

THE GREAT ARBITRATION CASE

NO. 661

A SERMON PREACHED
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*“Neither is there any mediator between us, Who might lay his hand on us both.”
Job 9:33.*

THE Patriarch Job, when reasoning with the Lord concerning his great affliction, felt himself to be at a disadvantage, and declined the controversy, saying, “He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment.” Yet feeling that his friends were cruelly misstating his case, he still desired to spread it before the Lord, but wished for a mediator, a middleman, to act as umpire and decide the case. In his mournful plight he sighed for an arbitrator who, while dealing justly for God, would, at the same time, deal kindly with poor flesh and blood, being able to lay his hand upon both. And, dear Friends, what Job desired to have, the Lord has provided for us in the Person of His own dear Son, Jesus Christ. We cannot say with Job that there is no mediator who can lay his hand upon both of us because there is now, “one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.” In Him let us rejoice, if indeed we have an interest in Him; and if we have not yet received Him, may Almighty Grace bring us, even now, to accept Him as our Advocate and Friend.

There is an old quarrel between the thrice Holy God and His sinful subjects, the sons of Adam. Man has sinned; he has broken God’s Law in every part of it, and has wantonly cast off from him the allegiance which was due to his Maker and his King. There is a suit against man which was formally instituted at Sinai, and must be pleaded in the Court of King’s Bench before the Judge of the quick and the dead. God is the great Plaintiff against His sinful creatures who are the defendants. If that suit is carried into court, it must go against the sinner. There is no hope whatever that at the last tremendous day any sinner will be able to stand in judgment if he shall leave the matter of his debts and obligations towards his God unsettled until that dreadful hour. Sinner, it would be well for you to “agree with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way,” for if you are once delivered up to the great Judge of all the earth, there is not the slightest hope that your suit can be decided otherwise than to your eternal ruin. “Weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth,” will be the doom adjudged you forever, if your case as before the living God shall ever come to be tried at the fiery Throne of Absolute Justice. But the Infinite Grace of God proposes an arbitration, and I trust there are many here who are not anxious to have their suit carried into court, but are willing that the appointed Mediator should stand between them and God, and lay His hand upon both, and propose and carry out a plan of reconciliation. There is hope for you, bankrupt Sinner, that you may yet be at peace with God. There is a way by which your debts may yet be paid; that way is a blessed arbitration in which Jesus Christ shall stand as the Mediator.

Let me begin *by describing the essentials of an arbitrator, or mediator*; then let me *take you into the Arbitrator’s court and show you His proceedings*; and then for a little while, if there is enough time, let us dwell upon the *happy success of our great Mediator*.

I. First of all, let me describe what are THE ESSENTIALS OF AN UMPIRE, AN ARBITRATOR, OR A DAYSMAN.

The first essential is that *both parties should be agreed to accept him*. Let me come to you, you Sinner against whom God has laid His suit, and put the matter to you. God has accepted Christ Jesus to be His Umpire in His dispute. He appointed Him to the office, and chose Him for it before He laid the foundations of the world. He is God’s Fellow, equal with the Most High, and can put His hand upon the Eternal Father without fear, because He is dearly beloved of the Father’s heart. He is “very God of very God,” and is in no respect inferior to “God over all, blessed forever.” But He is also a man like yourself, Sinner. He once suffered, hungered, thirsted, and knew the meaning of poverty and pain. No, He went farther—He was tempted as you have been—and farther still, He suffered the pangs of death as you, poor mortal man, will one day have to do. Now, what do you think? God has accepted Him—can you agree with God in this matter

and agree to take Christ to be *your* Mediator, too? Does foolish enmity possess you, or does Grace reign, and lead you to accept Emmanuel, “God With Us,” as Umpire in this great dispute? Let me say to you that you will never find another so near akin to you, so tender, so sympathetic, and with such a heart of compassion towards you. Love streamed from His eyes in life, and poured from His wounds in death; He is “the express Image” of Jehovah’s Person, and you know that Jehovah’s name is “Love.” “God is Love,” and Christ is Love. Sinner, has Divine Grace brought you to your senses? Will you accept Christ? Are you willing that He should take this case into His hands and arbitrate between you and God? If God accepts Him, and you accept Him, too, then He has one of the first qualifications for being a Mediator.

