

John 1:29 Commentary

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

John the apostle wrote "The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him and *said, **Behold**, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!." (John 1:29)

The Lamb of God

THE GREAT PROCLAMATION

See the [discussion below on the Lamb of God](#), past, present and future.

Adam Clarke on **Behold the Lamb of God** -

This was said in allusion to what was spoken Isaiah 53:7+. Jesus was the true Lamb or Sacrifice required and appointed by God, of which those offered daily in the tabernacle and temple, Exodus 29:38-39+, and especially the paschal lamb, were only the types and representatives. See Exodus 12:4+, Exodus 12:5+; 1 Corinthians 5:7. The continual morning and evening sacrifice of a lamb, under the Jewish law, was intended to point out the continual efficacy of the blood of atonement: for even at the throne of God, Jesus Christ is ever represented as a lamb newly slain, Revelation 5:6. But John, pointing to Christ, calls him emphatically, the Lamb of God: - all the lambs which had been hitherto offered had been furnished by men: this was provided by God, as the only sufficient and available sacrifice for the sin of the world. In three essential respects, this lamb differed from those by which it was represented.

Albert Barnes -

Behold the Lamb of God - A "lamb," among the Jews, was killed and eaten at the Passover to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt, Exodus 12:3-11. A lamb was offered in the tabernacle, and afterward in the temple, every morning and evening, as a part of the daily worship, Exodus 29:38-39+. The Messiah was predicted as a lamb led to the slaughter, to show his patience in his sufferings, and readiness to die for man, Isaiah 53:7+. A lamb, among the Jews, was also an emblem of patience, meekness, gentleness. On "all" these accounts, rather than on any one of them alone, Jesus was called "the Lamb." He was innocent 1 Peter 2:23-25+; He was a sacrifice for sin the substance represented by the daily offering of the lamb, and **slain at the usual time of the evening sacrifice** Luke 23:44-46+ and he was what was represented by the Passover, turning away the anger of God, and saving sinners by his blood from vengeance and eternal death, 1 Corinthians 5:7.

John Gill -

(Jesus came) Not to be baptized, for he had been baptized before by him. This seems to have been after Christ had been forty days in the wilderness, from whence he now returned, and came to attend on John's ministry; both to do honour to him, and that he might be made manifest by him; and this was the day after John had bore such a testimony concerning him, to the priests and Levites; and which Christ the omniscient God, knew full well, and therefore came at this season, when the minds of the people were prepared by John's testimony, to expect and receive him

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said - The next day after the visit of the Jews sent by the Pharisees. In this case, the next day introduces a series of events described in John 1:29 through John 2:1. We know from Jn 1:26 and Jn 1:32-33 that John recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

Henry Morris on the next day - This may have been about six weeks after Jesus' baptism following the forty-day testing in the wilderness (Mark 1:11-12), and shortly before Passover (John 2:13), when the people would be thinking about the coming slaying of the Passover lambs.

Robertson says **saw...coming** is a "Dramatic **historical present** indicative (blepei) with vivid present middle participle (erchomenon). Graphic picture." **Addendum note** - Verbs in [present tense](#) in the context of the so-called **historical present** call for a vivid imagination on the part of the reader. The **historical present** describes a past event as though it were actually taking place. Here the present is a pictorial tense, displaying the action vividly before our eyes. In English we often use the historical present when recounting personal experiences such as "then he says to me" even though what he said occurred in the past. The Gospel of Mark frequently uses historical present - see [peculiarities of Mark](#). Mark wants us to picture these Pharisees surrounding Jesus like a "brood of vipers" with serpentine precision surrounding Jesus, as if preparing their "victim" for a kill!

Behold (see [idou](#) below) is a command to look, see, perceive. This command is in [aorist imperative](#) which means "Look now!," "Don't delay!," "Do not procrastinate!" In short John was saying **Look** at the Lamb. **See** Who the Lamb actually is. **Perceive** His purpose (e.g., Jews knew that literal lambs were sacrificed as sin offerings). There is a passage in the KJV of Isaiah which commands OT readers to "Look", Isaiah writing

Look (a command; Lxx = [epistrepho](#) in the [aorist imperative](#) = turn to Me [aka "be converted"]) unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

Comment: Some 1900 years later a 15 year old boy under amazing providential circumstances was confronted by a layman substituting for the absent preacher (because of a fierce snowstorm) with Isaiah 45:22KJV and implored to "Look!" Spurgeon later records this untrained laymen's words as he remembered them "*My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, 'Look.' Now lookin' don't take a deal of pain. It ain't liftin' your foot or your finger; it is just, 'Look.' Well, a man needn't go to College to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn't be worth a thousand a year to be able to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look.*" Then he pointed out that the text says, "Look unto Me," not to yourself. He went on about ten minutes or so telling everyone who Christ was that they were to look to. He seemed to be at the end of his tether when he looked directly at young Spurgeon and said (1:88), "*Young man, you look very miserable. And you always will be miserable-miserable in life, and miserable in death-if you don't obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved.*" Then he shouted, "*Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothin' to do but to look and live.*" Spurgeon said that he had been waiting to do fifty things, but that word "look" cleared away the clouds. He looked to Christ and the boy who would go on to become the greatest preacher of the 19th century was saved! And you will be saved too, if you look in faith to Jesus, the Lamb that God provided to take away your sins. (Adapted from [Steven Cole](#)).

THOUGHT - This incredible story of Spurgeon's salvation begs the question - Have you looked at the Lamb, the only One Who can save you from a Christ-less eternity? (Eph 2:8-9+, Jn 8:24) If not, then, like Spurgeon, procrastinate no further. Simply Look to Jesus by faith and be saved eternally.

- See a complete discussion of C H Spurgeon's Testimony.

The **ISBE** (old edition) has an interesting note - In Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs an apocryphal book, probably of the 2nd century - we have the term used for the Messiah, "Honor Judah and Levi, for from them shall arise for you the **Lamb of God**, saving all nations by grace." But the term does not seem to have been of any general use until it received its distinctly Christian significance. It has been generally understood as referring to the prophetic language of Jeremiah 11:19, and Isaiah 53:7.

Henry Morris has a good thought on the significance/meaning of the phrase **Lamb of God** - Jesus is called "the Lamb" by the Apostle John twice in his gospel (John 1:29, 36) and twenty-eight times in Revelation. The title is derived from the multitude of sacrificial lambs offered in atonement for sins in the old dispensation, soon to be superseded by Christ's "one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Hebrews 10:12). Note also Isaiah 53:7; Acts 8:32; and 1 Peter 1:19, where Christ's substitutionary sacrifice is also compared to the shedding of the innocent blood of a lamb.

The Lamb of God in Greek is "ho amnos tou theou" and in Latin is the well known phrase "Agnus Dei" which is used in liturgies in several denominations. Michael W Smith wrote a well-known Christian song entitled "[Agnus Dei](#)." I love the words of the song and have used it for personal worship times but am embarrassed to say that I never knew the meaning of "Agnus Dei" until I wrote these comments on John! The lyrics of Agnus Dei are simple but Scriptural. Take a moment to worship the Worthy Lamb of God in spirit and in truth. Alleluia means "Praise the Lord." Note also that "Lord God Almighty" in Hebrew is [Jehovah EL Shaddai](#). Finally especially notice that the words of the song are directed heavenward, unto the Lamb, for He alone is worthy to receive our praises - "**Worthy is the Lamb** that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." (Rev 5:12_±)

Alleluia Alleluia

For our Lord God Almighty reigns
Alleluia Alleluia
For our Lord God Almighty reigns
Alleluia

Holy Holy
Are You Lord God Almighty
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb
You are Holy

Holy
Are You Lord God Almighty
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb
Amen

Holy Holy
Are You Lord God Almighty
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb
You are Holy

Holy
Are You Lord God Almighty
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb
Amen

[Steven Cole](#) adds that "Some think that (LAMB OF GOD) was referring to the Passover lamb, whose blood spared the Israelites from the loss of their firstborn (John connects Jesus with the Passover lamb in John 19:36). It could refer to the lambs that were offered as morning and evening sacrifices at the temple (Ex 29:36-42+). Others say that it refers to the lamb of Isaiah 53:7, who died to bear the sin of many (see Isa. 53:3-12+). Or, it could refer to the lamb that God provided as a substitute so that Abraham did not have to sacrifice his "only" son Isaac (Gen. 22:7-13). **Leon Morris** is probably correct when he states (The Gospel According to John [Eerdmans], p. 147), "He used an expression which cannot be confined to any one view. He is making a general allusion to sacrifice." He adds (p. 148), "All that the ancient sacrifices foreshadowed was perfectly fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ. J. C. Ryle (Expository Thoughts on the Gospels [Baker], 3:55) wrote, "It meant that Christ was the great sacrifice for sin, who was come to make atonement for transgression by His own death upon the cross." He adds (3:57), "He is describing our Lord's official character as the great propitiation for sin."

The Lamb of God - John does not say **Behold** me. "John doesn't say, "Look at me! I'm a great prophet!" He doesn't say, "Look at your good works; they will save you." He doesn't say, "Look at your religious rituals; they will put you in good stead on judgment day." He doesn't say, "Look at your religious heritage or your church attendance." He says, "Look to the Lamb of God!" Jesus saves sinners who look in faith to Him." ([Cole](#)) In using this phrase, John described Jesus by the name **Lamb**, an animal which was recognized by all Jews as one used in the Temple sacrifices and in the celebration of Passover. It was as if John was saying behold the "**Sacrifice**." The implication is that John understood in some way that Jesus had come to die a sacrificial death. How John came to have this understanding is not clear. Of course, ultimately the Spirit of Truth (Jn 14:17, 15:26, 16:13; cf "illumination") opened the eyes of John's heart to "see" this spiritual truth. And surely John was familiar with the Old Testament and so would have some understanding of the metaphorical descriptions of coming Messiah depicted as a "**lamb**. He would also have understood there were passages that described a "Suffering Messiah," (see some of these passages below) a teaching that was not popular among most of the Jews of John's day who were looking for a "Conquering Messiah." (See the [Jewish Tradition of Two Messiahs](#) - very informative 34 page booklet) One other point to note is the **definite article** ("**the**", the Greek article "ho") precedes **Lamb**, . You may be asking "So what?" The importance is that the definite article preceding "**Lamb**" signifies that Jesus is THE UNIQUE Lamb, THE "ONE and ONLY" Lamb, that He is distinct and different and is not like other lambs Jews had been sacrifices for centuries. Hebrews 10:4+ explains why stating that "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats **to take away sins.**" Only the blood of **THE** Lamb can **take away the sin of the world!**

[Steven Cole](#) notes that John 1:29 "is so familiar that **it doesn't shock us, but it should.** That was a radical thing for John to say about a young Galilean carpenter to a bunch of Jewish people who for centuries had offered their sacrificial lambs at the temple!

"This man is the One Whom God has sent to be what **all of those thousands of lambs** over hundreds of years have symbolized! And He is not only the Lamb that God sent for Israel, but also for the whole world!"

For centuries the Israel had been sacrificing two lambs daily, one in the morning and a second in the evening, first in the Tabernacle and then in the Temple. John would have been very familiar with this practice as his father served as one of the priests and would have taught him about the sacrificial system and how the blood of the slain animals provided atonement for sins. But now John sees Jesus and recognizes Him as the ultimate sacrifice for the sin of the world.

John would have read about the OT statute in Exodus which foreshadowed and pointed to the Lamb of God...

"Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: **two one year old lambs** (Lxx = **amnos**- same word John uses here in Jn 1:29) **each day, continuously**. 39 "The one **lamb** (Lxx = **amnos**) you shall offer in the morning and the other **lamb** (Lxx = **amnos**) you shall offer at twilight; 40 and there shall be one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering with one **lamb** (Lxx = **amnos**). 41 "The other **lamb** (Lxx = **amnos**) you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it the same **grain offering** ([minchah](#)) and the same **drink offering** ([necek](#)) as in the morning, for a **soothing aroma** ([nihoah reah](#) - [See foreshadowing of Jesus](#)), an **offering by fire** ([ishsheh](#)) to the LORD. (Ex 29:38-41+)

"Command the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be careful to present My offering, My food for My offerings by fire, of a soothing aroma to Me, at their appointed time.' 3 "You shall say to them, 'This is the offering by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs (Lxx = **amnos**- same word John uses here in Jn 1:29) one year old **without defect** (tamim cf 1 Pe 1:18-19+) as a continual **burnt offering** ('olah) every day (cf what Paul says we should do today - Ro 12:1-2+). 4 'You shall offer the one **lamb** (Lxx = **amnos**) in the morning and the other **lamb** (Lxx = **amnos**) you shall offer at twilight; 5 also a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil. 6 'It is a continual burnt offering which was ordained in Mount Sinai as a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD. 7 'Then the drink offering with it shall be a fourth of a hin for each **lamb** (Lxx = **amnos**), in the holy place you shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to the LORD. 8' The other **lamb** (Lxx = **amnos**) you shall offer at twilight; as the grain offering of the morning and as its drink offering, you shall offer it, an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD. (Numbers 28:2-8 = see in depth commentary on this daily offering as well as weekly, monthly and yearly offerings God commanded, all of which pointed to the **Lamb of God** proclaimed here in John 1:29, 36 by John the Baptist).

Some other passages related to Jesus as the **Lamb of God**...

SUFFERING SERVANT - Isaiah 53 (commentary) - Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. 3He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 **Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.** 5 **But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.** 6 **All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.** 7 **He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; LIKE A LAMB that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.** 8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? 9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. 10 But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a **guilt offering** (see [asam](#)), He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; **Yet He Himself bore the sin of many** (OUR SINS WERE PLACED ON THE LAMB OF GOD UPON THE CROSS!), And interceded for the transgressors.

PASSOVER LAMB - Ex 12:5-11 (commentary) Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 'You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month (NISAN), then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. (THE TIME OF THE

DAILY SACRIFICE OF THE LAMB - COMPARE WHEN JESUS DIED IN THE AFTERNOON AS THE ETERNAL SACRIFICE - SEE Mt 27:45 = DARKNESS FROM NOON TO 3PM, ABOUT THE TIME OF THE SACRIFICES OF THE LITERAL PASSOVER LAMBS!) 7 'Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 8 'They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 9 'Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails. 10 'And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. 11 'Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD'S Passover. 12'For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD. 13'**The blood shall be a sign for you** on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. 14 'Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.

PROPHECY OF LAMB FULFILLED AND PROFITABLE - Acts 8:32-35+ (ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH READING ISAIAH'S PROPHECY AND IS BORN AGAIN) - Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. "IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO WILL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH." 34The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he **preached Jesus to him** (AND CLEARLY EXPLAINED THAT ISAIAH 53 WAS A PROPHECY FULFILLED BY JESUS.).

SACRIFICED PASSOVER LAMB - 1 Cor 5:7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

SIN BEARING LAMB - 1 Peter 2:21-24+ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

Revelation 5:6-13+ And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they *sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." 11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

COMMENT - Lamb in the Revelation passages is [arnion](#) the diminutive of [aren](#). [Aren](#) signifies the young offspring of a sheep, and can speak of an animal for slaughter and is used only in Lk 10:3+. **Aren** is used in the description of the Passover Lamb in Ex 12:5 "'Your **lamb** (Lxx = [aren](#)) shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats." In the coming [Millennium](#) "the wolf will dwell with the **lamb** (Lxx = [aren](#)), And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. (Isa. 11:6+, cf Isa 65:25). The other uses of [arnion](#) that refer to the Messiah are found in the Revelation - Rev 19:7, 9+, Rev 21:22, 2+, Rev 22:1-+ Rev 22:3+

Take a moment to **WORSHIP** the **Lamb of God**, remembering that the [etymology](#) of the word **WORSHIP** is "WORTHY!" HE ALONE IS WORTHY OF ALL OUR PRAISES...

WORTHY IS THE LAMB

Thank you for the cross, Lord
Thank you for the price You paid
Bearing all my sin and shame
In love You came
And gave amazing grace

Thank you for this love, Lord
Thank you for the nail pierced hands
Washed me in Your cleansing flow
Now all I know
Your forgiveness and embrace

Worthy is the Lamb
Seated on the throne
Crown You now with many crowns
You reign victorious

High and lifted up
Jesus Son of God
The Darling of Heaven crucified
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb

Thank you for the cross, Lord (thank you)
Thank you for the price You paid
Bearing all my sin and shame
In love You came
And gave amazing grace

Thank you for this love, Lord
Thank you for the nail pierced hands
Washed me in Your cleansing flow
Now all I know
Your forgiveness and embrace

Worthy is the Lamb
Seated on the throne
Crown You now with many crowns
You reign victorious

High and lifted up
Jesus Son of God
The Treasure of Heaven crucified
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb

Worthy is the Lamb
Seated on the throne
Crown You now with many crowns
You reign victorious

High and lifted up
Jesus Son of God
The Treasure of Heaven crucified
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb

Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb

And if that did not bless your heart enough,
take some more time and play

Shane & Shane's version of "[IS HE WORTHY?](#)"

Do you feel the world is broken? (We do)
Do you feel the shadows deepen? (We do)
But do you know that all the dark won't stop the light from getting through? (We do)
Do you wish that you could see it all made new? (We do)

Is all creation groaning? (It is)
Is a new creation coming? (It is)
Is the glory of the Lord to be the light within our midst? (It is)
Is it good that we remind ourselves of this? (It is)

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave
He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave

Is He worthy? Is He worthy
Of all blessing and honor and glory?
Is He worthy of this?
He is

Does the Father truly love us? (He does)
Does the Spirit move among us? (He does)
And does Jesus, our Messiah, hold forever those He loves? (He does)
Does our God intend to dwell again with us? (He does)

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave (Re 5:5⁺)
He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave

From every people and tribe (People and tribe)
Every nation and tongue (Every nation and tongue) (Re 5:9⁺)
He has made us a kingdom and priests to God
To reign with the Son

Is He worthy? Is He worthy
Of all blessing and honor and glory?
Is He worthy? Is He worthy?
Is He worthy of this?

He is, He is
Is He worthy? Is He worthy?
He is, He is
He is worthy, He is worthy
He is

As noted [in the excursus below](#) on the **Lamb of God**, John's declaration is the answer to the OT question "**Where is the Lamb?**" (Ge 22:7+) Note that even in Genesis 22 we see a statement by Abraham that could be taken as a prophecy when he answered Isaac's question "God will provide for Himself the **LAMB** for the burnt offering (THE CROSS WAS THE ULTIMATE

"BURNT OFFERING"), my son." (Ge 22:8+).

Behold (2400)(**idou**) is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which is a call for the audience to see, perceive, look. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **idou** in the **middle voice** means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The **aorist imperative** is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" **Zodhiates** writes that **idou** is a "demonstrative particle. "Lo and behold!", serving to call attention to something external or exterior to oneself; usually used at the beginning of a clause. **Spurgeon** adds that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

John uses **Behold** 14x which is more than all of the synoptic Gospels combined - Mt 25:20; Mt. 25:22; Mt. 25:25; Mt. 26:65; Mk. 2:24; Mk. 3:34; Mk. 11:21; Mk. 13:1; Mk. 13:21; Mk. 15:4; Mk. 15:35; Mk. 16:6; Jn. 1:29; Jn. 1:36; Jn. 1:47; Jn. 3:26; Jn. 5:14; Jn. 7:26; Jn. 11:3; Jn. 11:36; Jn. 12:19; Jn. 16:29; Jn. 19:4; Jn. 19:14; Jn. 19:26; Jn. 19:27; Gal. 5:2

Lamb (286)(**amnos**) refers to a lamb used for sacrifice. The 4 NT uses are all figurative descriptions of Jesus depicted as a sacrificial Lamb (Jn. 1:29+; Jn. 1:36+; Acts 8:32+; 1 Pet. 1:19+). **Amnos** is used 96 times in the **Septuagint** and while the offering of sheep is alluded to in Ge 4:4 (flock which would probably include sheep), the sacrificial use of the **amnos** is not specified until the exodus of Israel from Egypt (Ex 12:5-7 but Lxx is not amnos but probaton - sheep). Nevertheless from this time onward in the Septuagint the **amnos** assumed a specific sacrificial role as in Ex 29:40,41, Lev 9:3+, Lev 12:6, 8+, etc). Of the 96 uses of **amnos** in the **Septuagint**, 75 are in context of a sacrificial offering. The **amnos** was to be without blemish (Lev 9:3+) and sacrificed twice daily (Ex 29:38-41). The most significant use of amnos in the OT is found in Isaiah 53:7+ which is quoted here in Acts 8:32+. The New Testament's usage of **amnos** provides a clear picture of Christ as the "lamb of God." 1 Peter 1:19+ says we were redeemed "with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." So like the OT sacrifices of the lambs, Jesus was free of any defects as was His precious blood. He patiently endured His vicarious suffering (Acts 8:32, cf. Isaiah 53:7+), so that He might take away the sins of the world (John 1:29+). The other two words for lamb - **Lamb** (721) **arnion** (See passages from Revelation above) and **Lamb** (704) aren.

It is notable that **amnos** is used repeatedly in the descriptions of the sacrifices in Exodus, Leviticus and most often in Numbers - Ex 29:38; Ex 29:39; Ex 29:40; Ex 29:41; Lev. 9:3; Lev. 12:6; Lev. 12:8; Lev. 14:10; Lev. 14:12; Lev. 14:13; Lev. 14:21; Lev. 14:24; Lev. 14:25; Lev. 23:18; Lev. 23:19; Lev. 23:20; Num. 6:12; Num. 6:14; Num. 7:15; Num. 7:21; Num. 7:27; Num. 7:33; Num. 7:39; Num. 7:45; Num. 7:51; Num. 7:57; Num. 7:63; Num. 7:69; Num. 7:75; Num. 7:81; Num. 7:87; Num. 15:5; Num. 15:11; Num. 28:3; Num. 28:4; Num. 28:7; Num. 28:8; Num. 28:9; Num. 28:11; Num. 28:13; Num. 28:14; Num. 28:19; Num. 28:21; Num. 28:27; Num. 28:29; Num. 29:2; Num. 29:4; Num. 29:8; Num. 29:10; Num. 29:13; Num. 29:15; Num. 29:17; Num. 29:18; Num. 29:20; Num. 29:21; Num. 29:23; Num. 29:24; Num. 29:26; Num. 29:27; Num. 29:29; Num. 29:30; Num. 29:32; Num. 29:33; Num. 29:36; Num. 29:37.

Take a moment to worship the the Lamb Who Alone is worthy of your worship by playing (and singing to Him) **Twila Paris' beautiful song...**

The Lamb of God.

Your only Son no sin to hide
But You have sent Him from Your side
To walk upon this guilty sod
And to become the Lamb of God

Your gift of love they crucified
They laughed and scorned Him as he died
The humble King they named a fraud
And sacrificed the Lamb of God

Oh Lamb of God, Sweet lamb of God
I love the Holy Lamb of God
Oh wash me in His precious Blood

My Jesus Christ the Lamb of God
I was so lost I should have died

But You have brought me to Your side
To be led by Your staff and rod
And to be called a lamb of God

Oh Lamb of God, Sweet lamb of God
I love the Holy Lamb of God
Oh wash me in His precious Blood
My Jesus Christ the Lamb of God

Oh wash me in His precious Blood
My Jesus Christ the Lamb of God

Who takes away the sin of the world - Who refers to the Lamb (Jesus) and clearly links Him with the sacrificial system in the mind of the Jews, for all were familiar with the sacrifices for animals for sin, but there had never been a declaration in the OT that there was a sacrifice that could take away the sins of the world. So this was a radical concept to all who heard John's pronouncement. And yet it was clear that John was linking Jesus with the Levitical sacrificial system. Note that John does not say Jesus came to take **away the sin of the Jews**, but **of the world**. This would have also been a radical concept to Jewish ears, because world would include Gentiles! Of course, the apostle John is not teaching "[universalism](#)" or that all the souls ever born into this **world** will be saved (See [Is universalism / universal salvation biblical?](#)). John is saying that Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient for any person who receives His atoning sacrifice by grace through faith. Or stated another way we might say Christ invites all to come to the "salvation feast" which He has prepared (Luke 14:16-24+; Rev. 22:17+). The apostle in effect amplified or expanded the meaning of **the world** in Revelation 5:9+ writing that "they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are **You (THE LAMB in Rev 5:8+)** to take the book and to break its seals; for **You** were slain, and purchased for God with **Your** blood men **from every tribe and tongue and people and nation** (i.e., "**take away the sin of the world**"). **Takes away (airo)** is in the present tense "signifying the ongoing sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice and the fact that it is available at all times for every sinner who will trust in Him." ([Cole](#)) **Sin (hamartia)** is singular and in essence depicts **ALL** of the variegated sins of **ALL** mankind for all time, **ALL** collected together (so to speak). Christ's death was sufficient to take them **ALL** away, but of course only those who believe in His sin erasing death will be credited with His righteousness (right standing with God, blameless in Him).

Are these not some of the most wonderful words ever spoken/written? And so here at the outset of Jesus' ministry, John in essence describes the ultimate purpose for Jesus' incarnation as the God-Man - He is the Sin Bearer of the world.

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
[It Is Well with My Soul](#) - Horatio G. Spafford

Henry Morris on takes away has an interesting thought - The figure here is that of the two goats (Leviticus 16:7-22), offered on the annual Day of Atonement. One would die for the sins of the people; the other ("the scapegoat") would carry away all their sins into the wilderness. But "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). Sacrifices were offered every day, but they could "never take away sins" (Hebrews 10:11). Their blood could only provide a temporary "atonement" (or "covering"), until the one capable Lamb of God could come to take away the "sin," not just "sins" of the whole world!

Takes away (142) (airo) literally means to lift up something (Mt 17:27) and to carry it (Lxx - Ge 44:1, Ex 25:28 = the Ark). Figuratively in John 1:29 (and 1 John 3:5+) **airo** speaks of the taking away of sins. **Airo** is used twice in Isaiah 53:8+ "By oppression and judgment He **was taken away** (Lxx = airo); And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut (Lxx = airo) off out of the land of the living (Lexham English Septuagint = "His life **was taken** from the earth; He was led to death...) For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?" In Jn 8:59 the Jews (who ostensibly "came to believe in Him" - Jn 8:30) "**picked up (airo)** stones to throw at Him" because He had declared "before Abraham was born, **I am.**" (I AM = EGO EIMI - The Jews recognized He was calling Himself God and sought to stone Him for what they thought was blasphemy!) (Jn 8:58)

Sin (266) (hamartia) literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. **Hamartia** in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His

appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself. As **Martin Luther** put it "*Sin is essentially a departure from God.*"

Brian Bell - The blood of lambs covered the sins of the Jews Ps.32:1 "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered." The blood of Jesus takes away the sins of the world - Heb.10:4 it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin....Sacrifice examples:

1. First sacrifice was for the Individual (Adam/Eve; "Tunics of skin"; Ge.3:21+).
2. Second was for a Family (Passover Lamb; Ex.12).
3. Third was for the Nation (Day of Atonement; an offering made by fire; Lev.23:27+).
4. Fourth is for the World (Jesus for the world; Jn.1:29).

Related Resources:

- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Lamb, Lamb of God](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Lamb of God](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Lamb of God](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Lamb of God](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Lamb of God](#)
- [John 1:29 What does it mean that Jesus is the Lamb of God?](#)
- [Chart of Kinsman-Redeemer and Old Testament Shadows fulfilled in the New Testament](#)

THE LAMB OF GOD PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

GENESIS: In the Old Testament, the question is "**WHERE IS THE LAMB?**" In Genesis 22 God commanded Abraham "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." (Ge 22:2+) On the way to the mountain, Isaac asked his father "**Where is the LAMB for the burnt offering?**" (Ge 22:7+) to which Abraham replied "God will provide for Himself the LAMB for the burnt offering, my son." (Ge 22:8+). As Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac whom he loved, he "raised his eyes and looked and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of (as a "substitute" for) his son." (Ge 22:13) "Abraham called the name of that place the LORD WILL PROVIDE, (JEHOVAH JIREH) as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided." (Ge 22:14+) JEHOVAH JIREH is more literally "Jehovah will see," which conveys the idea that Jehovah sees the need before it arises and provides for the need! The Omniscient One sees your need beloved. The amazing God of all grace (1Pe 5:10+) not only foresaw Abraham's need for "A" lamb, but even more amazing, foresaw our need for "THE" LAMB OF GOD to be our Substitute. And so Paul could testify that "God saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works (not because of any "merit" or because we deserved it), but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus from all eternity (Jehovah saw our need for the LAMB OF GOD, even before time began!)" (2Ti 1:9+) Spurgeon writes that we "admire Abraham's giving up his son to God. Much more admire Jehovah's giving up His Son for sinners. Jehovah is the great Provider, and He provides the offering, not only for us, but for Himself, for the sacrifice was necessary to God as well as to man. And it is a burnt offering, not only a sin-offering but an offering of a sweet savor unto Himself."

