

SUPPLEMENT.

INDEPENDENT PATRIOT

AUGUST 1888.

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SERMON,

BY ELDER H. C. BRONSON, OF ST.
JOSEPH, MO., DELIVERED AT
INDEPENDENCE, MO.,
APRIL 10TH, 1888.

If I had had the selecting of the hymn this morning, I could not have chosen one that would have suggested a better thought upon the subject for our consideration this morning than the one just sung. The closing of each stanza of that hymn suggests to us one of the most important principles connected with the Christian religion. "Crown him Lord of all."

I will call your attention first to a passage of scripture found in Rom. 5: 18:

Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all unto justification of life.

This, you will discover, also suggests to us the atonement of Christ, through which we may truly sing, "Crown him Lord of all;" and we shall consider this morning, and so far as able, get something of an understanding of the character of the atonement of Christ; for I believe, and you are aware also of the fact, that the salvation of the human family depends largely upon the atonement of Christ. It is, therefore, a subject that should be under-

stood, so far as it is possible for the finite mind to comprehend it. I also believe, that because of a lack of a correct comprehension of this all-important subject, Christ has been misrepresented in the past, and is now being misrepresented, and injustice has been done to him, and to the Father also.

There is a class who tell us, that the atonement of Christ has proven a failure. It has failed to accomplish what God designed it should accomplish. That which God designed should be for the restoration and complete redemption of the human family, they tell us, has proven a failure and consequently what confidence can we have in God? If his designs have been frustrated in this, they may be in everything else. I would be willing to admit this morning, with the infidel world that their conclusions in this respect were correct, provided the premises upon which these conclusions are based, were correct. If I admit the correctness of the premises, I must admit the correctness of the conclusion. But I am not willing to admit that the premises upon which this conclusion is based, are correct. But somebody is responsible for these facts and this error. The infidel may be made responsible for the error, but I do not think he is responsible for the premises upon which the conclusion is bas-

ed, that the atonement has proven a failure. The statement is made that it has proven a failure, from the fact, as they understand it, that God designed through the atonement to save the entire world. That God sent his son from the courts of glory and made an atonement for the world; and further, that at no time subsequent to the atonement, has there been over one third of the human family saved by virtue of that atonement, or have become benefitted thereby. Now, says this infidel element, if this be a fact, the design of God to save the world through the atonement of Christ has proven a failure.

Let us notice the promises upon which these conclusions are based. We have been told and are still being told, that the atonement of Christ only benefits or affects those who become benefitted by making the atonement apply in their individual cases; or in other words, that since the gospel was introduced to man, it has only benefitted those who have become Christ's by virtue of the terms of the gospel. It has only benefitted those who have become Christian, have become members of the church. But as there has been but about one third of the human family Christian, therefore but one third of the inhabitants of the earth has been benefitted by the atonement. I do not agree with this thought. The soul-inspiring hymn just sung, says, "Crown him Lord of all." Paul says in the text, "Therefore, as by the offense of one, [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation"—you will discover right here, before introducing the latter clause of the text, that this condemna-

tion is universal. There is not a soul but has come under this condemnation in consequence of the offense of one—Adam. To-day we are under this condemnation, and we see the consequences of this offense of one every day. We feel it, and we are subject to infirmities, sickness, sorrow, disappointments, and finally death in consequence of the offense of one. This is the judgment of condemnation. Who shall escape it? Not one. It does not matter so far as this judgment is concerned, whether you are in the church or out of it; it does not matter whether you are virtuous and pure, or whether you are not; whether you are a believer in Christ, or whether you are not. It is just the same to you. It is universal in its nature. We all feel it; we are all affected by it. But you will bear in mind one thought as we pass along. Here we have this suffering, this final death referred to and yet they are not the result of any sin upon our part. They are the result of the transgression of one, which was Adam. You and I were not there. We had nothing to do with it. We are as innocent as an archangel of that offense. "Therefore, as by one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so"—you notice these two little words, even so, correspondingly—"By the righteousness of one," Who is this one? Christ. "The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Is not one just as broad as the other. Under that is not one just as universal as the other? Certainly it is. It does not matter whether you are in the church or not. No, no. It does not matter whether you have

been virtuous or not. No such provisions are made. But this is a free gift of one, Christ. This is for all men everywhere, every son and every daughter of Adam. Now we can consistently sing; "Crown him Lord of all." Can we longer cling to that narrow contracted idea, which misrepresents Christ, and does injustice to the great principle, the atonement of Christ; or say, that only those who have been obedient are benefitted by the atonement of Christ. It is too narrow. It does not do Him justice. Why should not this be the case? It is in harmony with justice. For this reason, we remarked before, that we were not present when the offense was committed, and we are not personally accountable for that crime. We are not guilty. We had nothing to do with the offense. Is it not then in harmony with the justice of God, that by the atonement we might be redeemed, not because of any works upon our part, or through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, and finally and completely restored, as far as this original transgression is concerned. I can not believe that God holds you and me personally accountable for a crime we never committed. I can not believe but that there must be a redemption and restoration; and this atonement of Christ is to bring this about, and accomplish this universal redemption.