But, in the next place, *both parties must be fully agreed to leave the case entirely in the arbitrator’s hands.* If the arbitrator does not possess the power of settling the case, then pleading before him is only making an opportunity for wrangling—without any chance of coming to a peaceful settlement. Now God has committed “all power” into the hands of His Son. Jesus Christ is the Ambassador of God, and has been invested with full ambassadorial powers; He comes commissioned by His Father, and can say in all that He does towards sinners that His Father’s heart is with Him. If the case is settled by Him, the Father is agreed. Now, Sinner, does Grace move your heart to do the same? Will you agree to put your case into the hands of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Man? Will you abide by His decision? Will you have it settled according to His judgment, and shall the verdict which He gives stand absolute and fast with you? If so, then Christ has another essential of an arbitrator; but if not, remember, though He may make peace for others, He will never make peace for you. Understand this—that until the Grace of God has made you willing to trust the case in Jesus’ hands, there can be no peace for you, and you are willfully remaining *God’s enemy* by refusing to accept His dear Son.

Further, let us say that to make a good arbitrator or umpire, *it is essential that he be a fit person.* If the case were between a king and a beggar, it would not seem exactly right that another *king* should be the arbitrator, nor another beggar; but if there could be found a person who combined the two—who was both prince and beggar—then such a man could be selected by both. Our Lord Jesus Christ precisely meets the case! There is a very great disparity between the Plaintiff and the defendant, for great is the gulf which exists between the Eternal God and poor fallen man! How is this to be bridged? Why by none except by One who is God, and who at the same time can become Man. Now the only Being who can do this is Jesus Christ. He can put His hand on you, stooping down to all your infirmity and your sorrow—and He can put His other hand upon the Eternal Majesty, and claim to be co-equal with God, and co-eternal with the Father! Do you not see, then, His fitness? Surely it were the path of wisdom, Sinner, to accept Him at once as the Arbitrator in the case. See how well He understands it! I should not do to be an arbitrator in legal cases because, though I should be anxious to do justice, yet I should know nothing of the law of the case. But Christ knows your case, and the law concerning it, because He has lived among men, and has passed through and suffered the penalties of Justice. There cannot surely be a better skilled or more judicious Mediator than our blessed Redeemer.

Yet there is one more essential of an umpire, and that is, that *he should be a person desirous to bring the case to a happy settlement.* If you appoint a quarrelsome arbitrator, he may delight to “set dogs by the ears,” but if you elect one who is anxious for the good of both, and wishes to make both friends, then he is just the very man, though, to be sure, he would be one man in a thousand—very precious when found—but very hard to discover. Oh that all lawsuits could be decided by such men. In the great case which is pending between God and the sinner, the Lord Jesus Christ has a sincere anxiety both for His Father’s Glory, and for the sinner’s welfare, that there should be peace between the two contending parties. It is the life and aim of Jesus Christ to make peace. He delights not in the death of sinners, and He knows no joy greater than that of receiving prodigals to His bosom, and of bringing lost sheep back again to the fold. You cannot tell how high the Savior’s bosom swells with an intense desire to make to Himself a great name as a peacemaker. Never had warrior such ambition to make war and to win victories as Christ has to *end* war, and to win the bloodless triumphs of peace. From the heights of Heaven He came leaping like a young roe down to the plains of earth. From earth He leaped into the depths of the grave; then up again at a bound He sprang to earth, and up again to Heaven; and still He rests not, but presses on in His mighty work to ingather sinners, and to reconcile them unto God; making Himself a Propitiation for their sins.