EXODUS: In Exodus Israel was groaning because of enslavement by Egypt and in great need, a need which Jehovah saw, declaring "I will DELIVER you from bondage. I will **REDEEM** you with an outstretched arm (In light of the Cross, ponder God's redemption by His "outstretched arm!") and with great judgments." (Ex 6:6+) God redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt with the blood of a LAMB, instructing Moses "your LAMB shall be an unblemished male a year old...You shall keep it until the 14th day of ([Nisan](#)), then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. Take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts (vertical motion) and on the lintel (horizontal part of the doorframe) (ponder the application of blood vertically and horizontally – could this foreshadow the Cross?) of the houses in which they eat it. And they shall eat the flesh that same night...it is the **LORD'S Passover**... For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you." (Exodus 12:5-8,11, 23+) Clearly Christ's death on the Cross was foreshadowed in Exodus 12+ by the sacrifice of an unblemished lamb whose blood was applied to the entry door, for centuries later Paul recorded the inspired words that "**Christ our PASSOVER [LAMB] has been sacrificed.**" (1Cor 5:7Amplified+) Paul adds that "now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." (Eph 2:13+ Beloved, may God grant each of us the Spirit's power to "conduct ourselves in

(reverent) fear during the time of our (relatively short) stay upon earth, knowing that we were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile (useless in light of eternity) way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with **PRECIOUS BLOOD, AS OF A LAMB** unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ" (1Peter 1:17-19-note)

Spurgeon comments on the precious blood of the Lamb of God "Standing at the foot of the Cross, we see hands, and feet, and side, all distilling crimson streams of precious blood. It is "**PRECIOUS**" because of its redeeming and atoning efficacy. By it the sins of Christ's people are atoned for; they are redeemed from under the law; they are reconciled to God, made one with Him. Christ's blood is also "**PRECIOUS**" in its cleansing power; it "cleanses us from all sin." (1 Jn 1:7+) "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." (Isa 1:18+) Through Jesus' blood there is not a spot left upon any believer, no wrinkle nor any such thing remains. O precious blood, which makes us clean, removing the stains of abundant iniquity, and permitting us to stand "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6KJV+), notwithstanding the many ways in which we have rebelled against our God. The blood of Christ is likewise "**PRECIOUS**" in its preserving power. We are safe from the destroying angel under the sprinkled blood. Remember it is God's seeing the blood which is the true reason for our being spared. Here is comfort for us when the eye of faith is dim, for God's eye is still the same. The blood of Christ is "**PRECIOUS**" also in its sanctifying influence. The same blood which justifies by taking away sin, does in its after-action, quicken the new nature and lead it onward to subdue sin and to follow out the commands of God. There is no motive for holiness so great as that which streams from the veins of Jesus. And "**PRECIOUS**," unspeakably precious, is this blood, because it has an overcoming power. It is written, "They overcame through the **BLOOD OF THE LAMB.**" (Rev 12:11KJV+, cf 1Jn 5:4-5+) How could they do otherwise? He who fights with the precious blood of Jesus, fights with a weapon which cannot know defeat. The blood of Jesus! sin dies at its presence, death ceases to be death: heaven's gates are opened. The blood of Jesus! we shall march on, conquering and to conquer, so long as we can trust its power!"

ISAIAH: "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him (literally "laid on Him with a death-dealing blow"). He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a **LAMB** that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth." (Isaiah 53:6-7+) Centuries later when the Ethiopian Eunuch ask Phillip "of Whom does the prophet Isaiah speak?" "Philip opened his mouth and beginning from (Isaiah 53:7+) he preached Jesus to him." (Acts 8:32-35+)

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: John the Baptist answers the Old Testament question, declaring "**Behold the LAMB OF GOD** Who takes away the sin of the world." (Jn 1:29+). The renowned preacher **C H Spurgeon** once tested an auditorium in which he was to speak that evening. Stepping into the pulpit, Spurgeon loudly proclaimed, "**Behold the lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world.**" Satisfied with the acoustics, he left and went his way. Unknown to him, there were two men working in the rafters of that large auditorium, neither one a Christian. One of the men was pricked in his conscience by the verse Spurgeon quoted and became a believer later that day! May Spurgeon's experience encourage all of us to boldly, unashamedly proclaim the Gospel of the Lamb, which is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Ro 1:16+).

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST: Keep in mind that the most common Name for Jesus in the Revelation is "**THE LAMB.**" (Lamb -29x, Jesus-14x!) After our Lord Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures (1Cor 15:4+), He came into the room in the presence of the 11 disciples, and encouraged Thomas (who was doubting the truth of His resurrection) to "Reach here your finger and see My hands and reach here your hand, and put it into My side and be not unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:27-28+) Those same nail-scarred hands John saw in that room on earth, were the very scars he saw in his glorified Lord's hands in heaven when he testified "I saw between the throne and the elders a **LAMB** standing, as if **SLAIN** (The same Greek verb [sphazo] was used to describe the slaughter of the Passover lamb in Ex 12:6!) (Revelation 5:6+). **Spurgeon** asks "Why should our exalted Lord appear in His wounds in glory? The wounds of Jesus are His glories, His jewels, His sacred ornaments. Jesus wears the appearance of a **SLAIN LAMB** as His court dress in which He wooed our souls, and redeemed them by His complete atonement. Nor are these only the ornaments of Christ: they are the trophies of His love and of His victory. He has divided the spoil with the strong. He has redeemed for Himself a great multitude whom no man can number, and these **SCARS** are the memorials of the fight. Ah! if Christ thus loves to retain the thought of His sufferings for His people, how precious should His wounds be to us!"

In Isaiah Jehovah declared "**Behold**, I have inscribed (engraved) you on the palms of My hands." (Isa 49:16+) Spurgeon asks "What are these wounds in Thy hands, these sacred stigmata, these ensigns of suffering? The graver's tool was the nail, backed by the hammer. He must be fastened to the Cross, that His people might be truly graven on the palms of His hands. There is much consolation here. We know that what a man has won with great pain he will keep with great tenacity. Child of God, you cost Christ too much for Him to forget you." Spurgeon goes on to add "It does not say, "Thy name." Yes, the name is there, but that is not all: "I have graven **THEE.**" See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee upon His own palms?" See also onsite devotional [Inscribed on His Hands](#)).

In the face of such amazing love, how could God ever forget His people? Do you ever feel like He has forgotten you or your difficult circumstances? Then take heart, for He Himself has declared "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." (Heb 13:5+) and the scars on the Lamb that was slain seal His promise forever! Augustus Toplady spoke of this great truth writing "My name from the palms of His hands eternity will not erase; Impressed on His heart it remains, in marks of indelible grace. Yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is giv'n; More happy, but not more secure, then even the glorified spirits in Heav'n." (Hymn: [A Debtor to Mercy Alone](#)) As Spurgeon remarks "How loving, then, how full of superlative, super-excellent affection is God toward you and toward me in so recording our names." In view of so great a sacrifice procured by the meek and gentle Lamb of God, let us join now with that heavenly throng singing with a loud voice "**Worthy is the LAMB** that was **SLAIN** to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing... To Him who sits on the throne, and to the **LAMB**, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." (Revelation 5:12-13+)

THOUGHT: The question in the OT was "**WHERE IS THE LAMB?**" The answer in the NT is "**BEHOLD THE LAMB!**" Our cry throughout eternity will be "**WORTHY IS THE LAMB!**" (See this charted out below) And all God's children said "**Hallelujah! Amen!**"

In the mysterious working of God, the **LAMB** Who died to redeem us and give us new life in Himself is now our **SHEPHERD** (cf Rev 7:17+) Who ever lives to make us, His **SHEEP**, lie down in green pastures, to lead us beside still waters, to restore our soul, to guide us in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake, to walk with us through the valley of the shadow of death, to prepare a table before us in the presence of our enemies, to anoint our head with oil, to cause our cup to overflow. "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow (us) all the days of (our) life, and (we) will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." (Ps 23:1-6+)

Father, as we **BEHOLD THE LAMB** "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev 13:8KJV+) and ponder with wonder and awe the **REDEMPTION** wrought by our **REDEEMER'S** precious blood, may Your Spirit use this eternal Word of Truth to enable us to daily die to self and lovingly follow the Good Shepherd all the days of our life. Amen

Worship the Lamb singing [MY REDEEMER LIVES - NICOLE C MULLEN](#)

Redemption by the Lamb of God				
The Question in the Old Testament was...		The Answer in the New Testament is...		The Cry throughout eternity is...
Where is the Lamb?		Behold the Lamb!		Worthy is the Lamb!
The ram in the thicket	The Passover Lamb	The Lamb of God	Christ our Passover	The Lamb that was slain
Ge 22:1, 2, 7, 8, 13, 14 Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide	Ex 12:5, 6, 7, 13, 14+ [Read Ex 12:1-51] 430 yr in Egypt, 30 yr free, 400 in bondage cp Ex 12:40+ (430) with Acts 7:6+ (400)	Jn 1:29, 36+ Jn 19:31, 32, 33, 36, Ps 34:19, 20 (See study of Jehovah Roi - The LORD is my Shepherd)	1Cor 5:7 Isa 53:7+ Acts 8:32, 33, 34, 35+ 1 Pe 1:18-19+ 1 Pe 2:24+	Jn 20:20, 27 Rev 5:6+ Re 5:12+ Re 19:7, 9+ Re 21:22, 2+ Re 22:1+ Re 22:3+
				Come Let Us Worship Here I Am to Worship We Bow Down
<p>CLICK HERE and take a few moments out of your busy schedule Listen, watch and worship the Lamb of God!</p>				

John the Baptist was the herald of Jesus Christ. He, therefore, knew Who Jesus was and proclaimed it without hesitation. Here is a good example, John sees Jesus and tells those about him, Who Jesus is. We note three things about this announcement made by John the Baptist.

FIRST—THE WORTH OF THE LAMB

"Behold." John was watching for Jesus. When he saw Him, it was "Behold." This signifies importance. It speaks of the worth of the Lamb. The Lamb/Jesus is what we need most, for He takes away our sins and brings us eternal life. You may have many needs in your life but none is as great as your soul salvation. And the Lamb of God was provided to bring us soul salvation. Therefore, His worth is impossible to calculate in human terms. To deliver us from eternal hellfire to the glories of eternal heaven make Jesus worth more than anything else. In the final book of the Bible we read, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:12). No one is so worthy as the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

SECOND—THE WORK OF THE LAMB

"Who taketh away the sin of the world." The primary work of Jesus Christ was to "take away the sin of the world." He was a great teacher, healer and example but that was not the main reason He came into the world. The main reason was to provide a way of salvation for sinners via the crucifixion. We note two important things about this crucifixion of the Lamb.

- The way of the Lamb. "Lamb of God." Our text talks about only one Lamb. God only provided One Lamb. There is only one way of salvation (Acts 4:12, I Timothy 2:5). Christ alone is the way of salvation (John 14:6). It is His blood and none other that brings redemption (I Peter 1:18, 19).
- The world for the Lamb. "World." Christ is able to save anyone in the world. We do not need to incorporate other religions of the world into the Gospel message. It is Christ or eternal damnation. He is the only Savior for the entire world.

THIRD—THE WANTING OF THE LAMB

"Lamb." Many folk in Jesus' day, like many in every day, really did not want a Lamb. They wanted a Lion. One day Jesus will come back to earth as the "Lion" (Revelation 5:5). The Lion will conquer and rule the world. But before the Lion comes the Lamb. The sin problem must be dealt with first. Many folk want to conquer people, not passions; they want position, prestige, and possessions, not purity. They want earthly power not spiritual power and so reject the Lamb which takes away their sin and makes the Lion part possible. Before Jesus is our Sovereign, He must first be our Savior.

WITH LOINS GIRDED - J J KNAP

The Lamb of God John 1:29

John must have cast a deep glance into Jesus' heart to point Him out as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, at His very first appearance. Among those who listened to this short sermon at Bethabara, there would not be one who did not understand the meaning of it. Daily, a lamb was placed upon the altar in the front court of the temple. Annually, the Passover lamb, whose blood was painted on the door posts at the time of the exodus out of Egypt to make the angel of death pass by, was prepared in every house. All Israel was very familiar with the idea that a meek and blameless lamb would die instead of the sinner. These lambs only purified the conscience to the degree the sinner saw in it the great sacrifice that Jesus would bring one day upon Golgotha. In Him no lamb was sacrificed like the others, but the Lamb to which the others pointed; the Lamb appointed and prepared of God. Indeed, the Lamb of God that would take away the sin, not only of Israel but also of the heathens, so, the sin of the world. This is, in short, the explanation of this profound saying.

The sin of the world—it is not written in the plural but decidedly in the singular and rightly so. At its deepest, it is only one great, communal guilt that lies upon all mankind. It is this great guilt, including ours also, that Jesus took upon Himself at His birth; that He carried His life long; that He carried away to the cursed cross and to the depth of the grave. No one on earth can take away sin. We may try to cover or to belittle it, but we do not take it away. The severe law casts it in its full weight upon our conscience, but does not take it away. Only Christ took it away and takes it still daily away. He takes it completely away from us. He takes it so completely away from us that it disappears into the depth of the sea of forgetfulness.

Therefore, John with his sermon remain continually before us: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" At each stumble: "Behold the Lamb of God!" At each fall: "Behold the Lamb of God!" At each impure impulse of the heart: "Behold the Lamb of God!"

Forever the eye upon Him who can hide the guilt of sin. Let us follow the example of the pious Israelite. He would place the hand upon the head of the lamb to transfer his guilt upon the lamb and to own the blameless perfection of the lamb. Let us also humbly

and trustingly lay our hand of faith upon the holy Lamb of God, so that our sin may rest upon Him and His righteousness upon us. Only in that way shall we experience how precious His blood is and how completely it purifies us of all sin.

Robert Morgan - Behold the Lamb August 26

George Cutting, British author and soul-winner, was bicycling one day through a certain English village when he felt impressed to shout out the words, "Behold! the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" No sooner had he spoken those syllables when he suddenly felt he should repeat them.

A half-year passed, and Cutting returned to evangelize door-to-door in the area. When a woman came to the door of one cottage, Cutting asked if she was saved. "Oh yes!" she exclaimed. "Six months ago I was in great distress about the salvation of my soul. I pleaded for God's help. Then a voice cried, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' I asked God to repeat what he had said, and the voice came again."

A similar, better-known incident happened in the ministry of Charles H. Spurgeon. He was invited to preach in London's Crystal Palace on the "Day of National Humiliation." The meeting was described as "the largest ever addressed by a preacher of the gospel in Europe or the world." Several days before the service, Spurgeon went to the Crystal Palace to walk around the platform, gaze over the empty seats, and test the acoustics. He stepped to the podium, raised his voice, and shouted the words, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."

Unknown to him, his words wafted through the hall and up into the rafters where a workman, busy in the upper galleries, heard them as though spoken from heaven. He was immediately smitten with conviction of sin and put down his tools, went home, and sought for Christ until he found Him.

THE LAMB OF GOD C H SPURGEON

A Sermon PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD, 1910, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, On Lord's-day Evening, February 20th, 1870.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—John 1:29.*

BEFORE we plunge into our main subject, it is needful to notice what is implied in our text, which is that "the world" was lost through sin, that all mankind had become guilty before God. You, therefore, my dear hearer, are one of those who are thus guilty. Though you may never have broken the laws of your country, nor even the rules of propriety; though you may be both amiable and admirable in your general deportment, yet, for all this, as "there is none righteous, no, not one," you also are included amongst the unrighteous. It matters not what religious professions you may have made, or what outward forms of godliness you may have observed, unless you have a better righteousness than your own, you are a lost sinner. I believe there is now present a brother who, when he was first convinced of sin, strove hard to make himself a better man, under the mistaken idea that this was the way of salvation; and when, one Sabbath night, he heard me say that all the reforms you could ever make upon your old nature would be useless as to the matter of salvation, but that "ye must be born again," he felt very angry, and made a vow that he would never be found listening to me again; yet here he is, rejoicing that the Lord has taught him to see himself as a lost, ruined sinner, and to put his heart's trust in Jesus Christ, the sinner's Saviour.

It is very likely that, if I had time to explain to you, my hearer, the fulness of your sin and the utter ruin of your natural state, you also would grow angry. Yet you would have no cause to be angry, for all that I could say would fall far short of the truth about your real condition in the sight of God; and it is most solemnly important for you to know that, however high you may stand in the ranks of merely moral men, you are a lost soul, and a condemned soul, so long as you remain without living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are angry with the minister of the gospel who tells you this truth, you are as foolish as a certain Brahmin of whom I have heard. His religion consisted chiefly in not eating any animal food or destroying any kind of life. The missionary told him that it was impossible for him to carry out such a "religion" as that, "for," said he, "in every drop of water that you drink, you swallow thousands of animals, and so destroy vast quantities of animal life." Then he put a drop of water out of the cup from which the Brahmin had been drinking under his microscope, and so convinced him of the truth of what he had said; and when the Brahmin saw the creatures moving in the Water, instead of abandoning his false theory, he grew very angry, and dashed the microscope upon the ground. He was not angry, you see, with the fact, but with that which revealed the fact; like the lazy housemaid, who said she was quite sure that she always kept the rooms clean, but that it was the nasty sun that would shine in, and make everything look so dusty! The fault is not in the gospel which we preach, so you should not be angry with it, or with us; the fault is in your own selves, in your own hearts and lives; and if you do not like to be told the truth about sin, it is a sure sign that your heart is not right in the sight

of God. It is still true that “every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”

Well then, with that truth taken for granted,—that you, whom I am now addressing, have sinned, and are therefore under God’s condemnation unless you are trusting in Christ,—we now come directly to our text. We shall take it, not merely as though John the Baptist were speaking it, but as we may now use it from our point of view. It appears to me to be the whole gospel in a very brief form. You may sometimes write much in a very few words, and here you have an epitome of the whole gospel of God in these few syllables: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” I am going to ask, and to try to answer, three questions: first, what is to be beheld? secondly, what is to be done? and, thirdly, why should we do this?

I. First, then, WHAT IS TO BE BEHELD?

The text mentions a Lamb, by which is meant a sacrifice. Under the Jewish law, those who had offended brought sacrifices, and offered them to God. These sacrifices were representations of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is “the Lamb of God.” Listen, my dear hearer, and I will tell thee the gospel in a few sentences. As God is just, it is inevitable that sin should be punished. If he would pardon thee, how can this be righteously accomplished? Only thus: Jesus Christ, his Son, came to earth and stood in the room, and place, and stead of all those who believe on him; and God accepted him as the substitutionary sacrifice for all those who put their trust in him. Under the Jewish law, the Lamb was put to death that the man might not be put to death; and, in like manner, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour suffered the pangs of death by crucifixion and the greater agony of the wrath of God that we might not suffer the pangs of hell and the wrath eternal which is due to sin. There is no other way of salvation under heaven but this. God cannot relax his justice, and he will by no means clear the guilty; but he laid upon Christ the full punishment that was due to sin, and smote him as though he had been the actual offender, and now, turning round to you, he tells you that, if you trust in Jesus, the merits of his great atoning sacrifice shall be imputed to you, and you shall live for ever in glory because Jesus died upon the cross of Calvary. If any of you would have your sins forgiven, and so enjoy peace with God, you must look by faith to that sacrifice which was offered upon Calvary, and keep your eye of faith fixed there, and sooner or later you will certainly receive the blessings of peace into your souls.

But the text not only mentions a Lamb; it says, “Behold the Lamb of God,” and I draw your special attention to that expression. It is not merely a sacrifice to which you are to look, but the sacrifice that God has appointed and ordained to be the one and only sacrifice for sin. This is an all-important point. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.... It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.” If Christ had not been sent of God to be the Saviour of sinners, our faith would have had no firm foundation to rest upon; but as God himself has set forth Christ to be the propitiation for human guilt, then he cannot reject the sinner who accepts that propitiation. I need not raise any question as to whether Christ’s atonement is sufficient, for God says that it is; and as he is well satisfied with the sacrifice offered by his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, surely the most troubled conscience may be equally well satisfied with it. Your offence, my friend, was committed against God; if, then, God is content with what Christ has done on your behalf, and so is willing to pardon you, surely you need not enquire any further, but with gratitude you should at once accept the reconciliation which Christ has made. It is “the Lamb of God” whom I have to bid you “behold.” It is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who dies on Calvary, “the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” It was God who appointed him to die as the Substitute for sinners, it was God who accepted his sacrifice when he died; and now Jehovah himself, speaking from his throne of glory, saith to the sinner, “Believe thou on my Son, whom I have set forth as the propitiation for human sin; trust thou in him, and thou shalt be eternally saved.”

Still further to bring out the full force of the text, notice the next words, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” When Jesus Christ was put into our place, our sin was laid upon him; and sin, like anything else, cannot be in two places at one time. If, then, I, being a believer in Jesus, know that all my sin was laid upon Christ, it follows necessarily that I have no sin left upon me. It has become Christ’s burden; he has taken it away from me. “Yes,” you say, “but then the sin is still on Christ.” Ah! but, my hearers, if our Lord Jesus Christ, “his own self bare our sins in his own body up to the tree,” he there endured all the punishment that was due to us, or an equivalent for it, and those sins were by that means put away; that is to say, they ceased to be; so they do not exist any longer. All my indebtedness to God was transferred to Christ, and he paid all my debts. Then, where are my debts now? Why, there are none, they are all gone for ever. This is what Christ does for every one who truly trusts in him; he takes that man’s sins, suffers what that man ought to have suffered, and puts that man’s sins absolutely out of existence, so that they cease to be. Christ has accomplished the great work described to Daniel by the angel Gabriel; he has finished the transgression, made an end of sins,—what a strong expression that is!—made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. How gloriously he has put sin right away for all who believe in him! “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” Of all sinners in the whole world who believe in Jesus Christ, it may be truly said that all their sins are gone past all recall; God has cast them behind his back into the depths of the Red Sea of the Saviour’s blood, and they shall not be remembered against them any more for ever. It is thus that the Lamb of God taketh or beareth away sin.

But whose sin does he take away? The text saith, “the sin of the world.” By this expression, I believe is intended the sin, not of the Jews only, but of Jews and Gentiles alike;—the sin, not of a few sinners only, but of all sinners in the whole world who come to

Jesus, and put their trust in him. He has so taken away "the sin of the world" that every sinner in the world who will come to him, and trust in him, shall have all his sins put away for ever. Whether he be Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, Barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, if he truly believes in Jesus, it is certain that Christ took all his sins away. Whether he was born eighteen hundred years ago, or whether he shall be born in the ages that are yet to come, does not make any difference to this fact,—Christ hath borne his sins if he trusts in Jesus as his own Saviour. This is the sign and token by which he may assuredly know that he hath a saving and eternal interest in the precious blood of Jesus: "He that believeth on him is not condemned." The gate of grace is set very wide open in our text; if it were not, some poor sinners would be afraid to enter. "Oh!" asks one, "is this mercy for me? Is it for me?" Well, friend, I will ask thee a question,—Wilt thou trust Christ? Wilt thou come to him this very moment, and take the mercy that he freely presents to all who will accept it? If so, I am sure that it is thine, as sure as I am that it is mine.

Possibly, somebody has come in here to-night hoping to hear something new; but I have nothing new to tell, nor do I wish ever to have anything more new than this, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" or this, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." When Dr. Judson went home to America from Burmah, there was a large congregation gathered together, and they requested the returned missionary, the veteran of so many years of service, to address the assembly. He stood up, and simply told the story that I have again told you to-night, the story of Christ suffering in the stead of sinners, and of Christ saving all who trust him. Then he sat down; and one who sat next him said to him, "I am afraid the friends are rather disappointed; they expected to hear something interesting from you." He said, "I have spoken to them, to the best of my ability, upon the most interesting subject in the whole world; what could I have done better than that?" "Yes," said the other; "but, after having been so long abroad, they thought that you would tell them some interesting story; they did not think you would come all the way from Burmah just to tell them only that." The missionary then rose, and said, "I should like to go home feeling that, although I have come all the way from Burmah, I do not know anything that I can tell you that I think is half so good for you to hear, or half so interesting, as the story of the love of Christ in dying to save sinners." The good doctor was right; and I feel, just as he did, that there is nothing so interesting as the story of the cross. You want to hear it, you who are already saved; and you want to hear it, you who are not yet saved. You must hear it, for there is no hope of salvation for you except as faith shall come to you by hearing, and specially hearing that portion of the Word of God which deals most closely with the cross of Christ.

One night, a dissolving-view lecture upon the Holy Land was being given; and, as the audience, sitting in darkness, looked at a picture of Jerusalem, they were startled by a voice asking, "Where is Calvary?" Ah! and that is the question that many of you want to ask, "Where is Calvary?" There must you turn your eye, where, betwixt the two thieves, your Saviour died. If you really do look to him as he dies there for guilty sinners, you are saved; and then, whatever else you do not know, you know enough to save you, for you are wise unto life eternal. May the Lord graciously make you thus wise through the effectual working of his ever-blessed Spirit! So then, God in human flesh, the divinely-appointed sacrifice for human guilt, "the Lamb of God," is what you are in our text bidden to "behold."

II. But now, secondly, WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

How are we to have a part and lot in that great sacrifice which Christ offered on Calvary? The answer of the text is, "Behold"—that is, look to "the Lamb of God."

"There is life in a look at the Crucified One."

"Behold the Lamb of God" means believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, trust in him as your Saviour, accept God's revelation concerning him, and rely upon him to save you. This is the way of salvation.

Notice how opposed this is to the idea that we are critically to understand the doctrines of the gospel before we can be saved. How many persons there are who want to know this and to understand that! They come to us, and say, "Here are two texts that do not seem to us to square with one another, and there are those two doctrines of divine sovereignty and human responsibility which do not appear to be consistent with each other. Must we understand all these mysteries before we can be saved?" O foolish people! they remind me of one who is shipwrecked, and who, as the lifeboat comes up to the sinking ship, or to the spar upon which he is floating, says to the captain, "Before I can get on board that lifeboat, I want to know the exact number of planks there are in it; and I do not think that knowing that would content me, I should like also to know how many rivets and bolts there are in the boat; and I want also to know what is the theory of the operation of the oars upon the waves, and how it is that boats are propelled." If a man ever did talk thus, I am pretty sure that the captain of the lifeboat would exclaim, "What a fool the man is! He is in danger of drowning, yet he talks like this! Come into the boat at once, or we must leave you to perish!" And I also feel that you unconverted sinners have no business to set yourselves up as critics of the Word of God. There is something much simpler than that for you to do, and the text bids you do it. It is this, "Behold the Lamb of God;" do not sit down to manufacture difficulties; "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." There are various ways of using a piece of bread. One man may take it, and employ it in rubbing out the pencil marks which he has made upon a sheet of paper. Another man may take it to the analyst, and ask him to see

how much alum the baker may have put into it. But the really hungry man, the one who gets the most good out of the piece of bread, eats it; and that is what I recommend you to do with the gospel;—not begin to turn it about this way and that, not ask all manner of questions concerning it, but feed upon it; and the way to feed upon it is to accept and believe it, and especially to put your trust in Jesus Christ, who is the very essence of the gospel.

“Behold the Lamb of God,” says the text; then that command is opposed to the question that troubles so many,—whether they are elect or not. That is like wanting to read Hebrew before one has learned to speak English. Such people are not content to learn the ABC, the elements, the rudiments of the gospel first, they want to know the gospel’s classics, or mathematics, or metaphysics first, but that cannot be. During the recent hard frosts, I have struck an acquaintance with a little friend who, I am afraid, may desert me by-and-by, but our friendship has been exceedingly pleasant to each of us thus far. On the little balcony outside my study windows, I observed a robin frequently coming, so I took an opportunity, one morning, to put some crumbs there, and I have done the same thing every morning since; and my little feathered friend comes close up to the window-frame, and picks up the crumbs, and I do not perceive that he has any difficulty about whether those crumbs were laid there for him, or whether I had an electing love towards him in my heart. There were the crumbs, he wanted them, and he picked them up, and ate them; and I can tell you that, in doing so, he exactly fulfilled my purpose in putting the crumbs there. I thought that he acted very wisely; and I think that, if a poor sinner wants mercy, and he sees that there is mercy to be had, he had better not pause to ask, “Did God decree me to have it?” but go and take it, and he will then find that, in doing so, he is fulfilling God’s decrees. My little robin friend is very wise in his way, for he has called a friend of his to join him at the feast on the balcony. How he did it, I do not know; but he managed to tell a blackbird all about the crumbs, and he brought him last Friday morning to see them for himself. The blackbird was rather shy at first, and stood for a while on the iron bar of the balcony; but, after looking in at the study window, he hopped down, and neither he nor the robin asked whether it was my purpose that the blackbird should have any of the crumbs; but there were the crumbs, and they were both hungry, so they came and fed together. So, if any of you find Jesus Christ for yourselves, and you know some poor soul who wants him, do not you begin asking whether it is God’s purpose or decree that he also should find the Saviour; you go and invite him to come to Jesus, and then both of you come to the Saviour together; and then, just as the robin and blackbird exactly fulfilled my purpose in throwing out the crumbs, so, when you and your friend too come to Christ, you will rejoice to find that you have both of you fulfilled the eternal purpose of the divine decree of the great heart of God. It is not your business to look into the book of God’s secret purposes, but to look to Christ, or, as our text puts it, to “behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Ah! but this beholding of the Lamb of God is a thing to which men cannot readily be brought. I know many whose consciences are truly awakened, and who see themselves as sinners in the sight of God; but, instead of beholding the Lamb of God, they are continually beholding themselves. I do not think that they have any confidence in their own righteousness, but they are afraid that they do not feel their guilt as much as they ought. They think that they are not yet sufficiently awakened, sufficiently humbled, sufficiently penitent, and so on, and thus they fix their eyes upon themselves in the hope of getting peace with God. Suppose that, yesterday, or the day before, you had felt very cold, and therefore you had gone outside your house, and fixed your gaze upon the ice and the snow, do you think that sight would have warmed you? No; you know you would have been getting colder all the time. Suppose you are very poor, and you studiously fix your mind’s eye upon your empty pocket, do you think that will enrich you? Or imagine that you have had an accident, and that one of your bones is broken, if you think very seriously of that broken bone, do you think that your consideration will mend it? Yet some sinners seem to imagine that salvation can come to them through their consideration of their lost and ruined condition. My dear unconverted hearers, you are lost whether you know it or not. Take that fact for granted. If you would be saved, look not at yourselves, but “behold the Lamb of God.” He has been sent by his Father to be the Saviour of sinners, and it is by trust in him that peace and pardon will come to you. I pray you not to suppose, for a single moment, that your repentance, your tears, or your softened heart can prepare you for Christ. Do not come to Christ because you have a tender heart, but come to Christ to get a tender heart. Do not come to him because you are fit to come, but because you want to be made fit; and remember that—

“All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of him;
This he gives you;
'Tis the Spirit’s rising beam.”

But do give up looking at yourself, and “behold the Lamb of God.”

