

The High Priest Standing Between the Dead and the Living

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon portrays Aaron's intercession as a vivid type of Christ's loving, propitiatory role as the High Priest standing between the living and the dead, saving sinners by his atoning sacrifice.

Scripture: Numbers 16:47-48, Psalm 23:1, Hebrews 7:17, Hebrews 9:24, Isaiah 53:5, John 1:11, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Christology", "Atonement", "Intercession"

Description

In this powerful expository sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the biblical account of Aaron standing between the dead and the living as a vivid type of Christ's intercessory role. Spurgeon highlights Aaron's loving sacrifice, his role as the great propitiator, and the readiness of the High Priest to save. The sermon draws rich theological insights into Christ's atoning work and calls believers to trust fully in Jesus' priestly mediation. It is a stirring call to recognize the sufficiency and exclusivity of Christ's priesthood and to respond with faith and love.

Transcript

"And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed."—Numbers 16:47-48.

WE HAVE ATTENTIVELY read the passage which contains the account of this transaction. The authority of Moses and Aaron had been disputed by an ambitious man belonging to an elder branch of the family of Levi, who had craftily joined with himself certain factious spirits of the tribe of Reuben, who themselves also sought to attain to power by their supposed rights through Reuben the firstborn. By a singular judgment from heaven, God had proved that rebellion against Moses was a mortal sin. He had bidden the earth open its mouth and swallow up all the traitors, and both Levites and Reubenites had disappeared, covered in a living grave. One would have imagined that from this time the murmurings of the children of Israel would have ceased, or that at least even should they have daring enough to gather in little mutinous knob, yet their traitorous spirit never would have come to so great a height as to develop itself in the whole body openly before the Lord's tabernacle. Yet so was it. On the very morrow after that solemn transaction, the whole of the people of Israel gathered themselves together, and with unholy clamours surrounded Moses and Aaron, charging them with having put to death the people of the Lord. Doubtless

they hinged this accusation upon the fact, that whenever Moses prayed God heard him; then would they say, "Had he prayed upon this occasion the people would not have been destroyed; the earth would not have opened her mouth, and they would not have been swallowed up." They would thus attempt to prove the charge which they brought against these two great men of God. Can you picture the scene now in your mind's eye. There is the infuriated mass of people; the spectacle of such a crowd as I see before me in this hall is overpowering, and were all this multitude in tumult against two men, the two might have sufficient cause for trembling, but this would be but as a grain of sand compared with that inconceivable number who were then gathered. A large part of those three millions would come up in one vast tumultuous host; whatever was proposed by any leader of the mob would no doubt have instantly been carried into effect, and had it not been for the awful majesty which surrounded the person of Moses, no doubt they would have torn him to pieces on the spot. But just as they are rushing up like the waves of the sea, the cloudy pillar which hung above the tabernacle descends, and envelopes in its fold, as with a protecting baptism, the whole of the sacred place. Then in the center of this cloud there blazed out that marvellous light called the Shekinah, which was the indication of the presence of Him who cannot be seen, but whose glory may be manifest. The people stand back a little; Moses and Aaron fall upon their faces in prayer; they beg of God that he would spare the people, for they have heard a voice coming out of the excellent glory, saying, "Get thee up from this people, that I may destroy them in a moment." This time God's blow goes forth with his word, for the destroying angel begins to mow down the outer ranks of the vast tumultuous host, there they fall one upon another; Moses with his undimmed vision, looking over the heads of the people, can see them begin to fall beneath the scythe of death. "Up," saith Aaron, up, and take with thee thy censer; snatch fire from off the holy altar, and run among the people, for the plague has begun." Aaron, a man of a hundred years of age, fills his censor, runs along as if he were a youth, and begins to swing it towards heaven with holy energy, feeling that in his hand was the life of the people; and when the incense is accepted in heaven, death stops in his work. On this side are heaps upon heaps of corpses slain by God's avenging angel, and there stand the crowd of living people, living only because of Aaron's intercession; living simply because he had waved that censor and burned that incense for them; otherwise, had the angel smitten them all, they would all have lain together as the leaves of the forest lie in autumn—dead and sear.

I think you can now in your imaginations picture the scene. I desire to use the picture before us as a great spiritual type of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for that erring multitude of the sons of men, who "like sheep have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way." We shall look at Aaron this morning in a five-fold character. The whole scene is typical of Christ; and Aaron, as he appears before us in each character is a most magnificent picture of the Lord Jesus.

