

The Believer's Challenge

by C.H. Spurgeon

The sermon explores the four marvelous pillars upon which the Christian rests their hope: Christ's death, resurrection, right hand, and intercession, and how these pillars guarantee the believer's salvation.

Duration: 40:54

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 22:44, Romans 8:34, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 7:25, Revelation 12:10

Topics: "Faith And Doubt", "Spiritual Protection"

Description

In this sermon, Charles Haddon Spurgeon discusses four doctrines that provide strong consolation and protection for believers in times of doubt and attack on their faith. The first doctrine addresses the issue of unbelief, which God foresaw and countered by smiting it four times to ensure its defeat. The second doctrine acknowledges the constant attacks on believers' faith by the world, sin, and the devil, and how God has fortified them with four strong lines of protection. Spurgeon emphasizes the importance of these doctrines in fortifying believers' hearts when faced with challenges. He concludes by urging listeners to seek an interest in these precious doctrines and highlights the power and excellence of the doctrine itself.

Transcript

The Prince of Preachers Charles Haddon Spurgeon has been called England's greatest contribution to the spread of the gospel in the 19th century. One of his contemporaries said that the chief secret of Spurgeon's attractiveness was the fact that in every sermon, no matter what the text or the occasion, he explained the way of salvation in simple terms. Spurgeon's messages remain one of the great treasure houses of Christian literature, still bringing the light of the gospel and the comfort of the scriptures to hungry souls long after the preacher has passed into glory.

This is Charles Kelsch inviting you to listen to a message from the Prince of Preachers. C. H. Spurgeon preached this message on June the 5th, 1859, in the music hall of the Royal Surrey Gardens. It is entitled, The Believer's Challenge.

The text is found in Romans chapter 8 and verse 34. Who 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.

The protest of an innocent man against the charge of an accuser may well be strong and vehement. But here we have a more uncommon and a sublimer theme. It is the challenge of a justified sinner protesting with holy and inspired fervor that his character is clear and his conscience clean even in the sight of

heaven.

Yet it is not the natural innocence of his heart, but the perfect mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ which gives him this amazing confidence. May the Spirit of God enable me to expound to you this most blessed portion of God's word. We have before us in the text the four marvelous pillars upon which the Christian rests his hope.

Any one of them were all sufficient. Though the sins of the whole world should press on any one of these sacred columns, it would never break nor bend. Yet, for our strong consolation that we may never tremble or fear, God has been pleased to give us these four eternal rocks, these four immovable foundations upon which our faith may rest and stand secure.

But why is this? Why needeth the Christian to have such firm, such massive foundations? For this simple reason. He is himself so doubtful, so ready to distrust, so difficult to be persuaded of his own security. Therefore hath God, as it were, enlarged his arguments.

One blow might, we should have imagined, have been enough to have smitten to death our unbelief forever. The cross ought to have been enough for the crucifixion of our infidelity. Yet God, foreseeing the strength of our unbelief, hath been pleased to smite it four times that it might be raised to rise no more.

Moreover, he well knew that our faith would be sternly attacked. The world, our own sin, and the devil, he foresaw, would be continually molesting us. Therefore hath he entrenched us within these four walls.

He hath garrisoned us in four strong lines of protection. We cannot be destroyed. We have bulwarks, none of which can possibly be stormed.

But when combined, they are so irresistible, they could not be carried, though earth and hell should combine to storm them. It is, I say first, because of our unbelief, and secondly, because of the tremendous attacks our faith hath to endure, that God has been pleased to lay down four strong consolations with which we may fortify our hearts whenever the sky is overcast or the hurricane is coming forth from its place. Let us now notice these four stupendous doctrines.

I repeat it again. Any one of them is all-sufficient. It reminds me of what I have sometimes heard of the ropes that are used in mining.

It is said that every strand of them would bear the entire tonnage, and consequently, if each strand bears the full weight that will ever be put upon the whole, there is an absolute certainty of safety given to the whole when twisted together. Now each of these four articles of our faith is sufficient to bear the weight of the sins of the whole world. What must be the strength when the whole four are interlaced and intertwined and become the support of the believer? The Apostle challenges the whole world and heaven and hell, too, in the question, Who is he that condemneth? And in order to excuse his boldness, he gives us four reasons why he can never be condemned.

Christ has died, yea, rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. We shall first look over these four pillars of the believer's faith, and then afterwards we shall ourselves take up the Apostle's challenge and cry, Who is he that condemneth? The first reason why the Christian never can be condemned is because Christ has died. We believe that in the death of Christ there was a full penalty paid to divine justice for all the sins which the believer can possibly commit.