Let me also, dear friend, warn you against the notion that your prayers can save you apart from beholding Christ. I believe that it is both the duty and the privilege of every living soul to pray; but that the first command to a sinner is to pray, I deny. The first command is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;” and when thou hast done that, thou wilt soon get to praying. I think it is stated, in McCheyne’s life, that, after an earnest sermon, he found a man under deep concern of soul; and, after saying a word or two to him, he said, “I cannot stop longer with you myself, but there is one of my elders who will pray with you.” The elder did so, and he prayed in so fervent a fashion that it was remarked that he seemed to be like Jacob wrestling with the angel until he prevailed. The man afterwards came to see Mr. McCheyne, and he said to him, “I am very thankful that I was at your church that night; I feel very happy,

and I believe I am saved." "Well," said McCheyne, "what makes you feel so happy?" "Oh!" he said, "I have great faith in that good man's prayers." McCheyne at once said, "My friend, I am afraid that good man's prayers will ruin you; if that is where you are putting your confidence, you are utterly mistaken." He was quite right, and your own prayers will be just such an obstacle in your way if you trust to them instead of trusting to Christ. "I know I pray," says one, "and I am very earnest in prayer." Well, I am glad of that as far as it goes; but if you have not something better to trust to than your own prayers, your prayers will ruin you; for the look of faith is not to be given to prayer, but to Christ. Our text says, "Behold the Lamb of God." I have told you what that means,—look by faith to the sacrifice that Christ made for sinners on the cross at Calvary; and if you look to anything else for salvation, you will not find it. Even your prayers, apart from faith in Christ, will not save you from everlasting destruction. O sinner, get away from everything else to Christ!

"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good."

This great truth, that believing is the divinely-appointed means of salvation, may be illustrated by the old story of the children of Israel and the serpent of brass.* You have heard it scores of times; yet I beg you to listen to it once more. When the people were bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness, they were commanded to look to the serpent of brass that was lifted up upon a pole; and whosoever looked, lived. They had nothing to do but to look. Moses lifted up the serpent, and pointed to it, and cried, "Look! Look! Look! and be healed." Possibly, there were some who said they were bitten too badly to look. Well, if they could not or did not look, they would die. They might think it was a proof of their humility to say, "We are too sick to be cured;" but if they did so, they would die whether they were humble or not. O my hearer, do not be lost through a mock humility which is really abominable pride! You are not too great a sinner to be saved. I will venture to say that you will dishonour Christ if you ever think such a thing; so let not that sinful thought destroy you.

There may have been others who said, "We shall not look to the brazen serpent, for we have only got a mere scratch; it will soon be gone." But you know a poison scratch means death; and if your sin were only a scratch, (and it is much more than that,) it would mean eternal damnation for you. So look to Jesus, I implore thee, just as thou art; look now, look and live.

Perhaps there was one who said, "My father had a famous recipe for serpent bites; it was given to him by a celebrated doctor in Egypt; so we will mix up the proper ingredients, and so get cured." Well, if any who were bitten were to act and speak like that, they would all die; the deadly venom would certainly destroy them, whatever ointments they might use. A look at the brazen serpent gave life; but the refusal to look brought death.

There may have been some fine gentlemen there who had imbibed sceptical notions during their life in Egypt. They were so clever that they thought they knew a great deal more than the Lord's servant to whom God had specially revealed the only effectual remedy, so they turned on their heels, and said, "Such a remedy as this is utterly ridiculous; it is not according to the laws of physics that the mere looking at a piece of brass can heal people of the bites of snakes;" so they perished. Notwithstanding all their learning and wit, notwithstanding their jeers at the divinely-appointed remedy, they perished; and nobody in the whole camp was healed except those who were simple enough and wise enough to take God at his word. Then, though they were terribly bitten, and their blood was set on fire by the poison, and though some of them were in a truly desperate state, when they just looked at the serpent of brass, in a moment their blood again flowed healthily through their veins, and their strength returned to them in all its former vigour; and, dear friends, there shall be no soul saved in the whole world except by looking to the crucified Christ of Calvary. All trust in christening, (or even in baptism,) in confirmation, in sacraments, in ceremonies, in priests, and popes, and relics, are all a lie together; but, so long as God's Word remains true, he who looks by faith to Christ alone must and shall be eternally saved. Oh, how can I utter this truth so as to make it plainer, or how shall I plead with you so as to bring you all to trust in Christ? I cannot do this, but I pray the Holy Spirit to do it, for he can; and then you will believe in Jesus, and so receive life everlasting.

III. I must not detain you longer, as our time has fled; otherwise, I was to have answered a third question, WHY SHOULD WE THUS LOOK?

The answer would have been that God has appointed this as the only way of salvation; that those who obey the command of the text will obtain immediate salvation; and that, being saved, they shall have joy and peace in believing; and that those who neglect or refuse to "behold the Lamb of God" must, without doubt, perish everlastingly. Of his infinite mercy, may God graciously grant that none, whom I am now addressing, may refuse to believe in Jesus, but may everyone look unto him, and live, live now, and live for ever.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD
C H SPURGEON

A Sermon DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 16TH, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—John 1:29.

JOHN the Baptist's one business was to bear witness to Christ. He was the morning star which heralds the rising sun. When the sun appeared he had no more reason for shining. You cannot account for John except by Jesus: the one reason for John's existence is Jesus. I wish it might be so with us; may we be able to say, "For me to live is Christ." May our life be such that it cannot be understood apart from Jesus: take him away, and our whole character would become an inexplicable mystery. I am afraid that some professors could be easily interpreted apart from Christ; perhaps could be better accounted for if there were no Christ; but if we are like John, true witnesses to Jesus, we shall find in Jesus the conscious purpose of our being, and his glory will be the clue to all the windings of our lives. For this purpose were we born, and for this end have we come into the world, that we may bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. Search and look, my brethren, whether it has been so with you.

When our Lord was thus set forth by John, it is well to note the special character under which he was declared. John knew much of the Lord Jesus, and could have pictured him in many lights and characters. He might especially have pointed him out as the great moral example, the founder of a higher form of life, the great teacher of holiness and love; yet this did not strike the Baptist as the head and front of our Lord's character, but he proclaimed him as one who had come into the world to be the great sacrifice for sin. Lifting up his hand and pointing to Jesus, he cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He did not say, "Behold the great Exemplar"; no doubt he would have said that in due season. He did not even say, "Behold the king and leader of a new dispensation"; that fact he would by no means have denied, but would have gloried in it. Still, the first point that he dwells upon, and that which wins his enthusiasm is, "Behold the Lamb of God." John Baptist views him as the propitiation for sin, and so he cries, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

My brethren, we may depend upon it that this must be a very practical truth, for John was pre-eminently practical. What is the sum and substance of his teaching but, "Repent. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance. The axe is laid unto the root of the trees"? He has a word for everybody that comes: even the Roman soldiers are told to be content with their rations. John is no theorist or quibbler about dogma: he deals with life and character, and demands works meet for repentance; yet he makes a great point of our Lord's being the sacrifice for sin. This indeed is the text of his life-sermon. Rest assured that there is something wonderfully practical about that truth, and those who becloud it under the notion of being practical are laying aside the best instrument of doing good to men. For the reformation of manners and the overthrow of evil, and the setting up of the kingdom of righteousness throughout the world, there is no truth like that which reveals Jesus as the sacrifice provided by God for removing the sin of men. The stern Baptist, the true Elijah, who grappled hard with sin, and laid the sword of repentance to its throat, saw that nothing could be done unless he pointed out the Lamb of God, by whom the world's sin is taken away. When repentance is the sermon, Jesus must be the text and the substance of the discourse. He puts life, power, energy into what else would be a dead moral essay. O ye who would save men from sin, take care that ye preach the great sacrifice for sin. It is clear that this doctrine has to do with repentance, for the apostle of repentance introduced it: he whose first word was "Repent," brought forward Jesus as the great Sin-Bearer; for he saw, what I wish all would see, that there is a very intimate connection between the creation, growth, and purity of repentance and the sin-bearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren, the fact is, the more we have to do with penitent sinners, the more we feel the need of a sin-bearer. O you that have never sinned, and are wrapped up in your own self-righteousness, you imagine that you can enter heaven by your own works; the bearing of sin by the Lamb of God does not seem to you at all needful; but if you once dwelt, as John did, in the midst of a burdened people, who came lamenting and confessing their sins, you would feel that nothing could bring them into reconciliation with God but faith in the appointed atonement. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," is the text which evangelists love, because without it they cannot face the troubled ones who throng around them.

My brethren, in proportion as you wisely love your fellow men you will prize the sacrifice for sin. Your practical dealing with a perishing people will make you prize the Saviour. Oh, what should I do if I were sent to preach to this vast throng, and had no sin-offering to declare to you! Might I not break my heart before a task so useless, so cruel, as to have to denounce sin, and yet to have no pardon to declare, and consequently no hope? Now that I can tell of One who bore in his own body on the tree the transgression, iniquity, and sin of men, I find my task a solemn one, but certainly not hopeless, nor even dreary. Happy indeed am I to be permitted to set forth so blessed a salvation. Blessed are the lips which are allowed to cry, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." You see, then, that the practical character of John's mission made him all the more at home in setting forth the sacrificial character of our Lord.

If John the Baptist had not felt that the character of our Lord, as a sin-offering, was the chief matter, he might have fitly pointed him out as an example at the time when he delivered the words of our text. The Saviour had not yet revealed to anyone the fact and

meaning of his future death: his Passion was as yet a thing in the dim future, while his life was just blossoming out into public observation. He had newly left the holy quiet of the parental roof at Nazareth, and the charm of early holiness was on him. Should not the world now mark him, that his example might be known throughout its entire length? In his retirement his conduct had been such, that the austere and devout Baptist had noticed it, and had felt bound to acknowledge that his younger relative was a worthier person than himself, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee." But John does not seem, when he beholds the Lord after his baptism, to think of his godly life already commenced, nor of that holy life which he could foresee in him; but he fastens his eye upon the sacrificial character of that wondrous personage, and dwells on that alone, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God." Brethren, that age needed an example as badly as ours does; but it needed a Saviour still more, and John sees first that which is first. Let me add that the time was doubly opportune for dwelling upon our Lord's example, since he had just returned from his famous temptation in the wilderness, wherein he had rehearsed his life-struggles. You cannot, in reading the narrative, piece in the forty days' temptation in the wilderness anywhere else but just here. We read that our Saviour, after his baptism, was led up immediately into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. Tempted he was, but he yielded in no point. In the threefold battle he vanquished the power of darkness at every point, and now, armed for the fray, in mail which he had tried and proven, the champion stood before John; and it would not have been singular had the man of God cried out, "Behold the perfect One, in whom the prince of this world has no place. Copy his supreme example." But no, the great Baptist's eye rests not on that: the blood and wounds of the passion are before his mind's eye, and beyond all else he sees the sacrificial character of the wondrous Being who now stands in the midst of the throng. The fact that he is the appointed victim for human sin enwraps the whole soul of the preacher, and he cries, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Brethren, I desire to be in the same case with John the Baptist. I would have my thoughts of Christ concentrated upon his atoning death, henceforth and evermore. During the little time in which I may be spared to lift up my voice in this wilderness, I would bear witness to the Lamb of God. The years may be short in which I may guide this flock, but around the cross shall be to me evermore the place of green pastures, and from the sacrifice of our Lord shall flow the still waters. Many others are dealing with other aspects of our Lord's work; some, I doubt not, faithfully, and others with evil intent: I may very well leave them to do their best or their worst; for at least one may be allowed to be baptized for the Crucified, separated unto the cross, dedicated to the atonement by blood. I know no atonement but substitution, no substitute but Christ. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." To the declaration of that fact I set myself apart to life's end.

I. To come still closer to our text, I would have you notice, in the first place, that JOHN SET FORTH CHRIST AS A SACRIFICE WITH EVIDENT PERSONAL PERCEPTION OF THE FACT. When a man says "Behold!" he sees something himself, he sees that something with clearness, and he desires you to see it, and therefore he cries, "Behold! Behold!" John had from his birth been ordained to be the herald of the Christ; but he evidently did not know who the Lamb of God might be. As a babe he leaped in the womb when he came near to the mother of our Lord; but yet he did not know Jesus as the Lamb of God. He says, "I knew him not." Some suppose that John and Jesus had never met during their early years; but I find it hard to believe it. I see quite another meaning here. John knew Jesus, but did not know him as the Sin-Bearer. I think he must have known the life of the holy child, his near relative, while he grew in favour both with God and man; but he had not yet seen upon him the attesting seal which marked him as the Son of God. John admired the Lord's character very much, insomuch that when he came to be baptized of him, John said, "I have need to be baptized of thee." Yet John says, "I knew him not." He knew him as one of high and holy character, but as yet he saw not the token which the Lord God had secretly given to his servant; for he saw not the Spirit of God descending and resting upon him. John shrewdly suspected that Jesus was the Son of the Highest, of whom he was the forerunner; but a witness must not follow his own surmises, however correct they may be. John, as the Lord's servant, did not dare to know anything of his own unguided judgment, he waited for the secret sign. Certain preachers tell their people anything they invent out of their wonderful brains; but the true servant of God has no business to put forth his own thoughts or opinions; but he must wait for a word from God. The message should come straight from the Master: "Thus saith the Lord." John, though he saw about this wondrous Jesus such marvellous traits of character that he was sure he was much greater than himself, yet says, "I knew him not." He would know nothing but as it was revealed to him by the Lord God who sent him.

But when at last he received that personal token, when he plunged our blessed Master into the waters of the Jordan, and saw the heavens opened and the Dove descend, and heard the voice saying, "This is my beloved Son," then he knew him, and was henceforth sure. When he afterwards spoke he did not say, "I think this is the Lamb of God," or, "I am under the impression that this is the Son of God." No, he boldly cried, "Behold him! See for yourselves. This is the Lamb of God! I speak with the accent of conviction; nothing can shake me. The Master has given the sign, and henceforth I bear confident witness. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Henceforth to John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus Christ was more than he appeared to be to any others. To those who looked at the Saviour, he would have seemed to be a plain, humble Jew, with nothing particular to mark him out, except it were the gentleness of his demeanour, and a certain heavenliness of carriage; but to the Baptist he was now before all, and above all. When a person was to be baptized, he confessed his sins to John; but when Jesus came with no sins of his own to confess, did he whisper in John's ear,

"I bear the sin of the world"? I think he did; but in any case, this was true to the Baptist's mind, and to him Jesus was henceforth the matchless sacrifice, the one atonement for human sin.

This was an extraordinary truth to John. It took a miracle of grace to make a Jew see, "The Lamb, which taketh away the sin of the world." The Jew thought that the sacrifice of God must be for his chosen people only; but John saw beyond all bounds of nationality and restrictions of race, and clearly perceived in Jesus "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Remember that John was of priestly race; he was familiar with lambs for sacrifice. But as a priest he never saw a lamb for sacrifice in a place far off from the consecrated shrine. There was only one altar, and that was at Jerusalem, and there the lamb of sacrifice must be, and not by Jordan's lonely stream. Yet John saw, in a place never dedicated in any peculiar manner to the service of God, the one great sacrifice standing in the midst of the people. "Behold," says he, "this is the Lamb of God." See how well the Lord had taught him, and how fully he had broken away from natural prejudices!

Beloved, I pray that each one of us may know for himself Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. You were brought up as children to believe that Jesus is the Lamb of God; but all revelation in the Book must again be revealed to the heart, or it will not be really known and perceived. For the life of the truth to enter into our life it must become a matter, not of head-creed only, but of heart-belief. That Jesus is the substitutionary sacrifice, the propitiation for our sins, the expiation for our iniquity, must be taught us by the Holy Ghost. I can truly declare among you that I do not preach this doctrine of vicarious sacrifice as one among many theories, but as the saving fact of my experience. I must preach this or nothing. I know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, because I have neither hope nor comfort outside of the great atoning sacrifice. He was made sin for us, even he who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. "He was made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." I pray that each one of God's people may have a clear knowledge of Christ as the sin-bearing Lamb, and have it written on his individual consciousness, for then nothing will shake him out of it. When men find their own deliverance from sin, and their own peace with God flowing out of the atoning sacrifice, this great truth becomes a part of their inward experience, and it can never be torn from them. O my brother, when the great sacrifice has saved thee, thou wilt never be able to doubt it; thou wilt sooner doubt thine own existence than doubt this blessed fact, that he bare our sin in his own body on the tree, and that through him we are reconciled unto God. It was a matter with John of personal perception.

II. Let us advance a little. JOHN SET FORTH OUR LORD AS EMPHATICALLY THE SACRIFICE: "Behold the Lamb of God." This is more than John would have said of all the lambs that he had ever heard or read of since the first appointment of sacrifice. He remembered the firstling of the flock which Abel offered, and the sacrifice of a sweet savour which Noah presented; he knew the sacrifices of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; he was familiar with the lamb of the Paschal supper, and those of Israel's high festivals. He remembered the thousands of offerings that had been presented by David and by Solomon, and by other kings in the great national acts of worship; but passing them all by as if they were all mere shadows, he points his finger to the man Christ Jesus, and he says of him, "This is THE Lamb of God."

In this I think the Baptist comprehended everything that went before. There was the daily lamb of which I read to you in the commencement of the service, from Exodus 29. There had been slain before the Lord a lamb every morning, and a lamb every evening, all the year round throughout the centuries of Israel's history. Always and ever the continual sacrifice of the lamb was the symbol of Jehovah's dwelling with his people. But John puts his finger down upon a single sacrifice, and says, "This is the Lamb." All the other daily lambs had been but prefigurations of this. "Behold THE Lamb."

Let me call your attention also to another wonderful lamb, the Paschal lamb, slain on the night when Israel went up out of Egypt, when each Hebrew smeared the lintel and side-posts of his door with blood, and the sight of that blood sufficed for the deliverance of the family, according to the word of Jehovah, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." These passover lambs were many and sacred to every Jewish mind; but John passes them all over, and says, "Behold the Lamb of God."

Do you not think he also had in his mind the lamb spoken of by Isaiah, the great evangelical prophet? Had he not in his memory that famous passage, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter"? John the Baptist cries, "This is he of whom the prophet spake, Behold the Lamb of God."

Ay, and if John's eyes had been turned to the future as well as to the past, so that he could have looked adown the centuries, and shared the visions of the seer of Patmos, he would have seen the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and have heard the song unto him that was slain; but after seeing all the visions of the coming glory of the Lamb, he would still have kept his finger pointed towards the blessed Christ of God standing among the people, and would have said, "Behold the Lamb." All that you read of sacrifice and sin-bearing in the Old or the New Testament, all that you have ever heard, or ever shall hear, of the putting away of sin, if it be true, is all centred in this line, "Behold the Lamb." It is a great thing when we can focus our testimony upon a single point. Let every servant of God do so, and bear his witness that there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. There is no other purgation for sin in the whole universe save that great sacrifice which taketh away the sin of the world.

III. We will go a step further again: JOHN, IN DESCRIBING OUR LORD JESUS IN HIS SACRIFICIAL CHARACTER, WAS VERY

EXPLICIT IN DECLARING HIM TO BE THE SACRIFICE OF GOD. He says: "Behold the Lamb of God." These words contain a great depth of meaning. "The Lamb of God." Did not the Baptist thus recall the day when Abraham walked with Isaac towards the mount that God had told him of? "And Isaac said to his father, My father, behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham answered, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for the burnt offering." John, standing centuries after, seems to say, "Now is the saying of the Father of the faithful fulfilled. Behold how God provides! Behold the Lamb of God." Under the old Jewish dispensation, if a man sinned, he said to himself, "I must go and find a lamb"; and he went out to his own flock, or else to his neighbour, and he bought a lamb. That was his lamb which he brought for his own trespass. But you and I have not to go and find a lamb: God has provided a lamb already, and we have only to accept the Lamb of God. And is it not a wonderful thing, that he against whom all sin was levelled, himself provided the sacrifice for sin? Behold the sin of man and the Lamb of God. Jesus is the Father's best beloved, his choice one, his only one, and yet he delivered him up for us all; and God's Son became God's lamb. O my Father, my Father, do I sin, and dost thou find the sacrifice? But if a sacrifice must be found by the Father, why was it found so near his heart? He could find the sacrifice for sin nowhere but in his own bosom. He had but one Son, his Only-begotten; and "God so loved the world, that he gave his Only-begotten Son." Jehovah gave his only Son to be a sacrifice! Let heaven and earth be filled with astonishment. Beloved, if you think of it, who else could have provided a sacrifice for the sin of the world? None will pretend to such ability. And when God himself provided a sacrifice, what other could he have found but his co-equal Son? Who else could render the honour which was due to the broken law? Who else could offer to divine justice the vindication which it demanded? Justice must be violated, or else man must perish for ever: there remained no way of escape from this dilemma until the Son of the Highest condescended to become a sacrifice, and put away sin by his own death. So, you see, the Lord must himself provide the sacrifice, and that sacrifice must be his Only-begotten Son.

I do not think I can preach more, for a faintness has come over me, nor is there need for more if you will but chew the cud of this one precious truth: Jesus is the Lamb which God provided, and he is the Lamb which God himself presented at the altar. Yet I must rouse myself to say a little more. Who was it that sacrificed the Lamb of God? Who was the priest on that dread day? Who was it that bruised him? Who put him to grief? Who caused him the direst pang of all when he cried, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Was it not the Father himself? This was one point in the hardness of Abraham's test—"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a sacrifice." He must himself officiate at the Sacrifice. This the great Father did! He is the Lamb, the Lamb of God. And now to-day the bright side of this truth remains. He is the Lamb that God always accepts, must accept, glories to accept. Bring thou but Jesus with thee, and thou hast brought God an acceptable sacrifice. Thou canst not fail to be forgiven, when thou comest pleading the name of Jesus. If thou shouldst bring the fattest of thy flock, and the choicest of thy herd, thou mightest hear God say, "I will not accept thy sacrifice"! But when thou bringest God's own sacrifice, he cannot reject thee. Thou art accepted in the Beloved; there is such acceptance of Christ with God that it overlaps thine unacceptableness; it covers thy sin, it covers thee, it makes thee to be dear to the heart of God.

Thus far have we come with this blessed text, even unto "waters to swim in." "Behold the Lamb of God."

IV. Lend me your ears a little longer while in the fourth place I show you that JOHN SET FORTH THIS BLESSED SAVIOUR AS BEARING AND BEARING AWAY OUR SIN. You that have the Revised Version will please notice that the Revisers follow the Authorized Version in the body of the translation, and say, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," but they have done wisely by putting in the margin, "beareth the sin." Both meanings are here. In order to the bearing away of sin, there must first be the bearing of it. The Lord Jesus both took sin and took it away. Dwell for a minute on the first fact, that sin was actually laid on Christ. I saw the other day, amongst the abominations of the Stygian Bog, across which I have been compelled to gaze of late, such a foul teaching as this:—that the transference of sin is immoral. Yet is not Scripture full of it? "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Sin was borne by Christ; yes, actually borne by him; "he his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." They may make what they like of it. I am not going to explain or apologize, but I say without hesitation that the sin of the world was laid upon Christ, and he bore it, and bore it away. The heaviest thing in the universe is sin, the earth has been known to open beneath the unbearable load of it. Neither angels nor men can stand under the load of sin, it sinks them lower than the lowest hell. When sin was laid upon the Lamb of God, he bore it; but he sweat as it were great drops of blood, and he was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. To have borne up the weight of the world would have been nothing compared with bearing the sin of the world.

The best of all is, however, that our Lord did not only bear the load, but he took it away. "He taketh away the sin of the world." The sin which was laid upon Christ did not remain there, he took it away—it remains no more. We read in Scripture many things about sin, as that God forgives it, blots it out, forgets it, casts it into the sea, puts it behind his back, and a great many other expressive figures, but this is in some respects the best of them—he takes it away. Blessed be his name. My hearer, if thou believest in Jesus thou needest not to ask, "Where is my sin?" Jesus took it away. By bearing it he bore it away. It is gone, gone for ever—it is utterly abolished. "The day cometh when the sins of Jacob shall be sought for, and they shall not be found; yea they shall not be, saith the Lord." Our glory is that by the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross sin was made an end of. He finished transgressions, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. This is a gospel worth believing, worth living for, worth dying for. Let all teaching be accursed that cometh in opposition to it. This is heaven to a soul whose sins are dragging it down to hell: sin can be forgiven, for Jesus is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." What a sight is this to see! Those eyes can never be sore again

that have once seen sin put away by Jesus.

V. I must, however, call your attention to another point, which is that JOHN REPRESENTS OUR LORD AS REMOVING SIN CONTINUALLY. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Behold the sin of the world as one huge mass, and Jesus deals with it as a whole, and takes it away. John does not speak in the past tense, nor in the future, but he speaks in the present—"He taketh away the sin of the world." Our Saviour's atoning sacrifice, though it was but once offered, is perpetual in its effect. He must needs die at a certain point of time, and there were reasons why his death should have taken place at the particular moment when it did; yet time does not enter into the essence of it. The sacrifice might have been offered a million years ago, and as the Lamb of God he would still take away sin; or the actual sacrifice might further have been postponed, if infinite wisdom had so chosen, and yet the Lamb of God would now have taken away sin. The date of his death is not the question, his sacrifice is effectual before and after the event. Our Saviour was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, in the purpose, and covenant, and thought of God. His sacrifice saved Adam, and Noah, and Moses, and David, and all the saints, before the name of Calvary had become illustrious. Before he died he stood before John the Baptist, as taking away the sin of the world; and now to-day, though his death is a matter of 1800 years ago, he still "taketh away the sin of the world." In his person he was ever the Sin-Bearer, and through his death he puts sin away for ever. By one sacrifice he hath for ever put away sin. His eternal merits for ever remain a sweet savour unto the Lord God, and for ever remove the foul offence of human transgression. As the Great Purifier he continually takes away and will continue to take away the sin of the world.

Blessed be God, I have a Saviour to-day as fresh and full of power as if he had been crucified this very morning for my sin. He is now as able to save me as if he were at this hour on the Cross. Those dear wounds of his in effect perpetually do bleed; in his case the print of the nails is the token of an inexhaustible fount of merit, which is always flowing forth for the removal of my guilt, eternally efficacious, ceaselessly sin-cleansing. This is where we rest. It is the grandest fact in the history of all ages that Jesus takes away the sin of the world. We do not know what happened before this solar system was created, and we do not need to know. We cannot prophesy what is going to happen when you sun and moon and stars shall disappear like transient sparks from the anvil of power; but there never will be any new fact which can equal this first of truths—that the Son of God assumed human nature, and in that nature bare sin and bare it away. This is the truth to be looked at beyond all others: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Although I am too weak to preach to you as I desire; I feel great joy for myself in looking to the Sin-Bearer who hath taken away my sin. How I wish that all of you felt the same! This is the pith and the marrow of my theology. But you must take the Lamb of God for yourselves: you must know him for yourselves, you must believe in him for yourselves, and he will surely take away that sin which now burdens you. He will take it right away, so that it shall never burden you again. He will blot it out: it shall cease to be: you shall be no more under condemnation, but shall be free from it for ever. God help you to know Jesus, of whom I speak to you!

VI. The last point is this—JOHN WITNESSED TO THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE DIVINE SACRIFICE: "Which taketh away the sin of the world." No other in all the world can take away sin but the Lamb of God. There is no sin which he cannot take away. There is no limit to the value of his great sacrifice: he taketh away the sin of the world. There is no other sin-bearer, no other atonement, no other satisfaction. No purgatory in the present nor in the future can avail to take away sin. No supposed remedial pains in hell are possible: neither lapse of years, nor bitterness of regret, can take away sin: Jesus taketh away the sin of the world, and beside him there is no other.

Mark you, "he taketh away the sin of the world": all manner of sin that was ever done in the world, by all sorts of men, of all races, in all places. He removes sins of long duration, of aggravated criminality, of crying heinousness: any sin that can be compassed within the bounds of the world, Christ taketh away. O repenting sinner, though thy sins should be as many as the hairs of thine head, and each one as black as the midnight of Tophet, yet Christ taketh away each sin. Though thou shouldst have cursed God and slain thy fellow men, yet such sin as this comes within the range of "the sin of the world." Even as another text puts it, "God so loved the world, that he gave his Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" so is this text to be understood! Jesus so taketh away the sin of the world that whosoever believeth in him shall no longer be guilty of sin, but shall be forgiven, and be justified before God. Dost thou hear this? There is nothing in this text to shut any man out of mercy. Behold, I set before you an open door. There is everything in my text to induce every one of you who is conscious of guilt to come to the Lord Jesus, and accept him as his substitute and sacrifice. Christ shall take away no man's sin that doth not believe in him. Christ hath so taken away sin that whosoever believeth in him shall live. If thou wilt come now and lay thy hand on this divine sacrifice thou shalt find it all sufficient, whatsoever the nature of thy guilt may be. O delightful gospel! How sweet to preach it!

I have done when I have said this. John the Baptist appears to me to have relieved his mind by the utterance of my text. He was full of weariness because of the scribes and Pharisees, doctors and doubters who had been warring around him. He had been put upon his defence, and had been harried with innumerable questions. First one and then another; this question and that question; and now John ends the wordy duel by pointing to one whose presence was joy to his heart. There stands the Saviour, and John stops his argument, and cries, "There he is! Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." It is to me a supreme joy to turn aside from those who becloud the everlasting gospel, to leap out of the midst of controversy, and to cry to you with exultation—

Jesus is the Son of God; he is the sacrifice for sin, he takes it away. Believe on him and live. There is more joy in one sermon than in years of disputation. Oh, that every one in this congregation might believe in Jesus and live! What a refreshment it is to the preacher's mind to get to his message at last, to get away from the bamboozlement of those who confound plain truth, and to come to matter-of-fact dealing with eternal salvation. There, let them question and quibble—the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin.