I. First, let us look at Aaron as the LOVER of the people. You know who it is to whom we give that name of "Lover of my Soul." You will be able to see in Aaron the lover of Israel; in Jesus the lover of his people.

Aaron deserves to be very highly praised for his patriotic affection for a people who were the most rebellious and stiffnecked that ever grieved the heart of a good man. You must remember that in this case he was the aggrieved party. The clamor was made against Moses and against Aaron, yet it was Moses and Aaron who intercede and saved the people. They were the offended ones, yet were they the saving ones. Aaron had a special part in the matter, for no doubt the conflict of Korah especially was rather against the priesthood, which belonged exclusively to Aaron, than against the prophetic dispensation which God had granted to Moses. Aaron must have felt when he saw Korah there and the two hundred and fifty men, all of them with their censers, that the plot was against him; that they wished to strip from

him his mitre, to take from him his embroidered vest, and the glittering stones that shone upon his breast; that they wished to reduce him to the position of a common Levite, and take to themselves his office and his dignity. Yet, forgetting himself, he doth not say, "Let them die; I will wait awhile till they have been sufficiently smitten." But the old man with generous love hastened into the midst of the people, though he was himself the aggrieved person. Is not this the very picture of our sweet Lord Jesus? Had not sin dishonored him? Was he not the Eternal God, and did not sin therefore conspire against him as well as against the Eternal Father and the Holy Spirit? Was he not, I say, the one against whom the nations of the earth stood up and said, "Let us break his bands asunder, and cast his cords from us." Yet he, our Jesus, laying aside all thought of avenging himself, becomes the Savior of his people.

"Down from the shining seats above, With joyful haste he fled; Entered the grave in mortal flesh, And dwelt among the dead."

Oh! generous Christ, forgetting the offenses which we have committed against thee, and making atonement by thine own blood for sins which were perpetrated against thine own glory!

Well, you note again, that Aaron in thus coming forward as the deliverer and lover of his people, must have remembered that he was abhorred by this very people. They were seeking his blood; they were desiring to put him and Moses to death, and yet all thoughtless of danger, he snatches up his censer and runs into their midst with a divine enthusiasm in his heart. He might have stood back, and said, "No, they will slay me if I go into their ranks; furious as they are, they will charge this new death upon me and lay me low." But he never considers it. Into the midst of their crowd he boldly springs. Most blessed Jesus, thou mightest not only think thus, but indeed thou didst feel it to be true. Thou didst come unto thine own, and thine own received thee not. Thou didst come into the world to save a race that hated thee, and oh, how they proved their hatred to thee, for they did spit upon thy cheeks; they did cast calumny and slander upon thy person; they did take the heir, and said, "Come, let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours." Jesus, thou wast willing to die a martyr, that thou mightest be made a sacrifice for those by whom thy blood was spilt. Jesus transcends Aaron; Aaron might have feared death at the hands of the people, Jesus Christ did actually meet it, and yet there he stood even in the hour of death, waving his censer, staying the plague, and dividing the living from the dead.

Again, you will see the love and kindness of Aaron, if you look again; Aaron might have said, "But the Lord will surely destroy me also with the people, if I go where the shafts of death are flying they will reach me." He never thinks of it; he exposes his own person in the very forefront of the destroying one. There comes the angel of death, smiting all before him, and here stands Aaron in his very path, as much as to say, "Get thee back! get thee back! I will wave my incense in thy face; destroyer of men, thou canst not pass the censor of God's high priest." Oh thou glorious High Priest of our profession, thou mightest not only have feared this which Aaron might have dreaded, but thou didst actually endure the plague of God, for when thou didst come among the people to save them from Jehovah's wrath, Jehovah's wrath fell upon thee. Thou wast forsaken of thy Father. The plague which Jesus kept from us slew him, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The sheep escaped, but, "his life and blood the Shepherd pays, a ransom for the flock."

Oh, thou lover of thy church, immortal honors be unto thee! Aaron deserves to be beloved by the tribes of Israel, because he stood in the gap and exposed himself for their sins; but thou, most mighty Savior, thou shalt have eternal songs, because, forgetful of thyself, thou didst bleed and die, that man might be saved!

