is used.

Already he is laying his foundation that "travail" in Isaiah 53:11 means just the physical sufferings of Christ. After elaborating a bit, he continues saying:

Observe the text says, "The travail of his soul." We are not to depreciate the bodily sufferings of Christ, **but still** it has been well said that "the soul sufferings of Christ were the soul of his sufferings." Brethren, **there was so much in the outward agony of Christ** that my ears have tingled, and my heart burned with wrath, when I have heard chain theologians speak lightly of it. Speak lightly of the sweat of blood in the garden of Gethsemane? Speak lightly of the flagellations by Herod and Pilate, when the bloody scourges made the sacred drops to roll?

He starts of saying "We are not to depreciate the bodily sufferings of Christ," as if he was going to go on and speak of something different. However, this is not the case. Simply put to Spurgeon "**travail**" = **only the physical sufferings of Christ**. In other words, Christ's imputation and substitution for our sins consisted solely or at least mostly in "sufferings". After a rather graphic description of some of Christ's physical sufferings he says:

We believe that the body of Christ took its full share of the chastisement. By his stripes we are healed. By his scourging and bodily chastisements, we get at least a portion of the healing balm which cures the disease of sin. **Our sin was with the body, and Christ's atonement was with the body. Our flesh was sinful, and, therefore, his flesh must suffer.**

After thus negating much of the work of Christ as the God man mediator he contradicts himself again. He first postulates a near impossible task and then provides two ways around it. He says:

Where shall I find a golden reed with which to measure this city, or where shall I find a plumbline with which to fathom the depths of agony which I now see before me? Jesus Christ suffered so that I despair of conceiving his sufferings, or of conveying them to you by any form of words.

²⁵ This refers to a heathen Greek legend of a sacrifice of a human to a Greek god. It is highly unlikely that many in his audience would have any idea what he was referring to. Even if they did this has nothing whatsoever to do with Christ and his sacrifice rather the exact reverse.

His two proposed methods of conveying what he sees as that truth are: 1. “the perfection of our Lord’s nature.” 2. “... what our sins deserved” To him this is all in relation to the physical sufferings of Christ.

He spends a lot more time on the former method than the latter which is very short. He uses several illustrations to speak of human suffering and how it affects godly people like himself. For example: “What a dreadful thing it is for us sometimes to have to go and walk through the hospital. I know I should feel it to be one of the most painful days in my life if I had to spend a day in the operating-room of a hospital.” Summarizing this part, he says in part that: “they must have pierced and penetrated his tender and sympathetic heart, riddling it, as it were, with the barbed arrows of grief.” It is very important to understand that while there is some truth in what Spurgeon says he misses the mark again. Speaking only of his one example he says: “Still, he took upon himself our infirmities, and carried our sorrows, all his lifetime.” He then goes on to say before giving more illustrations: “But there was worse than this. Our Lord, being perfect, must have shuddered as he came into daily contact with sinners.”

He then comes to his main point, what went before was a build up to this. He again compares Christ to sinful men saying:

But the point I want to bring you to is this. He was such a perfect being, and yet sin was actually laid upon him, and what must this have been! I should like to express myself cautiously and carefully. Jesus Christ never was a sinner, never could have been one, never was guilty of sin. In him was no sin. Yet the sin of his people was imputed to him, for so I understand the words, “The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all.” What a word! “And he bore the sin of many.” This chapter has the expression, I think, three or four times over that God actually laid upon Christ human sin. Now what a load for him to carry! What a pain for sin thus to come into contact with the perfectly holy soul of the blessed Jesus! You do not know what a very hell is included in the thought **that sin came anyhow to be laid** upon Christ. Think of it yourselves. You are perfectly innocent tonight of anything like murder. Suppose yourselves arraigned tomorrow morning at the police court and accused of it. How would you feel? You may tell me that your innocence might, and would, sustain you. I have no doubt it would, but still, what a shame it would be to stand before the vulgar crowd, and to be pointed at as having been guilty of an infamous deed. And suppose that, although you had not committed the deed, you were, nevertheless, unable to plead guiltless, for certain reasons, it was necessary that the guilt of the action should lie upon you. Can you now conceive what strength you would need to keep your tongue from speaking so as to deny it, and to stand there like the sheep before the shearers — dumb to your own confusion? Can you imagine yourselves ...

He continues on briefly with more examples of physical and mental suffering before asking his hearers: “The holy One in the sinner’s place; angel in a dungeon; the God of heaven veiled in human flesh to be hung upon the gibbet as a malefactor — start as ye think of it, and then try to conceive, if you can, what must have been the horror of his soul.”

So up to this point which is very near the end of his part one, he has given us a very limited picture of Christ travail. He limits this to physical and mental “suffering”. This “suffering” is compared to and equated with man’s suffering. Also, as I said before nothing at all is said about Christ’s punishment because to Spurgeon, physical, non-judicial as to the law, suffering = punishment when it concerns Christ atonement. More importantly the judicial law fulfilling, and wrath abiding of God are vastly negated or often ignored altogether. We will see shortly how these effects his view of Christ’s imputation.

The real danger of Spurgeon’s teaching here is that it is only a part of the truth. He, himself imposes limitations on how much of the truth he can preach because of the gospel he preaches. Because of this rather than allowing the Bible to speak for itself and let scripture interpret scripture he often falls back on two choices. One is to openly glory in so called contradictions (this is another whole topic). The second is to stress only a part of the truth, which is what I’m dealing with here.

At this point we are left with no clear definition of what Spurgeon means by sin being imputed to Christ. He comes to our aid, however in his second point of what our sins deserved. Aware of his short coming so far, he opens this next topic in this way:

But I have got another plumline with which, perhaps, if the Holy Spirit helps us, we shall be able to fathom the depth better. Think, beloved, of what our sins deserved. It is undoubtedly the teaching of Scripture that a single sin deserves death from God’s hand. The very sparks of sin set hell on a blaze but what do you deserve who have transgressed ten thousand times ten thousand times told? But Christ did not die for you alone. He died for a multitude that no man can number. Will you multiply, then, the desert of the sin of one human being by that of all the countless myriads who are now before the throne, and the yet greater numbers that shall yet be brought there? **Now I will not say that Christ suffered precisely and exactly what all these ought to have suffered as the result of their sin, but I will say that what he offered to God was certainly not a less vindication of his justice, but a greater one than all that would have been, ...**

Here, in the text in bold, we arrive at the very heart of his perception of our sins being imputed to Christ. Two years earlier in a sermon titled “The Heart of the Gospel” he expounded 2 Corinthians 5:20,21. Speaking of the phrase “He made him to be sin.” He says:

I do not say that our substitute endured a hell, that were unwarrantable. I will not say that he endured either the exact punishment for sin, or an equivalent for it; but I do say that what he endured rendered to the justice of God a vindication of his law more clear and more effectual than would have been rendered to it by the damnation of the sinners for whom he died.

Before thinking about the two sections in bold above we need to notice that in this sermon, as quoted earlier he says: **“You do not know what a very hell is included in the thought that sin came anyhow to be laid upon Christ.”** While in the 2 Corinthians 5:20,21 sermon he said: **“I do not say that our substitute endured a hell, that were unwarrantable.”** Surely it must be one or the other! This is a good example of Spurgeon’s changing rhetoric.