We teach every Sabbath day that the whole shower of divine wrath was poured upon Christ's head, that the black cloud of vengeance emptied out itself upon the cross, and that there is not left in the book of God a single sin against a believer, nor can there possibly be even a particle of punishment ever exacted at the hand of the man that believeth in Jesus. For this reason, that Jesus has been punished to the full. In full tale hath every sin received sentence in his death.

He hath suffered the just for the unjust to bring us to God. And now, if you and I are enabled this morning to go beneath the bloody tree of Calvary and shelter ourselves there, how safe we are! Ah, we may look around and defy all our sins to destroy us. This shall be an all-sufficient argument to shut their clamorous mouths.

Christ hath died. Here cometh one, and he cries, Thou hast been a blasphemer. Yes, but Christ died a blasphemer's death, and he died for blasphemers.

But Thou hast stained Thyself with lust. Yes, but Christ died for the lascivious. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's own Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

So away, foul fiend! That also has received its due. But Thou hast long resisted grace, and long stood out against the warnings of God. Yes, but Jesus died.

And say what Thou wilt, O conscience. Remind me of what Thou wilt. Lo, this shall be my sure reply.

Jesus died. Standing at the foot of the cross and beholding the Redeemer in His expiring agony, the Christian may indeed gather courage. When I think of my sin, it seems impossible that any atonement should ever be adequate.

But when I think of Christ's death, it seems impossible that any sin should ever be great enough to need such an atonement as that. There is in the death of Christ enough and more than enough. There is not only a sea in which to drown our sins, but the very tops of the mountains of our guilt are covered.

Forty cubits upwards hath this red sea prevailed. There is not only enough to put our sins to death, but enough to bury them and hide them out of sight. I say it boldly and without a figure.

The eternal arm of God, now nerved with strength, now released from the bondage in which justice held it, is able to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by Christ. Our first reason for knowing that we cannot be condemned is because Christ has died for us. The second reason the believer hath is this, that Christ hath risen again.

You will observe that the Apostle has here prefixed the words, yea, rather. Do you see the force of this expression? As much as to say it is a powerful argument for our salvation that Christ died, but it is a still more cogent proof that every believer shall be saved, that Christ rose again from the dead. This does not often strike us.

We generally receive more comfort at the cross than we do at the empty sepulcher, and yet this is just through our ignorance and through the blindness of our eyes, for verily to the enlightened believer there is more consolation in Jesus arising from the tomb than there is in Jesus nailed to the cross. Yea, rather, said the Apostle, as if he would have it that this is a still more powerful argument. Now what had the resurrection of Christ from the dead to do with the justification of a believer? I take it thus.

Christ by His death paid to His Father the full price of what we owed to Him. God did, as it were, hold a bond against us which we could not pay. The alternative of this bond, if not paid, was that we should be sold forever under sin and should endure the penalty of our transgressions in unquenchable fire.

Now Jesus by His death paid all the debt. To the utmost farthing that was due from us to God, Christ did pay by His death. Still the bond was not cancelled until the day when Christ rose from the dead.

Then did His Father, as it were, rend the bond in halves and blot it out, so that fence forward it ceases to have effect. It is true that death was the payment of the debt, but resurrection was the public acknowledgment that the debt was paid. Now, says Paul, yea, rather, He is risen from the dead.

O Christian, thou canst not be condemned, for Christ has paid the debt. Look at His gore as it distills from His body in Gethsemane and on the accursed tree. But rather, lest there should be a shadow of a doubt that thou canst not be condemned, thy debts are cancelled.

Here is the full receipt. The resurrection hath rent the bond in twain. And now at God's right hand there is not left a record of thy sin.

For when our Lord Jesus Christ quitted the tomb, He left thy sin buried in it, once for all cast away, never to be recovered. To use another figure, Christ's death was, as it were, the digging out of the gold of grace out of the deep mines of Jesus' sufferings. Christ coined, so to speak, the gold which should be the redemption of His children.

But the resurrection was the minting of that gold. It stamped it with the Father's impress as the current coin of the realm of heaven. The gold itself was fused in the atoning sacrifice, but the minting of it, making it into that which should be the current coin of the merchant, was the resurrection of Christ.