With what certainty the Baptist speaks! He does not for a moment hesitate, or speak with cautious reserve. No debate disturbs the foundation of his confidence. Before his eyes he evidently sees the Sin-Bearer, and he bids others see him as he sees him. To him no doubt remains, for he had seen the heavens opened above the head of Jesus, and he had heard the voice of God himself, saying, "This is my beloved Son." Dear friends, the marks which prove our Lord Jesus to be the vicarious sacrifice for sin are as clear to me as ever they were to John the Baptist. I dogmatize; because I feel more than sure as to my Lord's being the great sacrifice for sin. I could not doubt this doctrine if I were to try to do so. My hope, my joy, my very being hinge on my Lord's substitution. This truth is woven into the warp and woof of my being. Jesus suffered in my stead. A leader in the religious world tells us that we have not yet obtained a satisfactory theory of the atonement. Let him speak for himself. Thousands of us know what we believe, and know what Jesus did for us. Where has the man lived? What comfort in life and death is there for one who cannot see clearly this first of truths? I thank God I have a definition of the atonement which is to me most clear, sure, and full of comfort. Here it is—"He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." I can live by that, and I can live by that. I am sick to death of the ever-repeated cant about "theory of the atonement"; I have no theory, for I believe in atonement itself. God keep us steadfast in the faith once delivered to the saints, and our consolation will abound.

And yet, once more, there seems to be deep anxiety on John's part in the words of my text. He says, "Behold the Lamb of God." And he does so for the sake of those around him. We do not desire others to believe with us because we need them to keep us in countenance. John was not a man cut out of brown paper, in the same shape as thousands of others, but he was an original, self-contained individual. He knew how to see the Lamb of God for himself, whether other people did or did not see him. When I preach to you the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice, it is not because I am unable to believe this truth alone. Long ago I ceased to count heads. Truth is usually in the minority in this evil world. I have faith in the Lord Jesus for myself, a faith burned into me as with a hot iron. I thank God, what I believe I shall believe, even if I believe it alone. If I am the last man to glory in the substitution of the Lord Jesus, I shall count myself honoured to bear his cross alone. But there is great love to his fellows in the heart of every man who has seen the Lord Jesus Christ as bearing sin. That great deed of love makes the beholder feel that he would have all men look and live. Were you ever half-starved, and did you find bread? Then I know you pitied your famishing brother. Our very instincts lead us to spread the blessing which we have received. Even dogs would do that. A poor dog had his broken leg healed at the hospital, and not many weeks after he brought another lame dog to the same house of mercy. We also long to see men come to Christ, because we have had our broken hearts healed by his tender hand. We love because he first loved us. Brethren, I was ready to perish under a sense of sin; I was all but damned; I felt the wrath of God surging in my soul like a sea of fire, I found no relief or comfort. Even the Word of God did not cheer me. They told me of believing in Jesus; but till I learned that this Jesus was God's great appointed sacrifice for sin I saw nothing in him to cheer me. When I learned that he had borne the penalty and satisfied justice, then I found out the glorious secret, and my conscience was at rest. Conscience within us reflects, as in a mirror, the facts of the case as God sees them. God causes an awakened conscience to require that which his justice requires. The demand of the conscience is the echo of the demand of the divine government. Conscience requires atonement because the necessity of the case and the nature of God require it. When I learned that there was such an atonement provided, oh, then I rested most sweetly! I wish you all did so. You that have no atoning sacrifice to plead, how can you bear the weight of your sins? What will you do with them when the death-damp is on your brows? You for whom, according to your own creed, no debt was paid, no penalty endured, how will you answer Justice in her great and terrible day? Believers look to Jesus as discharging all their debt, and they are not afraid of the day of account. But where will you look? Oh, what will you do? Do not remain without faith in him who stood in the sinner's stead. His work is exactly what your mind wants to give it peace. The satisfaction of Jesus will give your mind satisfaction, and nothing else will. Conscience, like the horse-leech, crieth, "Give, give," and it will never cease its cravings till it meets with Christ, whose one full satisfaction will content it for ever.

"Behold the Lamb of God" I shall meet you all in the day of judgment, and I tremble not to do so, for I have told you all the truth so far as I know it. If you reject the sacrifice for sin, I cannot help it! But, I beseech you, receive it and find that the Lamb of God has taken away your sin. Go in peace. The Lord go with you. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 29:38–46; Isaiah 53; John 1:19–51.

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, OCTOBER 29TH, 1899, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, On Lord's-day Evening, July 2nd, 1882.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—John 1:29.

JOHN was the herald of Christ; he came to bear witness to him, and to prepare the way for him. In the olden times, when kings travelled, they were accustomed to send heralds before them, to announce their coming, and to prepare the way for them; and I have read that, on several occasions, the herald wore such gorgeous apparel, adorned with gold and lace, that when he went into some of the towns and villages, the people thought that he must be the king himself, so they made ready to receive him with royal honours. When he said, "No, I am not the king I have merely come to sound the trumpet, and to say that he is coming," they wondered whatever the king himself must be like if his herald was so resplendent; and it is said that, in several instances, they refused to receive the king when he came, for they said, "The man who told us that he was only your servant was a far finer-looking man than you are, and much more grandly dressed." So, when the king arrived, and they saw that he was but plainly dressed, as kings usually are when not wearing their state robes, they would not receive him. Something like that happens with some of Christ's heralds, but it did not occur in the case of John the Baptist. He was not arrayed in soft raiment or rich apparel; he came straight up from the wilderness clothed in a garment of camel's hair, and with a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Nor was there anything at all about John's mode of speech which was likely to attract attention to himself, and make men think less of his Master when he should come. I wish that all of us, when we go forth as Christ's heralds, crying, "Behold the Lamb of God,"—and that is our main business here below,—would take care that we were never so grand in our style of thought or language that, when the Master himself came in all his wondrous simplicity, men would begin to despise him because they recollected the fine tones of his pretended herald. Nay, let us be simple and plain whenever we have to tell of Christ; and when our King himself comes, let us step back, and get out of sight, that he alone may be seen, and that all the people's hearts may be won to him.

I have plunged into the middle of my subject at the very beginning of my sermon, for that is the theme on which I want to speak to you. First, I am going to describe the true messenger,—John the Baptist, or anyone else who is like him; then, secondly, I hope to talk about the true message: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" and then, thirdly, I must say a little upon the true reception of this message, telling what they do who really hear and believe the true messenger of God.

I. First, then, let us think of THE TRUE MESSENGER; and, as I know that there are many here who try to do good by speaking for the Lord to their fellow-men, let this first part of my subject be a lesson in self-examination;—not by way of discouragement, but rather of encouragement, I hope, to those whom I am addressing. Who are they who will be owned by Christ, at the last great day, as the true messengers of God? What are the special characteristics by which they may be known?

Well, first, the true messenger is one who sees the Lord Jesus for himself: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him." To be his herald and witness, John must see Jesus, and he must see Jesus coming to him. Those prophets, who lived a long while before the coming of Christ, were but dim seers compared with John the Baptist. He was like the morning star, which is so near the sun that it is the brightest of the stars. We see it shining almost like a little sun, and then, when the sun himself rises in all his brightness, the star disappears. John was "a burning and a shining light;" and all who came before him were, in Christ's judgment, inferior to him. He said to the multitudes concerning John, "What went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." This was the difference between John and the prophets; his sight of Christ was clearer than theirs because he was nearer to Christ, and his view of Christ was brighter, fuller, and clearer, than that of all who had gone before.

Yet they also were true witnesses to Christ, according to the light they had. Our Saviour said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: he saw it, and was glad;" and if he had not seen Christ by faith, he could not have been one of the witnesses who testified beforehand concerning him. All the prophets looked through the haze of the ages, and by faith perceived their Lord, and then they wrote of him, and spoke of him to the people. The ancient name for a prophet was a very instructive one; he was called a seer; and you and I, beloved, must see Christ, or else we cannot bear witness to him. As the prophets saw Christ by faith, and as John actually looked upon him, and then bore witness to him, so must you and I see him,—not with these eyes, that sight is reserved until the resurrection,—but with the eyes of our spirit, with the eyes of our mind and heart, we must see Jesus before we can rightly speak of him.

Art thou anxious, my brother, to go and preach? Hast thou seen Jesus? If not, what canst thou say when people ask thee, "What is he like? Who is he that we should believe in him?" Thou must look unto him before thou canst speak of him; and, the more steadfastly thou dost gaze upon his person, his work, his offices, his humiliation, his glorification, the better wilt thou be able to bear thy witness concerning him. Thou wilt speak then more surely and confidently for thy God if thou canst testify concerning that which

thy heart knows to be true, because thou hast perceived and enjoyed it thyself.

Ay, and if thou hast seen him in the past, try to see him again, and to be continually "looking unto Jesus." Let not any of us go and talk to our Sunday-school class, or preach from the pulpit, or write a letter about our Lord, until we have had a fresh glimpse of him. It is wonderful how nimbly the pen or the tongue moves when the eye has just feasted itself upon Christ. The psalmist said, "My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." When you have yourself been with Christ, when you have just come forth from the ivory palaces of communion and fellowship with the Lord Jesus, all your garments will smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia; and your words will have some of the precious savour clinging to them. So again I say that we must see Christ or else we cannot be witnesses to him; therefore, let us fix our hearts, and our thoughts, and our meditations, so completely upon Christ that, when we cry to other men, "Behold the Lamb of God," it will be because we have just beheld him ourselves. If a man, who is blind, were to stand up in the street, and cry, "Behold," people would be apt to ask, "What can a poor blind man bid us look at? He cannot see anything himself." If you say to the people, "Behold Christ," yet all the while your eye is turned toward yourself, and you are wondering whether you will get through the sermon all right, whether you will have a fine peroration at the end, and what the congregation will think of it when you have done, that will be like saying, "Behold!" while you yourself are looking round the other way, and other people will look in the same direction. They will be sure to do as you do, and not as you say; and if you do not behold Christ, neither will they. Our inward thought, and conviction, and belief must be in strict accordance with our outward speech, or else we shall belie ourselves, and our message will be ill delivered, and will fall without power upon our hearers.

I also remind you that we must preach Christ as coming. "Why!" says one, "he has come." I know that he has, but he is coming again. It is a blessed thing that, whereas the prophets saw him as coming, they only differed from us in this respect,—that we can look back to his first coming, as they looked forward to it, and we can also look onward to his coming a second time, "without sin unto salvation," and we are to speak of him as coming. It is grand preaching when the preacher can see Christ coming, when he can behold the throne of judgment set, and can gaze upon the King in his beauty sitting upon it, and see him reigning over all, King of kings and Lord of lords. It is glorious when he hears the hallelujahs of the approaching millennial age even while he is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. "Lo, he cometh," says he; and he sees him coming, for he is not like the virgins who had fallen asleep, and so did not watch for the bridegroom's appearing. Oh, for open eyes, and expectant hearts, and earnest tongues, to see, and long for, and tell of our coming Lord! This is the way the faithful witness preaches him to the people.

But, next, the true messenger calls upon men to see Jesus. He calls them away from seeing other things, and bids them look, and "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." God-sent servants do not say, "Look to the priest; look to the altar; look to the sacraments; look to yourself; come and confess your sins, and I will give you absolution." No, no, no, no; for ever and for ever no! They do nothing of that sort. The priests of Antichrist do that, but the servants of Christ cry, "Behold the Lamb of God." Our great difficulty is to get men's eyes off themselves, off their works, off their forms and ceremonies, off mere creed-religion, and to get them to look at the living Christ who is still among us bearing the sin of all who truly seek his face. O dear hearers, I know that I am, in this respect, a faithful witness, wherever else I fail in my testimony, for my soul's labour and travail, even unto anguish, is to get you away from depending even in the slightest degree upon anything else but what Christ has done. I would not wish you to have the shadow of a shade of a ghost of a pretence of a confidence anywhere out of Christ. Jesus only is the one hope of sinners; let him be A to you, and Z, and all the letters between, the beginning and the end, and the middle, and everything else. Take your eyes off all ministers, and all books, and all feelings, and even all believings; do not even fix your gaze on your own faith. You know that the eye cannot see itself. Did you ever see your own eye? In a looking-glass, perhaps, you may have done so; but that was only the reflection of it; and you may, in like manner, see the evidence of your faith, but you cannot look at the faith itself. Faith looks away from itself to the object of faith, even to Christ; and this is what the true witness desires. He will, if he can, keep men from looking anywhere but on his Master. Some look at their repentance; but if you cannot keep your eye on Christ, then away with your repentance. Some are always looking to their faith; but if there be a faith that hides Christ, away with it! Some want feelings, and right feelings we may wish to have; but as for those feelings which come between us and Christ, away with them, it is not fit that they should live. Our one business is to get men off from anything, and from everything, however good it is, that they may look alone to Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God.

The third mark of a true witness is that he leads his own disciples to Jesus. It is generally thought to be a good thing to lead another man's disciples beyond their master; but it is not always so easy to lead our own disciples beyond ourselves. The preacher is often conscious that there are many weak persons who stop short at what he says; to them, it is a great help to faith that their pastor or their minister says so-and-so. Well, for lame people, we do not object to crutches for a time; but we always anxiously pray that the faith of these poor cripples may not stand,—at least, for any length of time,—in the power of man, but in Christ alone. I would say to you what the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, though I wish I could say something that should be worthy to be placed beneath what he said, and so be more suitable for one so much inferior to him. He says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." That is, "Let us ourselves be accursed if we ever dare to lead you away from Christ. It is an imprecation upon our own souls if we dare to make ourselves your masters, instead

of your servants for Jesus' sake." It was a beautiful trait in the character of John the Baptist that he was so ready to pass on to Christ his own disciples; he did not want to keep them merely to swell the number of his own followers, but only kept them with him until he could point them to his Master. When we try to win souls, if we find that people have confidence in us and affection for us, let us use that influence, not to attach them to ourselves except with the earnest desire to pass them on to Christ, that they may become disciples of the Saviour for themselves, and grow up from being babes who have to be nursed to become strong men in Christ Jesus.

One more thing about John the Baptist, which is also a characteristic of the true witness for Christ, is that he lost himself in his Master. Without a single atom of regret, he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Oh, how grandly he witnessed for Christ by sinking himself until he was lost in Christ! And my brother, it must be the same with you; if you would be a true witness for Christ, you must say that which glorifies him, even though it dishonours yourself. Perhaps there is a very learned man sitting over yonder, and the temptation to the preacher is to say something that shall make him feel that the minister to whom he is listening is not so ignorant as some people suppose; but if there is an unlearned, simple sinner anywhere in the place, the preacher's business is just to chop his words down to that poor man's condition, and let the learned hearer receive the same message if he will. Luther said, "When I am preaching, I see Dr. Jonas sitting there, and Cœcolampadius, and Melancthon, and I say to myself, 'Those learned doctors know enough already; so I need not trouble about them. I shall fire at the poor people in the aisles.'" That is the way Luther preached, and God richly blessed his ministry because he did it. Though he was a truly learned man, he was willing to be reckoned as knowing nothing at all if by that means he could the better serve his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, when you are serving Christ, do not seek also to serve yourself in a sneaking kind of way. It is easily done; under the appearance of glorifying Christ, you may really be extolling yourself. You may even seek to win souls with the view of having the credit of doing it; and if you do, you will spoil the whole work. It must not be so with you; this royal crown must be touched by none but Christ. You and I cannot really put the crown on his head, though we may wish to do so. Christ is greater than that monarch who, when the Pope was about to crown him, took the crown out of his hands, and said, "I won it myself, so I will put it on my own head." And Christ must crown himself. The words we sometimes sing,—

"Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all,"—

are very good and right; but, after all, Christ is his own glory, and the Holy Spirit truly glorifies him. How can we be worthy to put the crown on his head when we are not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes? Oh, what poor things we are! We are not fit to be the dust under his feet. Glory, glory, glory, be unto him, and unto him alone!

Thus I think I have said enough about the true messenger. Aim at being like John the Baptist, in these respects, brethren and sisters, as God shall help you.

II. But now, secondly, we are to consider THE TRUE MESSAGE, which is this: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

In these few words we have the substance of the message to be delivered by God's faithful ministers. First, John declared that God had sent his Son into the world, that men might live through him. He taught that Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son of God, appointed by him to redeem mankind, and that he came into the world on purpose that he might save his people from their sins. Oh, tell out this wondrous story! Tell it till every wave bears onward the message, and every wind wafts it till all of woman born have heard the glad tidings that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." All our hopes spring from Christ and him crucified. They begin with him, and they end with him; and whosoever believeth on him hath everlasting life; but whosoever rejects him by disbelieving him, there remaineth no hope for him, but he must be lost for ever. There is but one way to heaven, and that one way is marked by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Further, in telling the true message, we must go on to explain that Jesus Christ is thus the Saviour because he is the one sacrifice for sin. This verse reads, in the margin, "Behold the Lamb of God, which beareth the sin of the world;" and in that rendering there is a great truth which is not to be kept back. Christ Jesus did actually bear the sin of his people in his own body on the tree. It was lifted bodily off those whom it would have crushed for ever, and it was laid on him. He was, indeed, the great Sin-Bearer; he who knew no sin was made sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Now here is a point at which some are always sticking. Robertson, of Brighton, with his magnificent genius, practically taught the atonement in some such fashion as Dr. Duncan used to say, that Jesus Christ did something or other which, in some way or other, in some degree or other, made it possible for men to be forgiven. That was Robertson's notion of the atonement; but we say not so. We say that he really took the sin of men upon himself; and who can read that marvellous fifty-third chapter of Isaiah without seeing that this is no figure, no metaphor, but literal truth, "the Lord hath made to meet upon him the iniquity of us all"? So says the prophet; but what says the apostle? "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." And I cannot preach the gospel without proclaiming this great truth of Christ's atoning sacrifice, and I do not mean to try to do so. I know of no way by which sin can be taken off us except by laying it on him who was our Surety and our Substitute. But he did take it, and he did bear it; and the true messenger, sent from God, tells you that, whatever else

he may say or may not say.

But he tells you more than that, namely, what the text says in our Authorized Version: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away"—as well as takes upon himself—"the sin of the world." Oh, blessed word,—taketh it away! Where did he take it? I will tell you: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." He took the sin of all believers away so completely that it sank into the bottom of the sea; God has cast it behind his back, and it shall not be mentioned against them any more for ever. There is no such thing now as the sin of the saints, for Christ has utterly annihilated it. He came to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins; and if he made an end of them, there is an end of them, and they are gone for ever; and those who believe in Jesus are washed white as the driven snow, and clothed in his matchless righteousness. This is what the true messenger has to tell, that Jesus bore the sin of his people, and that he took it right away. Oh, what joyous work is ours!

This is to be our message; we are to set Christ forth as the object of faith. We are to say to men, "Behold the Lamb of God." Is that all the sinner has to do? Yes, behold him. Never was there another Saviour like Christ Jesus our Lord. The mere looking at him saves the soul; whosoever looks to Christ lives by that look, and shall live for ever. There is not a sinner in hell who ever looked on Christ with the eye of faith; and there never shall be such a soul. And all who are in heaven entered there simply through beholding the slain Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Wouldst thou get there, young man? Then, behold the Lamb of God, and thou shalt get there. There is life in a look at the Lamb, of God. Wouldst thou get there, poor sinner, driven and hunted about by the devil? Then, behold the Lamb of God. Do but look out of the corner of thine eye, if that is all that thou canst do, look through thy blinding tears; look through the mists and clouds that environ thee; do but look unto Jesus; and, as every bitten one who looked at the brazen serpent lived, so every sick soul that looks to Christ shall live, and live for ever. That is the gospel, and it is a blessed gospel to have to preach; and blessed is the messenger who tells it out boldly, and plainly, in the name of Jesus, saying on Christ's behalf, "Look unto him, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth. Look and live." May many do so at this very moment!

III. Now I close by turning to the third head of my discourse, which is, THE TRUE RECEPTION OF THE MESSAGE. How can I truly receive this true message of the true messenger? Well, brethren and sisters, if we, by faith, "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," observe what we shall do.

First, we shall follow Jesus. Read from the 35th verse to the 37th: "Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." That is to say, they did behold the Lamb of God; and, believing in him, they followed him; and if you have really believed in Christ, you will try to tread in his footprints. You will call him Master and Lord; he will be your Leader and Commander; and you will willingly follow where he leads, and cheerfully do what he commands. Christ has not come to give you licence to sin; but he has brought you to liberty from sin. Blessed liberty! If you do indeed thus look to Christ, follow him at once, become his disciple, do what he bids you, feeling that it is—

"Yours not to reason why,
Yours not to make reply;"—

but just to do as he commands, and believe what he teaches by the implicit faith which yields itself up entirely to him. This is the test of real faith in Jesus, that the man is no more his own master, but takes Jesus to be his Master, and follows wherever he leads.

The next thing that happens with those who give a true reception to the message is, that they want to abide with Christ. The two disciples followed Jesus, and "they said unto him, Master, where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day." I do not know where he dwelt; I am sure that it was not a very luxurious mansion, and, in after days, he had not where to lay his head. But as soon as ever these men had looked to him, and followed him, they wanted to live with him. Oh, that is the highest joy of a Christian, to live with Christ! A look of faith saves the soul because it is the beginning of a life of living with Christ for ever and ever. I am afraid that some of God's people fail to realize this blessed living with Christ. They get a little joy, and they seem very pleased with it, but in a little time they lose it. Why is that? Because they rejoiced merely in their own joy; and when a man does that, he will soon lose it. It is as old Master Brooks says, "If a loving husband were to give his wife earrings, and bracelets, and jewels, and then, instead of loving him for his gifts, she began to be in love with his presents, and cared little for him, he would be inclined to take them away from her so as to have all her love for himself." And surely it is so with Christ. He puts the earring of holy joy in his bride's ear, and she begins to say, "Oh, how joyful I am!" Nay, nay, do not talk like that. I heard one, the other day, prating about his own holiness; and I thought to myself, "That holiness which talks about itself is an unholy holiness." Do you think that holiness is a thing to be trailed about the streets, or set up for a show? Oh, no! As I think of the thrice-holy God, I lay my face in the very dust before him. O brethren, true holiness is something very different from this tinsel stuff that men, in these days, boast about as they beat their drums. True holiness beats on its breast, and gets away into its place of secret communion; and if it has any beauties, it shows them to the Lord alone there, with many a blush and many a lament that it is not much more nearly what it ought to be. O beloved, may God grant us grace to follow Jesus, and to abide with Jesus!

I said that some of God's people do not seem to understand this abiding with Jesus, but why should not we? Why need we have

doubts and fears? Why need we get away from Christ? Had we but the faith he deserves, and did we believe in him as he ought to be believed in, we might go from joy to joy, and so ascend to heaven as on a ladder of light. God give us this grace of abiding with Christ! It is to be had by those who seek it aright.

Then, lastly, the proof which these people, who had seen Christ, and followed him, gave that they had really found him, was that they went and tried to bring others to him. They said to their kinsfolk and acquaintance, "We have found the Messiah;" "We have found Jesus." Ah! you have never truly found Jesus if you do not tell others about him. You know how children act, and we ought to be children in all things before God. If a little child, in its rambles, were to find honey, and its brothers and sisters were all around, I feel certain that it would give such a cry after it had first sucked its own fingers, that all of them would soon be plunging their hands into the honey, too. Thou hast never tasted its sweetness if it has not made thee cry, "Come hither; was there ever such joy as this? Was there ever such delight, such rapture as this?" It is the instinct of true children of God to desire to fetch in others to taste and see that the Lord is good, to share in the bliss unspeakable which is already their own.

Many of you are coming to the Lord's table. As you come to it, I would whisper in your ear, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Never mind that bread and wine, unless you can use them as poor old folks often use their spectacles. What do they use them for? To look at? No, to look through them. So, use the bread and wine as a pair of spectacles; look through them, and do not be satisfied until you can say, "Yes, yes, I can see the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Then shall the communion be really what it ought to be to you. God make it so, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

SYNOPSIS OF The Baptist's message

I. THE TRUE MESSENGER.

1. One who sees Jesus for himself (John 1:33), The true herald of Jesus is like John.
2. He calls upon men to see Jesus.
3. He leads his own followers to Jesus (John 1:37).
4. He loses himself in Jesus.

II. THE TRUE MESSAGE. John's word was brief, but emphatic. He declared Jesus to be

1. Sent and ordained "of God."
2. The one real, Divinely appointed sacrifice for sin--"the Lamb of God."
3. The only remover of human guilt--" which taketh away the sin of the world."
4. Set forth as the object of faiths" Behold the Lamb." He exhorted his hearers to look at him with that look which saves. The end of all ministries and ordinances is to bring men to look to Jesus. Both John, who ran before, and we, who run after, must point in the same direction.

III. THE TRUE RECEPTION OF THAT MESSAGE. The conduct of John's disciples shows that our true wisdom concerning gospel testimony is

1. To believe it, and so to acknowledge Jesus as our sin-removing sacrifice.
2. To follow Jesus (John 1:37).
3. To follow Jesus, even if we be alone. These were the vanguard of the vast hosts who have since followed Jesus. They knew not what suffering it might involve, but went first and foremost.
4. To abide with Jesus (John 1:39).
5. To go forth and tell others of Jesus (John 1:40-41).

Conclusion: Here is

1. A lesson for those who preach. John's sermon was short, but full of Jesus, and effectual for soul-winning. Imitate him.
2. An example for those who have believed.
3. A gospel for those who hitherto have not known the Saviour.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD U R THOMAS

From Biblical Illustrator

John 1:29 *Behold the Lamb of God!*

The work of Christ, and of His disciples

I. THE SAVIOUR'S WORK IN THE SALVATION OF MEN.

1. He taketh away the sin of the world. The father says, "Save the family"; the citizen, "Save the town"; the patriot, "Save the country"; Christ, "Save the world"—and not merely says, but accomplishes.
2. His qualification for the work; the "Lamb of God," innocent, pure, spotless; the "Son of Man"; the "Son of God." The head of humanity and the heart of God were in the great sacrifice.
3. His constant watching. Christ asks men to follow what they seek. Not one follower is unnoticed.
4. His ready welcome. The noble gathering up of the Gospel is in the golden word "Come." It is not the mere sentimental emotion roused by a Sunday service that He seeks, but the coming and believing in Him.
5. His intimate knowledge of the character of any that may come. Christ reveals to men their ideals. Peter. Nathaniel.

II. THE DISCIPLES' WORK IN THE SALVATION OF MEN.

1. Manifestation of humility in the presence of Christ. "I am not worthy."
2. Manifest perseverance. Men scarcely listen; but John repeats his direction. The humble man is not changeable, not persistent.
3. Exquisite naturalness. Andrew thought of his brother: a rather obscure man brings Peter to Christ. (*U. R. Thomas.*)

THE LAMB OF GOD JABEZ BURNS

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

It had long been predicted that a harbinger should be sent to prepare the way of the Lord. That harbinger was John; hence, when the people were anxious to treat him as the Messiah, he said that he was not the Christ, "But as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord," etc. The very next day after this, John, seeing Jesus, said unto them, "Behold the Lamb of God," etc.

Let us consider,

The Title, the Work, and the Attention which Christ demands.

I. The Title Given to Jesus—"The Lamb of God."

A. Jesus was distinguished for those things which the lamb is supposed to exhibit. The Lamb is the emblem,

1. Of innocency. Now Jesus was free from all guilt and all guile. His nature was spotless; His life perfect; His conduct unblamable. He had not one sinful weakness or infirmity. The Lamb is also the emblem,
2. Of meekness and patience. How these were displayed through His whole life. They railed at Him, despised Him, mocked Him, insulted Him; yet He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself. This had been predicted: "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter," etc. Before the priests, before Pilate, in Herod's court, on the cross, how He exemplified the meekness and patience of the lamb. He may be likened to the Lamb,
3. For usefulness. No creature more useful than the lamb. Its flesh is meat, and its wool raiment to us. So Jesus says, His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed. He also provides for us the best robe, the wedding raiment, the garment of salvation.

B. As a Lamb, Jesus had been typified both by the paschal Lamb, and the daily sacrifices. The paschal Lamb especially had respect

to Him. In its being without spot and blemish; in its being a year old; in its being taken out of the fold; in its being set apart four days; in its being slain in the midst of the assembly; in not a bone being broken; in being roasted with fire; in its blood delivering from the destroying angel. Jesus was holy—in the perfection of life. Was selected by God for the purpose. Was set apart in the promise four thousand years before His death, and entered Jerusalem four days before He was crucified—was slain in the midst of the assembly of Israel. Not a bone of Him was broken. He endured the scorching rays of the Divine dispensation; and in His blood we have redemption from the wrath to come.

C. Jesus is the Lamb of God. His, in a peculiar sense; His only-begotten Son; His essential co-equal; His in a higher sense than angels are His creatures; His selecting; His sending; for whom He prepared a body, whom He delivered up, and whose sacrifice He accepted—His to the exclusion of every other. Notice,

II. The Work of Jesus. “Taketh away the sins of the world.”

A. By His obedience and death He took away the curse of sin from the world. Whole world guilty, wretched, helpless, and condemned. Threatening of death gone forth. Jesus magnified the law in His life, and endured the curse, by being made a curse for us. By His voluntary sacrifice He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Hence, for this He was born, and lived, and died, that He might suffer, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Hence it is written that “Christ gave Himself for us” (Titus 2:4). That He “redeemed us to God by His blood” (Rev. 5:9). “In whom we have redemption,” etc. (Eph. 1:7). “He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26). “He was manifested to take away our sins” (1 John 3:5). And He did this for the world (see 1 John 2:2, and 4:14; also 1 Tim. 2:3–6).

B. He takes away the guilt of sin by His justifying grace. Hence the Gospel which announces redemption through His blood, offers to us justification and forgiveness of sin, on condition of receiving the record given of Christ, by faith. By believing in Him we are justified freely from all things, and all our sins are blotted out (Rom. 3:24; Isa. 53).

C. He takes away the pollution of sin, by His Spirit and blood. His Spirit, by the application of His blood to our conscience, cleanses us from all sin. Hence we are sanctified by His blood, and thus wash our robes and obtain a meetness for celestial and eternal glory: “That He might sanctify the people with His own blood” (Heb. 12:24).

III. The Attention Christ Demands—“Behold,” etc.

We cannot behold Him as John desired the Jews to do. He is now removed into the holiest place, etc. To sense invisible, but we may yet obey the spirit of this direction, we should Behold Jesus, the Lamb of God,

A. In the mystery of His incarnation. How low He stooped; how He humbled Himself, etc.; and how wonderful the constitution of His person. The child born, son given, Immanuel, God with us.