Secondly, in the former words that I have bolded he speaks of what Christ “suffered” while in the second quote he refers to “punishment”. I believe he means the same thing by both words. He means something that God was willing to take in the place of the actual guilt of the elect’s sin. Something less than the fulfillment of God’s absolute justice. Something less than what the law required. In fact, however Christ bore the actual sins of the elect alone. The elect alone therefore receive the righteousness of Christ’s active and passive obedience to the whole law of God. As I noted earlier Spurgeon’s is basically the Governmental theory of the Atonement. The scriptural doctrine is The Penal Substitutionary atonement. Although Spurgeon’s doctrine of the Atonement is heresy, he later pleads earnestly that his is actually the true Biblical doctrine. Later in Part 2 he speaks about new views of the atonement and rejects them. Relying on suffering and punishment as he defines them, he says:

I never find my conscience made peaceful by any theory of atonement, except this, that my sins were actually laid upon Christ, and that his righteousness is put upon me, and it is only when I firmly believe in that divine exchange and blessed substitution that I find quiet and rest within, and as long as this is the case I shall cling to the old anchorage, and let who will try new-fangled ways. **If Christ really did suffer for sinners, then God is just in not punishing sinners, and if he did not actually suffer for sinners, then there is no atonement, the justice of God is not satisfied, and there is no basis for a sinner to rest upon at all.**

The fact that he is not talking about the penal substitutionary atonement of Calvinism and Bible comes out clearly in a statement he makes a little later. He clearly defines what he believes the extent of the atonement is. To invite and plead with all sinners, no matter how unrepentant they are he must avoid any thought Christ dying for the elect alone without any reference to the rest of mankind for salvation. What Christ accomplished on the cross must in some way be for “all men” It cannot be his bearing the sin of the elect alone. It cannot be about the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace, of God’s wrath upon all whom he has not chosen to save. Spurgeon’s doctrine is that God saves all who will believe. While Christ did not intend to save all mankind, he died to offer salvation to all men, if only they will believe. Hence the urgency in Spurgeon’s preaching, it up to him to finish God’s work.

At this point the reader may vehemently accuse me of defaming Spurgeon. To show that is not so I give the following long quote from further on in this sermon:

It has always seemed to us, and I think it will seem reasonable to you, that if Jesus Christ is to see of the travail of his soul, and to be satisfied, then whatever was his intention when he laid down his life will be given him. This is not farfetched, because if it be written, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied,” how is a man satisfied if he does not have the result, the full result of his labor, above all such labor, labor even unto death. If a man doth not achieve by his dying all that he died for, then he cannot be satisfied, unless his first intention be amended, which would imply that he had been in error. Do you see the drift of this observation? Jesus Christ did not, then, on the tree intend to save every man. **It is not true that Jesus Christ died with the intention of saving every man of the**

human race. But this is true — Christ died that every man might be spared, and they are spared. You are here tonight as the result of his death, and in that sense he “tasted death for every man.” He died that every man might have the gospel preached to him, that there should be an honest declaration that whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ shall be saved. I this night, for the ten thousandth time, announce to you that gospel, that if you believe in Jesus Christ, you shall be saved; and **this gospel is to be preached not to some, but to every creature under heaven, and the proclamation of this gospel comes universally to all mankind as the result of Christ’s death, and in that sense, he tasted death for every man. But mark you, he stood as a substitute for none of you, **except you do believe in him**, or shall believe in him. **He suffered for those who trust him**, but if you trust him not, you have no part nor lot in this matter. He had no design to save you. If he had, neither you nor the devil in hell could have frustrated that design. But this is his design, “God so loved the world that whosoever believeth in him hath everlasting life.” This is the mark of the people for whom Christ died, that they come and trust in Jesus. **By this “broad arrow” are the blood-bought known, and the blood-redeemed discerned from the unregenerate mass — by their trusting in Jesus.****

There are several ways to see how patently false Spurgeon’s words are in the above quotation. His doctrines here are intimately connected with his false theory of the atonement and what the gospel is. First: Even to this day there are millions almost beyond count who have never heard the gospel. Countless numbers more since Adam and Eve fell. If Christ died so that the gospel was to be preached universally to all mankind, then Christ has not and never will see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Even if we were to start with Christ’s blessed resurrection till say the 19th century, only a tiny fraction heard the gospel. Is man to blame? Of course, not just think of a passage like “Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,”²⁶ among others. It was never God’s intention for the gospel to be preached to every single person. The Holy Spirit moves upon his children when and how he wishes to call out his elect. For example, “And he must needs go through Samaria.” John 4:4 speaking of Christ seeking one of his lost sheep. We are of course, to preach the gospel whenever and wherever God opens a door to us. However, it is not an offer but a command. This is God’s way of calling out the elect for whom he died.

Secondly, and even more importantly let’s look at verses like the following. These teach us much about the phrase “believing in Jesus”:

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I

²⁶ Acts 16:6

do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.²⁷

This is so vital that I beg leave to quote a second passage:

Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.²⁸

These strike to the heart Spurgeon's easy believe-ism gospel. Salvation is not man's choice but God's. Men can say "I believe in Jesus" and many do but only a few of these are truly called and converted by God.

Finally, there is another point. Spurgeon is telling us all a half-truth which is in fact a lie from the devil. Remember he told us that: "Christ died that every man might be spared, and they are spared. You are here tonight as the result of his death, and in that sense he 'tasted death for every man.'" This is a very well-defined statement. According to Spurgeon Christ tased death for every non-elect person, or at least for any who hear the gospel. His teaching on this and some other subjects comes from his Arminian interpretations of various scriptures. This is a subject that is too large to go into much detail here. The fact is however that Spurgeon gave himself complete liberty to have

²⁷ John 8:23-44

²⁸ Matthew 7:21-23

scripture contradict scripture.²⁹ He does not say that God is longsuffering with the non-elect in order to save the elect alone while bringing his full wrath on the rest of mankind! Before referring to 2 Peter 3 and especially verse 9 here is what Spurgeon said about verse 9: “So he hurries not. He gives the sinner space and time and verge enough in which to repent. Oh, that man would turn to God, moved by that gracious long-suffering of his!”³⁰ This is the classic Arminian use of that verse. They, and Spurgeon take the “usward” to mean all mankind. Here is the passage in context³¹.

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Unfortunately, he seems to have never preached a sermon on 2 Peter 3:9. However, sermon number 1516 was based on 1 Timothy 2:3-4. This is another favorite Arminian verse which is used in the same way as 2 Peter 3:9. Here is the context of verses 3 and 4³²:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; **Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

My purpose here is not to defend the true meaning of these verses but only to show Spurgeon’s defective teaching. Speaking of verse 4 he tells us:

What then? Shall we try to put another meaning into the text than that which it fairly bears? I trow not. **You must, most of you, be acquainted with the general method in which our older Calvinistic friends deal with this text.** “All men,” say they,- “that is, some men”: as if the Holy Ghost could not have said “some men” if he had meant some men. “All men,” say they; “that is, some of all sorts of men”: as if the Lord could not have said “all sorts of men” if he had meant that. The Holy Ghost by the apostle has written “all men,” and unquestionably he means all men.

²⁹ See below on 1 Timothy 2:3,4

³⁰ Spurgeon's Verse Expositions of the Bible

³¹ Verses 6-10

³² Verses 1-6

I know how to get rid of the force of the “all’s” according to that critical method which some time ago was very current, but I do not see how it can be applied here with due regard to truth. I was reading just now the exposition of a very able doctor who explains the text so as to explain it away; he applies grammatical gunpowder to it, and explodes it by way of expounding it. I thought when I read his exposition that it would have been a very capital comment upon the text if it had read, “Who will not have all men to be saved, nor come to a knowledge of the truth.” Had such been the inspired language every remark of the learned doctor would have been exactly in keeping, but as it happens to say, “Who will have all men to be saved,” his observations are more than a little out of place. **My love of consistency with my own doctrinal views is not great enough to allow me knowingly to alter a single text of Scripture. I have great respect for orthodoxy, but my reverence for inspiration is far greater. I would sooner a hundred times over appear to be inconsistent with myself than be inconsistent with the word of God.** I never thought it to be any very great crime to seem to be inconsistent with myself; for who am I that I should everlastingly be consistent?

Here the self-professed Calvinist rejects, as he so very often does, the doctrines of grace in order to embrace that Arminian / duty faith doctrines of Andrew Fuller.