You see, then, Sinner, how the case is. God has evidently chosen the most fitting Arbitrator. That Arbitrator is willing to undertake the case, and you may well repose all confidence in Him; but if you shall live and die without

accepting Him as your Arbitrator, and the case goes against you—you will have none to blame but yourself. When the everlasting damages shall be assessed against you in your soul and body forever, you shall have to curse only your own folly for having been the cause of your ruin. May I ask you to speak candidly? Has the Holy Spirit so turned the natural bent and current of your will, that you have chosen Him because He has first chosen you? Do you feel that Christ, this day, is standing before God for you? He is God's Anointed—is He your elected? God's choice pitches upon Him—does your choice agree? Remember, where there is no will towards Christ, Christ as yet exercises no saving power. Christ saves no sinner who lives and dies unwilling. He makes unwilling sinners willing before He speaks a word of comfort to them. It is the mark of our Election, as His people, that we are made willing in the day of God's power. Lay your hope where God has laid your help, namely, on Christ, mighty to save. You cannot have an Arbitrator except both sides are agreed. Do you say, "Yes, yes, with all my soul I choose Him"? Then let us proceed.

II. And now I shall need, by your leave, to TAKE YOU INTO THE COURT WHERE THE TRIAL IS GOING ON, AND SHOW YOU THE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE GREAT MEDIATOR.

"The Man, Christ Jesus," who is "God over all, blessed forever," opens His court *by laying down the principles upon which He intends to deliver judgment*, and those principles I will now try to explain and expound. They are two-fold—First, *strict Justice*; and secondly, *fervent Love*.

The Arbitrator has determined that let the case go as it may *there shall be full Justice done*, Justice to the very extreme, whether it is for or against the defendant. He intends to take the Law in its sternest and severest aspect, and to judge according to its strictest letter. He will not be guilty of partiality on either side. If the Law says that the sinner shall die, the Arbitrator declares that He will judge that the sinner shall die; and if, on the other hand, the defendant can plead and prove that he is innocent, He intends to adjudge to him the award of innocence, namely ETERNAL LIFE. If the sinner can prove that he has fairly won it, he shall have his due. Either way, whether it is in favor of the Plaintiff or of the defendant, the condition of judgment is to be strict Justice.

But the Arbitrator also says that He will judge according to the second rule, that of *fervent Love*. He loves His Father, and therefore He will decide on nothing that may taint His honor or disgrace His crown. He so loves God, the Eternal One, that He will allow Heaven and earth to pass away sooner than there shall be one blot upon the Character of the Most High. On the other hand, He so loves the poor defendant, man, that He will be willing to do anything rather than inflict penalty upon him unless Justice shall absolutely require it. He loves man with so great a love that nothing will delight Him more than to decide in his favor, and He will be but too glad if He can be the means happily establishing peace between the Plaintiff and the defendant. How these principles are to meet will be seen by-and-by. At present He lays them down very positively. "He who rules among men must be just." An Arbitrator must be just; or else He is not fit to hold the scales in any suit. On the other hand, He must be tender, for His name, as God, is Love; and His Nature as Man is gentleness and mercy. Both parties should distinctly consent to these principles. How can they do otherwise? Do they not commend themselves to all of you? Let Justice and Love unite if they can.

Having thus laid down the principles of judgment, the Arbitrator *next calls upon the Plaintiff to state His case*. Let us listen while the great Creator speaks—may God give me Grace to reverently state it in His name, as one poor sinner stating God's case against us all. "Hear, O heavens and give ear, O earth: for the Lord has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel does not know, My people do not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people filled with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children who are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." The Eternal God charges us, and let me confess at once, most justly and most truly charges us, with having broken all His Commandments—some of them in act, some of them in word, all of them in heart, and thought, and imagination. He says that we, against light and knowledge, have chosen the evil and forsaken the good; He charges that knowing what we were doing, we have turned aside from His most righteous Law and have gone astray like lost sheep, following the imaginations and devices of our own hearts. The great Plaintiff claims that inasmuch as we are His creatures we ought to have obeyed Him, that inasmuch as we owe our very lives to His daily care we ought to have rendered Him service instead of disobedience, and to have been His loyal subjects instead of turning traitors to His Throne. All this, calmly and dispassionately, according to the great Book of the Law, is laid to our charge before the Mediator. No exaggeration of sin is brought against us. It is simply declared of us that the whole head is sick, and the