I would again for one moment, draw your attention to that other thought which I have already hinted at, namely, that Aaron as a lover of the people of Israel deserves much commendation, from the fact that it is expressly said, he ran into the host. I am not just now sure about Aaron's age, but being older than Moses, who must have been at this time about ninety years of age, Aaron must have been more than a hundred, and probably, a hundred and twenty, or more. It is no little thing to say that such a man, clad no doubt in his priestly robes, ran, and that for a people who had never shown any activity to do him service, but much zeal in opposing his authority. That little fact of his running is highly significant, for it shows the greatness and swiftness of the divine impulse of love that was within. Ah! and was it not so with Christ? Did he not haste to be our Savior? Were not his delights with the sons of men? Did he not often say, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." His dying for us was not a thing which he dreaded. "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover." He had panted for the moment when he should redeem his people. He had looked forward through eternity for that hour when he should glorify his Father, and his Father might glorify him. He came voluntarily bound by no constraint, except his own covenant engagements,; and he cheerfully and joyfully laid down his life—a life which no man could take from him, but which he laid down of himself. While I look with admiration upon Aaron, I must look with adoration upon Christ. While I write Aaron down as the lover of his race, I write down Jesus Christ as being the best of lovers—the friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

II. But I now pass on to take a second view of Aaron as he stands in another character. Let us now view Aaron as THE GREAT PROPITIATOR.

Wrath had gone out from God against the people on account of their sin, and it is God's law that his wrath shall never stay unless a propitiation be offered. The incense which Aaron carried in his hand was the propitiation before God, from the fact that God saw in that perfume the type of that richer offering which our Great High Priest is this very day offering before the throne.

Aaron as the propitiator, is to be looked at first as bearing in his censer that which was necessary for the propitiation. He did not come empty-handed. Even though God's high priest, he must take the censor, he must fill it with the ordained incense, made with the ordained materials, and then he must light it with the sacred fire from off the altar, and with that alone. With the censer in his hand he is safe; without it Aaron might have died as well as the rest of the people. The qualification of Aaron partly lay in the fact that he had the censer, and that that censer was full of sweet odours which were acceptable to God. Behold, then, Christ Jesus as the propitiator for his people. He stands this day before God with his censor smoking up towards heaven. Behold the Great High Priest! See him this day with his pierced hands, and head that once was crowned with thorns. Mark how the marvellous smoke of his merits goeth up for ever and ever before the eternal throne. 'Tis he, 'tis he alone who puts away the sins of his people. His incense, as we know, consists first of all of his positive obedience to the divine law. He kept his Father's commands; he did everything he should have done; he kept to the full the whole law of God, and made it honorable. Then mixed with this is his blood—an equally rich and precious ingredient. That bloody sweat—the blood from his head, pierced with the crown of thorns, the blood of his hands as they were nailed to the tree; the blood of his feet as they were fixed to the wood; and the blood of his very heart—richest of them all—all mixed together with his merits—these make up the incense—an incense incomparable—an incense peerless and surpassing all others. Not all the odours that ever rose from tabernacle or temple could for a moment stand in rivalry with these. The blood alone speaketh better things than that of Abel, and if Abel's blood prevailed to bring vengeance, how much more shall the blood of Christ prevail to bring down pardon and mercy! Our faith is fixed on perfect righteousness and complete atonement, which are as sweet

frankincense before the Father's face.

Besides that, it was not enough for Aaron to have the proper incense. Korah might have that too, and he might have the censor also. That would not suffice—he must be the ordained priest; for mark, two hundred and fifty men fell in doing the act which Aaron did. Aaron's act saved others; their act destroyed themselves. So Jesus, the propitiator, is to be looked upon as the ordained one—called of God as was Aaron. Settled in eternity as being the predestinated propitiation for sin, he came into the world as an ordained priest of God, receiving his ordination not from man, neither by man, but like Melchisedec, the priest of the Most High God, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, he is a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Stand back, sons of Korah, all of you who call yourselves priests. I can scarce imagine that any man in this world who takes to himself the title of a priest, except he take it in the sense in which all God's people are priests,—I cannot imagine that a priest can enter heaven. I would not say a thing too stern or too severe; but I do most thoroughly believe that an assumption of the office of priest is so base an usurpation of the priestly office of Christ, that I could as well conceive of a man being saved who called himself God, as conceive of a man being saved who called himself a priest; if he really means what he says, he has so trenched upon the priestly prerogative of Christ, that it seems to me he has touched the very crown jewels, and is guilty of a blasphemy, which, unless it be repented of, shall surely bring damnation on his head. Shake your garments, ye ministers of Christ, from all priestly assumption; come out from among them; touch not the unclean thing. There are no priests now specially to minister among men. Jesus Christ, and he only is the priest of his Church, and he hath made all of us priests and kings unto our God, and we shall reign for ever and ever. If I should have any person here so weak as to depend for his salvation upon the offerings of another man, I conjure him to forego his deception. I care not who your priests may be. He may belong to the Anglican or to the Romish church. Ay, and to any church under heaven. If he claimeth to be anything of a priest more than you can claim yourself—away with him—he imposes upon you; he speaks to you that which God abhors, and that which the Church of Christ should abhor and would detest, were she truly alive to her Master's glory. None but Jesus, none but Jesus; all other priests and offerings we disdain. Cast dirt upon their garments, they are not and they cannot be priests; they usurp the special dignity of Jesus.