I think it is important to note that some like Charles Hodge and influenced by him, A.A. Hodge, agree with Spurgeon on one point. This is, they believe that there is a sense in which it can be said that Christ died for all men including giving them a chance to repent. For reference here is what Charles Hoge says in part about 1 Corinthians 8:11. Speaking first about the elect he says:

There is not only a possibility, but an absolute certainty of their perishing if they fall away. But this is precisely what God has promised to prevent. This passage, therefore, is perfectly consistent with those numerous passages which teach that Christ's death secures the salvation of all those who were given to him in the covenant of redemption. **There is, however**, a sense in which it is scriptural to say that Christ died for all men. This is very different from saying that he died equally for all men, or that his death had no other reference to those who are saved than it had to those who are lost. To die for one is to die for his benefit. As Christ's death has benefited the whole world, **prolonged the probation of men**, secured for them innumerable blessings, **provided a righteousness sufficient and suitable for all**, it may be said that he died for all. And in reference to this obvious truth the language of the apostle, should any prefer this interpretation, may be understood, ‘Why should we destroy one for whose benefit Christ laid down his life?’ All this is perfectly consistent with the great scriptural truth that Christ came into the world to save his people, that his death renders certain the salvation of all those whom the Father hath given him, and therefore that he died not only for them but in their place, and on the condition that they should never die.³³

One has to wonder at Hodge’s addition starting at “There is, however”. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the passage. Paul is exclusively talking about the elect. There is no reference whatsoever

³³ Hodge, C. (n.d.). Exposition of 1 & 2 Corinthians Charles Hodge. 8:11

to the non-elect. Also, we must look at God's longsuffering to the non-elect as the scripture does. Bringing in human sentiment or desires and attributing them to God is not helpful. Yes, he is longsuffering to the non-elect. Yes, technically this gives them a chance to repent. However, God knows not one of the non-elect will repent. Christ did not die for their salvation. He dies specially and only for the sins of his elect.

Near the very end of this sermon, speaking to his whole audience he says:

Now what say you, **my hearers**? Can you look to Christ upon the tree, **with a load of sin upon him**, and can you say, "I lay my guilt there"? Can you look to him in the throes of death, bruised beneath his Father's rod, and can you any, "He was bruised for me; **my sins I have confessed and laid them upon him**"? Then are you happy. But if there has been none to bear your sins, then remember, I beseech you, that you will have to bear them yourselves, and if they gave Christ a travail, oh! what will they give to you? **Oh! impenitent ones, if the imputed sins that were laid on Christ made him sorrowful, even unto death, what will your actual sins do with you** when you are made drunken with the wormwood, and God makes you to break your teeth with gravel-stones; when you are cast out into outer darkness, where there are weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth?

I find at least two things interesting here. First it is the sinner who does all the work. He or she confesses and lays their sins upon Christ. Instead, it should be the trinity in the covenant of redemption choosing the elect and laying their sins upon Christ. It should be God act of salvation not man's decision alone We are not saved because we say we are. Rather we are saved with the Holy Spirit renews our hearts and minds, giving us light and life to accept what God has done. Secondly, he seems to be saying that the sins that were imputed to Christ are not actual sin but some kind of substitute. If we do not accept that then our actual sins will be held against us. "if the **imputed** sins that were laid on Christ made him sorrowful, even unto death, what will your **actual** sins do with you"

Dr. John Gills comments on Isaiah 53 verses 5 and 11 are so blessed and helpful. They get our minds back onto our Lord Jesus Christ and his labor of love to his elect. This can be seen where he says:

Ver. 5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, &c.] Not for any sins of his own, but for ours, for our rebellions against God, and transgressions of his law, in order to make atonement and satisfaction for them; these were the procuring and meritorious causes of his sufferings and death, as they were taken upon him by him to answer for them to divine justice, which are meant by his being wounded; for not merely the wounds he received in his hands, feet, and side, made by the nails and spear, are meant, but the whole of his sufferings, and especially his being wounded to death, and which was occasioned by bearing the sins of his people; and hereby be removed the guilt from them, and freed them from the punishment due unto them: he was bruised for our iniquities; as bread-corn is bruised by threshing it, or by its being ground in the mill, as the manna was; or as spice is bruised in a mortar, he being broken and crushed to pieces under the weight of sin, and the

punishment of it. The ancient Jews understood this of the Messiah; in one place they say, “chastisements are divided into three parts, one to David and the fathers, one to our generation, and one to the King Messiah; as it is written, he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;” and in another place, “at that time they shall declare to the Messiah the troubles of Israel in captivity, and the wicked which are among them, that don’t mind to know the Lord; he shall lift up his voice, and weep over the wicked among them; as it is said, he was wounded for our transgressions,” &c.; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; that is, the punishment of our sins was inflicted on him, whereby our peace and reconciliation with God was made by him; for chastisement here does not design the chastisement of a father, and in love, such as the Lord chastises his people with; but an act of vindictive justice, and in Wrath, taking vengeance on our sins, of our surety, whereby divine wrath is appeased, justice is satisfied, and peace is made: and with his stripes we are healed; or by his stripes, or bruise; properly the black and blue mark of it, so called from the gathering and settling of the blood where the blow is given. Sin is a disease belonging to all men, a natural, hereditary, nauseous, and incurable one, but by the blood of Christ; forgiving sin is a healing of this disease; and this is to be had, and in no other way, than through the stripes and wounds, the blood and sacrifice, of the son of God. Christ is a wonderful physician; he heals by taking the sicknesses of his people upon himself, by bearing their sins, and being wounded and bruised for them, and by his enduring blows, and suffering death itself for them. The Targum is, “when we obey his words, our sins will be forgiven us;” but forgiveness is not through our obedience, but the blood of Christ.³⁴

Ver. 11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied, &c.] The travail of his soul is the toil and labour he endured, in working out the salvation of his people; his obedience and death, his sorrows and sufferings; particularly those birth-throes of his soul, under a sense of divine wrath, for the allusion is to women in travail; and all the agonies and pains of death which he went through. Now the fruit of all this he sees with inexpressible pleasure, and which gives him an infinite satisfaction; namely, the complete redemption of all the chosen ones, and the glory of the divine perfections displayed therein, as well as his own glory, which follows upon it; particularly this will be true of him as man and Mediator, when he shall have all his children with him in glory; see Heb. 12:2. The words are by some rendered, seeing himself or his soul freed from trouble, he shall be satisfied; so he saw it, and found it, when he rose from the dead, and was justified in the Spirit; ascended to his God and Father, was set down at his right hand, and was made glad with his countenance, enjoying to the full eternal glory and happiness with him: and by others thus, after the travail of his soul, he shall see a seed, and shall be satisfied: as a woman, after her travail and sharp pains are over, having brought forth a son, looks upon it with joy and pleasure, and is satisfied, and forgets her former pain and anguish; so Christ, after all his sorrows and sufferings, sees a large number of souls regenerated, sanctified, justified, and brought to heaven, in consequence of them, which is a most pleasing and satisfactory sight unto him, By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; Christ is the servant of the

³⁴ Gill, J. (1810). An Exposition of the Old Testament (Vol. 5, pp. 312–313). Mathews and Leigh.