B. Behold Him in the wonders of His life. A holy life—a life of sorrow and self-denial, of suffering and reproach, yet of miracles, of mercy, and grace.

C. Behold Him in the overwhelming agonies of Gethsemane. Giving His soul an offering for sin. Drinking the inexplicably bitter cup. Sorrowful unto death, etc.

D. Behold Him in the sufferings and ignominy of the cross. Dragged to Calvary’s summit, and there crucified between two thieves. Dying amid the darkness of the heavens, shaking of the earth, rending of rocks, etc.

E. Behold Him in His resurrection from the tomb. Once dead but alive again, and forevermore. The plague of death, the spoiler of the grave, and the resurrection and the life.

F. Behold Him on His mediatorial throne. The toil exchanged for rest; the sufferings, for glory; the cross, for His Father’s right hand. John beheld Him, and said, “And I beheld, and lo, in the midst” (Rev. 5:6).

And how should we behold Him?

1. With reverence and humility. “Great is the mystery,” etc. Isaiah cried, “Woe is me, for I have seen the king,” etc. Angels desire to look into these things, etc. The hosts of heaven bow profoundly before Him.

2. Behold Him with shame and contrition. Our sins brought Him from heaven; tried Him; put Him to death, etc. “They shall look on Him whom they have pierced” (Zech. 12:1). The Jews who heard Peter were goaded, etc.

3. Behold Him with the eye of faith. He says, “Look unto me,” etc. “As Moses lifted up,” etc. “If I be lifted up,” etc.

4. Behold with devout thankfulness. “Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.”

5. Behold Him with supreme affection and delight.

Application

1. Urge all classes of sinners to behold the Lamb of God.
2. The whole world will behold Him at the last day.
3. The saints shall behold Him in glory forever.

James Hastings - Great Texts of the Bible - THE LAMB OF GOD

On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!—John 1:29.

1. THE importance of the Baptist's ministry becomes fully intelligible only when his teaching is placed over against the characteristics of the religious thought of his day. It is no far-fetched analogy to liken his work, in one respect, to that of the Reformers of the sixteenth century. He made a great attempt to go back from the accretions of a later age to the purer doctrine of the Scriptures.

Pharisaism had, both directly and indirectly, done vast damage to the spiritual life of Palestine. It had "bound" upon men's aching backs "heavy burdens and grievous to be borne." Righteousness had been made to consist in the punctilious discharge of a multitude of ceremonial obligations. The conception of God as a loving and gracious Father had to no small extent been thrust into the background, while in the forefront of Pharisaic teaching was the idea of "a servile relationship"—God as the Master, man as the servant who was required to perform certain duties, and had a right, in return, to the Divine favour. A free, healthy spiritual life was thus made impossible, while encouragement was given, on the one hand to religious self-complacency and self-confidence, and on the other to hypocrisy, and equivocation, and subterfuge.

The effect of such encouragement was only too plain in connection with the popular anticipations of the Divine Kingdom. These anticipations always included the triumph of Israel and the overthrow of the heathen; but they took little or no account of Israel's own unworthiness, of Israel's own moral and spiritual failure, of Israel's own utter need of reconciliation and regeneration. The Judaism of that day failed to realize what sin must mean for God's chosen people. Controlled to a great extent by the Pharisees, it insisted with wearisome urgency upon offering, ablution, fast, or tithe, but it "left undone the weightier matters of the law." It refused to contemplate the possibility of a day of wrath coming for Israel.

At a critical hour in the fortunes of the nation John the Baptist sought to create a stricter, juster, healthier sense of the requirements of real religion. His teaching was the strong and uncompromising corrective of the prevailing fallacies and errors. He attacked with all his might the fabric of belief in privilege which confronted him like some enemy's stronghold. He told his auditors that their Abrahamic descent would afford them no refuge from the judgment which was impending. A new life! A new mind! Purity of heart and conscience! Self-separation from the guilty past!—herein lay the hope of salvation. It was the teaching of the Old Testament at its highest and best. The prophets had ever laid stress upon the renewal of the inner life through the operation of the Divine grace; and it was this idea that animated all the ministry of the appointed Forerunner of the Lord.

Thine, Baptist, was the cry,
In ages long gone by,
Heard in clear accents by the Prophet's ear;
As if 'twere thine to wait,
And with imperial state
Herald some Eastern monarch's proud career;
Who thus might march his host in full array,
And speed through trackless wilds his unresisted way.

But other task hadst thou
Than lofty hills to bow,
Make straight the crooked, the rough places plain:
Thine was the harder part
To smooth the human heart,
The wilderness where sin had fixed his reign;
To make deceit his mazy wiles forego,
Bring down high vaulting pride, and lay ambition low.

Such, Baptist, was thy care,

That no objection there,
Might check the progress of the King of kings;
But that a clear highway
Might welcome the array
Of Heavenly graces which His Presence brings;
And where Repentance had prepared the road,
There Faith might enter in, and Love to man and God.

2. Two utterances mark the flood-tide of St. John's prophetic inspiration; for when he says of his greater successor, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," the very term "baptize" connects his thought with "the divers washings" under the old dispensation, while the words "with the Holy Ghost and with fire" fore-herald that ministrations of the Spirit which was ushered in on the day of Pentecost. So, again, when he exclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" the phraseology in which he describes the great propitiation of Christ is seen at once to be derived from the typical sacrifices with which as the son of a priest he was perfectly familiar; while the mention of "the world" gives a wider range to the efficacy of the Atonement than the common Jew would have assigned to it, and is the prelude of the great commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." In the former instance it would almost seem that he had received a vision of the Upper Room at the moment when, to the disciples assembled in it, there appeared "cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." In the latter he appears to have had a revelation of the uplifted Christ on Calvary drawing all men unto Him.

The text is "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away [margin "beareth"] the sin of the world!" Let us consider it in this way—

- I. The Sin of the World.
- II. The Lamb of God.
- III. The Lamb and the Sin.

I THE SIN OF THE WORLD

1. Sin.—Sin, the choice of evil instead of good, the perversion of the desires, the slavery of the will, the darkening of the mind, the deadly sickness of the whole heart—this is the fountain of all trouble, the cause of all disorder and wretchedness. This is the wall which makes the world seem sometimes like a prison and sometimes like a madhouse. This is the curse which destroys life's harmony and beauty. This is the obstacle which separates the soul, in darkness and sorrow, from God. The forms of every religion, the voice of unceasing prayers, the smoke of endless burnt-offerings, the blood of bulls and goats, the oblations of all that is most precious, cruel altars drenched with human gore, and flames consuming the offspring of man's body,—gifts, propitiations, pleadings, sacrifices, without stint and without number,—bear witness to the deep and awful sense of sin which rests upon the heart of the world.

What do we really think about sin—as we see it in others, as we find it in ourselves? And side by side with such a question as that goes another: What is our conception of repentance? We are all acquainted with its philological significance; but what is its actual significance to our inmost conscience? What is our attitude towards those sins which come to us again and again till we know their faces well enough, till they possess for us a degrading—or even, it may be, a fatal—familiarity? What is our attitude towards that one type of sin which is, as it were, our constant companion—which we sometimes seriously try to shake off, but which appears to keep pace with us like the very shadow of ourselves? What is our attitude towards that one particular piece of iniquity which, perhaps in the fierce heat of sudden temptation, or perhaps after cool and deliberate calculation, we committed in past years, and which stands out with such hideous prominence from the midst of a life that often has been far enough from being pure and innocent and unselfish and upright?

As we have grown older, we have become clearer and clearer sighted, and we now see that what we at one time thought little or nothing of was really altogether unworthy of any Christian man or woman. Do not let us be afraid of this truer vision of the past; neither let us dread any sudden opening of the eyes, at some future moment, to what we are now, or to what we have been in the days that are beyond recall. Of course, we may let such a realization overwhelm us, but it is our own fault and folly if we do.

Man, what is this, and why art thou despairing?

God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

We may awake and see the sins which we have committed thronging about us, just as Robespierre—in the drama that was played some years ago in London—saw in the Conciergerie the ghosts of those whom he had sent to the guillotine. Those spectres may press upon us both on the right hand and on the left; they may come from the days of youth, when we were weak and easily led; or from early manhood or womanhood, when we were wild and reckless, without self-restraint and self-discipline; or from later years, when our conscience had become hardened, and we had made ourselves capable of actions from which aforesaid we should have shrunk. Yes; they may come to threaten and appal us. But there is deliverance from them.

(1) The sense of sin is not found everywhere. The Egyptians and Babylonians had their catalogues of sins, but their sinfulness never troubled them as the sinfulness of the Hebrews troubled them. We may almost say that the ancient Greeks had no real conception of sin. The Greeks recognized the existence of vice, certain actions were to them unlovely, disagreeable, mischievous; but the Greek people never felt the burden of their sinfulness. The countrymen of Homer and of Pericles were the lightest hearted of all the peoples of the earth, as joyous and as sunny as the sea which broke into laughter on the shores of their lovely islands. The Romans were far more earnest than the Greeks, but they had no deep consciousness of sin. We can hardly think of Julius Cæsar shedding tears over his transgressions. Rome had her priests and her sacrifices, but her conception of sin had slight influence on either the personal or the national life. Christianity is pre-eminently the religion which develops in its adherents a sense of sin. Buddhism, and Brahminism, and Confucianism, and Zoroastrianism all recognize the existence of evil, and attempt to deal with it in different ways; but in none of these religions is there a recognition of sin in the sense in which Christians use that word.

¶ A genial sense of "camaraderie" was inspired and maintained by sacred dance, song, and simple prayer, and especially by the sacrificial banquet at which the deity and his tribe were imagined as feasting together. And whatever ritual was in vogue for the purging of the people's sins was external and mechanical merely, accompanied by no call to real repentance, no appeal to the individual conscience.

¶ Nor, when the dying Indian had been induced at last to express a desire for Paradise, was it an easy matter to bring him to a due contrition for his sins; for he would deny with indignation that he had ever committed any.

¶ A sense of darkness and ignorance made the Greek sorrow, a sense of sin and evil the Hebrew sorrow. The Hebrew sorrow expressed itself in three ways—in a passion for forgiveness, in a passion for redemption, and in a passion for life; and these three passions are pointed out by the Baptist in this new phrase which he has coined for the new age, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

¶ Dale's sense of sin was deep and vivid. Sin—not merely as revealed in speech and conduct, but as that principle of evil within us by which the very springs of life are corrupted; sin, whether ours by inheritance, or through our own defect, or by our mysterious community in the moral life of the race—sin, in all its forms and degrees, he felt to be the most terrible of realities. No one who knew him intimately could fail to perceive it. He sometimes referred, half wonderingly, half sadly, to the experience of a friend of his who once asked him what theologians meant by "original sin":—"I cannot understand what they mean," he said, "I have never been conscious of any inclination to do what I knew to be wrong." The fact of original sin presented no difficulty to Dale. He knew only too well the unremitting energy of moral evil, and the incessant struggle against its malignant power. Altogether apart from any special incentive, he would never have dealt lightly with the baser elements in human character and conduct; and anxiety to avert any moral degeneracy in those who had accepted the new doctrine intensified his natural antipathy to evil. At times his denunciation of sin was overwhelming in its force. He never stormed; but his wrath, as it grew, glowed with passion at a white heat. It swept on in waves of living fire. It seemed to scorch, to shrivel, to consume. And if it was not often that he let indignation break into flame, there was always a certain austerity—it might even be called harshness—in his moral judgment, which strongly contrasted with his charitable temper in dealing with individual offenders; though even with them his sternness, when provoked, could be terrible.

(2) It is impossible to have any adequate sense of sin without a great conception of God. It was because the Hebrew prophets saw God to be high and lifted up that they felt themselves to be sinners. I "am but dust and ashes," says Abraham. "Behold, I am vile; I will lay my hand upon my mouth," says Job. "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips," says Isaiah. All the great Hebrews, from Abraham to John the Baptist, lie with their faces in the dust, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

¶ Where in any literature will you find a poem like the Fifty-first Psalm? "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me." The man who wrote that is a Shakespeare in the realm of spiritual expression.

(3) The world thinks that the Church makes much ado about little. Men of the world cannot see that sin is terrible, or that it needs to be shunned or feared. Men sometimes confess in a jocose tone that they are sinners; they confess their sinfulness between loud bursts of laughter. One would think from their behaviour that sinning is a joke. Every generation has brought forth its host of writers who have endeavoured to persuade the world that sin is nothing but a trifle, a straw that some happy wind will some day blow away. Or they make it out a form of immaturity, an imperfection, a crudity, a greenness, a rawness, a pardonable ignorance which will certainly be outgrown. "You do not blame the apple tree in the early spring because the blossoms are not full blown. Give the tree sufficient time, and the apples will be forthcoming."

¶ All depends on our maintaining the inviolability of the will; and for finite beings a will is no will which cannot choose evil. If — admits that, but says that the continued rebellion of any is irreconcilable with the triumph of God's will and love, then I say that the present rebellion of any is likewise inconsistent with the same. While that awful fact of sin is staring you in the face, you cannot weave theories for the future that will hold water, except by the German dodge of refining sin into a lesser kind of necessary good, which is the very devil.

¶ One night some years ago in a University town there was a meeting of the White Cross Society. The meeting was over, one of the members had argued that sin was not natural, and at the close one of the medical professors, gathering a group of students around him, said, "That's gammon! The sin you have heard of to-night is natural," and the students to a man hissed him out of the room.

I said to Heart, "How goes it?" Heart replied:
"Right as a Ribstone Pippin!" But it lied.

(4) According to Jesus, there is nothing terrible in the world but sin. It is the thing to be shunned, feared, hated. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better to lose an eye than to do wrong. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better to have no right hand than to do wrong. Beware how you tempt others to sin; it were better that a millstone should be hanged about a man's neck, and that the man should be cast into the midst of the sea, than that he should cause a human being to do wrong. That is not the language which we are apt to use, nor is it the feeling which is in our hearts. Many of us would commit a score of sins, rather than lose an eye or a hand. But to the mind of Jesus no loss which may come to the body is to be compared with the loss which comes to the soul by breaking the law of God. "Joy," He said, "shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." This feeling of Jesus was communicated to His disciples. His Apostles go to work with unflagging earnestness to root out the sins of men. Whenever St. Paul writes of sin, his language becomes terribly earnest and intense. Sin to him is no shadow, it is an awful reality. He speaks to his converts in words which sound like the blast of a bugle. "Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

¶ It could not have been a trifle that started the great drops of blood from the body of Jesus Christ in Gethsemane, or that caused Him His exceeding sorrow on the tree. Great natures cannot weep blood but on great occasions. There must, then, have been something terrible about this moral putrescence which is called sin. It was no speck on the surface; it was poison in the blood. The tones heard at Golgotha are not the harsh tones of vengeance; there is no scream of fury; no thunder of cursing; there is a wail of sorrow, deep, loud, long, as if the very heart of God had broken. It is the agony of love; it is the paroxysm of a lacerated and dying spirit. It was love that had failed in life, determined to succeed in death. It was dying innocence struggling with dead guilt.

2. The sin of the world.—The word "world" is one of St. John's words. It appears on almost every page of his writings. It stands out prominently both in his Gospel and in his Epistles. What, then, was his conception of the world? There are two words in Scripture used to denote the world. There is the word "kosmos." This means the world under the condition of space. There is the word "æon," which means the world under the condition of time. The latter word is translated sometimes "age" or "epoch" or "dispensation," and it is this word that is used and never the other when the end of the world is spoken of. But the other word "kosmos" is the word referred to here. What is its meaning? Its first and earliest meaning is the sum total of material things, their order, their beauty, symmetry, law. But this world is never represented as sinful, only as unmoral. Then into this framework of kosmos man is set. It was made for him. It was kept in existence for him, and so the world comes to mean, next, the material universe of which man is the moral centre. Then it comes to be applied to the men themselves, the sum total of humanity who live and move and have their being in this material framework. But man takes the world and uses it without reference to the Giver. He was put into it as a steward, but instead of faithfully recognizing the true owner, he appropriates the proceeds for his own purposes. Hence comes the next idea of the world. It is humanity separated from God. From separation the next step is easy. It is hostility. Thus the last stage of the world is humanity separated, hostile, rebellious against God. That is sin. That is the sin of the world.

(1) The view of the Baptist embraces the human race. His words are that the Lamb of God "taketh away the sin of the world"; that is, the whole enormous mass of iniquity which is in the world, which burdens and blights the world; the sin of which original depravity is as it were the root, vicious habits the branches, thoughts, words, and deeds of impiety and injustice the leaves and fruits.

John knew very well the sin of the nation. He had seen unreality and formalism in the religious circles of his day, the scandalous life of Herod, and the terrible effect of such examples upon public morality. He had seen the moral indifference of the Herodian, whom nothing could rouse to contend for the principles on which life is based. He had come in close contact with admitted and regretted sin. He had been roused to indignation, to sorrow, moved to pity, knowing that his brother-men had sought for happiness along the paths which end in misery. But from the sin of a nation he rose to a yet more overwhelming thought, which was the sin of the world. All the collective evil of mankind; the burden of inherited evil from which our Lord alone is exempt; the vast innumerable multitude of

personal sins from the first rebellion at Eden down to the last evil deed which humanity shall commit: the ghastly retinue of the passions and selfishness of mankind.

¶ All holiness and gentleness work for the world's redemption within their appointed field. A refined and loving soul, though without the gifts that attract the attention of the world, takes away the sin of a home or neighbourhood. But the power over men which we describe as greatness extends the influence more widely. The purity and gentleness of Jesus might have been hidden away in the little town of Nazareth, and have been an unseen ripple in the great ocean of the world's affairs. He was, however, not only the Lamb of God, but as He is described elsewhere, "the lion of the tribe of Judah." Like the monarch of the forest, He had strength. He had that power of command over men which, for good or evil, influences the world. His power was acknowledged and proved by the bitterness of His enemies; and when He was lifted up from the earth, He drew the eyes of nations, and became a beacon-light for succeeding centuries. And to this day His holiness and gentleness are the mightiest power that we know for taking away the sin of the world. It may still be long before the brute powers are dethroned and the reign of humanity is established, but never was the rule of Christ's spirit higher than it is to-day.

(2) Perhaps what appeals more forcibly to the sensitiveness of the present age is the suffering of the world, the burden of the anguish which rests upon mankind. And indeed in its collective mass it is, if viewed apart from Calvary, a terrible enigma. And yet incomparably more awful to a conscience really enlightened by penitence and faith would be the appalling, the overwhelming idea of "the sin of the world." That thought has rested with almost intolerable weight upon some of the saintliest of mankind. It rested that day upon St. John.

There was laughter in my father's hall,
Mirth in my mother's bower,
When One crept silently up by the wall
In the dim, dull, twilight hour.

How did he pass the faithful guard
Who watch both long and late?
Did he steal through the window strongly barred,
Or slipped he in by the gate?

What is the name of this fearful guest,
Sorrow or Shame or Sin?
I cannot tell, but I know no rest
Since his dread form came in.

(3) It is not the sins but the sin of the world. The sin of the world, of which the various sins are so many branches and manifestations, is the world's apostasy and alienation from the living God; the two great evils connected going into one—that, we have forsaken Jehovah, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out to ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." And the law of God is one—multitudes of commandments, but one in its principle, its principle being love to God, and love to all created beings for God's sake. It is one, as flowing all from the same essential purity, justice, and universal moral good—the Divine nature.

¶ In what does the sin of the world essentially consist? It consists in omitting God from its life. It consists in forgetting, ignoring, denying, defying God. Get hold of that truth, and never let it go. The Bible never wavers in representing this as the essence and origin of all sin. We sometimes speak of sin as drunkenness, or lust, or murder, or theft, or covetousness, or lying. These are rather crimes or vices. They are related to sin as the fruit is related to the tree, or the plant is related to the root. They are not so much sin as the last fruitage of sin. Sin itself lies deeper. It lies in "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

¶ Says Drummond: The whole of a man's nature is built up, I might say, of cells. One after another, good and bad, all things have become part of him. His sins have made sin a part of him. That unkind thing you say or do makes you an unkind character. That selfish thing you do makes you selfish, pure and holy and noble thoughts are turned out, and you become an animal. Paul says, "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this dead body?" Chained as they were in those dark dungeons of the East, if one prisoner died he was left chained to the man next him.... "This dead body"—it was Sin. But, gentlemen, we are making dead bodies with our own hands and lives: cell by cell we become dead. Sin is a part of one, and the end of these things is death, and all of a sudden some morning we awake and say, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this dead body?"

¶ Modern masters of science are much impressed with the need of beginning all inquiry with a fact. The ancient masters of religion were quite equally impressed with that necessity. They began with the fact of sin—a fact as practical as potatoes. Whether or not man could be washed in miraculous waters, there was no doubt at any rate that he wanted washing. But certain religious leaders in London, not mere Materialists, have begun in our day not to deny the highly disputable water, but to deny the indisputable dirt. Certain new theologians dispute original sin, which is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved.

I still, to suppose it true, for my part,
See reasons and reasons; this, to begin:
'Tis the faith that launched point-blank her dart
At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin,
The Corruption of Man's Heart.

II THE LAMB OF GOD

1. In the conception of Jesus as the Lamb of God, to be offered in expiation of human transgressions, the religious genius of the Baptist reaches (if the expression may be used) its high-water mark. So intense was his appreciation of the real significance of moral evil that he saw that while the utmost a guilty soul can do is to repent, yet more is necessary in the counsels of God if forgiveness is to become a full possibility. There must be the actual removal of human guilt through the self-oblation of the Christ. It was a great venture of thought, even although there was that in the literature of the Old Testament which pointed the way. Here and there in Israel there must have been natures—Simeon's seems to have been one of them—which were capable of recognizing the justice and force of such an anticipation; but it was very different with the almost universal sentiment of the nation. St. John stood nearly by himself in his realization of the profound truth. Flesh and blood had not revealed it unto him.

2. It has sometimes been asked and debated, To which of the lambs of sacrifice, ordained in the Old Testament, did the Baptist here refer; to which did he liken that immaculate Lamb, who, being without spot and stain, should take away our spots and stains, and bear the collective sin of the world? Did St. John allude to the daily lamb of the morning and evening sacrifice? or was it to the lamb of the passover, commemorating the old deliverance from Egypt? or was it to some other of the many lambs which were prescribed in the law of Moses, as a portion of the ritual of sacrifice appointed there? The question is surely a superfluous one. The reference is not special, but comprehensive. It is to none of these in particular, being indeed to them all. They severally set forth in type and in figure some part of that which He fulfilled in substance and in life; in Him, not now a lamb of men, but the Lamb of God, being at length fulfilled to the uttermost the significant word of Abraham, "God will provide himself a lamb."

(1) One thing that was associated with the lamb in the sacrifices of which it was the centre was innocence. Innocence belongs conceivably to two stages of life. We speak of the innocence of a child. We do not mean, if we understand our words, that he is free from sin. We mean that he has not yet actually done wrong. But in the case of Christ, we mean something more than that.

¶ As children emerge into manhood, innocence passes, and it is one of the sore regrets of life that it comes back no more. You remember the beautiful sonnet in which Charles Lamb utters his grief for the loss of innocence—

We were two pretty babes; the youngest she—
The youngest, and the loveliest far (I ween),
And innocence her name. The time has been
We two did love each other's company;
Time was we two had wept to have been apart.
But when by show of seeming good beguiled,
I left the garb and manners of a child,
And my first love for man's society,
Defiling with the world my virgin heart—
My lov'd companion dropt a tear, and fled,
And hid in deepest shades her awful head.
Beloved, who shall tell me, where thou art,
In what delicious Eden to be found?
That I may seek thee, the wide world round.

Now, that was the test that Christ never needed. Why? Because He never lost innocence. He went down among the sins and temptations of life, but He came out of them pure and unsoiled. We call tried innocence holiness. Christ was sinless. That is the marvel of this Lamb of God. The animal was innocent, but it was an untried and unmoral innocence. This Lamb is not only innocent, but also perfectly holy.

¶ Make no mistake as to what we call by the name of virtue. It is the generous force of life. Virtue is not an innocent. We adore Divine innocence, but it is not of all ages and all conditions; it is not ready for all encounters. It protects itself against the snares of nature and of man. Innocence fears everything, virtue fears nothing. Virtue can, if it be necessary, plunge with a sublime impurity into the depths of misery to console it, into every vice to recover it. It knows what the great human task is, and that it is sometimes necessary to soil one's hands.

(2) The second point about the lamb was its gentleness. It is the perfect type of meek, uncomplaining suffering. Christ's gentleness was wonderful. It was wonderful because it was not the outcome either of necessity or of weakness. A person is sometimes tolerant because he is morally indifferent. He manifests no anger or passion because he does not feel or see wrong. But with Christ it was not so. His gentleness was not the outcome of insensibility, of a mere ignorant good-nature. His holiness made it impossible for Him to be ignorant of sin, made it inevitable that He should see sin with clearer eyes than the sinner himself. Neither was it born from necessity. People are sometimes gentle because they must. They endure and suffer in silence because they say, "Well, we cannot help it; it is best to be quiet and resigned." That was not Christ's case either. The assumption of the New Testament is that Christ could help it; that He had only to speak, and legions of angels would leap to His command.

¶ This beautiful figure reveals the kind of impression which Jesus made by His simple presence. The lamb is an emblem of innocence and gentleness, as Spenser says:

And by her in a line a milke-white lamb she led
So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore.

Innocence in a moral agent is not the mere absence of guilt, but reaches the positive rank of purity, or, higher still, of holiness. This holiness in Himself and gentleness towards others marked Jesus out as God's own Lamb, a man Divine in purity and love, and therefore the "beloved Son" of God. So much might well be apparent to the searching glance of sympathy and a prophet's power of reading the heart. But the succeeding words disclose a deeper insight, and give utterance to a grand truth. Holiness and gentleness are the redeeming powers of the world, and these two great powers have wrought in Christendom from that day to this. The men and women who have lifted the burden of the world's sin have always been the saints who have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, or, in less figurative language, have imbibed His spirit of holiness and gentleness, and with their own peace have lulled the storms of passion, and with their own purity have sweetened the fountains of life. The holiness of Christ awakens the sense of sin, while we see that that is the true life of man, and our own hearts look black against that bright illumination. And then His gentleness saves us from despair. Were there nothing but condemnation and scorn, no sympathy, no tender pity, we could not bear that holiness, and could only abandon ourselves as lost. But when it comes with such soothing and loving accents, we are drawn within its folds, and purified in its purity. "Thy gentleness has made me great." The maxim of the world, and too often of the Church, has been that violence and revenge take away the sin of the world. But it is not so. These only harden and degrade, whereas love melts the heart, and gives a new and conquering motive in an answering love. In this soul-subduing love we recognize that which is heavenly and eternal. The Lamb of God manifests the holiness and the gentleness of God. And so our fear is cast out; and, lowly and contrite, we draw near, and are folded in the bosom of our Father, and receive the grace of sonship.

A lamb is innocent and mild
And merry on the soft green sod;
And Jesus Christ, the Undefined,
Is the Lamb of God:
Only spotless He
Upon His Mother's knee;
White and ruddy, soon to be
Sacrificed for you and me.

Nay, lamb is not so sweet a word,
Nor lily half so pure a name;
Another name our hearts hath stirred,
Kindling them to flame:
"Jesus" certainly
Is music and melody:
Heart with heart in harmony
Carol we and worship we.

¶ When the great Father came to unveil Himself in the person of His Son, it was a life of Divine gentleness that came to earth. Jesus was the incarnation of gentleness. When He was reviled He reviled not again. There

never was a life so mild and yet so firm and strong. Munkacsy, in his famous picture of "Christ before Pilate," has thrown this Divine trait into the face and figure of Christ. All around is strife, hatred, unrest, but in the centre stands the King of majesty and love with the gentleness of another world upon Him. They spit upon Him, they taunt Him, they crown Him with thorns, but He is still the "Lamb of God." Even on the cross this greatness abides, as the Saviour reaches the sublimest and Divinest moment of His passion with the prayer: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

(3) But what was in St. John's mind when he uttered these words was not so much the character of the Lamb—innocence, holiness, sinlessness, gentleness—it was death. It is beyond all doubt that he connected Christ with the sacrifices of the old dispensation. Here at last they found their fulfilment. Here at last the type was completed in the antitype. The Lamb is no unwilling victim. That was the weak spot in all preceding sacrifices. The creature went to death reluctantly. It was forced to its doom. Therefore its death in itself had no moral significance. But the remarkable thing about the death of the Lamb of God is that it is purely voluntary. From very early in His career Christ saw where He was going. It was no blind groping that ended accidentally or necessarily in the cross. He carried the cross on His heart long before it was laid on His shoulders.

¶ There are various types of death. There is the death of the good, the death when the soul surrenders itself into the hands of God. There is another kind of death. It is the death of Gordon of Khartum, the death of the hero. There is a third. Literature has never forgotten Socrates in the Agora of Athens. It is a beautiful scene. The Grecian sage has been sentenced to death on a false charge. He is to be his own executioner, and the great old man talks calmly to his disciples, settles his earthly affairs, says good-bye to one after another, then takes the cup of poison and drinks it, and all is over. Or yet, once more, yonder in a Chinese town a Chinese Christian sinks beneath the stones of the mob. "Are you sorry?" asks the missionary. "Sorry! Oh no," he says. "How glad! Only sorry that I have done so little for Jesus." These are the types of death as the world gives them. They are the deaths of the good, the heroic, the sage, the martyr. Christ's was not like any of these. Or rather it takes up and comprehends all these. There is one thing common to them all. They had to be. But Christ's was predicted. Christ's was foreseen. Christ's was deliberately accepted. Death did not choose Him. He chose death. He met it at the trysting-place where He and not death determined, and He went to the cross, though legions of angels were waiting to bear Him away from it. That makes His death unique in the world.