But let us note once more in considering Aaron as the great propitiator, that we must look upon him as being ready for his work. He was ready with his incense, and ran to the work at the moment the plague broke out. We do not find that he had need to go and put on his priestly garments; we do not find that he had to prepare for performing the propitiatory work; but he went there and then as soon as the plague broke out. The people were ready to perish and he was ready to save. Oh, my hearer, listen to this, Jesus Christ stands ready to save thee now; there is no need of preparation; he hath slain the victim; he hath offered the sacrifice; he hath filled the censor; he hath put to it the glowing coals. His breastplate is on his breast; his mitre is on his head; he is ready to save thee now. Trust him, and thou shalt not find need for delay. Rely upon him, and thou shalt not find that he hath to go a day's journey to save thee; "He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Ye who know not Christ, hear this! Ye are lost and ruined by the fall. Wrath is gone out from God against you. That wrath must consume you to the lowest hell, unless some one can propitiate God on your behalf. You cannot do it. No man can do it; no prayers of yours; no sacraments, nay, though you could sweat a bloody sweat, it would not avail; but Christ is able to make propitiation. He can do it, and he alone; he can stand between you and God, and turn away Jehovah's wrath, and he can put into your heart a sense of his love. Oh, I pray you, trust him, trust him. You may not be ready for him, but he is always

ready to save, and indeed I must correct myself in that last sentence, you are ready for him. If you be never so vile, and never so ruined by your sin, their needs no preparation and no readiness. It was not the merit of the people that saved them, nor any preparation on their part; it was the preparedness of the high priest that saved them. He is prepared. He stands on the behalf of those who believe on him. Would that thou wouldst now believe on him and trust thy soul in his hands; and oh, believe me, thy sins which are many shall be all forgiven; the plague shall be stayed, nor shall God's wrath go out against thee, but thou shalt be saved.

III. Let me now view Aaron as THE INTERPOSER.

Let me explain what I mean. As the old Westminster Annotations say upon this passage, "The plague was moving among the people as the fire moveth along a field of corn." There it came; it began in the extremity; the faces of men grew pale, and swiftly on, on it came, and in vast heaps they fell till some fourteen thousand had been destroyed. Aaron wisely puts himself just in the pathway of the plague. It came on, cutting down all before it, and there stood Aaron the interposer with arms outstretched and censor swinging towards heaven, interposing himself between the darts of death and the people. "If there be darts that must fly," he seemed to say, "let them pierce me; or let the incense shield both me and the people. Death," saith he, "art thou coming on thy pale horse? I arrest thee, I throw back thy steed upon his haunches. Art thou coming, thou skeleton king? With my censor in my hand I stand before thee; thou must march over my body; thou must empty my censer; thou must destroy God's High Priest, ere thou canst destroy this people." Just so was it with Christ. Wrath had gone out against us. The law was about to smite us the whole human race must be destroyed. Christ stands in the forefront of the battle. "The stripes must fall on me," he cries; "the arrows shall find a target in my breast. On me, Jehovah, let thy vengeance fall." And he receives that vengeance, and afterwards upspringing from the grave he waves the censor full of the merit of his blood, and bids this wrath and fury stand back. On which side are you to-day, sinner? Is God angry with thee, sinner? Are thy sins unforgiven? Say, art thou unpardoned? Art thou abiding still an heir of wrath and an inheritor of death? Ah! then would that thou wert on the other side of Christ. If thou dost believe on Christ, then let me ask thee, dost thou know that thou art completely saved? No wrath can ever reach thee, no spiritual death can ever destroy thee, no hell can ever consume thee, and why? What is thy guard, what thy protection? I see the tear, glistening in thine eye as thou sayest, "There is nothing between me and hell save Christ? There is nothing between me and Jehovah's wrath save Christ? There is nothing between me and instant destruction save Christ? But he is enough. He with the censor in his hand—God's great ordained Priest—he is enough." Ah, brothers and sisters, if you have put between you and God, baptisms and communions, fastings, prayers, tears and vows, Jehovah shall break through your refuges as the fire devours the stubble. But if, my soul, Christ stands between thee and Jehovah, Jehovah cannot smite thee; his thunderbolt must first pierce through the Divine Redeemer ere it can reach thee, and that can never be.