Lord; see the notes on ch. 42:1 and 49:3 and 52:13. He is said to be righteous, because of the holiness of his nature, and the righteousness of his life as a man; and because of his faithful discharge of his work and office as Mediator; and because he is the author and bringer in of an everlasting righteousness, by which he justifies his people; that is, acquits and absolves them, pronounces them righteous, and frees them from condemnation and death; he is the procuring and meritorious cause of their justification; his righteousness is the matter of it; in him, as their Head, are they justified, and by him the sentence is pronounced: for this is to be understood not of making men holy and righteous inherently, that is sanctification; nor of a teaching men doctrinally the way and method of justifying men, which is no other than ministers do; but it is a forensic act, a pronouncing and declaring men righteous, as opposed to condemnation; and they are many who are so justified; the many who were ordained to eternal life; the many whose sins Christ bore, and gave his life a ransom for; the many sons that are brought by him to glory. This shews that they are not a few, which serves to magnify the grace of God, exalt the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, and encourage distressed sinners to look to him for justification of life; and yet they are not all men, for all men have not faith, nor are they saved; though all Christ's spiritual seed and offspring shall be justified, and shall glory: and this is by or through his knowledge; the knowledge of him, of Christ, which is no other than faith in him, by which a man sees and knows him, and believes in him, as the Lord his righteousness; and this agrees with the New-Testament doctrine of justification by faith; which is no other than the manifestation, knowledge, sense, and perception of it by faith. For he shall bear their iniquities; this is the reason of Christ's justifying many, the ground and foundation of it; he undertook to satisfy for their sins; these, as before observed, were laid on him; being laid on him, he bore them, the whole of them, and all the punishment due to them; whereby he made satisfaction for them, and bore them away, so as they are to be seen no more; and upon this justification proceeds.³⁵

I hope by now that my reader can see what Spurgeon really believes about both Christ's imputation and substitution. That is to see behind that thick cloud of words which mean something different than what the bible teaches as true. In order, however, to be as fair as possible to Spurgeon I will examine two more sermons.

Example 2: The Blood of Sprinkling (part 1) No. 1888 February 28th 1866 and The Blood of Sprinkling (part 2) No. 1889

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to **the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel**. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." — Hebrews 12:24, 25.

³⁵ Gill

In these two combined sermons Spurgeon at first seems to be more orthodox. For instance, he speaks a lot about Christ bearing the penalty of our sins. Also, he uses many of the right terms but as he later goes into more detail it's clear he is not orthodox.

The best way that I know of to understand Spurgeon in these sermons, is by first understanding **what he does not say**. In other words, what he purposely leaves out. I'm not speaking of unimportant issues but of things that are of the utmost importance. For simplicity's sake I'll just list some of these.

1. He says nothing at all about Christ taking away the wrath of God from those he died for.
2. He says nothing about Christ bearing the guilt of the elect's (or anyone's) sin.
3. He says nothing about Christ's active obedience in satisfying all that the law required, both active and passive obedience are vital.
4. He says nothing of Christ being punished for our sins. Instead, he talks a lot about Christ bearing the penalty of sin. He only gives a few examples of others being punished.
5. He nowhere speaks of the Elect; all is said in very general Arminian terms.
6. He says nothing about Christ's strict fulfillment of God's law.

In his introduction he speaks very pointedly to believers. Only in the last paragraph does he widen his audience saying:

I shall need this morning to occupy all the time with what I regard as only the first head of my discourse. What is it? "The blood of sprinkling." It will be **our** duty afterwards to consider where **we** are — "we are come unto this blood;" and, thirdly, to remember what then? "See that **ye** refuse not him that speaketh."

It's often foolish to ignore his introductions. They are there for some specific purpose. In this case it's to put one's mind on believers. Who then is he addressing in Part 1? I believe he means all those he is speaking to.

Coming then to his first point: "FIRST, WHAT IS IT? 'What is this "blood of sprinkling?'"', it's necessary to clearly understand how he defines this. In doing so we must keep in mind what he does not say. He continues then:

In a few words, "the blood of sprinkling" represents the pains, the sufferings, the humiliation, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, which he endured on the behalf of guilty man. When we speak of the blood, we wish not to be understood as referring solely or mainly to the literal material blood which flowed from the wounds of Jesus. **We believe in the literal fact of his shedding his blood; but when we speak of his cross and blood we mean those sufferings and that death of our Lord Jesus Christ by which he magnified the law of God; we mean what Isaiah intended when he said, "He shall make his soul an offering for sin;" we mean all the griefs which Jesus vicariously endured on our behalf at Gethsemane, and Gabbatha, and Golgotha, and specially his yielding up his life upon the tree of scorn and doom.** "The chastisement of our peace was upon

him, and with his stripes we are healed.” “Without shedding of blood there is no remission;” and the shedding of blood intended is the death of Jesus, the Son of God.

As I have spoken about in other essays Spurgeon sometimes speaks of the blood of Christ as just that: blood. It is very interesting that he goes out of his way here to speak of it in more explicit terms. Notice that he says Christ “magnified the law” and not “fulfilled” or “satisfied it”. He says:

Remember that his sufferings and death were not apparent only, but true and real; and that they involved an incalculable degree of pain and anguish. To redeem our souls cost our Lord an exceeding sorrowfulness “even unto death;” it cost him the bloody sweat, the heart broken with reproach, and specially the agony of being forsaken of his Father, till he cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Our Mediator endured death under the worst possible aspects, bereft of those supports which are in all other cases of godly men afforded by the goodness and faithfulness of God. His was not merely a natural death, but a death aggravated by supernatural circumstance, which infinitely intensified its woe. This is what we mean by the blood of Christ, his sufferings, and his death.

Here and below, he concentrates even more on the of physical sufferings of Christ.

These were voluntarily undertaken by himself out of pure love to us, and in order that we might thereby be justly saved from deserved punishment. There was no natural reason on his own account why he should suffer, bleed, and die. Far from it, — “He only hath immortality.” But out of supreme love to us, **that man might be forgiven without the violation of divine rectitude**, the Son of God assumed human flesh, and became in very deed a man, in order that he might be able **to offer in man’s place a full vindication to the righteous and unchangeable law of God**. Being God, he thus showed forth the wondrous **love of God to man by being willing to suffer personally rather than the redeemed should die** as the just result of their sin. **The matchless majesty of his divine person lent supreme efficacy to his sufferings**. It was a man that died, but he was also God, and **the death of incarnate God reflects more glory upon law than the deaths of myriads of condemned creatures could have done**. See the yearning of the great God for perfect righteousness: he had sooner die than stain his justice even to indulge his mercy. Jesus the Lord, out of love to the Father and to men, undertook willingly and cheerfully for our sakes **to magnify the law, and bring in perfect righteousness**. This work was so carried out to the utmost, **that not a jot of the suffering was mitigated, nor a particle of the obedience foregone**: “he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Now he hath finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness: **for he has offered such an expiation that God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth**. God is at once the righteous Judge, and the infinitely loving Father, **through what Jesus hath suffered**.

Spurgeon’s careful use of terms without mentioning the subjects I listed above are interesting and important. The words I’m referring to here are rectitude, vindication and efficacy while keeping

in mind the emphasis on “suffering”. First, he used the word “rectitude” which can mean righteousness. I believe he did not use the word righteousness because rectitude also means moral integrity and correct in judgment and procedure. The idea of rightness of character. In other words, he is subtly getting away from the idea of strict justice by the full discharging of what the law requires. God than can act in such a way that justice and righteousness can be satisfied by something less then fulling the law in every respect. Next, he uses the word “vindication”. Here he carefully avoids that correct word which is “satisfaction”. The website comparewords.com in comparing these two words shows that vast difference between them.

Satisfaction

Definition:

(n.) The act of satisfying, or the state of being satisfied; gratification of desire; contentment in possession and enjoyment; repose of mind resulting from compliance with its desires or demands.

(n.) Settlement of a claim, due, or demand; payment; indemnification; adequate compensation.

(n.) That which satisfies or gratifies; atonement.

Vindication

Definition:

(n.) The act of vindicating, or the state of being vindicated; defense; justification against denial or censure; as, the vindication of opinions; his vindication is complete.

(n.) The claiming a thing as one's own; the asserting of a right or title in, or to, a thing.