3. He is the Lamb of God. For He is provided by God. But the Lamb of God does not mean merely a Lamb appointed or ordained by God. The words have reference to an abiding element in God Himself. The Lamb of God belongs as much to the eternal essence of God as His glory, His righteousness, His truth, and His love. And for us, and perhaps for all worlds, this is the most wonderful and entrancing name of all. The highest praise we can offer to God is to sing, "Worthy is the Lamb!"

Put emphasis on the words, "of God." There you strike the distinctive feature of this sacrifice, and of the religion which it created. The difference between Christianity and all other religions lies in these two words. In other religions man provides his sacrifice for his god. In Christianity God provides the sacrifice for man. Christ comes forth out of the heart of God. Shall we not indeed say He is God? Here is where a devastating error has crept in. Men have talked and written as if somehow God and Christ were divided, as if somehow Christ propitiated God, and won Him the mercy. Nowhere in Scripture is there any such statement made. It is a heathen importation. Men are heard saying, "Oh, God will do nothing for us. Our only hope is in Christ." What a dreadful travesty of the truth! God and Christ are one in this supreme work. The Father sends the Son, and the Son issues forth gladly out of the Father's heart. The two are an absolute unity in working out man's salvation. Here is the everlasting proof of the love of God. Men say God is loving, and therefore He does not need to be propitiated. The New Testament says, "God is love," and therefore He Himself provides a propitiation.

III THE LAMB AND THE SIN

1. "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" What precisely do these words mean? In the margin of the ordinary version we read, "beareth away" the sin of the world; and in that of the Revised Version it is given simply, "beareth the sin." But perhaps the full significance of the word is to be had by the union of both the textual and the marginal renderings, for the term in the original is the equivalent of a Hebrew word, which sometimes denotes the bearing of the punishment of sin, and sometimes the making of expiation for sin; and so, as Alford remarks, "it will in our verse bear either of these meanings, or both conjoined, for if the Lamb is to suffer the burden of the sins of the world, and is to take away sin and its guilt by expiation, this result must be accomplished by the offering of himself."

(1) The simplest meaning of the word is to lift, and this is also the simplest consciousness of liberation from sin. Man, unable to free himself from the fatal burden, feels it lifted from heart and conscience by the redeeming hand of God. Trust in God is not the product of profound doctrinal understanding, but the expression of the felt need of casting our infirmity and sin on the strength and grace of God. The beginning of the soul's redemption is the discovery that we ourselves cannot overcome sin, but that we can safely leave it all with the boundless love and mercy of God.

(2) The second phase in the meaning of the word is to bear. The Divine Saviour who "lifts" the sin from our aching hearts bears it on His own. This is the substance of the great act and process of atonement, which is the centre of the Christian faith, and in its inexhaustible import both the joy and the despair of the human understanding. It is related, on the one hand, to the inviolable righteousness and truth and love of God, and, on the other, to the vital union of the Divine life with the life of humanity. It is therefore at one and the same time the fulfilment of the Divine righteousness and the working of redemptive energy in the lives of men. The Cross is not an isolated thing, but the sacrificial life of the Son of God interwoven with the red fibres of the human spirit.

(3) The last phase of meaning in the word is to bear away. This ends the succession in the line of grace. The Saviour lifts the sin of the world; He bears the sin of the world; He bears away the sin of the world. The beginning of redemption is liberation from the weight of sin; the completion of redemption is everlasting separation from the power of sin. The Sin-bearer bears away our sin, and we are thrall to it no longer. It can never return to condemn us. He has borne it past all the measureless abysses of death and Hades, and overwhelmed it in the glory of His resurrection. This is the salvation of our God. We are risen with the Risen Christ. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2. The saving power of the Cross of Christ is no theory; it is a fact. The sign of shame and guilt has become the sign of faith and hope. The instrument of torture and death, defiled and loathed and hated, has been lifted out of the gloom and horror of sin, transfigured, crowned with honour and victory, and planted for ever on the hill of salvation. The eyes of the world turn to the Cross of Christ. Fainting, despairing, dying, bound in the prison-houses of crime, crushed under the load of transgressions, parched and burning with the fever of life, from every place of sorrow and suffering and darkness, the lost children of men are looking to the Cross with speechless longing, and feeling its blessed power with unutterable joy.

¶ Do you want to know how it is possible? What if I could not tell? You want to go by the cable cars. Can you explain the force that draws them? Will you wait until you understand the nature of steam and the machinery it uses before you trust yourself to them? You want to use the telegraph to send a message of sympathy or a sum of money to a relative who is in sorrow or want. Do you comprehend the nature of the electric fluid that is waiting to run with your message, and will you delay sending it until you do? You are hungry or thirsty, dying for want of food or drink. Here are both. Will you refuse them till you comprehend the chemical constituents of water, or the means by which the grain from the hillside is turned into the bread that delivers from starvation? Is the experience of others, hundreds of thousands, not enough to assure you in venturing although you do not understand all? "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" That is the Gospel. That is the good news from heaven. It comes as an offer, as a gift. It is ours only to put aside prejudice, and unwillingness, and indifference, and embrace the offer and receive the gift. This is what amazed the Son of God, that men dying should refuse the means of life, that men under the guilt and bondage of sin should decline deliverance. Their unbelief filled Him with dismay. Let it not be said of any of us as of those of old, "He marvelled at their unbelief." For unbelief seals us up in sin, and delivers us to the death eternal, from which the Son of God came to set us free.

3. How the death of Christ upon the Cross is an atonement for the sins of the whole world is a complete mystery to us; but that it is so we know from revelation. All sin, upon repentance, is made as though it had never been by virtue of this sacrifice; it is cancelled, done away with. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." What an astonishing result! What a miracle of power and mercy! Here is accomplished all that man has yearned for, and so ineffectually striven after—the compensation, the atonement for sin. His wish is accomplished, though he cannot understand how. The atonement, when it has come, is a mystery; but he knows that it is made, that something has been done in heaven by which sin has been cancelled. He knows that there has been a great reconciliation, a great restoration. He does not see this, but he apprehends it by faith.

The various aspects of this mysterious atoning sacrifice emerge in constant succession throughout this Gospel, even before the narrative of the Passion begins. To Nathanael, in those earliest days of all, is whispered the mysterious prophecy of a new Bethel vision. The Person of the Son of Man is to be a fresh medium of access, a new ladder of communication between earth and an opened heaven. To Nicodemus the Son of Man is revealed as the antitype of Moses' brazen serpent, lifted up for the saving of those who will look to Him. Meanwhile a still more mysterious utterance has been given to those scandalized by His fierce cleansing of the Temple courts, an utterance which not even the most intimate understood till long afterwards. But St. John is determined that his readers shall understand it, there, in its place, and shall know that thus early the Master was conscious of that supreme trial through which His body had to pass, and of His own inner power to transform death into victory. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

The same thought again underlies His clear consciousness of the murderous intention of the Jews, recorded in the earlier contests from the fifth chapter to the eighth, and is concentrated in the teaching of the sixth chapter and the tenth.

The sacrificial language of the Fourth Gospel is matched, as we might expect, by that of the First Epistle, here as elsewhere fulfilling the function of an inspired commentary on the writer's earlier work. Thus, in the first chapter, it is declared that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin those who in communion with Him are walking in the light. In the second, "Jesus Christ the righteous" is set forth as at once Advocate and Propitiation concerning the sins, not merely of a limited circle of privileged ones, but "of the whole world." Later on in the same chapter, and again in those that follow it, we are told of a mutual indwelling, wherein the believer attains to that mystic union with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which is the ultimate end of all sacrifice—that true and only eternal Life; so that we are prepared for the clear teaching of the final chapter, where, in the uncompromising language of the beloved disciple, it is proclaimed that "He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."

¶ I have felt that to understand the Passion one must be one's self, as it were, God infinite, and able to comprehend the love and the agony of an infinite nature. This sight, of all I look upon, alone has power to arrest my heart. It seems foreign to the order in which I am at present moving, yet it is friendly, familiar to some inner instinct, as if it were native to a kingdom in which I had once moved.

4. There are, however, certain principles which we can hardly mistake, if we listen either to the voice of Scripture, or to the voice of the Church, or to the voice of our own moral reason—voices which speak in true concord more frequently than is sometimes supposed.

(1) The first principle which is thus guaranteed to us is that the Death of Christ was not only efficacious by way of example, or because of its influence on the minds of those who think of it, but objectively, in itself, and in relation to the law of righteousness. It is quite true that it is the supremest example of self-sacrifice that the world has witnessed, quite true that the message of the Cross has had power to convince of sin and to lead men to holiness, solely from the pathetic pleading of the love of which it tells. But it is impossible to reconcile the words of Scripture with a theory which goes no farther than this, or to understand the moral necessity for the awful victory of the Cross, if nothing more than this be true.

(2) On the other hand, the word "punishment" is not used in the New Testament of the Death of Christ. His Atonement is never there described as a punishment of the innocent instead of the guilty, though it has been so described by careless readers of Scripture. That is a conception which is repugnant to all our notions of justice, and it is foreign to the teaching of the Gospels. Punishment can be justly inflicted only on the offender himself. Certainly it does not follow that only the guilty suffer in consequence of their sin. Every day's experience convinces us of the contrary. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children; "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." But that is not to say that the Almighty punishes the children for what was no fault of theirs; it is rather to say that we are all linked together by bonds so close in one great brotherhood that, "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." It may be said that this makes no difference as to the pain entailed upon the innocent; but surely it makes a wide difference in our conception of the justice of the Supreme Orderer of men's lives, whether we regard Him as the immediate Author of that pain, or whether we look on it as an inevitable consequence of the unity of mankind and of the warfare against good inspired by the wayward wills of men. To ask that it should be otherwise is to ask that man should not be man, should have been created other than he is. The innocent is not punished instead of the guilty; and so it is not said in the New Testament that Christ was punished instead of man. It is said that He suffered because of man, for the sake of man, that the sin which man commits every hour issued in His Passion.

¶ Ghastliest of all misconceptions ever put before this city or any other is the assertion that the doctrine of the Atonement implies, first, that an innocent being is made guilty in the sense of being personally blameworthy; and, secondly, that that innocent being is punished in the sense of suffering pain for personal ill-desert. Both these propositions all clear thought discards, all religious science condemns. We have no doctrine of the Atonement which declares that personal demerit is laid upon our Lord, or that, in the strict sense of the word, He suffered punishment—that is, pain inflicted for personal blameworthiness. He had no personal blameworthiness. He was an innocent being, as He always will be; and never did, can, or will suffer punishment, in the strict sense of the word.

(3) Once more, the Death of Jesus is not represented in the New Testament as the cause of the love of God. It is its effect, its outcome. It is a parody of the Gospel to speak of Christ's having, as it were, purchased by His death God's love for man. For "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."

¶ I recollect particularly well an answer he gave once in private conversation to the question, "Do you believe that the sacrifice of Christ is the essential and basal thing in the Christian religion?" The interrogator desired an answer, Yes or No. It was at the time when Drummond's position was being assailed from almost every quarter. I shall not soon forget the slow, deliberate reply: "Then my answer must be No." The questioner remarked that it was satisfactory to have such a plain answer. But there was in store for him something which probably made matters plainer still: "If I may venture a supplementary remark," said Drummond, "I would say

that in my opinion the sacrifice of Christ is a part of the very essence of Christianity, but the basis of Christianity is the eternal love of God.”

(4) And, lastly, such a conception as that of a Martyr Prophet suffering in innocence instead of sinners who had to share in his sorrow and his pain would be demoralizing to man himself. It would cut at the root of personal responsibility. But the doctrine of the Incarnation has been only half learnt if we have not understood that Christ claimed to be, not only in word, but in fact, the Representative and the Recapitulation of all men. It was in the name of the race whose nature He assumed that He confessed the guilt of sin, on their behalf that He suffered the inevitable consequence of sin. He “tasted death for every man.” He drank the cup to the dregs. Even alienation from the Divine love was felt by Him at last. “My God,” He cried, “why hast thou forsaken me?” Herein was the law of righteousness fulfilled.

¶ Writing to Westcott, Hort says: I entirely agree with what you say on the Atonement, having for many years believed that “the absolute union of the Christian (or rather, of man) with Christ Himself” is the spiritual truth of which the popular doctrine of substitution is an immoral and material counterfeit.

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Behold the Lamb - Bob Gass

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

When Adam sinned, God took a lamb and shed its blood to cover his sin. That day the principle of substitution was established: “The just for the unjust” (1 Peter 3:18). God told Noah to take two of each unclean animal, but seven of each clean animal, so that there would be a blood sacrifice when the world started again. In the Old Testament tabernacle, God arranged the furniture (the altar, the laver, the mercy seat, etc.) in the shape of a cross: four pieces down and three pieces across. Then He told Moses to sprinkle each piece with the blood of a lamb. For 1,400 years God looked down and saw a blood-stained cross in the midst of His people. How wonderful!

But one day John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Did you hear that? Not just the sin of an individual or a family or a nation—but the sin of the whole world! That includes you and me. Listen: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

TODAY HE'S WAITING TO SAVE YOU FROM YOUR SINS;
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS CALL ON HIM—HE'LL DO THE REST!

I. THE LAMB PROPHESED.

1. Moses prophesied concerning Him; Gen. 3:15; Num. 24:17.
2. Isaiah prophesied concerning Him; Isa. 53:4–12.
3. Jeremiah prophesied concerning Him; Jer. 23:5, 6.

II. THE LAMB TYPIFIED.

1. He was typified by the Ark; Gen. 6:14.
2. He was typified by the Brazen Serpent; Num. 21:9.
3. He was typified by the Passover Lamb; Ex. 12:3–10.

III. THE LAMB PERSONIFIED.

1. His conception was by the Holy Spirit; Luke 1:34, 35.
2. His body was prepared by the Father; Heb. 10:5.
3. His birth was by the Virgin Mary; Luke 2:7.

IV. THE LAMB MAGNIFIED.

1. He had power over disease; Mark 1:31.
2. He had power over devils; Mark 9:25–27.
3. He had power over death; Mark 5:41.

V. THE LAMB DESPISED.

1. He was despised by Herod; Matt. 2:8, 16.
2. He was despised by the Jews; John 1:11; 19:14, 15; Matt. 27:41–43.
3. He was despised by the governor's soldiers; Matt. 27:27–31.

VI. THE LAMB CRUCIFIED.

1. The blood of Christ atones; 1 Peter 1:18, 19.
2. The blood of Christ preserves; Rom. 3:25.
3. The blood of Christ is sufficient; Heb. 2:9.

VII. THE LAMB GLORIFIED.

1. He was glorified to become our High Priest; Heb. 8:1.
2. He was glorified to become our Advocate; 1 John 2:1.
3. He was glorified to offer salvation; Heb. 7:25.

SERMONS BY THOMAS MANTON ON JOHN 1:29

SERMON I

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. JOHN 1:29.

THE words are spoken upon occasion of John's meeting with Christ. Before his temptations in the desert Christ had honoured John's baptism; after his return from the desert he cometh to honour his ministry. Christ himself was one of John's auditors. It fell out happily by the divine providence, that so John might give him a solemn testimony before the people, 'Behold the Lamb of God,' &c. In the words we have—

1. A note of demonstration or ostension, as pointing at him with the finger, 'Behold.'
2. The person demonstrated, set forth here under the notion of 'the Lamb of God.'
3. His work and office, from whence the title is given him, 'Which taketh away the sin of the world.'

The text is full of matter; every word and title is emphatical.

Two doctrines I shall observe from the words—(1.) That Jesus Christ was the true Lamb of God; (2.) The great work of Christ the Lamb of God is to take away the sin of the world.

Doct. 1. That Jesus Christ was the true Lamb of God.

1. I shall show that Christ was the true Lamb of God.
2. How we are to behold him.

I. That Christ is the true Lamb of God. He may be called so either with allusion to the common lamb, or else to the holy lamb, which, $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\rho\tau\iota\kappa\ \varsigma$, is here called 'the lamb of God,' the lamb appointed by him for sacrifice, or else to the paschal lamb.

First, There are many fit resemblances between him and the common lamb. I shall instance only in three—(1.) Innocency; (2.) Liableness to injuries; and (3.) Meekness and patience.

1. For innocency. Of all creatures the lamb is the most harmless, the true emblem of innocency. So was Christ without wrong and without guile: Isa. 53:9, 'He hath done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.' All wrong and harm is there reduced to two heads—violence and deceit; the one the fruit of wicked cunning, the other the fruit of abused power; both are far removed from Christ, for he was holy and harmless.

2. So for liableness to injuries. Sheep are not ravenous creatures, but easily exposed to the prey of others, and can use no forcible means to defend themselves: Mat. 10:16, 'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.' So was Christ himself, that in him might be exemplified the spirit and genius of that religion which he would establish. Ever since there hath been sin in the world, man hath been grasping at power, to use it, not in acts of mercy, but violence; but the great God, who hath all power in his hands, would come into the world as a lamb to the slaughter, and redeem the world that was lost, not by grasping at power and greatness, but by meekness and sufferings; and so establish a kingdom of patience, not of power.

3. For meekness and patience. For patience in his death he was a lamb: Isa. 53:7, 'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.' Swine will howl and whine when they are touched, but sheep are dumb before the shearers. Christ did not open his mouth unless it were to instruct, and bless, and pray for those that crucified him, but went patiently to the cross. It was anciently observed among the heathens, that if the beast struggled, or did run away from the altar, that it was counted an unlucky sacrifice. If we should go by this rule in judging concerning the success of our sin-offering, his carriage at his death promiseth an happy issue; for 'He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.' He died not as the beasts in the temple, against their will; if he complained of the bitter cup, it was to show that he was not without sense, not that he was without patience.

Secondly, The sacrifice lamb, therefore called 'the lamb of God.' All lambs were God's creatures, and therefore might be called his; but the lamb appointed for sacrifice was God's in a peculiar manner, as set apart for this use by his special appointment. And yet that lamb was not God's so much as Christ is; for there man had his choice, and was to interpose his judgment what lamb he would single out of the flock; and therefore the sacrifices and offerings were called theirs who presented them, not God's who appointed them; but Christ was both appointed by God: 1 Peter 1:20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world;' and offered by God: 'Heb 9:14, 'Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God;' and accepted by God, in token whereof he hath set him forth in the gospel as a propitiation for sin: Rom. 3:25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' And in the text he is said to be *μνος*, not a lamb, but the lamb, that lamb of God; which is said partly by way of dignity and distinction, to put a difference between him and the typical lamb; and partly by way of ostension and demonstration, that lamb figured in the sacrifices, and spoken of by the prophets; this is he, 'the Lamb of God' indeed. Now lambs were often used in sacrifices. In the purification of women: Lev. 12:6, 'She shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering.' In the cleansing of the leper: Lev. 14:10, 'On the eighth day he shall bring two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb without blemish;' both which figured the cleansing of our defiled natures by Christ, and the doing away the defilement and leprosy of sin. But the most frequent and constant use of the lamb was in the daily sacrifice: Exod. 29:38, 39, 'Now this is that thou shalt offer upon the altar, two lambs of the first year, day by day continually; the one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even;' which was to be done with meal and wine, the two great supports of the natural life; all which figured Christ. God is every day pleased and propitiated for our sins, and by virtue of his daily mediation we and all our actions are accepted of the Lord. The Lord Jesus is our daily lamb, which must be represented to God's justice, as the only means of our atonement, every morning and every evening. We need it as much as they, and are more obliged than they, because all is clear and open to us. Now upon the sabbath-day this offering was double: Num. 28:9, 10, 'And on the sabbath-day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth-deals of flour for a meat-offering mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof. This is the burnt-offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.' Then God requireth a more solemn remembrance of Christ, our lamb slain for us.

Thirdly, But the most solemn figure and type of Christ was the paschal lamb, and most frequently interpreted of him in the new testament: 1 Cor. 5:7, 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us;' and John 19:36, 'A bone of him shall not be broken.' This was originally spoken of the paschal lamb: Exod. 12:46, 'Neither shall ye break a bone thereof.' Now the evangelist bringeth this as a prophecy; this which was ordained concerning the paschal lamb is said to be fulfilled in Christ; it is brought as a reason why the divine providence permitted not his legs to be broken. This is the type to which John here alludeth, and saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' Therefore here my work must be fixed, to state the resemblance between the paschal lamb and Jesus Christ. Certainly the use of that ordinance was typical, as well as historical; it was ordained not only as a memorial of their redemption from Egypt, but as a figure of our redemption by Christ. To the first use it is supposed David hath respect when he said, Ps. 111:4, 5, 'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion. He hath given meat to them that fear him; he will ever be mindful of his covenant.' The meat there mentioned is supposed to respect the paschal lamb, when they were to remember the works of God. But the chief use was to type out Christ, who hath so taken away sin that he hath freed us from eternal death. He

was the truth and substance of that type, and the true passover sacrificed for us, in whose person, and in whose sufferings and benefits, all that is really to be found which is pointed out and typified by that shadow.

That this may more clearly appear to you, I shall show you that the paschal lamb figured—(1.) The person of Christ; (2.) His death on the cross; (3.) The fruits of his death; (4.) The manner how we are made partakers of them.

1. The paschal lamb figured the person of Christ. The prophets and apostles do often set forth the person of Christ under the notion of a lamb. Isaiah calleth him a lamb: Isa. 53:7, 'He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.' And Philip, instructing the eunuch, applieth that prophecy to Christ, Acts 8:35. And among the apostles, Peter telleth you that we are redeemed 'with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Peter 1:19. And John the evangelist calleth him often 'The Lamb that was slain,' Rev. 5:6, 9. And here John the Baptist, who was *fibula legis et evangelii*, in the middle between the prophets and apostles, calleth him 'The Lamb of God,' in the text; and ver. 36, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' And fitly, for Christ was a lamb in regard of his meekness, patience, and humble innocence. For his meekness he was a lamb, for he saith, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' Mat. 11:29; and for his innocency, for 'there was no guile found in his mouth,' 1 Peter 2:22. But chiefly for his patience; for 'as a lamb before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth,' Acts 8:32; 'He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets,' Isa. 42:2; 'Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously,' 1 Peter 2:23. Not that he wanted strength and power, 'for all power was given him both in heaven and earth;' and if he would have made use of them, he had more than twelve legions of angels at his command: Mat. 26:53, 'Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?' one of which was able enough easily to dissipate and destroy all his enemies. But 'he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,' Mat. 20:28; and therefore he humbled himself, being made 'obedient to death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. 2:8. Thus the lion of the tribe of Judah, by a strange metamorphosis, of a lion was made a lamb, that out of the eater might come forth meat, and out of the strong might come forth sweetness; for this lamb feedeth us with his flesh, and giveth us to drink of his blood: John 6:55, 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' No dish so savoury as that to an hungry conscience, no draught so comfortable to a thirsty soul. And besides this, he clotheth us with the fleece of his own righteousness, and therefore we are said to put on Christ: Gal. 3:29, 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ;' and Rom. 13:14, 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.' And to receive white garments from him, by which the shame of our nakedness may be covered: Rev. 3:18, 'I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed.' I remember it is said, Gen. 3:21, that 'God clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skins;' most probably of the skins of the sacrifices, for as yet they did not eat flesh; and so it would fitly imply the Redeemer's righteousness to clothe our nakedness:

'Nudatus tegmine vitæ

Pellibus ut tegetetur homo suspenditur Agnus.'—TERTUL.

But I must more expressly make good the resemblance between Christ and the paschal lamb.

[1.] The lamb was taken from among the rest of the flock: Exod. 12:5, 'Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats.' So Christ from his brethren: Deut. 18:15, 'I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren.' The paschal lamb was a lamb as other lambs; so Christ had the same common nature with other believers; he was a man as we are: 'Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same,' Heb. 2:14; and 'in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren,' ver. 17; sin only excepted: Heb. 4:15, 'He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'

[2.] The lamb chosen was to be without blemish; so was Christ 'a lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Peter 1:19; that is, free from sin, for sins are the spots and blemishes of the soul; from these Christ was free: 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' John 8:46. Pilate, that condemned him, pronounced him innocent, and professed before the Jews that 'he found no fault in him,' Luke 23:14; Heb. 7:26, 27, 'For such an high priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners; who needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's;' for then how could he satisfy for us who had sins of his own to expiate? And then the Jews would not without reason have objected to him: Mt 27:42, 'He saveth others, himself he cannot save.' No; John joineth these two as inseparable: 1 John 3:5, 'And we know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.'

[3.] This lamb also was to be a male; as also Christ, that he might be the Son of God, and king, and priest, and prophet to the church. Therefore Luke 2:23, that law is applied to Christ, that 'every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.'

[4.] The lamb was to be a year old, of competent age; as Christ also was to have some experience of human life before he died, that he might be acquainted with our griefs and sorrows, and tried in all points like us; but in his flower, when he had most reason to love his life, then he laid it down for his people's sake.

[5.] The lamb, being separated, was to be kept four days, from the tenth day of the first month till the fourteenth of the same, Exod. 12:6; which was a rite which had not only a moral use, but a mystical signification. A moral use: Fagius saith he was *ad cubitia*

obligatus, tied to their bedposts, that, hearing the bleatings of the lamb, they might remember the sorrows of Egypt, and be the more thankful for their redemption. And it had a mystical use, for it signifieth the time between Christ's consecration at his baptism and his death, after three years and a half spent in his ministry; as also Christ's entrance into Jerusalem on the tenth day of the same month by the sheep-gate, which was the gate by which the sheep and lambs were led to be sacrificed in the temple, John 12:1, 12.

2. His death on the cross was figured by the paschal lamb, for this lamb was to be slain, as the Messiah was to be cut off by a violent death: Dan. 9:26, 'And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.' The lamb was to be slain at the middle of the month Nisan, at the full moon, between the two evenings. Christ's death was just at the same time, when they were killing the paschal lamb; for the paschal lamb was to be killed between the two evenings; that is, as Josephus interpreteth it, π ννάτης ρας μέκρη νδεκότης, from the ninth hour unto the eleventh, that is, between three and five o'clock in our account; and about that time Christ died: Mat. 27:45, 46, 'Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land till the ninth hour: and about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice;' and ver. 50, 'Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, gave up the ghost.' And the place was the same; for ever since David's time the paschal lambs were killed at Jerusalem in the porch of the temple, where Christ also suffered. And it is said, Exod. 12:6, that 'the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening;' which was in a manner fulfilled in Christ, against whom the scribes and pharisees, and all the people conspired: and therefore, when Pilate would have released him, 'they all said unto him, Let him be crucified,' Mat. 27:22; and Luke 23:18, 'They cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas;' παμπληθε, all the multitude together. And the kind of the death agreeth; for as the lamb's blood was shed, so was Christ's for the people of God. The blood of the paschal lamb was not spilt on the ground, but carried away in basins, Exod. 12:22, because it signified the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without spot and blemish. God would not have it spilt upon the ground; that blood is the true treasure of the church, which the Son of God still representeth unto the Father on our behalf. Again, the roasting of the lamb; the lamb was not to be eaten raw, nor sodden, nor baked, nor boiled, but roasted by fire. The fire represents the wrath of God: Mal. 4:1, 'Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven;' and Heb. 12:29, 'Our God is a consuming fire.' In this fire it behoved the Lamb of God to be roasted, when he offered himself a surety for sinners, and was substituted into their room and place. This was that which made him sweat drops of blood, and for this cause did he complain, Ps. 22:14, 15, 'My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels: my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws.' And their manner of roasting it is very notable, which was (as Maimonides telleth us) not by a spit of iron turned round about, as we do, but by hanging the flesh on a broach of wood in the midst of the fire, which had some shadow of Christ's crucifixion; especially if that be true which Justin Martyn in his dialogue with Tryphon the Jew telleth him, that their broach was fashioned to the shape of a cross, a transverse piece of wood thrust through the shoulders of the lamb. And why should we not believe this holy man, who was well acquainted with the Jewish affairs, being born at Sychem? Besides the notable providence of God that Christ's legs should not be broken.

3. The fruits and benefits of this sacrifice.

[1.] By the sprinkling the blood of the lamb, he that destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians could not touch them, Heb. 11:28. This secured them against the destroying angel; to teach us that the justice of God doth only spare them whose consciences are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. The blood of the lamb and the blood of Christ was shed for this end, that it might be sprinkled, and being sprinkled, might exempt, and free us from death. So the apostle St Peter speaketh of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, by which the elect are sanctified and saved: 1 Peter 1:2, 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' There was not only blood shed, but blood sprinkled; so Heb. 12:24, 'And to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' God said of the blood of the paschal lamb, Exod. 12:23, 'For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.' So when wrath maketh inquisition for sinners, God beholding his Son's blood, wherewith the elect are sprinkled, they are exempted from the curse wherein others have entangled and involved themselves; for saith the apostle Paul, Rom. 5:9, 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' So that we need not fear the sword of the destroying angel, whether he be an angel of darkness or an evil angel, for God hath 'delivered us from the power of darkness' by the blood of his Son, Col. 1:13, or an heavenly angel. By the same blood he hath 'reconciled all things unto himself both in heaven and in earth,' Col. 1:20. Those angels which were heretofore set as a guard upon the earthly paradise, with a flaming sword, to keep us out from thence, do carry us into the heavenly paradise: Luke 16:22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;' and are ministering spirits sent forth for the heirs of promise, not to destroy them, but to keep them and preserve them: Heb. 1:14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?'

[2.] In that very night in which the paschal lamb was slain, the Israelites obtained their freedom and deliverance out of Egypt. So hath Christ by his blood freed us from the slavery of sin, the devil, and the world, and called us into the glorious liberty of the children of God: 1 Cor. 7:23, 'Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.' So Heb. 2:15, 'That he might deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage;' and John 8:36, 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' We are redeemed unto God as they went into the wilderness to worship God.