My dear hearers, do you perceive this great truth, that there is nothing which can save the soul of man, save Jesus Christ standing between that soul and the just judgment of God? And oh, I put again the personal enquiry to you, are you sheltered behind Christ? Sinner, are you standing to-day beneath the cross? Is that thy shelter? Is the purple robe of Jesus' atonement covered over you?

Are you like the dove which hides in the clefts of the rock? Have you hidden in the wounds of Christ? Say, have you crept into his side, and do you feel that he must be your shelter till the tempest be overpast? Oh, be of good cheer; he for whom Christ is the intercessor, is a rescued man. Oh, soul, if thou art not in Christ, what wilt thou do when the destroying angel comes? Careless sinner, what will become of thee

when death arrests thee? Where wilt thou be when the judgment trumpet rings in thine ears, and sounds an alarm that shall wake the dead? Sleepy sinner, sleeping to-day under God's Word, will you sleep then, when Jehovah's thunders are let loose, and all his lightnings set the heavens in a blaze? I know where then you shall seek a shelter! You shall seek it where you cannot find it, you shall bid the rocks fall upon you, and ask the mountains to hide you, but their stony bowels shall know of no compassion, their hearts of adamant shall yield you no pity, and you shall stand exposed to the blast of vengeance and the shower of the hot hail of God's fury, and nothing shall protect you, but as Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed from off the face of the earth, so must you be destroyed, and that for ever and ever, because ye believed not on Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

IV. But we cannot tarry longer here; we must again pass to another point. We have viewed Aaron in three characters—as the lover, the propitiator, and the intercessor; now, fourthly, let me view him as THE SAVIOR.

It was Aaron Aaron's censor, that saved the lives of that great multitude. If he had not prayed the plague had not stayed, and the Lord would have consumed the whole company in a moment. As it was, you perceive there were some fourteen thousand and seven hundred that died before the Lord. The plague had begun its dreadful work, and only Aaron could stay it. And now I want you to notice with regard to Aaron, that Aaron, and especially the Lord Jesus, must be looked upon as a gracious Savior. It was nothing but love that moved Aaron to wave his censor. The people could not demand it of him. Had they not brought a false accusation against him? And yet he saves them. It must have been love and nothing but love. Say, was there anything in the voices of that infuriated multitude which could have moved Aaron to stay the plague from before them? Nothing! nothing in their character! nothing in their looks! nothing in their treatment of God's High Priest! and yet he graciously stands in the breach, and saves them from the devouring judgment of God! Oh! brothers and sisters—if Christ hath saved us he is a gracious Savior indeed. Often as we think of the fact that we are saved, the tear falls down our cheek; for we never can tell why Jesus hath saved us.

"What was there in you that could merit esteem! Or give the Creator delight? 'Twas 'Even so, Father!' you ever must sing 'Because it seem'd good in thy sight.'"

There is no difference between the glorified in heaven and the doomed in hell, except the difference that God made of his own sovereign grace. Whatever difference there may be between Saul the apostle and Elymas the sorcerer, has been made by infinite sovereignty and undeserved love. Paul might still have remained Saul of Tarsus, and might have become a damned fiend in the bottomless pit, had it not been for free sovereign grace which came out to snatch him as a brand from the burning. Oh, sinner, thou sayest "There is no reason in me why God should save me," but there is no reason in any man. Thou hast no good point, nor hath any man. There is nothing in any man to commend him to God. We are all such sinners, that hell is our deserved portion; and if any of us be saved from going down into the pit, it is God's undeserved sovereign bounty that doth it, and not any merits of ours. Jesus Christ is a most gracious Savior.