Then did His Father stamp the atonement with His own image and His own superscription. On the cross I see Jesus dying for my sins as an expiating sacrifice. But in the resurrection I see God acknowledging the death of Christ and accepting what He has done for my indisputable justification.

I see Him putting His own imprimatur thereupon, stamping it with His own signet, dignifying it with His own seal. And again I cry, Yea, rather, who is risen from the dead? Who then can condemn the believer? To put Christ's resurrection yet in another aspect, His death was the digging of the well of salvation. Stern was the labor, toilsome was the work.

He dug on and on and on, through rocks of suffering, into the deepest caverns of misery. But the resurrection was the springing up of the water. Christ digged the well to its very bottom, but not a drop did spring up.

Still was the world dry and thirsty, till on the morning of the resurrection a voice was heard, Spring up, O well! And forth came Christ Himself from the grave, and with Him came the resurrection and the life. Pardon and peace for all souls sprang up from the deep well of His misery. Oh, when I can find enough for my faith to be satisfied with, even in the digging of the well, what shall be my satisfaction when I see it overflowing its brim and springing up with life everlasting? Surely the apostle was right when he said, Yea, rather, who hath risen from the dead? And yet another picture.

Christ was in His death the hostage of the people of God. He was the representative of all the elect. When Christ was bound to the tree, I see my own sin bound there.

When He died, every believer virtually died in Him. When He was buried, we were buried in Him. And when He was in the tomb, He was, as it were, God's hostage for all His church, for all that ever should believe on Him.

Now, as long as He was in the prison, although there might be ground of hope, it was but as light sown for the righteous. But when the hostage came out, behold the first fruit of the harvest. When God said, Let My anointed go free, I am satisfied and content in Him.

Then every elect vessel went free in Him. Then every child of God was released from Durant's vial, no more to die, not to know bondage or fetter for ever. I do see ground for hope when Christ is bound, for He is bound for me.

I do see reason for rejoicing when He dies, for He dies for me and in my room instead. I do see a theme for solid satisfaction in His burial, for He is buried for me. But when He comes out of the grave, having swallowed up death in victory, my hope bursts into joyous song.

He lives, and because He lives, I shall live also. He is delivered, and I am delivered too. Death hath no more dominion over Him, and no more dominion over me.

His deliverance is mine, His freedom mine for ever. Again I repeat it. The believer should take strong draughts of consolation here.

Christ is risen from the dead. How can we be condemned? There are even stronger arguments for the non-condemnation of the believer in the resurrection of Christ than in His precious death and burial. I think I have shown this.

Only may God give us grace to rest upon this precious yea, rather, who is risen from the dead. The next clause of the sentence reads thus. Who is even at the right hand of God? Is there not any word of special commendation to this? You will remember the last one had, yea, rather.

Is there nothing to commend this? Well, if not in this text, there is in another. If at your leisure you read through the fifth chapter of this epistle to the Romans, you will there very readily discover that the apostle proves that if Christ's death be an argument for our salvation, His life is a still greater one. He says in the tenth verse of that chapter, If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, that's the word I wanted, much more we shall be saved by His life.

We may look then at this third clause as having a much more before it, comparing Scripture with Scripture. We cannot be condemned, for Christ hath died, yea, rather, is risen again. Much more is even at the right hand of God.

Here is an argument which hath much more power, much more strength, much more force than even Christ's death. Sometimes I have thought this impossible. Last Lord's Day, I thought by God's good help, I was unable to persuade some of you that the death of Christ was an argument too potent to be ever denied, an argument for the salvation of all for whom He died.

Much more, let me tell you now, is His life. Much more the fact that He lives and is at the right hand of the Father. Now I must call your attention to this clause, remarking that in other passages of God's word, Christ is said to have sat down forever at the right hand of God.

Do observe with care the fact that He is always described in heaven as sitting down. This seems to me to be one material argument for the salvation of the believer. Christ sits in heaven.

Now He would never sit if the work were not fully done. Jesus, when He was on earth, had a baptism to be baptized with, and how was He straightened until it was accomplished! He had not time so much as to eat bread full often, so eager was He to accomplish all His work. And I do not, I cannot imagine that He would be sitting down in heaven in the posture of ease unless He had accomplished all, unless it is finished were to be understood in its broadest and most unlimited sense.

There is one thing I have noticed in looking over the old Levitical law under the description of the tabernacle. There were no seats whatever provided for the priests. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering sacrifice for sin.

They never had any seats to sit on. There was a table for the showbread, an altar, and a brazen laver, yet there was no seat. No priest sat down.