whole heart is faint, that there is none that does good, no, not one; that we have all gone out of the way, and altogether become unprofitable.

This is God's case. He says, "I made this man; curiously was he worked in the lowest parts of the earth; and all his members bear traces of My singular handiwork. I made him for My honor, and he has not honored Me. I created him for My service, and he has not served Me. Twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years I have kept the breath in his nostrils; the bread he has eaten has been the daily portion of My bounty; his garments are the livery of My charity; and all this while he has neither thought of Me, his Creator and Preserver, nor done anything in My service. He has served his family, his wife and children, but his Maker he has despised. He has served his country, his neighbors, the borough in which he dwells; but I, who made him, I have had nothing from him. He has been an unprofitable servant unto Me." I think I may put the Plaintiff's case into your hands. Which of you would keep a horse if that horse should yield you no obedience? What excuse is it that though I might not use him he would carry another? No, the case is worse than this. Not only has man done nothing, but worse than nothing. Which of you would keep a dog, which, instead of fawning upon you, would bark at you—fly at you, and tear you apart in his rage? Some of us have done this to God; we have perhaps cursed Him to His face; we have broken His Sabbaths, laughed at His Gospel, and persecuted His saints. You would have said of such a dog, "Let it die! Why should I harbor in my house a dog that treats me thus?" Yet, hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth; God has borne with your ill manners, and He still cries, "mercy." He puts the lifted thunder back into the arsenal of His dread artillery. I wish I could state the case as I ought. My lips are but clay; and these words should be like fire in the sinner's soul. When I meditated upon this subject alone, I felt much sympathy with God, that He should have been so ill-treated; and whereas some men speak of the flames of Hell as too great a punishment for sin, it seems ten thousand marvels that we should not have been thrust down there long ago.

The Plaintiff's case having thus been stated, *the defendant is called upon by the Mediator for his*; and I think I hear him as he begins. First of all the trembling defendant sinner pleads—"*I confess to the indictment, but I say I could not help it. I have sinned, it is true, but my nature was such that I could not well do otherwise; I must lay all the blame of it to my own heart; my heart was deceitful and my nature was evil.*" The Mediator at once rules that this is no excuse whatever, but an aggravation, for inasmuch as it is conceded that the man's heart, itself, is enmity against God, this is an admission of yet greater malice and blacker rebellion. It was only alleged against the offender in the first place that he had outwardly offended; but he acknowledges that he does it inwardly, and confesses that his very heart is traitorous against God, and is fully set upon working the King's damage and dishonor. It is determined, therefore, by the Mediator that this excuse will not stand, and He gives a case in point—a thief is brought up for stealing, and he pleads that his heart was thievish, that he felt a constant inclination to steal, and that therefore he could not help running off with any goods within his reach. The judge very properly answers, "Then I shall give you twice as much penalty as any other man who only fell into the fault by surprise, for according to your own confession, you are a thief through and through; what you have said is not an excuse, but an aggravation."