And then again, Aaron was an unaided Savior. Even Moses did not come with Aaron to help him. He stood alone in the gap with that censor—that one solitary stream of smoke dividing between the living and the dead. Why did not the princes of Israel come with him? Alas! they could have done nothing, they must have died themselves. Why did not all the Levity come with him? They must have been smitten if they had dared to stand in the place of God's High Priest. He stands alone, alone, alone! and herein was he a great

type of Christ, who could say, "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me." Do not think, then, that when Christ prevails with God, it is because of any of your prayers, or tears, or good works. He never puts your tears and prayers into his censor. They would mar the incense. There is nothing but his own prayers, and his own tears, and his own merits there. Do not think that you are saved because of anything that you have ever done or can ever do for Christ. We may preach, and we may be made in God's hand the spiritual fathers of thousands of souls, but our preaching doth in no way help to turn away the wrath of God from us. Christ doth it all, entirely and alone, and no man must dare to stand as his helper. Sinner, dost thou hear this, thou art saying, "I cannot do this or that." He asks thee not to do anything, thou sayest, "I have no merits." Man, he does not want any, if thou wouldst help Christ thou wilt be lost, but if thou wilt leave Christ to do it all, thou shalt be saved. Come now, the very plan of salvation is this, to take Christ to be thine all in all; he will never be a part-Savior; he never came to patch our ragged garments; he will give us a new robe, but he will never mend the old one. He did not come to help build the palace of God, he will quarry every stone and lay it on its fellow, he will have no sound of hammer, or help in that great work. Oh that this voice could ring through the world while I proclaim again those words, the deathblow of all Popery, legality, and carnal merit, "Jesus only, Jesus only." "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Nor doth he need a helper; "He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." "He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him."

He was, then, you will perceive, a gracious Savior, and all unaided one; and, once more, Aaron as a Savior was all-sufficient. Death came up to the very feet of Aaron; there lay a dead man, there lay a mother, a child, a prince, a hewer of wood, a drawer of water,—there they lay. There stood a strong man in his agony, and implored that he might not die, but he fell backward a corpse. There stood up a prince of Israel and must he die? Yes, he must fall. All-devouring death, like a hungry lion, came howling onward, amidst the screams and shrieks of the people, but there he stood; that censor seemed to say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." What a miracle that the censor should stop the reign of death. Up to this mark the waves of that shoreless sea are flowing; there men stand on the terra firma of life. Aaron stands, and as God's High Priest with that censor alone, he puts back grim death; the whole host of Israel, if they had been armed and had carried bows, could not have driven back the pestilence; nay, all the hosts of armed men that ever stained the earth with blood could not have driven back God's plagues. Death would have laughed at them, yea, he would have trodden in among their ranks and cut them in pieces, but Aaron alone is enough, fully sufficient, and that through the burning of the incense. Oh sinner, Christ is an all-sufficient Savior, able to save; you cannot save yourself, but he can save you. Oh sinner, all sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; it mattereth not how base and vile you may have been, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Though the remembrance of thy sin bring scarlet into thy face, dost thou blush to think what a wretch thou hast been, has thy life been foul adultery, has it been blasphemy, lying, hatred of God's people, and what not,—I add to this another, if thou wilt,—or lasciviousness, debauchery, murder,—if all these crimes were there, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, would be able still to cleanse thee from all sin. Though thou had committed every crime in the catalogue of iniquity, sins which we cannot mention, yet "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as white as snow." And thou sayest, "How can I partake of this?" Simply by trusting Christ with thy soul. "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved he that believeth not shall be damned." This was Christ's commission to the apostles, he bid them go forth and preach this great truth, and again I proclaim it, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not must be damned." He that believeth not shall be damned, be his sins never so few, he that believeth shall never be lost, though his skis may have been never so many. Trust thou thy soul with

Christ, and thy sins are at once forgiven, at once blotted out.