He must always stand, for there was always work to be accomplished, always something to be done. But the great High Priest of our profession, Jesus, the Son of God, hath taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Why is this? Because now the sacrifice is complete forever, and the priest hath made a full end of his solemn service.

What would the Jew have thought if it had been possible for a seat to have been introduced into the sanctuary and for the High Priest to sit down? Why, the Jew would then have been compelled to believe that it was all over, the dispensation was ended, for a sitting priest would be the end of all. And now we may rest assured, since we can see a sitting Christ in heaven, that the whole atonement is finished. The work is over.

He hath made an end of sin. I do consider that in this there is an argument why no believer ever can perish. If he could, if there were yet a chance of risk, Christ would not be sitting down.

If the work were not so fully done that every redeemed one should at last be received into heaven, he would never rest nor hold his peace. Turning, however, more strictly to the words of the text, who is even at the right hand of God, what meaneth this? It means, first of all, that Christ is now in the honorable position of an accepted one. The right hand of God is the place of Majesty and the place of Favor, too.

Now Christ is his people's representative. When he died for them, they had rest. When he rose again for them, they had liberty.

When he was received into his father's favor yet again and sat at his own right hand, then had they favor and honor and dignity. Do you not remember that the two sons of Zebedee asked to sit, one on the right hand and the other on the left? Little did they know that they had already what they had asked for. For all the church is now at the right hand of the Father.

All the church is now raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The raising and elevation of Christ to that throne of dignity and favor is the elevation, the acceptance, the enshrinement, the glorifying of all his people, for he is their common head and stands as their representative. This sitting at the right hand of God, then, is to be viewed as the acceptance of the person of the surety, the reception of the representative, and therefore the acceptance of our souls.

Who is he that condemneth them? Condemn a man that is at the right hand of God? Absurd! Impossible! Yet am I there in Christ. Condemn a man who sits next to his Father, the King of kings? Yet there is the church, and how can she in the slightest degree incur condemnation when she is already at the right hand of the Father with her covenant head? And let me further remark that the right hand is the place of power. Christ at the right hand of God signifies that all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth.

Now, who is he that condemns the people that have such a head as this? O my soul, what can destroy thee if omnipotence is thy helper? If the aegis of the Almighty covers thee, what sword can smite thee? If the wings of the Eternal are thy shelter, what plague can attack thee? Rest thou secure. If Jesus is thine all-prevailing King and hath trodden thine enemies beneath his feet, if sin, death, and hell are now only parts of his empire for he is Lord of all, and if thou art representative in him, and he is thy guarantee, thy sworn surety, it cannot be by any possibility that thou canst be condemned. While we have an Almighty Saviour, the redeemed must be saved until omnipotence can fail and the Almighty can be overcome.

Every blood-bought redeemed child of God is safe and secure forever. Well did the Apostle say of this, much more, much more than dying and rising again from the dead. He lives at the right hand of God.

And now I come to the fourth, and this also hath an encomium passed upon it. Who also maketh intercession for us. Our Apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, puts a very strong encomium upon this sentence.

What does he say upon it? A little more than he said about the others. The first one is, yea, rather. The second one is, much more.

And what is the third? Remember the passage. He is able also to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Lo, this is to the uttermost.

What we thought perhaps to be the very smallest matter in the recital is just the greatest. To the very uttermost he is able to save, seeing he ever liveth to intercede, the strongest argument of the whole four. Let us try to meet this question.

Why does Christ intercede today in heaven? A quaint old divine says that when God in his justice rose from his throne to smite the surety, he would make no concession whatever. The surety paid the debt. Yet, said the judge, I will not come down to earth to receive the payment.

Bring it to me. And therefore the surety first groped through death to fight his way up to the eternal throne, and then, mounting aloft by a glorious ascension, dragged his conquered foes behind him, and scattering mercies with both his hands, like Roman conquerors who scattered gold and silver coins in their triumph, he entered heaven. And he came before his father's throne and said, There it is, the full price.

I have brought it all. God would not go down to the earth for payment. It must be brought to him.

This was pictured by the high priest of old. The high priest first took the blood, but that was not accepted. He did not bring the mercy seat outside the veil to carry the mercy seat to the blood, no.

The blood must be taken to the mercy seat. God will not stoop when he is just. It must be brought to him.