Then the defendant pleads in the next place that albeit he acknowledges the facts alleged against him, *yet he is no worse than other offenders*, and that there are many in the world who have sinned more grievously than he has done. He says he has been envious, and angry, and worldly, and covetous, and has forgotten God; but then he never was an adulterer, or a thief, or a drunkard, or a blasphemer—and he pleads that his lesser crimes may well be winked at. But the great Mediator at once turns to the Statute Book, and says that as He is about to give His decision by Law, that plea is not at all tenable, for the Law Book has it—"Cursed is every man who continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them." The offense of one sinner does not excuse the offense of another; and the Arbitrator declares that He cannot mix up other cases with the case now in hand; that the present offender has, on his own confession, broken the Law, and that as the Law Book stands, that is the only question to be decided, for "the soul that sins, it shall die," and if the defendant has no better plea to offer, judgment must go against him.

The sinner urges further, that though he has offended, and offended very greatly and grievously, yet *he has done a great many good things*. It is true he did not love God, but he always went to Chapel. It is true he did not pray, but he belonged to a singing class. It is quite correct that he did not love his neighbor as himself, but he always liked to relieve the poor. But the Arbitrator, looking the sinner full in the face, tells him that this plea also is bad, for the alleged commission of some acts of loyalty will not make compensation for avowed acts of treason. "Those things," says He,

“you *ought* to have done, but not to have left the others undone.” And He tells the sinner, with all kindness and gentleness, that straining at a gnat does not exonerate him for having swallowed a camel; and that having tithed mint, and anise, and cumin, is no justification for having devoured a widow’s house. To have forgotten God is in itself a great enormity; to have lived without serving Him is a crime of omission so great, that whatever the sinner may have done on the contrary, stands for nothing at all, since he has even then in that case, done only what he ought to have done. You see at once the justice of this decision. If any of you were to say to your grocer, or tailor, when they send in their bills, “Well, now, you ought not to ask for payment of that account, because I did pay you another bill—you ought not to ask me to pay for that suit of clothes, because I did pay you for another suit.” I think the answer would be, “But in paying for what you had before, you only did what you *ought* to do—I still have a demand upon you for this.” So all the good deeds you have ever done are only debts discharged which were most fully due, (supposing them to be good deeds, which is very questionable), and they leave the great debt still untouched.

The defendant has no end of pleas, for the sinner has a thousand excuses; and finding that nothing else will do, he begins to appeal to the mercy of the Plaintiff, and says *that for the future he will do better*. He confesses that he is in debt, but he will run up no more bills at that shop. He acknowledges that he has offended, but he vows he will not do so again. He is quite sure that the future shall be as free from fault as angels are from sin. Though it is true that he just now said his heart was bad, still, he feels inclined to think that it is not so very bad after all; he is conceited enough to think that he can, in the future, keep himself from committing sin; thereby, you see, admitting the worthlessness of his former plea on which he relied so much. “Now,” he says, “if for life I become a teetotaler, then surely I may be excused for having been a drunkard; suppose now that I am always honest and steady, and never again say one ill word—will not that exonerate me from all my wrong-doings, and for having blasphemed God?” But the Mediator rules, still with kindness and gentleness, that the greatest imaginable virtue in the future will be no recompense for the sin of the past; for He finds in the Law Book no promise whatever made to that effect; but the statute runs in these words, “He will by no means spare the guilty.” “Cursed is everyone who continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.”

You would think that the defendant would now be fairly beaten, but he is not—he asks leave to step across the way *to bring in a friend of his*. He is allowed to do so, and comes back with a gentleman dressed in such a strange style, that, if you had not sometimes seen the same in certain Catholic Churches, you would suppose him to have arrayed himself for the mere purpose of amusing children at a show where a merry Andrew is the presiding genius. The defendant seems to imagine that if the case is left to this gentleman in the white shirt and ribbons, he will settle it with ease. He has with him a little bottle of water by which he can turn hearts of stone into flesh—making heirs of wrath into “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.” He has a certain portion of mystical bread, and magical wine, the reception with which he can work wonderful transformation, producing flesh and blood at his Reverence’s will and pleasure! In fact, this gentleman trades and gets his living by the prosecution of magic. He has occult influences streaming from his fingers, which influences he derived originally from a gentleman in lawn; and he now pretends to have ability derived from the Apostles, most probably from Judas, by marvelous manipulations—how, I cannot tell you—but by a kind of sleight of hand to settle the case. But the Mediator, with a frown, hurls a thunderbolt from His hand against the impudent impostor, and bids him take himself away, and not again deceive poor sinners with his vain pretensions. He warns the defendant that the priest is an arrant knave, that whatever professions he may make of being a “successor of the Apostles,” he knows nothing about Apostolic Doctrine, or else he would not have intruded his sinful, silly self between men’s souls and God. He bids him advise the man to dress himself like a person in his right mind who was about honest work, and not as a sorcerer or priest of Baal, and give himself to preaching the Gospel, instead of propagating the superstitious inventions of Rome.