V. And now I come to my last point, and that is, Aaron as THE DIVIDER—the picture of Christ.

Aaron the anointed one stands here; on that side is death, on this side life; the boundary between life and death is that one man. Where his incense smokes the air is purified, where it smokes not the plague reigns with unmitigated fury. There are two sorts of people here this morning, we forget the distinction of rich and poor, we know it not here there are two sorts of people, we forego the distinction of the learned and unlearned we care not for that here; there are two sorts here, and these are the living and the dead, the pardoned, the unpardoned, the saved, and the lost. What divides the true Christian from the unbeliever? Some think it is that the Christian takes the Sacrament, the other not. It is no division, there be men who have gone to hell with sacramental bread in their mouths; others may imagine that Baptism makes the difference, and indeed it is the outward token, the baptismal pool is the means by which we show to the world that we are buried in Christ's grave, in type that we are dead to the world and buried in Christ; we rise up from it in testimony that we desire to live in newness of life by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He who is baptized does in that way cross the Rubicon, he draws the sword and throws away the scabbard, he is the baptized one, and has a sign that can never be eradicated from him. He is dedicated through that baptism to Christ, but it is but an outward sign, for many have there been who have been baptized with water, who not having the baptism of the Holy Ghost, have afterwards been baptized in the fiery sufferings of eternal torment. No! no! the one division, the one great division between those who are God's people and those who are not, is Christ. A man in Christ is a Christian; a man out of Christ is dead in trespasses and sins. "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ is saved, he that believeth not is lost." Christ is the only divider between his people and the world. On which side, then, art thou to-day, my hearer? Come, let the question go individually to you. Young man, on which side are you? Are you Christ's friend and servant, or are you his enemy? Old man, thou with the grey head yonder, thou hast but a little while to live, on which side art thou? Art thou my Master's blood-bought one, or art thou still a lost sheep? And thou matron, thou who art busied, perhaps, even now in thy thoughts upon thy children, think not of them for a moment, on which side art thou? Hast thou believed, hast thou been born again, or art thou still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity? Ye that stand yonder, let the question penetrate your thick rank now, where are you? Can you take the name of Christ upon your lips, and say, "Jesus, I am thine, and thou art mine, thy blood and righteousness are my hope and trust;" for if not, my hearer, thou art among the spiritually dead, and thou shalt soon be among the damned unless divine grace prevent, and change, and renew thee.

Please remember, brothers and sisters, that as Christ is the great divider now, so will he be in the day of judgment. Do you never think of that, he shall divide them the one from the other, as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. It is the Shepherd's person that divideth the sheep from the goats. He stands between them, and in that last day of days for which all other days were made, Christ shall be the great divider. There the righteous clad in white, in songs triumphant glorified with him; and there the lost, the unbelieving, the fearful, the abominable. What divides them from you bright host? Nothing but the person of the Son of Man, on whom they look, and weep, and mourn, and wail because of him. That is the impenetrable barrier that shall shut out the damned from eternal bliss. The gate which may let you in now will be the fiery gate which shall shut you out hereafter. Christ is the door of heaven; oh, dreadful day when that door shall be shut, when that door shall stand before you, and prevent you entering into the felicity which you shall then long for, when you cannot enter into it.

Oh! on which side shall I be, when all these transitory things are done away with, when the dead have risen from their graves, when the great congregation shall stand upon the land, and upon the sea, when every valley, and every mountain, and every river, and every sea, shall be crowded with multitudes standing in thick array? Oh! when he shall say, "Separate my people, thrust in the sickle, for the harvest of the world is ripe;" my soul, where shalt thou be? Shalt thou be found among the lost? Shall the dread trumpet send thee down to hell, while a voice that rends thine ear, shall call after thee "Depart from me, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity into everlasting fire in hell, prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh, grant that I may not be there, but among thy people may I stand. So may it be; may we be on the right hand of the Judge to all eternity, and remember that for ever and ever Christ will be the divider, he shall stand between the lost and the saved, he shall interpose for ever between the damned and the glorified. Again I put it to you, give me your ears just for one moment while I speak. What say you, sirs, shall this congregation be rent in twain? The hour is coming when our wills and wishes shall have no forge. God will divide the righteous from the wicked then, and Christ shall be the dread division, I say, are we prepared to be separated eternally? Husband, are you prepared to renounce to-day your wife for ever, are you prepared when the clammy sweat gathers on her brow to give her the last kiss, and say, "Adieu, adieu, I shall never meet with thee again." Child, son, daughter, are you ready to go home and sit down at the table of your mother, and ere you eat, say, "Mother, I now forswear you once for all, I am determined to be lost and as thou art on the side of Christ, and I will never love him, I will part with you for ever." Surely the ties of kinship make us long to meet in another world, and do we wish to meet in hell? Do you wish all of you to meet there—a grim company to lie in the midst of the flames. Will you abide in the devouring fire, and dwell in everlasting burning? No, your wishes are that you may meet in heaven, but you cannot unless you meet in Christ, you cannot meet in Paradise unless you meet in him. Oh that now the grace of God were poured upon you, that you might come unto Jesus.

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