[3.] In that very night God exercised judgments on the gods of the Egyptians. So it is said, Exod. 12:12, 'Against all the gods of the Egyptians will I exercise judgment;' and it is repeated, Num. 33:4, 'For the Egyptians buried all their first-born, which the Lord had smitten among them; upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments.' Some say by slaying the beasts which the Egyptians worshipped, as the ox. Jonathan in his paraphrase saith that all their idols of metal melted, and their idols of stone and earth were broken in pieces, and their idols of wood were burned to ashes. Whether this or that we cannot tell, because the scripture is silent; but surely these threatenings were not in vain, and wanted not their certain effect. Certain we are that by the blood of Christ the devil's kingdom goeth down: John 12:31, 32, 'Now shall the prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' As Christ's kingdom goeth up, 'The idols are thrown to the moles and to the bats,' Isa. 2:20; and God will 'famish all the gods of the earth,' Zeph. 2:11; and in the 1 Peter 1:18, 19, 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversations, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' The blood of Christ fetcheth over men from their inveterate customs and superstitions. And Rev. 12:11, 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb;' and 1 John 3:8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.'

How shall we be partakers of those good things which come to us from the Lamb of God. Two things were required of these Israelites—that they should sprinkle the blood of this lamb upon the lintel and the two side-posts, and than eat his flesh in an holy and religious manner; and if any of the Israelites had neglected either of these, he had refused the grace annexed to this ordinance, and so lost the benefit of it. So if we neglect the means by which Christ is to be applied, we lose our benefit by him.

(1.) They were to sprinkle the lintel and the two side-posts of their doors. At another time God gave them direction to write his law on the door-posts: Deut. 11:20, 'Thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates;' which I mention that we may the better understand what is meant by them. By these doorposts are meant our hearts, for these God sprinkleth with the blood of his Son: Heb. 10:22, 'Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' And upon these hearts of ours doth he write his laws: Jer. 31:32, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;' for the hearts of men are as open to God as the doors of our houses are to ourselves. Now our hearts are sprinkled with the blood of Christ when we firmly believe that God is propitiated by the blood of Christ, and will spare all those who in a broken-hearted manner sue out their pardon in Christ's name, unfeignedly devoting themselves to God. Oh, then, let every one of us get our hearts sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and apply it to our consciences, and say, with the apostle, 1 Tim. 1:15, 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;' and again, Gal. 6:14, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world;' and again, 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 'The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.' These are true workings of heart; only remember, the same place that is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, on the same place must the law be written, that we may love God, and keep his law, and entirely give up ourselves to do his will, and be subject to him. And remember also, that it is the lintel and side-posts that must be sprinkled, and the law was written upon the door-posts, not inscribed upon the threshold. There are some which tread the blood of the covenant underfoot: Heb. 10:29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?' These are swine and dogs, before whom we must not 'cast holy things, lest they tread them under feet,' Mat. 7:6. These prefer their carnal satisfaction before the fruits of Christ's death, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage.

(2.) By the same faith by which the blood of the Lamb of God is sprinkled on the doors of our hearts, by the same faith is his flesh eaten. The Lamb of God was given, not only as a ransom to divine justice, but as food for our souls. The eating of the sacrifice noteth the manner of our fruition of Christ, for eating implieth an intimate union. Those things which are eaten are turned into our substance, and become one with us: John 6:53, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.' Christ is as truly meat as the paschal lamb was, but meat, not for the body, but the soul; and therefore he is eaten not with the mouth of the body, which receiveth bodily food, but the mouth of the soul, which is faith. The appetite is spiritual, so is the food; it is a spiritual hunger and a spiritual thirst that must be satisfied. Now a corporeal thing beareth no proportion with it; there is no satisfying this hunger nor quenching this thirst but by coming to Christ, that is, believing in him; for it is said, John 6:35, 'I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' In that manner we receive Christ in that manner he dwelleth in us. Now he dwelleth in us by faith: Eph. 3:17, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Christ dwelleth in us, not by his infinite presence as God, so he is everywhere; nor by his corporeal presence as man, so the heavens must contain him; but by his gracious presence, and special influence as our head, whereby he quickeneth us; therefore we are to receive him by faith, and not by the mouth and stomach, and give him a hearty welcome into our souls. The Israelites in the wilderness 'did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ,' 1 Cor. 10:3, 4. As they did eat Christ and drink Christ before ever his body was formed in the Virgin's womb, so do we now he is ascended into heaven. The passover lamb was not to be eaten raw or half-roasted, but thoroughly roasted; so is the Lamb of God; he is not digested, and turned into strength and nourishment by a few crude, cold, cursory, and careless thoughts; but this mystery must be much concocted by deep, serious, pressing, and ponderous

meditation; for meditation is that to the mind which concoction and digestion is to the stomach. An unattentive mind gets no warmth, no strength, no comfort from the Lamb of God. In short, we must so mind these things as to choose them, and so choose them as to be determined and governed by our choice in our whole course. The lamb was to be eaten whole; there was nothing to be left of him: Exod. 12:10, 'And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning;' to show that Christ must not be divided, not nature from nature, nor office from office, nor benefit from benefit; this is to eat part of Christ and leave the rest. If we would have his glory, we must be partakers of his sufferings, and take up his cross; if we will have him for our redeemer and saviour, we must own him for our Lord and lawgiver; if we would be feasted with privileges, we must not neglect duties; his Spirit must renew us, as well as his merit justify us. The paschal lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs; it is our misery giveth Christ a relish. God casts us into sufferings, or puts us under a cloud, that we may not be gospel-glutted, or cloyed with doctrines of grace. He must be eaten with unleavened bread, simple plain bread without mixture: 1 Cor. 5:7, 8, 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened; for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.' Christ, in whose mouth there is no guile, cannot endure hypocrisy. At first they were to eat the passover with their loins girt, their staff in their hands, and shoes on their feet. So Luke 12:35, 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;' 1 Peter 1:13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds;' Eph. 6:14, 15, 'Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.' We are strangers here, and must put on for heaven, and be ready for a remove for the heavenly journey.

II. How we are to behold him, or how he is to be considered by us. This ecce, behold, doth not only point at Christ as personally and corporally present as an object of the senses, but doth excite their mind and faith to get a spiritual sight of him, to behold him in the quality of his office. He is not personally present with us, as he was when these words were said, yet that doth not hinder the sight of faith. Whenever we are conversant about these holy mysteries, it may be said to us, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.'

1. Behold him with seriousness and reverence. This mystery must not be passed over with a few hasty and running thoughts. It is μέγα μυστήριον, the greatest wonder that ever was in the world, that God should die, and for such forlorn creatures. How should we be swallowed up of admiration whenever we think of it! When this Lamb of God was killing, the creatures were all in amazement, the earth trembled, the rocks rent, the sun was eclipsed. Oh, how great is the stupidity and dulness of our hearts, that we can no more seriously think of it! Heb. 3:1, 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' Serious meditation is like the concoction of meat in the stomach.

2. Behold him with application: Job 5:27, 'Hear it, and know thou it for thy good;' Rom. 8:31, 'What shall we then say to these things?' Excite thine own heart: Surely this was for my sins, if I have an heart to receive Christ, and make use of him for this end and purpose: Gal. 2:20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' and 1 Peter 1:20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.'

3. Behold him with an eye of faith: Isa. 45:22, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;' Heb. 12:2, 'Looking unto Jesus;' Zech. 12:10, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.' Faith gets such a clear sight of things, as if we had been by when he suffered and paid this ransom.

4. Behold him with an eye of repentance, and brokenness of heart: Zech. 12:10, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him as one that mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.' It was thy sins that pierced him, therefore behold him and mourn.

5. Behold him with an eye of thankfulness, as the great instance of God's love, who would by so costly a remedy procure our pardon and happiness: 1 John 4:9, 10, 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

6. Behold your suffering and crucified Saviour with an eye of love, so as to love him the more. ῥως μο σταυρ τμ, my love is crucified. Ignatius: Quo vilior, eo charior. The more vile and humble he was, the more dear he should be to you. Let it persuade us to a real love, to allow him a dominion and lordship in our hearts; that is real love, to obey God: Rom. 5:8, 'God commended his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' This love must beget love.

Use 1. To press you to behold the Lamb of God; behold him as a sacrifice for sin, whose blood applied doth quiet the conscience and turn away the curse. These words present the more glorious spectacle and object, not to your sight, but to your faith; not to your senses, but to your most serious and intimate consideration. The object is Christ crucified, the only true propitiatory sacrifice for sin, the chief point of christian knowledge, and the most powerful means of the creature's good. Oh, behold him! look not at bread and wine in the Lord's supper, but at the Lamb of God.

Use 2. To press you to take and eat Christ, and receive him out of God's hands by faith. He is the Lamb of God. God designed him

for this work, when man had no way to help himself: 1 Peter 1:20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.' God tendereth him to you; now take and eat. God, the party offended, hath authorised Christ to be a mediator; say, then, Lord, thou hast appointed thy Son, and sent him into the world to be a ransom for our souls: he is now offered to me; Lord, I come to eat his flesh and drink his blood. We must eat him so as to feel the virtue of both, changing our hearts, and comforting our consciences. Changing our hearts; other food is changed into our substance, this changeth us: 2 Cor. 5:17, 'He that is in Christ is a new creature.' Comforting our consciences: Heb. 9:14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' Is God unwilling to give Christ? or is Christ unable to do his work?

SERMON II

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. JOHN 1:29.

DOCT. 2. The great work of Christ, the Lamb of God, is to take away the sins of the world.

I. What is meant by 'the world.'

2. In what manner Christ taketh away the sins of the world.

3. That this is the great end, work, and scope of Christ's coming into the world.

1. What is meant by 'the world'? Why is there such a capacious and comprehensive word used, since it is clear that all the world have not benefit by Christ, for many of them die in their sins?

Ans. 1. To show the difference between the Lamb of God and the sacrifices of the law. The old sacrifices were only offered for the people of Israel, but Christ's death hath a larger extent, to people of all places, Jews and gentiles: 1 John 2:2, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' And in all ages, from the beginning of the world to the end: Rev. 13:8, 'He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' The Lamb of God is of an universal and perpetual use.

2. To show the sufficiency of this mediatorial sacrifice, it is of such a full and overflowing merit that it becometh a foundation for a tender of grace to every creature. Here is a groundwork and foundation laid for the truth of this proposition: Mark 16:16, that 'whosoever believeth shall be saved.' So that here is a great invitation and encouragement for every oppressed soul; if Christ taketh away the sins of the world, put in for a share; thou art a member of the world. Paul creepeth in at the back-door of the promise: 1 Tim. 1:15, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Christ would not have sinners exclude themselves, but attend upon him for this benefit. Therefore he would have his grace set forth in the most comprehensive terms, that all that find themselves sinners may stir up themselves to find benefit by him.

3. Those elect ones, who have actual benefit by this sacrifice, may be called 'the world;' partly because of their number; take them altogether, and they are many, and therefore called 'world;' Rev. 7:9, 'I beheld a great multitude, which no man could number,' &c.; and partly in regard of God's estimation; though they are few, they are as good as all the world to him; and partly because they will one day be set apart from the rest of mankind, and make a peculiar world of themselves.

II. In what manner doth Christ take away the sins of the world? I shall give my answer in these propositions—

1. The whole world in its natural estate lieth under sin and wrath. The scripture in one place telleth us, 1 John 5:19, 'The whole world lieth in wickedness;' and in another, that 'all the world is become guilty before God,' Rom. 3:19. Both together speak this much, that the sin and misery of the world was such that it groaned for a saviour, even as a man sick of a mortal disease, and almost at his last gasp, hath need of a physician. In the corruption of nature all are involved: Rom. 3:23, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' and so by consequence all are under the wrath of God: Eph. 2:3, 'We are by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' Which abideth upon us while we remain unbelieving and impenitent: John 3:36, 'He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' And besides this, there is the dominion of actual sin, Rom. 6:14. All which show the miserable state of the world, and the high need of a saviour. Sin liveth with men from the birth to the grave; and all are become abominable and filthy; they are all gone out of the way; there is none that seeketh after God; there is none that doeth good, no not one, Ps. 14:1–3. They are all gone out of the way of holiness and happiness; they are all become vile and loathsome to God, all guilty of a careless neglect of God, and of their duty, and of the service they owe to him; all are given to please the flesh: John 3:6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh.' So general a wickedness and defection from God is there throughout the world, as if they had cast off all fear, and care, and love of God and his service; though they speak honourably of him in words, yet in their deeds they deny him, and disobey his authority, and wholly abandon themselves to please the flesh.

2. To lie under sin, and the consequences thereof, is a burden too heavy for us to bear, and miserable are they who have it lying

upon their own shoulders. How light soever sins may seem to be when they are committed, yet they will not be found to be light when we come to reckon with God for them. Sin to a waking conscience is one of the heaviest burdens that ever was felt: Ps. 38:4, 'My iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.' If you do but taste of this cup, if a spark of God's wrath light upon the conscience, what a weight and pressure is this upon the soul! You will find the little finger of sin to be heavier than the loins of any other sorrow. You may know it in part by what Christ suffered. If his soul was heavy unto death, if he felt such strange agonies, sweated drops of curdled blood, lost the actual sensible comforts of his godhead when he bore the burden of sin, what shall any one of us do, if he were to bear his own burden? If this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? You may also know it by the complaints of the saints, when the finger of God hath but touched them. All life and power is gone if God should set home one sin upon the conscience: Ps. 40:12, 'Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.' So Job complaineth that the arrows of the Almighty are within him, the poison whereof did drink up his spirits, Job 6:4. If you will know what it is to bear sin, ask a tender conscience or a troubled conscience. What disquiets of soul do wicked men feel when their consciences are a little awakened! how uneasy do their hearts sit within them! Prov. 28:14, 'He that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.' Cain crieth out, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear,' Gen. 4:13. What large offers do men then make to get rid of their burden! 'Thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil; yea, their first-born for their transgressions, the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls,' Micah 6:6, 7. Lastly, what it is to live and die in sin, the other world will show us. Christ useth no other expression of the misery of the unbelieving Jews but this, 'Ye shall die in your sins,' John 8:24. That is enough, for that speaketh all manner of horror and torment. And the threatenings of the word show their case is miserable enough: 'They fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. 10:31. And 'the worm' that feedeth upon them 'shall never die;' and 'the fire' wherewith they are scorched 'shall never be quenched,' Mark 9:44. Sins that now lie like sleepy lions then awaken, and take them by the throat, and feed and gnaw upon them to all eternity. Miserable questionless is the state of them who bear their own burden and their own transgression. Now the sense of this should make a crucified Saviour sweet to us.

3. None can take off this burden of sin but Jesus Christ; this is a work proper to the Lamb of God. None else could preserve the honour of God's justice, which was necessary before we could be intrusted with a new stock of grace: Rom. 3:24, 25, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' None else could secure the honour of God's government; punishments are inflicted, not only for the reformation and correction of the offenders, but for a warning to others, to secure the ends of government, that none may presume upon impunity. The same is necessary in the government of the world by God. If God should wholly release the law, all awe and sense of it would be lost, sin would not be counted so grievous a thing; therefore there is a brand put upon sin by the sufferings of Christ; the odiousness of it is represented in the agonies and sorrows of his cross. The apostle saith, 'That God for sin condemned sin in the flesh,' Rom. 8:3; or by a sacrifice given for sin he hath showed his hatred and displeasure against it. When we look upon sin through Satan's spectacles, or the cloud of our own passions or carnal affections, we make nothing of it; but it is a terrible spectacle to see the fruits of it in the agonies and sufferings of Jesus Christ, which are represented to us in the word and sacraments, as if he were crucified before our eyes. Once more, none could bear this burden of punishment but Jesus Christ, who was man to undertake it in our name, and also God to get through it in his own strength. His human nature did put a price into his hands to lay down for the ransom of our souls, and his divine nature did put a value upon that price, and made it sufficient and responsible to all God's ends. Therefore it is said, Ps. 89:19, 'Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.' It best befitted the divine wisdom to choose such a person as might undertake the work, and not miscarry in it; otherwise we could have no assurance that full satisfaction was given.

4. Jesus Christ taketh away sin by bearing it in his own person. $\alpha\rho\omega\nu$ signifieth both to take it away and carry it away; and it is said, Isa. 53:6, 'The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all.' God laid it on him, and he willingly took it upon himself: 1 Peter 2:24, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree;' which signifieth his voluntary susception, as well as the Father's ordination and appointment.

I must a little explain two things—(1.) How sin was laid upon Christ; (2.) That being transferred and laid upon Christ, it is taken off from the creature.

[1.] How sin was laid upon Christ, for so the scripture speaketh. There is in sin, culpa, the fault; macula, the stain; reatus, the guilt, and pœna, the punishment. We cannot say the fault was laid on him, for that is the blame which ariseth or groweth out of sin inherent; we cannot say the stain, for Christ was 'holy, harmless, undefiled; separate from sinners,' Heb. 7:26; therefore we must understand it of the other two, the guilt and the punishment. The guilt is imputed as he stood in our stead; for he is said to 'bear the sins of many,' Isa. 53:12, and to 'be made sin for us,' 2 Cor. 5:21. As he offered himself, and obliged himself to make satisfaction to his Father's justice, his soul and body was a ransom in our souls' stead: 1 Tim. 2:6, 'Who gave himself' ἀντίτρον, a ransom for all.' He not only died in bonum nostrum, for our good, but loco et vice omnium nostrum, he stood before the Father's tribunal in our room and stead. Then for the punishment, as he was 'made sin for us,' so he was 'made a curse for us,' Gal. 3:13; that is, to undergo the curse of the law due to us. He was no more spared than if we ourselves, who had sinned, had been in his room and place at that

time; and therefore he is said to 'carry our sorrows and bear our griefs,' Isa. 53:4. He was the object of sinpursuing justice, and at his hands did God demand satisfaction for all our wrongs. He had all the sins of the elect upon him by imputation and voluntary susception, and was handled by divine justice as if he had been guilty of them all.

[2.] The guilt and punishment being transferred and transacted upon Christ, it is taken off from the creature; and all who upon God's terms do thankfully accept of this atonement are acquitted and reconciled to God, and taken into grace and favour through Christ: Job 33:24, 'Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.' When the surety hath paid the debt, the debtor is let out of prison; when the ram was taken, Isaac was let go, Gen. 22. As Christ told his persecutors, John 18:8, 'If therefore you seek me, let these go their way.' In that action of his there was a pledge, an illustration, at least, of his offering himself to the curse of the law and the punishment due to sin, to exempt us from it: Take me, and let these go. The fault is forgiven, the guilt expiated, the blot more and more done away, and the sentence of condemnation and punishment disannulled, so that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. 8:1.

5. Christ, having borne the burden and weight of our sins, hath undertaken to take away all that may be called sin; he hath taken away the guilt, and he hath taken away the stain, the obligation to punishment, and the power of corruption; or, in short, he hath procured both justification and sanctification for us.

[1.] Justification is a fruit of his bearing sin: Isa. 53:11, 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' To bear the sin is to bear the punishment, the wrath due to it. Now God will not exact it twice, of Christ and of us too. Christ doth so bear it for us that he takes it away from us, that we are discharged from the guilt, and 'delivered from wrath to come,' 2 Thes. 1:10, and are brought into a justifiable condition before God; 2 Cor. 5:21, 'He was made sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

[2.] Sanctification, that is one taking away of sin, and a fruit of Christ's bearing our iniquities: 1 Peter 2:24, 'He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might be alive unto righteousness.' Naturally we are alive to sin, love it, delight in it, and are active in it, but we are dead to righteousness; not only sick and wounded, but dead to it. But Christ came to purchase grace, to subdue our love and delight in sin, and to turn our hearts towards God. We need a saviour to help us to repentance as well as to pardon. The loss of God's image was part of our punishment, and the renovation of our nature is a part, yea, a principal part, of our deliverance by Jesus Christ.

6. This work of taking away sin is not done all at an instant, but accomplished by degrees. $\alpha\rho\omega\nu$; the participle noteth a continued act; it is a thing Christ is always a-doing till sin be no more. Here we must distinguish between impetration and application. As to purchase and impetration, Christ hath done it once for all; there needed no repeating of this act: Heb. 10:14, 'For by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.' As to the merit, nothing is wanting; no other oblation and sacrifice needeth to be offered to God. But as to application, so he is every day taking away sin. What is his business now in heaven but to sit at the right hand of God, and to see the fruits of his mediation accomplished? yea, and as to the same persons, Christ doth not destroy sin all at once. Narrow-mouthed vessels cannot be filled in an instant, though cast into an ocean. Therefore taking away sin is a continual act, which Christ is ever a-doing. Some blessings are dispensed presently, upon the first day of our entering into the state of grace and favour with God, as adoption into God's family, pardon of sins past, a renewing of the image of God in us, redemption or exemption from the curse of the law; which things increase more and more unto their final perfection in eternal glory. Adoption then shall be complete: Rom. 8:23, 'Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.' When we shall know more fully what honour and blessedness belongeth to the children of God; now it doth not appear what we shall be. So pardon of sin shall be then complete: Acts 3:19, 'Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' All pardoned sins shall never be remembered more; our absolution shall be solemnly pronounced by the Judge upon the bench; that is the great regeneration: Mat. 19:28, 'You that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' So for redemption: Eph. 4:30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption;' when all the effects of sin shall cease, for death remaineth on the body till that day.

7. This work of taking away sin is carried on with respect to Christ's threefold office of king, priest, and prophet.

[1.] As a priest; so he taketh away sin by his merit, having purchased a power and a virtue whereby our natures may be healed and cleansed, and our peace made with God. In this sense it is said, 1 John 1:7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

[2.] As a prophet; so he taketh away sin by his doctrine, which is fit for such a purpose, as it commandeth and requireth purity and holiness, and inviteth us to it by notable promises, and encourageth us by blessed examples, especially of Jesus Christ himself, and the perfect pattern of his holy obedience and heavenly life: John 17:17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.'

[3.] As a king; so he taketh away sin by his Spirit. So backward are our minds, so bad our hearts, so strong our lusts, so manifold our

temptations, that bare teaching will not serve the turn without a spirit of light, life, and love, to open our eyes, and change our hearts, and incline us, and bring us back again to God. Therefore it is said, Titus 3:5, 6, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' His merit giveth us confidence, his word, means and helps, and his sanctifying Spirit maketh all effectual to the soul.

III. That this is the great end and scope of Christ's coming into the world appeareth by sundry scriptures: 1 John 3:5, 'And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin.' He was manifested in the flesh, and manifested in the gospel for this end. He came as an holy innocent saviour to take away sin: Mat. 1:21, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.' Not to case them of their trouble only, but chiefly to destroy sin, with the mischievous effects of it. He is a saviour that saves us from sin, not in sin.' Titus 2:14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.' Not only from the curse of the law, but from all iniquity. The Mediator's blessing was not to free us from the Roman yoke, but from the slavery and bondage of sin: Acts 3:26, 'Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.'

Reasons.

1. Sin is the great make bate between God and us. The first breach was by sin, and still it continueth the distance: Isa. 59:2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.' Till sin be taken out of the way, there can be no perfect communion between God and the creature. The purity of God is irreconcilable to sin, though not to the sinner, and therefore, though the sinner be pardoned, the sin must be taken away.

2. Sin is the great disease of mankind, and the cause of all misery; therefore Christ came to stop mischief at the fountain-head. Take away sin, and you take away wrath; for when the cause is gone, the effect ceaseth. Those who are most sensible of their true evil do mainly desire the taking away of sin. Pharaoh said, 'Take away this plague;' but the church saith, 'Take away all iniquity,' Hosea 14:2. Many seek to get rid of trouble and temporal afflictions, but not of sin; because they have a gross sense of things, and measure their happiness and misery by their outward condition: Hosea 7:14, 'They assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.' They sought not God's favour, but corn, and wine, and oil. Others, if they mind spiritual things, they mind only pardon of sins and ease of conscience, but not to be freed from the power of it; as if a man that had broken his leg should only desire to be eased of the smart, but not to have it set again. But the true penitent is troubled with the stain as well as the guilt, therefore the promise is suited to such: 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Others, if they would be freed from sin, they respect only the preventing the outward act, but you must abstain from the lust: 2 Peter 2:11, 'I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' If they look after the heart and inward man, it is some branch of sin, not the root, or the change of the heart, and so die impenitent Evil practices do not flow from a present temptation, but an evil nature. All these lose their labour; they neither get rid of trouble nor prevent the act, nor are free from the breach of God's law, but Christ would make a thorough cure.

3. Taking away of sin is a greater benefit than impunity, or taking away the punishment. Those means which have a more immediate connection with the last end are more noble than those which are more remote. The last end is the glory of God. Now the holiness and subjection of the creature is a nearer means to it than our comfort and pardon. Christ's end was to fit us for God's use, and therefore his end was to sanctify us and free us from sin.

Use 1. Is caution. Let us renounce all sin, that we may not make Christ's coming into the world in vain. You go about to frustrate your Redeemer's end, and so to put him to shame, if you cherish sin, for then you cherish that which he came to destroy: 1 John 3:8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;' that is, dissolve, untie, and loose this knot. The work of the devil is to bring us into sin and misery, and will you tie the knot the faster? If you go about to frustrate his undertaking, you renounce all benefit by him, and slight the price of your redemption.

Use 2. Hath Christ taken upon him to carry away sin; then here is instruction—

1. To the careless. Certainly he that seeketh after benefit by Christ must be one that is not a stranger to himself, one that knoweth and is acquainted with the case of his own heart and life, one that is sensible of his sins and corrupt inclinations, and the guilt and burden that lieth upon him, one that mourneth under the fears of God's displeasure. Will Christ case a man of a burden that he feeleth not? A senseless sleepy soul hath not work for Christ to do. He inviteth those that see a need of mercy: Mat. 11:28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

2. To those who are afflicted in conscience for sin. Remember, you must be not only sensible of the guilt of sin, but the stain of it, and look after not only peace, but healing: Isa. 53:5, 'With his stripes we are healed.' It is not a sound cure that aimeth only at the assuaging of the grief, but the distemper must be removed. Mountebanks only stop the pain, but let alone the cause; such a cure would they have who are more earnest for ease and comfort than for grace. Sin in some sense is worse than damnation. Remember, then, this is the undertaking of our blessed Redeemer; will he come in vain, and miss of his end? Consider the merit of his

humiliation, what a price he hath paid for sanctifying grace: 1 Peter 1:18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' This price was not given only to heighten our esteem of the privilege, but to increase our confidence. And consider the power of his exaltation: Acts 3:26, 'God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.' Having paid our ransom, he is gone into heaven fully furnished and empowered to free from sin all that consent to receive this benefit.

But what shall we do that we may have the actual benefit?

[1.] Seek the pardon of sin in the way of repentance, confessing your sins with brokenness of heart: 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Sue out his grace, and turn to the Lord. Repentance lieth not in a feigned wish only that sin had not been done, but in a change of mind, heart, and life; in a hatred to sin repented of, and a love to God and holiness. Man's fall was specially in point of love, and his recovery must be a recovery of love to God again. Your love to sin must be turned into an hatred of sin; the soul must be not only turned from sin, but against it. Repentance is most seen in our love and hatred.

[2.] Seek the subduing of sin in a diligent use of means; There is a spirit purchased by Christ to begin the life of grace and to carry it on with success, to heal and renew our natures, and to strengthen them, being healed and renewed. Now we must not by our carelessness, negligence, or other sin, provoke the Lord to withdraw from us and suspend his grace, but humbly implore his favour, wait for his approaches, and attend and obey his sanctifying motions. God is willing to give the Spirit to them that ask him, as a father is to give an hungry child bread: Luke 11:13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' We make ourselves incapable of this help by grieving the Spirit: Eph. 4:30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' When we are so easy to the requests of sin, and so deaf to his motions, he ceaseth to give us warning. There are certain ordinances whereby this grace is conveyed to us, and Christ died to sanctify them to us: Eph. 5:25, 26, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' These ordinances are the word and sacraments, by the use of which sin receiveth a new wound. The word is for cleansing the soul: John 15:3, 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.' Baptism must be improved for the washing away of sin: Acts 22:16, 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.' A man forgetteth his baptism, that is, neglecteth it, if he be not purged from sin: 2 Peter 1:9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins;' that is, he hath made no use and received no benefit by his baptism. In the Lord's supper we remember the death of Christ as the price given for the life of our souls; as a spectacle that may affect us with the odiousness of sin, as an occasion of renewing our covenant with God, and binding ourselves afresh to his service, and as a means to stir up our love to God, and so by consequence our hatred of sin: Ps. 97:10, 'Ye that love the Lord hate evil;' and to awaken our hopes, and so of purifying the soul: 1 John 3:3, 'And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' Here is delivered to the believing soul a sealed pardon of all sin: Mat. 26:28, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins;' and we wait for the application of his mortifying and renewing grace.

[3.] If the first attempt succeed not, yet afterwards sin may be subdued and broken. In natural things we do not sit down with one trial and one endeavour; a man that will be rich pierceth himself through with many sorrows, 1 Tim. 4:10; and after many miscarriages pursues his designs till he complete them; and shall we give over our waiting and striving because we cannot presently find success? That showeth our will is not fully bent and set upon the thing we seem to desire. In the face of discouragements we must venture again: Luke 5:5, 'Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy command I will let down the net.' God's grace is free, and his holy leisure must be waited for. It was long ere God got us to this pass, to be sensible of our burden, or anxiously solicitous about our soul distempers. We must lie at the pool for cure. The Spirit bloweth when and where it listeth: John 3:8, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' He that began the work to make us serious will carry it on to a further degree if we be not impatient: Mat. 12:20, 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.' He is not wont to be strange to such as bemoan themselves to him: Jer. 31:18, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.' It may be he will not do it so sensibly by ordinances as by or not without sharp providences, which usually subtract the fuel of our lusts, and awaken seriousness: Isa. 27:9, 'By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin;' and 2 Cor. 12:7, 'There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' We must leave God to his own way.

Use 3. Let it put us on thankfulness to our Redeemer. Sin is a great mischief. Now that he should fetch us up from the gates of hell, and recover us, when the sentence of condemnation was passed upon us, and there was nothing but the slender thread of a frail life between us and execution, and was content to do it at so dear a rate, as to be made sin, and to be made a curse for us, and that he should put us into the way of salvation to obtain eternal life, how should our hearts be enlarged in thanksgiving to such a Redeemer?