I have shown here and elsewhere how forcefully Spurgeon stresses the “suffering” of Christ. This is a constant theme. With this in mind I think it’s important to look at another word he uses frequently: “penalty”. Penalty which is a noun is linked to the adverb penal. A casual reader could be forgiven thinking that Spurgeon is touching upon the biblical doctrine of the Penal Substitution theory of the atonement. Nothing could be further from the truth as I hope I have demonstrated. One prominent dictionary gives the first two meanings of the word penalty as follows:

1

: the suffering in person, rights, or property that is annexed by law or judicial decision to the commission of a crime or public offense

trespassing forbidden under penalty of imprisonment

2

: the suffering or the sum to be forfeited to which a person agrees to be subjected in case of nonfulfillment of stipulations

Though Spurgeon defines the sufferings of Christ for sin in various ways (from just plain physical suffering to general suffering leading to and including death) he never, in the sermons I have studied, teaches the truth. What he teaches is clear from the definitions above. That is that God

excepted by judicial decision to take some unspecified amount of suffering by Christ as a sufficient payment to save some in fact and to make salvation possible for all who hear the gospel.

Again, Spurgeon is pandering to his false views of Atonement, Imputation and Substitution. There is then, another word, or phrase that we must notice. Rather than saying the Christ made an actual expiation of God's wrath he uses the phrase "offered **such an** expiation". So whatever Christ did it was sufficient for Spurgeon's rather unique doctrine of the Governmental theory of the Atonement. To him, it was not an actual expiation of the sins of the elect alone but something much less than that. Something making salvation possible to all who will but consent to believe.

Spurgeon next deals with various aspects of "the sprinkling of blood" in the Old Testament he sums these up in the following paragraph:

There were other uses besides these, but it may suffice to put down the sprinkling of the blood as having these effects, namely, that of preservation, satisfaction, purification, sanctification, and access to God. This was all typified in the blood of bulls and of goats, but actually fulfilled in the great sacrifice of Christ.

We must keep in mind his definition of what "the blood of sprinkling" / "shedding his blood" means:

In a few words, "the blood of sprinkling" represents the pains, the sufferings, the humiliation, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, which he endured on the behalf of guilty man. When we speak of the blood, we wish not to be understood as referring solely or mainly to the literal material blood which flowed from the wounds of Jesus. We believe in the literal fact of his shedding his blood; but when we speak of his cross and blood we mean those sufferings and that death of our Lord Jesus Christ by which he magnified the law of God;

This statement, as far as it goes, is correct. As one source says: "The phrase the blood of Christ in the New Testament is often used as a metonymy³⁶ meaning "the death of Christ." The blood/death of Christ forgives our sin, reconciles us with God, guarantees our inheritance in heaven, etc."³⁷ Spurgeon however mixes truth with half-truths.

He comes next to deal with his text where his first point is: "The blood of sprinkling is the center of the divine manifestation under the gospel." Here in this section, there is no mention of the great covenant of redemption nor the covenant of grace. No mention of the Holy Spirit. God the Father is as it were only in the background. He imagines a scene where his hearer is privileged to climb to the top of Mount Zion, to "enter the city of the living God". This person then presses "onward to the throne itself, where sits the Judge of all..." But according to Spurgeon they have not yet reached the highest point. There is something greater than God on his throne! He says:

A step further lands you where stands your Savior, the Mediator, with the new covenant. Now is your joy complete; but you have a further object to behold. What

³⁶ a word that is associated with something is used to refer to that thing

³⁷ <https://www.gotquestions.org/pleading-the-blood.html>

is in that innermost shrine? What is that which is hidden away in the holy of holies? What is that which is the most precious and costly thing of all, the last, the ultimatum, God's grandest revelation? The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot — the blood of sprinkling. This comes last; it is the innermost truth of the dispensation of grace under which we live.

Spurgeon is, of course, giving us his understanding of chapter 12 and verses 22 to 24. He has decided to take the author to the Hebrews words as building to a climax. Making the blood of sprinkling be the apex and most important part. In the Old Testament and the New the Holy of Holies, the presence before God in all His glory. Father Son and Holy Spirit and our Lord Jesus Christ seated at God's right hand with all the elect and angels singing God's praises is our goal. The precious blood of Jesus and all it truly represents is our way into the Holy of Holies both now and in reality, in heaven. John Gill brings this out in his comments on verse 24:

Coming to Christ is by faith; and is different from a corporeal coming to him in the days of his flesh; and from an outward attendance on ordinances; it is a coming to him under a sense of want, and upon a sight of fulness; and is the produce of God's efficacious grace; and souls must come to Christ as naked sinners; and without a Mediator, without any thing of their own to ingratiate them; and it is free to all sensible sinners to come to him, and is the great privilege of saints: it is the blessing of blessings; such are safe, and settled, and at peace, who are come to Jesus; they can want no good thing, for all are theirs; they have free access to God through him, and a right to all privileges: and to the blood of sprinkling; that is, the blood of Christ; so called, either in allusion to the blood of the passover, which was received in a basin, and with a bunch of hyssop was sprinkled upon the lintel and two side-posts of the doors of the houses, in which the Israelites were; which being looked upon by Jehovah, he passed over them, and all were safe within, so that the destroyer did not touch them, when the first-born in Egypt were destroyed, Exod. 12 which is the case of all such as are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus: or else to the blood of the covenant, sprinkled by Moses on the book, and on all the people, Exod. 24:8 or to the several sprinklings of blood in the legal sacrifices: and the phrase may denote the application of Christ's blood to his people, for justification, pardon, and cleansing, which is their great mercy and privilege: that speaketh better things than that of Abel; either than Abel, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it, who being dead, yet speaks; and who was a type of Christ in his death, and the punishment of it; for as he was slain by his own brother, who was punished for it, so Christ was put to death by his own nation and people, the Jews, for which wrath is come upon them to the uttermost: but the efficacy of Christ's blood for the procuring pardon, peace, reconciliation, and the redemption and purchase of his church and people, shews him to be greater than Abel; and it speaks better things than he did, or does: or else, than the blood of Abel, as the Arabic version renders it; Abel's blood cried for vengeance; Christ's blood cries for peace and pardon, both in the court of heaven, where it is pleaded by Christ, and in the court of conscience, where it is sprinkled by his spirit: or than the sprinkling of the blood of Abel's sacrifice, or than Abel's sacrifice; which was the first blood that was sprinkled in

that way, and the first sacrifice mentioned that was offered up by faith, and was typical of Christ's; but then Christ's sacrifice itself is better than that; and the sprinkling of his blood, to which believers may continually apply for their justification, remission, and purgation, and by which they have entrance into the holiest of all, is of greater efficacy than the sprinkling of blood in Abel's sacrifice; and calls for and procures better things than that did; which sense may the rather be chosen, since the apostle's view, in this epistle, is to shew the superior excellency of Christ's sacrifice to all others, even to the more excellent of them, as Abel's was, ch. 11:4.³⁸

In seeking to gain his point Spurgeon over magnifies the truth to such an extent that he negates or destroys other equally important truths. This, as I have sought to show here and elsewhere, is a far too common fault of Spurgeon's. Repeatedly he gives himself the freedom to make scripture say whatever he feels it should say to meet his needs, regardless of other scriptures. Passing by many other factors I'll concentrate on two to bring out the truth. Conversion happens when God the Holy Spirit regenerates one of his elect. They become in every sense alive where they were totally dead. The Spirit next brings a sense of sin and guilt. Now that they are spiritually alive, they behold Christ their Saviour. Like the pilgrim in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, their burden falls from them, and they behold Christ in his resurrection glory. Each person's experience of conversion may differ to a greater or lesser extent but to the cross and the risen Christ they must come. Secondly the Apostle Paul, as an example, has revealed an important truth to all true believers. In Ephesians chapter two and verses 1 to 9 he says:

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) **And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Our union with Christ is so complete by God's power that we are already seated in the heavenly places in Christ our Lord. Spurgeon, however, is laying the groundwork for his own unique interpretation of what "the blood of sprinkling" is. Not content with isolating and over emphasizing it, he grossly misinterprets his passage to advance his own heretical teaching. In order to understand Spurgeon here we must remember that he has already defined the blood of sprinkling. As quoted above he told us that: "In a few words, "the blood of sprinkling" represents the pains, the sufferings, the humiliation, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, which he endured on the behalf of guilty man." Clearly this defines it as something Christ did which is clearly distinct from himself. In the face of this fact Spurgeon used horrendous exegesis to make scripture say

³⁸ Gill Op cited.

something very different. The lengths to which he will go to make scripture say what he wants it to say are amazing. Changing the subject, he says:

I next ask you to look at the text and observe that this sprinkling of the blood, **as mentioned by the Holy Ghost in this passage, is absolutely identical with Jesus himself.** Read it. “To Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.”