What is the poor defendant to do now? He is fairly beaten this time. He falls down on his knees, and with many tears and lamentations he cries, “I see how the case stands; *I have nothing to plead, but I appeal to the mercy of the Plaintiff!* I confess that I have broken His Commandments; I acknowledge that I deserve His wrath; but I have heard that He is merciful, and I plead for free and full forgiveness.”

And now comes another scene. The Plaintiff, seeing the sinner on his knees, with his eyes full of tears, makes this reply, “I am willing at all times to deal kindly and according to loving kindness with all My creatures; but will the Mediator, for a moment suggest that I should damage and ruin My own perfections of Truth and Holiness; that I should

belie My own Word; that I should imperil My own Throne; that I should make the purity of Immaculate Justice to be suspect, and should bring down the Glory of My unsullied Holiness, because this creature has offended Me, and now craves for mercy? I cannot, I will not spare the guilty—*he has offended and he must die!* ‘As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but would rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.’ Still, this ‘would rather’ must not be supreme. I am gracious and would spare the sinner, but I am Just, and must not unsay My own Words. I swore with an oath, ‘The soul that sins shall die.’ I have laid it down as a matter of firm decree, ‘Cursed is everyone who continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.’ This sinner is righteously cursed, and he must inevitably die; and yet I love him. How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I make you as Admah? How can I set you as Zeboim? And yet, how can I put you among the children? Would it not be a worse calamity that I should be unjust than that earth should lose its inhabitants? Better all men perish, than that the universe should lose the Justice of God as its stay and shield.” The Arbitrator bows and says, “Even so; Justice demands that the offender should die, and I would not have You unjust.”

What more does the Mediator say? He sits still and the case is in suspense. There stands the Just and Holy God, willing to forgive if it can be done without injury to the Immutable principles of right. There sits the Mediator, looking with eyes of Love upon the poor, weeping, trembling sinner, and anxious to devise a plan to save him, but conscious that that plan must not infringe upon Divine Justice; for it were a worse cruelty to injure Divine Perfections than it were to destroy the whole human race. The Arbitrator, therefore, after pausing awhile, puts it thus—“I am anxious that these two should be brought together; I love them both—I cannot, on the one hand, recommend that My Father should stain His Honor; I cannot, on the other hand, endure that this sinner should be cast eternally into Hell. I will decide the case and it shall be thus—I will pay My Father’s Justice all it craves; I pledge Myself that in the fullness of time *I will suffer in My own proper Person all that the weeping, trembling sinner ought to have suffered.* My Father, will You agree to this?” The eternal God accepts the awful Sacrifice! What do you say, Sinner, what do you say? Why, I think you cannot have two opinions. If you are sane—and may God make you sane—you will melt with amazement. You will say, “I could not have thought of this! I never called in a Mediator with an expectation of this! I have sinned, and *He* declares that *He* will suffer; I am guilty, and *He* says that *He* will be punished for me!”