Some may say to us as some have said in the past in consideration of this fact, "Yours is a universal salvation." My dear friend, it is nothing of the kind, if I understand it correctly. Between the universal salvation brought about by the atonement of Christ, and

the salvation received by compliance with the conditions thereof, there is a wide difference. This universal restoration comes to us, as we before remarked, by virtue of the atonement of Christ; and it is by the righteousness of one, that is Christ, and not by virtue of our righteousness. We could do nothing to bring about this atonement because we had done nothing to bring about the judgment, or the offense. Christ nailed it to the cross, thank God. We suffer under it still, but praise to His holy name, the day is coming when we will be liberated from this suffering and the sorrow in consequence of this offense. How is it that we become sufferers in consequence of this offense, yet are not responsible or accountable. I would illustrate the thought like this: Picture to your minds a beautiful city, and within the walls of that city there is everything that the heart can desire to bring happiness. Perfect peace, perfect joy. There are certain corporate laws governing the inhabitants of that city, and there are certain penalties attached to the transgression of these laws, any one of them, which is right. Suppose that two of those individuals transgress one of those laws, man and wife, the penalty is applied and they are banished from the city, they are placed without the walls, and the gates are shut against them. Outside of the city they are deprived of all the privileges and blessings which they might have enjoyed had they kept the law, and remained on the inside, and they are subject to suffering and death. In the course of time there are born unto them children, and so on down for many generations.

Those who are born unto these individuals who were banished, are also deprived of the privileges and blessings which they might have enjoyed, had their parents remained faithful to the law. They are, therefore, just as much sufferers as their parents who transgressed the law. Yet the children are innocent so far as the crime is concerned; nevertheless, having been born to those who have transgressed the law, they suffer in consequence of that transgression. But you can not say that they are personally accountable. This is just the condition the human family has been in, and is in to-day. Jesus came for the restoration of that which was lost in Adam. Not a partial, but a complete restoration. As we sometimes sing, the blessing will reach "As far as the curse was found." We find that we are all in this condition in consequence of the offense of one, and that Jesus comes and the atonement is wrought out for the universal restoration of all men. That sin and offense are nailed upon Calvary's cross; and the time will come and we look forward to it, when there will be a full and complete redemption. As Paul expressed it in the letter to the Ephesian brethren, "He has purchased it with his own blood." We look forward to the time when we shall inherit the promised possession because he has purchased it for us. It is not given yet, but it will come.

Now about this salvation. This we discover to be a universal restoration, but I do not understand it to be salvation. I understand salvation to mean this: To become entitled to glory and reward in the life beyond the tomb. For one I would not be satisfied alone

with the restoration wrought out by the atonement of Christ. He has not so ordained; but has provided means whereby we may attain unto a higher life and a greater glory and reward. Jesus paid the original debt; the one contracted by Adam; but the question with us is, How are the debts we contract to be canceled. You and I contracted them, we are the parties who are expected to cancel them. Jesus paid the debt contracted by Adam. He canceled that because we had nothing to do in contracting it. Jesus paid the debt Adam contracted, but we have something to do before the debt we contracted can be paid. When we come to this we begin to talk about a salvation, and we grasp the idea of the glory and reward that we may obtain; and the higher condition of life into which we may enter. Cancelling original sin is not all Jesus did; but He has made the blood of Christ applicable in our individual cases, so that by virtue of our works we may attain unto that glory and reward beyond the grave, which we call salvation. Speaking with reference to the difference between restoration and salvation, let me call your attention to the saying of Paul, in the tenth verse of the chapter from which the text is selected: "For if when we were enemies"—that is in this lost and fallen condition—"We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,"—Are reconciled, what does that mean? His original debt is canceled by Christ and a consequent reconciliation accomplished. What further? "Much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." We now have the death of Christ that brings about a universal restoration, but the salvation by the life of Christ. I notice this distinction. Salvation by his life, reconciliation by his death. Jesus paid the debt, and therefore freely gives to us a universal resurrection, universal physical life, and redemption from the death brought in consequence

of Adam's transgression. The salvation here mentioned as coming by his life, is, as I understand the Apostle, the reward, the glory that we shall enjoy in the life that is to come. This is brought by the life of Christ; and as we follow him, and tread in his foot prints, we begin to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven; then we will merit the reward offered for thus following in the foot-prints of Christ. Let me tell you dear friends who have entered into the gospel covenant you are safe in laying up treasures in heaven. When you walk in the foot-prints of Christ, great and grand treasures will be laid up for you in heaven. A greater bank account will be there to your credit than you could have in any other way. It is not in danger. Thieves can not get it. It is sure. God will give it to us just as we lay it up. In this sense I understand salvation by the life of Christ. If this theory be true, and I believe we are warranted in accepting it by the word, then the more faithful we are in this life, the more we shall receive in the life to come! According as we have received here, so shall we receive hereafter. John the revelator saw the time when all stand before God, both small and great, and the books shall be opened and another book shall be opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged according to those things written in the books according to their works. The statement of St. Paul in Rom. 4: 4, throws light upon this question. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." What is this grace? A favor bestowed. This universal restoration comes through the favor or grace of God. But to him that worketh the reward is reckoned of debt. God promises to bless us just in harmony with our works. He has promised us a glory, and it will not be given as of grace, favor, but as of debt. For all that we can do here for Christ and for his truth he will abundantly reward us. The