He directly attributes his wild fantasies to God the Holy Spirit “in this passage”. Digging a deeper and deeper hole for himself he goes on to explain why he made such a statement in the first place saying then:

This is a very unexpected turn, which can only be explained upon the **supposition** that Jesus and the blood are identical in the writer’s view. By what we may call a **singularity in grammar**, in putting him for it, the Spirit of God intentionally sets forth the striking truth, that the sacrifice is identical with the Savior. “We are come to the Savior, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh; see that ye refuse not him.”

Just by looking at the striking language he uses we can tell that something is wrong here. He says “This is a **very unexpected turn**” that depends upon a “**supposition**”. Now a supposition is something that is supposed i.e., a hypothesis. Spurgeon bases this on what he calls “**a singularity in grammar**” A singularity in grammar is something found only once. By his own confession, he says that the Holy Spirit moved upon the author of the Book of Hebrews to say some very unexpected and unique about Christ for the only time it occurs in the Bible. Before looking at the use Spurgeon makes of this hypothesis the question that must be asked is: Is this true? Is there the least possibility that Spurgeon is correct?

His chosen text is but part of the context set forth by the Holy Spirit in Hebrews chapter 12. The author sums up his teaching from chapter 11 saying in chapter 12:1-8

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Without question the author is addressing believers, stirring up their faith and need for discipline and godly effort because they are saved. He continues in the same vein in verses 9 – 17. In verses 18 to 21 he speaks of the Law and mount Sinai before turning our eyes to mount Sion and the gospel. Contrasting the two he continues in verses 22 to 27 describing the gospel revelation saying:

But ye are come unto mount Sion, 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, **And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:** Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

He than gives a brief but telling exhortation to believers based upon the truth of what he has stated concluding:

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.

As I touched upon above, the Holy Spirit inspired writer lists eight things that represent or make up what we have come to. They are in the order he has given them: 1. Mount Zion. 2. The city of the living God. 3. The heavenly Jerusalem. 4. An innumerable company of angels. The general assembly and church of the firstborn. 5. To God the judge of all. 6. To the spirits of just men made perfect. 7. Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. 8. The blood of sprinkling. As can be seen in the bolded text above Spurgeon has taken just the last two of the eight things in context which he has taken out of context. In taking them out of context he has ignored the fact that it is expressly noted by the Holy Spirit that Jesus the mediator of the new covenant is one of the distinct eight things and that God through those eight things speaks to believers. All eight are distinct including of course the Lord Jesus Christ and the blood of sprinkling. By all eight God speaks to believers of the need we have for Godly fear as our God is a consuming fire. Now it should be noted that the author of Hebrews cumulates this explanation with the Lord Jesus Christ as sperate from that other seven and as being him through his atonement the elect are now spoken to. Making use of the context and content, many Bible versions and Bible commentators draw attention to the change in subject between verse 24 and 25. Spurgeon, however, goes his own way, with “a very unexpected turn”, a “supposition” and “a singularity in grammar”, which are all his own ideas.

As he continues, he goes into more detail about his conception that the blood of sprinkling and the Lord Jesus Christ are from these two verses identical. He gives one reason for this belief and then comments in more detail about it saying,

Beloved friends, there is no Jesus if there is no blood of sprinkling; there is no Savior if there is no sacrifice. I put this strongly, because the attempt is being made nowadays to set forth Jesus apart from his cross and atonement. . . . As for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, since to me that cross is identical with Jesus himself. I know no Jesus but he who died the just for the unjust. You can separate Jesus and the blood materially; for by the spear-thrust, and all his other wounds, the blood was drawn away from the body of our Lord; **but spiritually this “blood of sprinkling” and the Jesus by whom we live, are inseparable. In fact, they are one and indivisible, the self-same thing, and you cannot truly know Jesus, or preach Jesus, unless you preach him as slain for sin;** you cannot trust Jesus except you trust him as making peace by the blood of his cross. If you have done with the blood of sprinkling, you have done with Jesus altogether; he will never part with his mediatorial glory as our sacrifice, neither can we come to him if we ignore that character. Is it not clear in the text that Jesus and the blood of sprinkling are one? What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. Note this right carefully.

Why would Spurgeon willfully propagate such erroneous teaching? Why would he fly in the face of what the Bible teaches from cover to cover to seek support in a so-called singularity? I said above that Spurgeon gives us one reason for his hypothesis. As he continues in the sermon his deeper purpose becomes more obvious. It must be remembered that this sermon is part one of a two-part series. His purpose here in the first is to set forth his own doctrinal position for the purpose of preaching its application to all his hearers. Skipping ahead for a moment we can see this is his opening remarks in part 2 of the second sermon where he says:

II. My business under the second head of my discourse is to answer the question, WHERE ARE WE? I have to explain what is meant by the expression which is found in the twenty-second verse of the chapter “Ye are come.” Link the twenty-second verse with this twenty-fourth, and read, “Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling.”

Well, first, ye are come to the hearing of the gospel of the atoning sacrifice.

We see here that whatever he made the one phrase “the blood of sprinkling” to be in the first sermon now becomes the heart and soul of his gospel of the atonement. It should be noted that he continues at some length in the first sermon to elaborate on “the blood of sprinkling”. As I stated before he nowhere touches upon the Covenant of Redemption or even of Christ's choice of the elect alone. He rather touches on its relationship with “the new covenant”, it being the voice of the new dispensation and a voice of instruction. Speaking in very general terms he goes on to say:

Shall we be censured if we continually proclaim the heaven-sent message of the blood of Jesus? Shall we speak with bated breath because some affected person shudders at the sound of the word “blood?” or some “cultured” individual rebels at the old-fashioned thought of sacrifice? Nay, verily, we will sooner have our tongue cut out than cease to speak of the precious blood of Jesus Christ. **For me there is nothing worth thinking of or preaching about but this grand truth, which is**

the beginning and the end of the whole Christian system, namely, that God gave his Son to die that sinners might live. This is not the voice of the blood only, but the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. So saith the text, and who can contradict it?

Here is the answer to why Spurgeon wants “the blood of sprinkling” and Jesus to be identical. Why he, to all intent and purposes, rejects salvation being from all time for the elect and them alone. Why he chooses the Governmental theory of the atonement and rejects the Calvinistic and Biblical doctrine of penal substitution. Why he passes over the wrath of God. He wants an easy believe-ism gospel of love and kindness. A God who having done all he can now waits for mankind to exercise their ability and choose to accept what God longs for. Getting sinners, at any cost, by any means, to “believe in Jesus” is the soul, heart, and substance of his gospel.

The author of the Book of Hebrews wrote to believers alone, stirring them up to increased faith and dependence upon the God of their salvation, giving all the glory to God. Hebrews 3 starts with these words:

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Therefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.³⁹

Indeed, the book opens by giving all glory to God in Christ Jesus. Thus, including the atonement but so much more that Spurgeon would blind our eyes too. God’s glory revealed though Christ Jesus is at the heart of the gospel. He does not make salvation possible but instead provides a complete and finished salvation to his elect alone. Nothing was left to chance, and certainly not to man’s will alone. Hebrews 1:1-13 reveals to us God’s glory.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath

³⁹ Hebrews 3: 1-15

appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

A little later in the second sermon he address both the saved and the lost with the following words which show his true motivation.