So the high priest takes off his royal robes and puts on the garments of the minor priest and goes within the veil and sprinkles the blood upon the mercy seat. Even so did our Lord Jesus Christ. He took the

payment and bore it to God, took his wounds, his rent body, his flowing blood up to his father's very eyes, and there he spread his wounded hands and pleaded for his people.

Now here is a proof that the Christian cannot be condemned because the blood is on the mercy seat. It is not poured out on the ground. It is on the mercy seat.

It is on the throne. It speaks in the very ears of God, and it must of a surety prevail. But perhaps the sweetest proof that the Christian cannot be condemned is derived from the intercession of Christ if we view it thus.

Who is Christ, and who is it with whom he intercedes? My soul was in raptures when I mused yesterday upon two sweet thoughts. They are but simple and plain, but they were very interesting to me. I thought that had I to intercede for anybody and do a mediating part, if I had to intercede for my brother with my father, I should feel I had got a safe case in hand.

This is just what Jesus has to do. He has to intercede with his father and Mark, with our father, too. There is a double precedent to strengthen our confidence that he must prevail.

When Christ pleads, he does not plead with one who is stronger than him or inimical to him, but with his own father. My father, saith he, it is my delight to do thy will, and it is thy delight to do my will. I will, then, that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.

And then he adds this blessed argument. Father, those for whom I plead are thine own children, and thou lovest them as much as I do. Yea, thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

Oh, it is no hard task to plead when you are pleading with a father for a brother, and when the advocate can say, I go to my father and to your father. To my God and to your God. Suppose, my dear friends, that any of you were about to be tried for your life.

Do you think you could trust your advocacy with any man you know? I do really think I should be impatient to speak for myself. But my counsel would say, Now, just be quiet, my dear sir. You perhaps may plead more earnestly than I can, because it is for your own life.

But then you do not understand the law. You will soon make a blunder or other, and commit yourself and spoil your own cause. But still I think if my life were in hazard and I stood in the dock, and my counsel were pleading for me, my tongue would be itching to plead for myself, and I should want to get up and just say, My Lord, I am innocent, innocent as the babe newly born of the crime laid to my charge.

My hands have never been stained with the blood of any man. Oh, I think I could indeed plead if I were pleading for myself. But do you know, I have never felt that with regard to Christ.

I can sit down and let Him plead, and I do not want to get up and conduct the pleading myself. I do feel that He loves me better than I love myself. My cause is quite safe in His hands, especially when I remember again that He pleads with my father, and He is His own father's beloved son, and that He is my brother, and such a brother, a brother born for adversity.

Give Him, my soul, thy cause to plead, nor doubt the Father's grace. It is enough. He has the cause, nor would we take it from His hand even if we could.

I know that safe with Him remains, protected by His power, what I have committed to His hands till the decisive hour. Well, did the Apostle say, to the very uttermost, He is able to save them that come unto God by Him because He ever lives to make intercession for them. I have thus given you the four props and pillars of the believer's faith, and now, my hearers, let me just utter this personal appeal to you.

What would you give, some of you, if you could have such a hope as this? Here are four pillars, O unhappy souls, that cannot call one of these your own. The mass of men are all in uncertainty. They do not know what will become of them at last.

They are discontented enough with life, and yet they are afraid to die. God is angry with them, and they know it. Death is terrible to them.

The tomb affrights them. They can scarcely understand the possibility of having any confidence this side of the grave. Ah, my hearers, what would you give if you could obtain this confidence? And yet it is within reach of every truly penitent sinner.

If you are now led to repent of sin, if you will now cast yourself on the blood and righteousness of Christ, your eternal salvation shall be as sure as your present existence. He cannot perish who relies on Christ, and he who has faith in Jesus may see the heavens pass away, but not God's word. He may see the earth burned, but into the fire of hell he can never go.

He is safe, and he must be saved, though all things pass away. And now this brings me to the challenge. Fain would I picture the apostle as he appeared when he was uttering it.

Hark! I hear a brave, strong voice crying, Who shall lay anything to my charge? Who is that? Paul. What? Paul, a Christian? I thought Christians were a humble, timid people. They are so.

But not when they are arrayed in the robes and invested with the credentials of their sovereign. They are lambs in the harmlessness of their dispositions. But they have the courage of lions when they defend the honors of their king.

Again I hear him cry, Who shall lay anything to my charge? And he cast his eyes to heaven. Is not the wretch smitten dead? Will not such presumption as this be avenged? Does he challenge purity to convict him of guilt? O Paul, the thunderbolt of God will smite thee. No, says he.