Yes, Sinner, and He did more than say it, for when the fullness of time came—you know the story. The officers of Justice served Him with the writ, and He was taken from His knees in the Garden of Gethsemane away to the court. And there He was tried and condemned; and you know how His back was scourged till the white bones stood like islands of ivory in the midst of a crimson sea of gore; you know how His head was crowned with thorns, and His cheeks were given to those who plucked off the hair! Can you not see Him hounded through the streets of Jerusalem with the spit of the brutal soldiers still upon His unwashed face, and His wounds all bleeding? Can you not see Him as they hurl Him down and fasten Him to the accursed tree? Then they lift the Cross, and dash it down into its socket in the earth—dislocating every bone, tearing every nerve and sinew, filling His soul as full of agony as this earth is full of sin, or the depths of the ocean filled with its floods? You do not know, however, what He suffered within. Hell held carnival within His heart. Every arrow of the infernal pit of Hell was discharged at Him, and Heaven itself forsook Him. The thunderbolts of vengeance fell upon Him, and His Father hid His face from Him till He cried in His agony, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” And so He suffered on, and on, and on, till, “It is finished,” closed the scene.

Here, then, is the arbitration. Christ Himself suffers; and now I have to ask the question, “Have you accepted Christ?” O dear Friend, if you have, I know that God the Holy Spirit has made you accept Him; but if you have not, what shall I call you? I will not upbraid you—my heart weeps over you! How can you be so mad as to forego a compromise so blessed, an arbitration so Divine! Oh, kiss the feet of the Mediator; love Him all your life, that He has decided the case so blessedly.

III. Let us now look at THE MEDIATOR’S SUCCESS.

For every soul who has received Christ, Christ has made a full Atonement which God the Father has accepted; and His success in this matter is to be rejoiced in, first of all, because *the suit has been settled conclusively.* We have known cases go to arbitration, and yet the parties have quarreled afterwards; they have said that the arbitrator did not rule justly, or something of the kind, and so the whole point has been raised again. But O Beloved, the case between a saved soul and God is settled once and forever. There is no more conscience of sin left in the Believer; and as for God’s Book,

there is not a sin recorded there against any soul that has received Christ. I know some of our Arminian Brethren rather think that the case is not settled; or they suppose that the case is settled for a time, but that it will one day come up again. Beloved, I thank God that they are mistaken. Christ has not cast His people's sins into the shallows, where they may be washed up again; but He has cast them into the depths of the sea, where they are drowned forever! Our Scapegoat has not carried our sins to the borders of the land where they may be found again, but He has taken them away into the wilderness where, if they are searched for, they shall not be found. The case is so settled that in Eternity you shall never hear of it again except as a case which was gloriously decided.

Again, the case has been settled *on the best principles*, because, you see, neither party can possibly quarrel with the decision. The sinner cannot, for it is all mercy to him—even eternal Justice cannot, for it has had its due. If there had been any mitigation of the penalty, we might yet fear that perhaps the suit might come up again; but now that everything has been paid, that cannot be. If my creditor takes from me, by a settlement in the Court of Insolvency, ten shillings in the pound, I know he will not disturb me again; but I cannot feel quite at ease about the other ten shillings; and if I am ever able, I would like to pay him. But, you see, Christ has not paid ten shillings in the pound, but He has paid every farthing—

***“Justice now demands no more,
He has paid the dreadful score.”***

For all the sins of all His people He has made such a full and satisfactory Atonement, that Divine Justice were not Divine Justice at all if it should ask to be paid twice for the same offense. Christ has suffered the Law's fullest and most severe penalty, and there is now no fear whatever that the case can ever be revived, by writ of error, or removal into another court, because it has been settled on the Eternal and Immutable principles of Justice.

Again, the case has been so settled, *that both parties are well content*. You never hear a saved soul murmur at the Substitution of the Lord Jesus. If ever I get to see His face, I'll fall down before Him, and kiss the dust beneath His feet. Oh, if ever I see the Savior who has thus delivered me from ruin; if I have a crown I will cast it at His feet, and never, never wear it; it must, it shall be His. I feel like the good woman who said that if Christ ever saved her, He would never hear the last of it; and I am sure He never shall, for I will praise Him as long as Immortality endures for what He has done for me. I am sure that every saved sinner feels the same. And Jehovah, on the other side, is perfectly content. He is satisfied with His dear Son. “Well done!” He says to Him. He has received Him to the Throne of Glory, and made Him to sit at His right hand, because He is perfectly content with the great work which He has accomplished.