Among the great things which you are called upon to consider under the gospel is “the blood of sprinkling.” Count yourselves happy that you are privileged to hear of the divinely appointed way of reconciliation with God. **You are come to hear, not of your sin and its doom, not of the last judgment and the swift destruction of the enemies of God; but of love to the guilty, pity for the miserable, mercy for the wicked, compassion for those who are out of the way. You are come to hear of God’s great expedient of wisdom, by which he, by the same act and deed, condemns sin, and lets the sinner live; honors his law, and yet passes by transgression, iniquity, and sin.** You are come to hear, not of the shedding of your own blood, but of the shedding of his blood who, in his infinite compassion, deigned to take the place of guilty men — to suffer, that they might not suffer, and die, that they might not die. Blessed are your ears, that they hear of the perfect sacrifice! Happy are your spirits, since they are found where free grace and boundless love have set forth a great propitiation for sin! Divinely favored are you to live where you are told of pardon freely given to all who will believe on the name of the Lord Jesus, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. You hear at this hour not law, but gospel; not the sentence of judgment, but the proclamation of grace. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.” It is no small thing for the kingdom of God to have come so nigh unto you. **Awake to a sense of your privilege: you do not sit in heathen midnight, nor in Popish gloom, nor in Jewish mist; but day has dawned on you: do not refuse the light.**

His high view of sinful man as well as his very low option of God and his work of salvation by the cross of Christ can also be clearly seen near the end of the second sermon. He is not only addressing sinful depraved men and women, but he reasons with them as if they were alive to the truth. This is because he believes that they are alive in some sense as it's their duty to believe and the atonement has spared them for this very purpose. This is part of his "duty faith" gospel. I'm going to give the quote in full but break it into sections so it's easier to comment upon.

What we do say is this, that God is infinitely loving — that, in fact, God is love; but that love does not cause him to be unjust or unholy; for that **in the long run** would not be love. God is the Judge of all the earth, and he must do right. **The Lord, as the great moral governor, if he makes a law, and threatens a penalty, must execute that penalty, or else his law will lose its authority.** If the penalty threatened be not executed, there is a tacit acknowledgment that it was threatened in error. Could you believe in a fallible God? The Lord has made a law which is perfect, and just, and good. Would you rather be without law? What reasonable person desires anarchy?

This is one reason why I said he has a very low option of God. He is dumbing down God and his truth to a point where he believes sinful man can be motivated to believe and do their duty. Here we can see again his almost constant stress on God being loving at the cost of lowering his other attributes such as holiness and righteousness. God's knowledge and wisdom are infinite he does not think or reason as man and especially not as a fallen man. Why then does Spurgeon say "in the long run" in the context of God? He asks sinful, depraved sinners: "Could you believe in a fallible God?" That is exactly what they do believe! They hate God and run from any light at all. That is what John chapter 1 tells us plainly! Paul in Romans 1 puts it in even stronger language. Sinful men and women will love a god brought down to their level. They, then feel in charge, having God at their command. Life without God is anarchy, every person for her or his self. The best possible "good works" without salvation are nothing but the wood feeding the fire of pride. He goes on then to say:

He has backed up that law with a threatening. What is the use of a law if to break it involves no evil consequences? **A government that never punishes offenders is no government at all. God, therefore, as moral ruler, must be just, and must display his indignation against wrong and evil of every kind. It is written on the conscience of men that sin must be punished. Would you have it go unpunished? If you are a just man, you would not.**

Continuing with his theme he comes down to the "conscience of men", as if that, rather than the thrice Holy God is the arbitrator. Continuing to speak to sinners he asks them a question and gives them the right answer "Would you have it go unpunished? If you are a just man, you would not." All this is in the realm of eloquence and pandering to man's sinful pride.

To meet the case, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, by himself bearing the penalty of death, has **honored** the divine law. He has shown to **all intelligences** that God will not wink at sin, that even his infinite mercy must not come in the way of his justice. This is the doctrine: do not listen to those who twist and pervert it. **It is the**

love of God which has provided the great atonement by which, in a judgment better than ours, the law finds a glorious vindication, and the foundation of moral government is strengthened.

Why does he say “has honored the divine law” rather than correctly saying has fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law as Matthew 5: tells us? Again, it is because of his Moral influence and Governmental view of the atonement. For the same reasons and to include as many as possible in his gospel he says, “all intelligences.” Men are intelligent being therefore, to him they are able to reason this out and believe as their duty. This comes out distinctly as he continues.

Do consider this matter, and judge it fairly, with candid minds. We do assure you from God’s Word that apart from the atonement of our Lord Jesus you can never be saved either from the guilt or power of evil. You will find no peace for your conscience that is worth having, no thorough and deep peace, except by believing in this atoning sacrifice; **neither will you meet with a motive strong enough** to rescue you from the bonds of iniquity. Therefore “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.” Hear, and your soul shall live. Cavil, and you will die in your sins.

He places salvation squarely in the hands of those who are dead in trespasses and sins, haters of God and his truth. He expects them by the power in themselves to consider and judge fairly. He goes even further telling them to do this honestly and sincerely for that is what “candid” means. Rather than salvation by the power and regeneration of the Holy Spirit he speaks of “a motive strong enough to rescue you from the bonds of iniquity”. He often gives lip service to the Holy Spirit calling on the Spirit’s help, but this is just to clothe his naked theology with some semblance of truth. Whatever he may have preached about Total Depravity is lost in his delight in contradictions in the scripture and love of duty faith. In even more significant words, he continues:

Do not refuse the voice of the Lord Jesus by rejecting the principle of expiation. If God is content with this principle, it is not for us to raise objection. The Lord God is infinitely more concerned to fix matters on a right foundation than ever we can be, and **if he feels that the sacrifice of Jesus meets the case at all points, why should we be dissatisfied with it?** If there were a flaw in the proceedings his holy eyes would see it. He would not have delivered up his own Son to die unless that death would perfectly fulfill the design intended by it. A mistake so expensive he would never have perpetrated. Who are you to raise the question? If God is satisfied, surely you should be? To refuse the atonement because we are too wise to accept so simple a method of mercy is the utmost height of folly.

Spurgeon at heart does not believe in actual expiation (propitiation) of the sins of the elect for who he specifically died. He undoubtedly realizes this as his very words betray him. He tells us the God is satisfied with the “principle of expiation”. Something less than what the Bible shows us to be true. He actually calls his version of the Gospel: “so simple a method of mercy” For Spurgeon this is of necessity for fallen mankind must be able to see and accept it by their natural abilities.

Perhaps my reader is still unconvinced. If so Spurgeon, closer yet to the end of the second sermon, spells it out in the plainest possible words. He takes the author of the book of Hebrews words in Hebrews 12:25 and directs them to the unsaved masses. This is a gross misuse of scripture, verse one speaking to believers only says: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," As I have shown, the whole chapter as well as the book itself is for believers. As the context of verse 25 is so important I am giving all of chapter 12 here:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount

Sion, 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, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. **See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:** Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.

Rejecting Scripture and choosing Duty Faith language he says to the unsaved:

... The way to glory is by the way of the cross. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Look to him whom you have pierced and mourn for your sins. Look not to any other, for no other is needed, no other is provided, no other can be accepted. Jesus is the sole messenger of the covenant of life and peace. **“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.”**

“See that ye refuse not.” Then there is a choice about it. If you had never heard the gospel, you could not have refused it; but now that you have heard the message, **it lies within your power**, and it is an awfully dangerous power, to refuse him that speaketh. **Oh, can you, will you, dare you refuse my bleeding Savior** — refuse the Lord of love? I see him now. The thorn crown is about his brow. He is hanging on his cross expiring in unutterable pangs! Can you refuse him while he presents such a spectacle of sacrifice? **His eyes are red with weeping; have you no tears for such sorrow? His cheeks are all distained with the brutal soldiers’ spittle: have you no love and homage for him? His hands are fastened to the wood — his feet the same: and there he hangs to suffer in the sinner’s stead. Will you not yield yourselves to him?** I could joyfully bow before that cross-foot to kiss his dear feet distained with blood. What a charm he has for me! And you — do you refuse him?