It is God that justifieth. I am not afraid to face the highest heaven, since God has said that I am just. I can look upward without distressing fear.

But hush, repeat not that challenge. Yes, says he, I will. Who is he that condemneth? And I see him look downwards.

There lies the old dragon, bound in chains, the accuser of the brethren. And the apostle stares him in the face and says, Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Why, Paul, Satan will bring thundering accusations against thee. Art thou not afraid? No, says he.

I can stop his mouth with this cry. It is Christ that died. That will make him tremble.

For he crushed the serpent's head in that victorious hour. And I can shut his mouth again. Yea, rather, that is risen again.

For he took him captive on that day. I will add, Who sitteth at the right hand of God? I can foil him with that. For he sits there to judge him and to condemn him forever.

Once more I will appeal to his advocacy. Who maketh intercession for us? I can stop his accusation with this perpetual care of Jesus for his people. Again cries Paul, Who shall lay anything to my charge? There lie the bodies of the saints he has martyred.

And they cry from under the altar, O Lord, how long wilt thou not avenge thine own elect? Paul says, Who can lay anything to my charge? And they speak not. Because, says Paul, I have obtained mercy. Who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious? That in me first he might show forth all longsuffering.

Christ hath died. Yea, rather, hath risen again. And now, standing in the midst of men who mock and boast and jeer, he cries, Who can lay anything to my charge? And no one dares to speak.

For man himself cannot accuse. With all his malevolence and acrimony and malice, he can bring nothing against him. No charge can stand at the bar of God against the man whom he hath absolved through the merits of the death of Christ and the power of his resurrection.

Is it not a noble thing for a Christian to be able to go where he may and feel that he cannot meet an accuser? That wherever he may be, whether he walketh within himself in the chambers of conscience or out of himself amongst his fellow men, or above himself into heaven or beneath himself into hell, yet is he a justified one, and nothing can be laid to his charge. Who can condemn? Who can condemn? Yea, echo, O ye skies! Reverberate, ye caverns of the deep! Who can condemn when Christ hath died, hath risen from the dead, is enthroned on high, and intercedes? But all things pass away. I see the heavens on fire rolling up like a scroll.

I see sun, moon, and stars pale now their feeble light. The earth is tottering. The pillars of heaven are rocking.

The grand assize is commenced. The herald angels descend not to sing this time, but with thundering trumpets to proclaim, He comes, He comes to judge the earth in righteousness and the people in equity. What says the believer now? He says, I fear not that assize, for who can condemn? The great white throne is set.

The books are opened. Men are trembling. Fiends are yelling.

Sinners are shrieking. Rocks hide us. Mountains on us fall.

These make up an awful chorus of dismay. There stands the believer, and looking round on the assembled universe of men and angels, he cries, Who shall lay anything to my charge? And silence reigns through earth and heaven. Again he speaks, and fixing his eye full on the judge himself, he cries, Who is he that condemneth? And, lo, there upon the throne of judgment sits the only one who can condemn.

And who is that? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who sitteth on the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for Him. Can those lips say, to the man for whom they once did intercede? Can those eyes flash lightnings on the man whom once they saw in sin, and thence with rays of love they did lift him up with joy and peace and purity? No, Christ will not be lie himself. He cannot reverse His grace.

It cannot be that the throne of condemnation shall be exalted on the ruins of the cross. It cannot be that Christ should transform Himself at last. But till He can do so, none can condemn.

None but He hath a right to condemn, for He is the sole judge of right and wrong. And if He hath died, shall He put us to death? And if He hath risen for us, shall He thrust us downwards to the pit? And if He hath reigned for us and hath been accepted for us, shall He cast us away? And if He hath pleaded for us, shall He curse us at the last? No. Come life, come death.

My soul can rest on this. He died for me. I cannot be punished for my sin.

He rose again. I must rise. And though I die, yet shall I live again.

He sits at the right hand of God, and so must I. I must be crowned and reign with Him forever. He intercedes, and He must be heard. He beckons me, and I must be brought at length to see His face and to be with Him where He is.

I will say no more. Only may God give us all an interest in these four precious things. An angel's tongue might fail to sing their sweetness or to tell their brightness and their majesty.

Mine has failed. But this is well. The excellency of the power is in the doctrine and not in my preaching.

Amen. This message, The Believer's Challenge, was preached by Charles Haddon Spurgeon on June 5, 1859. This is Charles Kelsch inviting you to join me again for another message from The Prince of Preachers.

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