But, what is more and more wonderful still, *both parties have gained in the suit*. Did you ever hear of such a lawsuit as this before? No, never in the courts of man. The old story of the two oyster shells, you know, awarded to the plaintiff and defendant, while the oyster is eaten in court, is generally the result; but it is not so in this case, for both the Plaintiff and the defendant have won by the arbitration. What has God gained? Why, Glory to Himself, and such Glory as all Creation could not give Him, such Glory as the ruin of sinners, though so well-deserved, could not give Him. Listen how—

***“Heaven's eternal arches ring
With shouts of Sovereign Grace!”***

Angels, too, as well as those who have been redeemed, strike their harps which they have tuned afresh to a nobler strain, as they sing, “Worthy is the Lamb, and blessed is the eternal God!” And, as for us, the poor defendants, why, what have we NOT gained? We were men before—now we are something more than Adam was. We were “a little lower than the angels” before—now we are “lifted up far above all principalities and powers.” We were God's subjects once, but this arbitration has made us His *children!* We were at our very best only the possessors of a paradise on earth, but now we are joint-heirs with Christ of a Paradise above the skies! Both sides have won, and both sides must therefore be blessedly content with their glorious Mediator.

And, to conclude—through this Mediator *both parties have come to be united in the strongest, closest, dearest, and fondest bond of union*. This lawsuit has ended in such a way that the Plaintiff and the defendant are friends for life—no, friends through death, and friends in eternity. How near God is to a pardoned sinner—

***“So near, so very near to God,
Nearer we cannot be.
For in the Person of His Son,***

We are as near as He.”

What a wonderful thing is that union between God and the sinner! We have all been thinking a great deal lately about the Atlantic Cable. It is a very interesting attempt to join two worlds together. That poor cable, you know, has had to be sunk into the depths of the sea, in the hope of establishing a union between the two worlds, and now we are disappointed again. But oh, what an infinitely greater wonder *has been* accomplished. Christ Jesus saw the two worlds divided, and the great Atlantic of human guilt rolled between. He sank down deep into the woes of man till all God's waves and billows had gone over Him, that He might be, as it were, the great telegraphic communication between God and the apostate race—between the Most Holy One and poor sinners. Let me say to you, Sinner, there was no failure in the laying down of that blessed cable. It went down deep; the end was well secured, and it went down deep into the depths of our sin, and shame, and woe; and on the other side it has gone right up to the Eternal Throne, and is fastened there eternally fast, by God Himself. You may work that Telegraph today, and you may easily understand the art of working it, too. A *sigh* will work it; a *tear* will work it. Say, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” and along the wire the message will flash, and will reach God before it comes from you. It is far swifter than earthly telegraphs; yes, and there will come an answer back much sooner than you ever dreamed of, for it is promised—“Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”

Whoever heard of such a communication as this between man and man; but it really does exist between sinners and God, since Christ has opened up a way from the depths of our sin to the heights of His Glory. This is for you who are at a distance from Him, but He has done more for us who are saved, for He has taken us right across the Atlantic of our sin and set us down on the other side—He has taken us out of our sinful state, and put us into the Father's bosom—and there we shall dwell forever in the heart of God as His own dear children.

I would to God that some might now be led to look to the Savior—that some would come with weeping and with tears to Him, and say—

*“Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Your bosom fly.”*

Take my case and arbitrate for me; I accept Your Atonement; I trust in Your precious blood; only receive me and I will rejoice in You forever with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

May the Lord bless you forevermore. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON.—Isaiah 53.

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