more we do the more we shall receive! The more time we occupy in his service, the more glorious will be our reward, because the more we can accomplish for Christ, Then the sooner we commence this work the better it will be for us. This explodes the old theory, which it seems to me ought to have been exploded hundreds of years ago; that it does not matter when an individual becomes converted to God, it does not matter when he gives his heart to God, when he has accomplished this he becomes entitled to all that God has promised to any individual. I do not so understand my Bible. I do not so understand the great scheme brought out through Christ. If this theory were true, you could put off this matter until you thought you were going to die, and then you could turn and give your heart to God. I see neither justice nor scripture in the theory. But you know this has been the thought presented to us. And this with others has been the means of driving some of the brightest intellects we have to-day into infidelity and doubt. If this theory were correct, then all those who have passed away, passed over into the next life, met death in consequence of crime, if converted upon the scaffold, they would receive just the same reward as those who had exercised faith all their lives. Take the man arraigned as a criminal and charged with the grossest crime known to the law, and almost fifteen times out of twenty that individual becomes converted to God before he dies, and he is supposed to have done all that is required of him to receive the highest and brightest glory. This is inconsistent, and not in harmony with the word or justice of God. He has done nothing to earn the reward. A few years ago in the city of Indianapolis, Ind., an individual named Merritt was arraigned for murder and proven guilty. He was sentenced to pay the penalty of death. In a little while, as is common in almost every case, spirit-

nal advisers gathered around him, prayed with him, and brought a strong influence to bear upon him. With that influence brought to bear upon him and death staring him in the face, knowing that he had but a few days more before he must pass away to the unknown beyond, he began to think he had better change. Under this influence this man became converted and gave his heart to God. He sought forgiveness of his sins and professed to have obtained it. When he stepped upon the scaffold he confessed his crime, but said he had made his peace with God. But the one that he had murdered was the wife of his bosom. He says, "I have made my peace with God." He bade them all farewell and said that he knew that he was saved, and had only one thing to regret, that was that his poor wife was not prepared to meet him in heaven. This is the kind of salvation presented in the theory we are combatting. What had that man done to earn a reward? Can anyone tell me? Suppose he had received a forgiveness of his sins at that time—I do not believe he did, for he did not comply with the gospel, and my Bible tells me that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him—but suppose he had received a forgiveness of his sins just before he sprang into eternity, I want to ask you how great a reward you think this man had merited by his life? Had he ever educated himself up to that standard by which angels and archangels would be congenial associates for him? Never. There had been no development of character in that man calculated to fit him for heaven and heavenly things. I believe there is a difference between the forgiveness of sins and salvation. I may get a remission of my sins by complying strictly with the terms of the gospel. But do not be satisfied with that friends. It is a life-long work, in order to earn a reward and glory at the right hand of God. By a remission of sins we will simply escape

the punishment of those sins; but salvation must come by virtue of our works. Suppose for illustration that one of these brethren has a piece of work to accomplish next week. If he completes it he will receive a thousand dollars, but if he fails he will be the loser. Discovering that he cannot do it alone, he comes to me and engages me to assist him. Instead of going Monday or Tuesday, or any other day as I agree to do, I fail to go altogether. In consequence of my failure he has not been able to accomplish the work, and has suffered loss. I have sinned against that brother, and wronged him in that way. I get to thinking about this, and it worries me, and I am ashamed to meet him in the street. But I finally go to him and make my confession, and ask his forgiveness. Seeing a penitent spirit manifested by me, he forgives me, but can I expect him to pay me for the week's work? No. I have done nothing and can expect no pay. We may receive forgiveness of sins by complying with the gospel; but we must receive glory and reward by virtue of our works. In order to receive forgiveness of sins, we must comply with the terms of the gospel. When we thus comply our sins may be forgiven, and we may receive reward by developing within us a character calculated to bring to us that glory that God has designed we should receive. We often sing that beautiful hymn,

"Thank the Lord for the plan he has given.

That will render us pure as a child." And in this sense I understand the language of the Apostle Paul, "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation." How? Just in harmony with his second letter to the Corinthians, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new." This power changes the natural man, and transforms these natural dispositions, and makes them like Christ, and

prepares us for a higher glory and reward. But this cannot be accomplished in a moment. No, it is a life-work. May God bless us, and help us to be firm and steadfast in the covenants which we have made. And you who have not made a covenant with God, let me ask you and beseech you in the name of him who hath loved you and died for you, that you will comply with the gospel of Christ now, that your sins may be cancelled now and forever; and then move forward, that you may gain the reward promised you. May we all

at last enjoy everlasting peace through Christ, Amen.

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--BY--

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