If this were not horrendous enough a paragraph later, it gets more Arminian still:

When the text says, **“See that ye refuse not,”** it tacitly and **pleadingly** says, **“See that ye accept him.”** Dear hearers, I trust **you will receive** my Lord into your hearts. **When we read of refusing, or receiving, we perceive an action of the will. Jesus must be willingly received: he will not force himself upon any man. Whosoever accepts Jesus is himself accepted of Jesus. Never was there a heart willing to receive him to whom Jesus denied himself. Never! But you must be**

willing and obedient. Grace works this in you; but in you this must be. Till the heart entertains Jesus gladly nothing is done. All that is short of a willing hearing of Jesus, and a willing acceptance of his great atonement, is short of eternal life. Say, wilt thou have this Savior, or dost thou decline his love? Wilt thou give him a cold refusal? Oh, do not so; but, on the contrary, throw open the doors of thy heart, and entreat thy Lord and Savior to come in.

When I chose these two sermons, I had no idea of paragraphs at the end of the second sermon. I chose them instead because in parts they seemed to vindicate rather than condemn Spurgeon. I could not have been more mistaken. He is condemned throughout. Frankly, his evangelistic pleas as such are a different subject than his doctrine of the atonement. On the other hand, however, I believe his overreaching craving for this style of evangelism needed some plausible doctrinal basis. To Spurgeon they each validate each other. They stand and fall together. At some time, his stress on the atonement (such as his is) and Christ on the cross etc. gives the unaware the false impression that he believes in the doctrines of grace. The doctrines of grace glorify God, false doctrine glorifies man. It saddens and depresses me to even need to quote such blatant Arminianism.

CONCLUSION

As I said in my introduction, it's up to the reader of this essay to decide for him or herself on its merits. I trust that I have given some insight into Spurgeon's doctrine of the atonement and especially of imputation. At the very least it should be obvious that Spurgeon's words on these subjects cannot be taken at face value. His self-proclaimed "inspiration" is at the heart of his teachings. This brings to my mind two incidents from my earliest days as a soul saved by grace. The first was something Joy Dawson taught us. She said that she knew what the Holy Spirit meant by each of the stones David picked up before he killed Goliath. As the Holy Spirit is silent on this subject she was self-deluded or worse. Another teacher at the time was Gordon C. Olson. He like Spurgeon was a preacher and teacher of Moral Government Theology. He stood before us and with all the passion and power possible pleaded that his was that true doctrine of the bible. His huge library, deep Holy Spirit filled prayers, hours of study etc. meant that he has the truth. I took all this teaching to heart and consequently suffered for many years laboring under such false doctrines. My point is that there are many false prophets in the world moved by what they call "inspiration". All that Spurgeon preached and taught must be brought to the touchstone of the Holy Bible. As Christians our overriding benchmark must be that "Salvation is of the Lord".

Appendix

I recently did a Google web search on "C. H. Spurgeon and Andrew Fuller" As I have known for some time, numerous sites refer to Spurgeon calling Fuller "the greatest theologian of the century". There are clear and compelling proofs that Spurgeon was indeed impressed with and strongly influenced by Fuller. This would make a very interesting study in and of itself. I give the following three quotes here to support such a dependence.

Spurgeon Reflects On Fuller's Baptism
February 13, 2015 Andrew Fuller Center⁴⁰

By Steve Weaver

On July 19, 1863, Charles Haddon Spurgeon was preaching from Romans 10:10 on “Confession with the Mouth” at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. During the sermon he reflected on his reading “the life of good Andrew Fuller” the previous day.

I was noting when reading yesterday the life of good Andrew Fuller, after he had been baptized, some of the young men in the village were wont to mock him, asking him how he liked being dipped? and such like questions which are common enough now-a-days. I could but notice that the scoff of a hundred years ago is just the scoff of to-day. [1]

This is likely a reference to Fuller’s account in the memoir of his early life compiled from two series of letters written to friends. This memoir formed the basis of the nineteenth-century biographies of Fuller by his son Andrew Gunton Fuller, John Morris, and John Ryland, Jr. Fuller had written,

Within a day or two after I had been baptized, as I was riding through the fields, I met a company of young men. One of them especially, on my having passed them, called after me in very abusive language, and cursed me for having been ‘dipped.’ My heart instantly rose in a way of resentment; but though the fire burned, I held my peace; for before I uttered a word I was checked with this passage, which occurred to my mind, ‘In the world ye shall have tribulation.’ I wept, and entreated the Lord to pardon me; feeling quite willing to bear the ridicule of the wicked, and to go even through great tribulation, if at last I might but enter the kingdom. [2]

Spurgeon’s familiarity with the life of Fuller and the popular stories about him that were circulating in the nineteenth century served him well for illustration purposes throughout his ministry.

[1] C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 9 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1863), 401. This is likely a reference to Spurgeon described this reading in almost identical words in his autobiography.

I was noting, when reading the life of good Andrew Fuller, that, after he had been baptized, some of the young men in the village were wont to mock him, asking him how he liked being dipped, and such like questions which are common enough nowadays. I could but notice that the scoff of a hundred years ago is just the scoff of to-day.

Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 1:149–150.

LETTER FROM C. H. SPURGEON TO A. G. FULLER

⁴⁰ <http://andrewfullercenter.org/media/blog/2015/02/spurgeon-reflects-on-fullers-baptism>

COMMENDING ANDREW FULLER (as cited here)⁴¹

"In 1831, Andrew Gunton Fuller, the son of Andrew Fuller (1754-1815), gathered together all of his father's writings and published them in five volumes. This set was later revised by Joseph Belcher and published in three volumes by the American Baptist Publication Society in 1845.(1) These sets had included a biographical memoir of Fuller by A. G. Fuller. Near the end of his life, the younger Fuller published a full-length biography of his father in the series "Men Worth Remembering." Apparently, A. G. Fuller sent a complimentary copy of his Andrew Fuller(2) to London's greatest preacher of the day, Charles Haddon Spurgeon. The following letter of appreciation from Spurgeon survives. From this letter we learn of Spurgeon's regard for Andrew Fuller as a theologian.

Venerable Friend,

I thank you for sending me your Andrew Fuller. If you had lived for a long time for nothing else but to produce this volume, you have lived to good purpose.

I have long considered your father to be the greatest theologian of the century⁴², and I do not know that your pages have made me think more highly of him as a divine than I had thought before. But I now see him within doors far more accurately, and see about the Christian man a soft radiance of tender love which had never been revealed to me either by former biographies or by his writings.

You have added moss to the rose, and removed some of the thorns in the process.

Yours most respectfully,"

C. H. Spurgeon

Spurgeon's comments on Fullers Commentary of Genesis

Spurgeon says of this commentary: "Weighty, judicious, and full of Gospel truth. One of the very best series of discourses extant on Genesis." -C.H. Spurgeon⁴³

Clearly Spurgeon looked to Fuller with regard to what he calls "Gospel truth"

⁴¹ Taken from <http://baptistgadfly.blogspot.com/2020/06/spurgeon-on-andrew-fuller.html> They took it from <https://pastorhistorian.com/2014/05/12/letter-from-c-h-spurgeon-to-a-g-fuller-commending-andrew-fuller/>

⁴² This letter would have been written around 1880.

⁴³ This quote is often used to promote reprints of Fullers work. I believe it is from Spurgeon's Commenting on Commentaries.