THE LAMB OF GOD

Benjamin B. Warfield

JOHN 1:29:—Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

JOHN the Apostle was the pupil of John the Baptist. Alone of the evangelists, he had not merely heard the preaching of this last and greatest of the prophets, but had formed one of the inner circle of his disciples, closely attached to his person and intimately acquainted with his entire thought. And he had brought to this teaching the same receptive and brooding heart, attuned to the higher truth, which he afterwards brought to the teaching of Christ. The result was very much the same. There are scattered here and there through the sayings of Jesus recorded by the other evangelists, deep sayings enough to assure us that, even as they would set it forth, there was this element in the teaching of the Master; but John's record of our Lord's discourses is compacted of these deep sayings. So there are hints enough in the record of the Baptist's preaching given by the other evangelists, to make it clear that there was such a side to it as John records; but it is John alone who throws this aspect of it into the foreground. In both alike, the Baptist is purely the forerunner of the Lord, whose whole work consisted in making ready for the Lord's coming. But the attention of the other evangelists is directed to the pathway prepared for the feet of the Lord; John's is focused upon the figure advancing over the road. They tell us, therefore, of the trumpet-call to repentance which the Baptist sent ringing through the land, of his searching inquisition into the hearts of men, of his unsparing rebuke of evil whether in high places or in low, of his flaming proclamation of judgment; John tells us rather of the testimony of the Baptist to Christ. From them we learn accordingly what the Baptist thought of man; from John, what he thought of Jesus.

And when we learn from John what the Baptist thought of Jesus, we are startled by the clearness and fulness of his prophetic vision. We have already reminded ourselves that John was a pupil of the Baptist. Let us now give its full validity to this fact. At least this much he obviously would himself have us say,—that all he ever came to know of Jesus he saw, when he looked back upon the teaching of his first master, to have been already contained in germ in his prophetic instruction. It is therefore that he lays such stress on the testimony of the Baptist to Jesus. Even from the reports of the Baptist's teaching given in the other evangelists, we may perceive that he saw in Jesus a person, and expected of Him a work, which marked Him out as the divine Saviour of the world. What is thus implicit in their report, however, is made explicit in John's. We need not suppose that John fully understood from the beginning all he heard from the Baptist's lips. But, like Mary, he belonged to that class of profound religious natures who are accustomed to hide the deep declarations of the prophets in their hearts, that they may ripen under the influences which the experiences of later life bring. And thus, after John had lain on Jesus' bosom as he had sat at the Baptist's feet, and had drunk from that fuller and richer fountain, he was in a position to tell us that there was included in the Baptist's declaration a true knowledge of Jesus, a knowledge of who and what He was and what He came into the world to do, a knowledge of Him, in the fulness of the meaning of that great designation, as the "Son of God," and, in the fulness of the meaning of that great declaration, as "the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world."

It is easy to say that such fulness of apprehension is incredible in the Baptist. That, standing as he did, in the grey dawn of the new dispensation, it is incongruous to bathe him in the full light of noonday, a noonday which did not shine upon Christ's own disciples until long afterwards—which, indeed, never shone upon them until their Master's work had been accomplished and was bearing its own witness to itself, until He had not only died for our sins, but risen again for our justification and had sent His Spirit to teach their laggard understandings things which earlier they had been unable to bear. Nay, are we not attributing to the Baptist, it is asked, a knowledge to which even Jesus Himself attained only slowly, as He learned by the things which He suffered; for did not He Himself begin His ministry animated by the hope of establishing the Kingdom He came to erect through the mere force of His winning proclamation, and only gradually learn, as the cross threw more and more deeply its baleful shadow over His pathway, that it was only through suffering that He could attain His glory? How shall we believe that to the Baptist there lay open from the beginning all that the Lord Himself and all His disciples learned only at the end; and even, that the Baptist taught it all, on his prophetic authority, both to Jesus and to Jesus' disciples, who were his pupils,—although certainly with so little effect that they forthwith forgot it and required painfully to recover it in the hard school of experience? If indeed we must not even say that the Baptist forgot it himself; for how else can we suppose that he could send to Jesus that perplexed inquiry, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"

Plausible, however, as such doubts and hesitations may be made to appear, the answer to them is easy and decisive. They are utterly without historical foundation. They are purely the fruit of an attempt to reconstruct the historical sequences of the evangelical narrative in the interests of an a priori theory,—of an a priori theory, moreover, the principle of which is rejection of the supernatural factor in the history, though this supernatural factor is no less the nerve of the whole historical development than the very heart of the Christian religion. If we are to credit the evangelical narrative (and what other source of information have we?) it is not true that our Lord began His ministry with the expectation of accomplishing His mission through the instrumentality of successful preaching alone. Every one of the evangelists represents Him as undertaking His work with a clear perception of precisely what lay before

Him; as coming into the world, in a word, not that He might live and build up a Kingdom, but that He might die and through His death purchase a people to Himself; as entering from the beginning, that is to say, upon the conscious fulfilment of the programme which the Baptist marked out for Him when He called Him the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. It is true the disciples are represented as, in their preoccupation with another Messianic ideal, slow of heart to believe that it should be thus and not otherwise with their Master, that it should be through the sufferings and death of the cross that He should accomplish His work and enter into His glory. But the significance for this of the Baptist's preannouncement falls into the background in view of the repeated declarations of the Lord Himself, running up at last into careful and precise instruction, which only their dullness of spirit was able to resist; and, indeed, in view of the broad preadumbrations of the Old Testament itself, which the evangelists would have us understand laid down beforehand the entire plan of our Lord's life. When the risen Christ turned to His despondent disciples with the sorrowful rebuke, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" He but put into direct words once again before He was taken up the teaching of His whole life, which has become the teaching of all His biographers as well.

From the point of sight of our Lord Himself and of these narratives which embalm His memory for us, there was really nothing new in the Baptist's proclamation and nothing exceptional in it, beyond its designation of the man Jesus as the expected Messiah. It was but the summary presentation of the essential teaching of the Old Testament, and particularly of that great prophet of whom as truly as of Elijah the Baptist was a revival, and in whose prophecies his testimony, as recorded by John, is steeped. Little marvel that those who could forget Isaiah, could forget also the Baptist's crisp summary of Isaiah's teaching. Little marvel that, in the hour of his own trial, even he himself should sink into a certain measure of despondency and need to reassure himself that He on whose head he had seen the Spirit descend and rest, was really He that should come, and he need not look for another. In the progress alike of the individual and of the Kingdom of God upwards towards those heights of knowledge and privilege which at the start, perchance, stand out clearly in view touched with the glow of sunrise, it often happens that they are temporarily lost from sight as the lower valleys and shaded paths are traversed, by which they are approached. The very process of attaining the fuller possession of them involves the hiding of them for a time from view. There is nothing psychologically unnatural, therefore, either in the clear perception of the Baptist, from the vantage-ground of the opening of the new dispensation, of the true character of the Messiah and the real nature of His work; or in the evangelist's recalling the fulness of this prophetic teaching after the event had justified it and he had himself through his inspiration attained a firm grasp of its elements. What John, in effect, invites us to do, is to come back with him to the dawn of the Christian proclamation, and to observe with him how this lonely peak was "fired by the red glow of the rushing morn." "Listen," says he to us, "listen, to these marvellous words which fell from the great prophet's lips in the rich flow of his inspiration. When I heard them, then, they kindled a flame in my heart which has not yet died down; in their impulse I turned and followed Jesus. When I recall them now I see in them nothing less than a direct witness from God to what Jesus was and did. Harken to them as a voice from heaven, declaring what in truth is the central fact of the Gospel."

So we seem to hear the evangelist speaking to us out of the records of his Gospel this morning, and we would not be disobedient to the heavenly message. Let us, then, ask what it is that the Baptist, thus reported to us, bids us behold in Him whom he declares to be the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

We remark, then, in the first place, that he bids us see in Jesus the suffering servant of God.

In the preparation for the coming of redemption which forms the main burden of the Old Testament revelation the promised redeemer is presented in a great variety of aspects, corresponding to the multifarious functions which he was to perform as the Saviour of His people. Among these, none fell in so completely with the popular temper, or appealed with such force to the popular imagination, as that which foretold Him as the Son of David, the great warrior-king who should subdue the world to the God of Israel and for ever rule over the whole race of man. Fired with hopes kindled by this great prediction, the prevailing conception of the Messiah very naturally came to be that of a monarch, whose dominion was inevitably transmuted into a more or less carnal kingdom of power over the enemies of Israel. Meanwhile the other lines of prophetic description were neglected; and among them most of all that culminating in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, in which the Messiah is depicted as the righteous servant of Jehovah, preserving his integrity amid the contradictions of sinners, and by his patient endurance of the sufferings inflicted upon Him not merely earning the favour of God, but purchasing blessings for the people. What it concerns us to observe now is that the Baptist, in designating Jesus the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, recalls his hearers from the one Messianic ideal to the other. His prophetic announcement is the authoritative designation of Jesus as the long-expected Messiah, the Hope of Israel; but along with that, the authoritative definition of the Messianic ideal to be fulfilled in Jesus, as very especially that set forth in the figure of the servant of Jehovah. It is the prophetic proclamation of the great doctrine of the suffering Messiah, in terms and tones which imperatively claimed a hearing and admitted no misunderstanding.

In this, indeed, consists the offence of the Baptist's announcement. It was its offence at the time. Had the Baptist come proclaiming the advent of a warrior-king, who should, with the rod of His anger, break in pieces the oppressors of Israel, Herod might still have slain him, but the Pharisees would have believed in Him, and no Jew would ever have questioned whether his mission were from

heaven. It remains his offence to the present day. This doctrine of a suffering Messiah, we are asked,—what unheard-of doctrine is this? No Jew ever dreamed of it, we are told, until he had been taught it by the Christians; and the Christians invented it only to reconcile the catastrophe which had befallen their Christ with their hope that it would have been He who should redeem Israel. It concerns us little when the Jews, in their engrossment with the expectation of a Messianic King of the earth rather than of heaven, first began to lend tardy ear to the Isaian proclamation of a suffering Messiah; it is a historical question of some obscurity whose solution has little bearing on our practical life. But it is obvious that the contention that the doctrine of a suffering Messiah was first introduced by the Christians to save the situation when their Messiah succumbed to the machinations of His foes and poured out His blood at Calvary, involves the complete rewriting of the New Testament in the interests of an a priori theory. Here stands written in the forefront of the Gospel narrative, a crisp proclamation of the doctrine of the suffering Messiah from the mouth of John the Baptist; and over and over again from the very outset of the narrative of His life it is represented as underlying the announcements of Jesus Himself, as it is later made the prime topic of His instruction to His disciples and the staple of the preaching of all His followers. In very truth, if we conceive the great religious movement inaugurated by John the Baptist, and carried through by Jesus and His followers, from the point of view of the development of the Messianic conception, its significance is precisely that of a sustained effort to revolutionize the dominant Messianic ideal,—to substitute for the conception of Messiah the king of Israel, that of Messiah the suffering servant of Jehovah. This is written large over the whole face of the New Testament. Every one of the evangelists as he seeks to present a vital picture of how Jesus comported Himself on earth, makes his appeal to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, as laying down the programme on which His life was ordered (Matthew 8:17, Mark 15:28, Luke 22:37, John 12:35; also Matthew 11:5, 12:18, 21:5, Luke 4:18, etc.). In the didactic portions of the New Testament this conception is simply carried forward and developed into its doctrinal implications (Rom. 10:16, 1 Peter 2:22, Acts 8:28, Rev. 5:6, 13:8). The doctrine of the suffering Messiah may thus be truly said to be the nerve of the whole New Testament presentation. There is nothing peculiar, therefore, in the Baptist's proclamation except its initial position at the head of a development which has revolutionized, not the Messianic ideal merely, but the world itself. Historically speaking its entire significance is that it announces in a clear, sharp, startlingly worded proclamation at the very outset of the new dispensation, its whole programme. Precisely what characterizes the New Testament most profoundly as the documentation of a movement issuing from the bosom of Judaism is its ideal of the Messiah as the suffering servant of Jehovah. Precisely what differentiates Christianity most sharply from the Judaism from which it issued is its proclamation of this Messianic ideal. Precisely the distinction of the Baptist is his initial announcement of this altered hope.

"Behold," cries the Baptist, pointing to Jesus,—“behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” In that meek and lowly figure passing yonder, in bearing so simple and unassuming amid His fellow-men, see the Hope of Israel, the Chosen of God. Lay aside your national passions, your fierce chafing under the foreign yoke; man suffers from something worse than political bondage or alien oppression; there is a higher deliverance than that from the dominion of the stranger. It is not a king you need so much as a redeemer; and the God of our fathers knows it. Behold, there is the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. To his first hearers, that is substantially what the proclamation of the Baptist meant. To us, to-day, it means, that if we would know Jesus, we must dismiss from our minds all preconceived notions of what it behoved the Lord of all the earth to be, and how it behoved Him to bear Himself in the world, and, under the Baptist's direction, go to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and read in that prophetic picture what Jehovah's righteous servant was and how He lived in the earth. And certainly it is no attractive portrait, as men count attractiveness, that the prophet draws of Him. “His visage,” he writes, “was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of man.” “He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” “He was despised and rejected of men,” we are told, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face He was despised and we esteemed Him not.” “He was stricken, smitten of men, and afflicted” —wounded, bruised, chastised, oppressed, led like a lamb to the slaughter, put to grief. Epithet is piled upon epithet almost beyond measure, to convey to us a sense of the depth of His humiliation. This, says the prophet to us,—this is our Redeemer. If we would see Jesus as He was, looking beneath the appearance to the actual reality and faultless truth, the Baptist tells us to look at Him in this portrait,—subjected, to put it shortly and sharply, to the most fathomless humiliation that ever befell or will ever again befall a sentient, feeling, palpitating being in all God's universe. There never has been, there never will be, another to stoop as He stooped. You know how Paul put it, seeking to suggest the depth of the humiliation by the interval between that which He was by nature and that which He became by His condescension. God on His throne—a broken slave on the cross; these are the end terms. As God, He was the Lord of all the earth; when He became man, He became servant to the whole world; and not content with that, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself still further even unto death itself, and that the death of the cross. Enough: words cannot paint this humiliation. We read the prophetic portrayal in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; we read the historical portraiture in the pages of the Gospels, culminating in the agony of Gethsemane and the anguish of the Passion; we read the dogmatic representation in the arguments of the Epistles. They fill our minds with wonder; they wring our hearts with compassion; but we remain conscious through all that even the bloody sweat of Gethsemane and the forsaken cry on the cross are an insufficient index of the soul-anguish which was endured by this greatest of earth's sufferers, this most humiliated of all those who from the primal curse have trodden with bloody feet the thorny surface of this sin-smitten world of ours. Surely the Baptist was right when he bade us see in this Jesus, the type of all righteous sufferers, the suffering servant of Jehovah.

But a great deal more is to be said of this sufferer than merely that He stands before us as the type of all sufferers. His sufferings were not endured for their own sake; nor did the Baptist suppose that they were. We need to remark, in the second place, therefore, that the Baptist bids us see in Jesus the substitutive sacrifice for sin.

“Behold the Lamb of God,” cries the Baptist, “which taketh away the sin of the world.” Not, Behold the Prophet like unto Moses, whom ye shall hear; nor yet, Behold the Israelite without guile, in whom meet perfect purity, wisdom and truth; nor even, Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who shall scatter your foes and deliver you from all your enemies. He might have said any one or all of these things. They are all true of Jesus. Christ is our teacher, and our example, and our king. But there is something more fundamental than any of these things; something which underlies them all and from which they acquire their value. And it is this that the Baptist saw in Christ and sends us to Christ to find. “Behold,” says he, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” That image could mean but one thing to an humble, sin-conscious Old Testament saint. He would think first of the righteous sufferer of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah: and that righteous sufferer is not merely described there, we will remember, as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb, the very embodiment of meekness and patience in enduring the violence of the despoiler; but, in well-remembered words which throw a glory over these sufferings to which even meek patience and uncomplaining endurance can lend nothing, we read: “Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we were healed.” “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” “For the transgression of my people was he stricken ... yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him. He hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.... By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, and he shall bear their iniquities.... He bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.” And along with the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the Old Testament saint, when directed to the Lamb of God which takes away sin, would inevitably think also of the paschal lamb, the fundamental national symbol of deliverance; along with it, beyond question, also of the lamb of the daily sacrifice and of the underlying significance of the whole sacrificial system, with its typical finger pointing forward to something better,—to God’s own Lamb, who should really take away sin, a lamb of God’s providing, able and willing to bear on his own head the sin of the world.

It is through the eyes of such an Old Testament saint that we of these later days may hope to catch for ourselves the Baptist’s meaning. Men have no doubt wearied themselves with efforts to derive from his declaration some less explicit reference to sacrifice. Jesus might well be compared to a lamb, it has been said, merely because of His mild and inoffensive disposition, the gentleness of His bearing, the patience of His demeanour under the injuries of His foes; and He might well be said to take sin away from the world with reference merely to His zeal for purity of conduct and heart, the loftiness of His ethical character, the winning example of the holiness of His life. It may certainly be doubted whether those who take this line of remark, have fully understood Jesus—whether they remember the sternness of His demeanour in the presence of sin, the excoriation of His rebuke, that scourge of cords with which He drove the traders from the Temple, that bearing which, when He set his face to go up to Jerusalem, caused even His followers to draw back from Him afraid, leaving Him to rush on alone in the van. We must beware, because Jesus is described as bearing with patience the sufferings He came to endure, of picturing Him therefore to ourselves as without the power of indignation or without the will to use it. And it may equally be doubted whether those who suppose that the sin of the world may be taken away by any power of persuasion or example, rightly understand man, or his love of sinning, or the power of sin in him. But let all this pass. The artificiality of such attempts to explain away the plain significance of the Baptist’s declaration is too glaring to require formal refutation. Jesus is not merely compared with a lamb in it; He is identified with a specific and particular lamb,—the well-known “Lamb of God.” And whether this be taken as Isaiah’s lamb of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, or the passover lamb, or the lamb of the common sacrifices, it is in each and every case a sacrificial lamb which is indicated. Nor is Jesus said here in some broad and general way to take away sin. He is said to be the sin-bearer as the Lamb of God: and there is but one way in which from the beginning of the world, or in any nation, a lamb has ever been known to bear sin, and that is, as a peculiar sacrifice, expiating guilt in the sight of a propitiated God. The Lamb of God which takes away sin, is and can be nothing other than the lamb of God’s providing upon whose head sin is laid, and by whose blood expiation is wrought.

When, then, the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, he pointed Him out as the divinely provided sacrifice for sin: he pointed Him out as the substitute for sinners, by whose stripes they are healed. Thus he preached beforehand the Gospel of the blood of Jesus—that blood of Jesus by which alone can our sins be washed away. Following his direction, we shall see in Jesus not merely and not primarily our prophet and not merely and not primarily our king—our prophet and our king though we adoringly recognize Him as being, by whom alone we are effectively instructed in the truth, or protected from the most intimate enemies of our peace and safely directed in our way. Nay, we shall recognize in Him not merely our priest who represents us before God and makes satisfaction for our sins; but before all and above all, as our sacrifice,—the victim itself upon whose head our sin is laid, and by whose outpoured blood our guilt is cleansed. It is, in a word, the Gospel of the cross—of the cross of Christ—which the Baptist commends to us here; that Gospel, not only of Christ simpliciter, but of Christ as crucified, which has ever remained to the Jews a stumbling-block and to Gentiles foolishness, but which has also ever remained, and will ever

remain, to the called themselves, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. The blood of Jesus,—O, the blood of Jesus!—when we have reached it, we have attained not merely the heart, but the heart of the heart of the Gospel. It is as a lamb as it had been slain, that He draws to Himself most mightily the hearts, as He attracts to Himself most fully the praises of His saints.

But not even in this high testimony is the witness of the Baptist exhausted. We reach its height only when we remark, in the third place, that he calls upon us to see in Jesus the Saviour of the world.

“Behold,” he cries, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,”—not “our sin “merely, though we praise God that may be gloriously true; nor “the sin of His people” merely, though that too, when properly understood, expresses the entire fact; but, with clear vision of the ultimate issue, “the sin of the world.” The propitiatory sacrifice which the Baptist sees in Jesus, is a sacrifice of world-wide efficacy: the salvation which he perceives to issue from it stretches onward in its working until it embraces the whole world. The sin of the world, as a whole, he gathers, as it were, into one mass; and, laying it upon the head of Jesus, cries, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” It is in this universalism, we say, that we reach the height of the Baptist’s declaration.

And it is in this universalism that it has become common to discover the element in the Baptist’s proclamation which is specifically new. The suffering Messiah, it is often said, is no doubt an Old Testament doctrine; Messiah the sin-bearer, yes, even that may be found in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah: but Messiah the bearer of the sin of the world,—was it not reserved to the opening of the new dispensation, characterized by spiritual breadth, and to John the Baptist, harbinger of Christ, to give explicit expression to this great truth? It will be well, however, to walk warily even here. The narrowness of the ordinary Jewish outlook cannot, perhaps, be easily overstated,—the pride of the Jews as the special favourites of heaven, and their ingrained determination to confine the grace of God to the limits of their own nation. But they certainly were never encouraged in this restricted view of the reach of God’s mercy by the revelation of His purposes which Jehovah had made to them. From the moment when He promised to the mother of all living a seed by whose bruised heel the serpent’s head—the source of all evil in the world—should be crushed, the extension of His grace was never confined within narrower limits than the race itself. The normative promise to the father of the faithful,—typical of all the other promises of redemption that fill the Old Testament,—was that in his great Seed (for He saith not seeds, as of many, but Seed, as of one) should all the nations of the earth be blessed. Least of all in this wonderful chapter of Isaiah to which the Baptist’s words carry us most immediately is the sacrifice of the righteous sufferer circumscribed in its efficacy by the cleansing of the sins of Israel. “When He shall have made His soul an offering for sin,” we read, “He shall justify many”; and, bearing the sins of many, “so shall He sprinkle many nations.” No doubt the Baptist’s declaration, in the springing growth of prophetic annunciation, goes beyond even this, and asserts not a relative but an absolute universalism. Not many nations, but the whole world, is what he bids us see redeemed in Christ: the Jesus he proclaims as the God-provided sacrifice bears upon His broad and mighty shoulders nothing less than the world’s sin.

It is the note, then, of pure universalism, we perceive, that is sounded in the Baptist’s great proclamation. He does not think, of course, of denying that salvation is of the Jews. This Lamb of God was a Jew of the Jews, and came as the Hope of Israel: and only as the Hope of Israel does He become also the Hope of the world. No more does He think of doubting that only as it should work its way out from Israel, perhaps by slow and even tentative stages, could this redemption of Israel extend into and throughout the world. We cannot credit him, to be sure, with detailed foresight of the actual process by which the salvation in Jesus has been conveyed to the world: through the scattering of the disciples from Jerusalem, the preaching of Paul and his companions, the slow missionary advance of the Church and slower leavening of the ingathered mass, through all these two thousand lagging years—and no one knows how many more thousands of years the secular process must continue before the great goal is attained and the great promise fulfilled that the whole shall be leavened. But the Baptist certainly expected the redemption he saw in its potency in Jesus to take effect only through the process of discipling; and accordingly he directs his own disciples to Jesus that they might attach themselves to Him whose very nature it was to “increase,” and he himself remains through life an interested observer of the work and career of Him whose pathway it was his own highest ambition to smooth. Least of all does the Baptist ever think of obscuring that dark, that terrible fact, that as the redemption in Jesus thus makes its way surely to its ultimate goal of the salvation of the world, there are multitudes of sinners left to this side and that, out of the direct line of its advance; there are many who fail to hear the call; there are many who hearing refuse to hearken to it; there are whole masses of men that are extruded in the progress of the perfecting whole to its consummate end. Though the progress be continuous, therefore, and the goal sure, yet so long as it is progress to a goal as yet unreached, there must ever remain among the saved, unsaved—dross amid the gold, chaff to be winnowed out from the wheat. This Saviour, accordingly, whom the Baptist proclaims as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, he presents also as the husbandman who prunes and weeds His garden, and cuts down the unfruitful trees to cast them into the flames; as the Lord of the harvest who has His fan in His hand and thoroughly purges His threshing-floor, burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. The Baptist neither denies nor glozes such things as these. But neither does he focus his eye upon them as if they were the end which Jesus had in view in coming into the world. Rather, looking through and beyond them, he fixes his gaze upon the ultimate goal which, after the process attended by these effects is over, shall at length be attained, and in this great declaration points to Jesus as bearing in His own body on the tree nothing less than the sin of the world.

You will observe, that what I am endeavouring to do, is to make as plain as I can that the Baptist's gaze, when he declares that Jesus takes away the sin of the world, is directed to the end of a process—a process of long continuance and of varied appearance through the several stadia of its course. He sees in Jesus the Saviour of the world and perceives in Him a saved world. Through the turmoil and the labour which accompany the accomplishment of this great task; through the long years of progress towards the goal, the centuries and millenniums of but partial success and oft-times even of apparent failure, which we know as the history of the Church and which even we (let us praise God for it) can recognize as the history of the expansion of Christianity; he looks out upon the end, that end to which all has been steadily advancing, when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth even as the waters cover the sea,—with the same breadth and expansion, leaving no nook or cranny unfilled, and with the same depth of fulness, overwhelming all. It is the spectacle of a saved world thus which fills his vision. And with this spectacle full in his eye, he may well afford to neglect all that intervenes, and to proclaim Jesus simply as the Lamb of God that takes away the world's sin. He is unquestionably the husbandman who prunes His garden well, and casts the unprofitable plants and branches to the flames: but on that very account He is not a Husbandman who gives over His garden—the garden of the Lord—to thorns and weeds and unfruitful trees, but rather one who cleanses it and makes it in effect—this very garden in its entirety—what it has in principle been from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, the Garden of the Lord in which shall grow at last, luxuriantly filling it in its whole extent, only plants of worth and trees of delight. He is beyond doubt the winnower of men, whose fan is in His hand, to beat out the chaff and cast it in the fire: but on this very account He does not give over His threshing-floor to the worthless and cumbering chaff, but thoroughly purges it that, after the chaff is burned, it may remain the garner of the Lord heaped with the precious grain. Accordingly the Baptist does not teach us that in Jesus the sin of the world is so taken away in the mass, that there has not been and shall not yet be in the process by which the world has been and is being saved by Him, unfruitful trees cut down and chaff cast into the fire; but rather that in the end, when the process is over, no unfruitful trees will be found growing in God's garden, the world, no chaff be found cumbering God's threshing-floor, the world. The vision he brings before us, let us repeat it, is the vision of the ultimate salvation of the world, its complete conquest to Christ when at last Jesus' last enemy shall have been conquered and the whole world shall bow before Him as its Lord and its Redeemer. On the basis of this great consummation seen hanging on the margin of the future by his prophetic eye, he declares of Jesus that He bears in His body on the tree the whole world's sin, and in very truth is to be acclaimed as the Saviour of the World.

Such, then, is the Jesus to whom the Baptist would direct our eyes, when he bids us behold in Him the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Let us not fail to derive at least two great lessons from his exhortation.

The first of them is this: we must never despair of the world. This is certainly a much-needed lesson. For are we not very prone to despair of the world? And is there not very good apparent reason why we should despair of it? For who can deny that the world is very evil? Only, we must not add in the words of the old hymnist, that therefore "the times are waxing late." This world is not to rot down into destruction, but to become, however slowly and by whatever tentative processes, the very garden of the Lord. That the world is very evil is no proof, then, that the times are waxing late; but, if any inference can be drawn from it, the contrary rather. The world has always been very evil, ever since there entered it, through that forbidden fruit, the sin of man and all our human woes. Throughout all the ages, its sin has gone up reeking before God to heaven. Viewed in itself we could not but despair of it. But the great fact—the great fact, greater even than the fact of the world's sin—is that Christ has redeemed this sinful world. In Him we behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. Not, who strives to take it away and fails; not, who takes it away in some measure, but is unable to take it away entirely; not, who suspends its taking away upon a gigantic IF—as though His taking it away were dependent on some aid given Him by the world itself—that world which loves its sin and will never give it up of itself and which will, of course, always act when left to itself in accordance with its nature as the sinful world. No, but who actually, completely, finally, takes away its sin. This,—I beg you to bind the great truth on your heart,—this, despite all appearances that smite the astounded eye and the slowness of its realization of its great destiny—is a redeemed world, in which we live. It has been purchased unto God by the most precious blood of His Son. Its salvation, in God's own good time and way, can no more fail than the purpose of God can fail, than the blood of Jesus Christ can be of none effect. God's ways, to be sure, are not as our ways: there is none of us fitted to be His counsellor; we cannot review His plans nor bid Him stay and justify to us His methods of working. It must ever remain a mystery to us why He works in this world by process; why He created the world by process, why He has peopled it by process, why He has redeemed it by process, why He is saving it by process—by process so slow and to our human eye so uncertain, cast so much to the mercy of the currents that flow up and down through the earth, that we are tempted at times to doubt whether it is directed to a goal at all. We know only that it is by process that God chooses to work in the world,—except this further: that, though He works by process, He ever gloriously attains His ends. This wicked world in which we live is, then, God's world, Christ's world; it belongs to Christ by right of purchase and nothing can snatch it out of His hands. The day will surely come when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of our God and His Christ; and we—you and I—are coworkers with God in bringing about the great consummation. O lift up your eyes from the dust and noise of the strife and its apparently fitful fortunes, and, shall I not even say? doubtful issue; and under the direction of the Baptist, fix them upon the end: lift them from the world's sin and its just doom for its sin, to the world's Saviour and its abounding life in Him. See the redeemed world in its redeeming Lord, clothed in righteousness; and let your hearts beat high with the vision and gather courage for your daily tasks as messengers of God to a world lost indeed in its sin,

but found again in its Saviour.

The second lesson is: we must not despair of ourselves. Living in this sinful world, as constituent members of it, we are partakers of its sin; or, as it may be more fair to put it, its sinfulness is but the expression of our sin. How can we, sinners, cherish hope of life? In ourselves, surely, we can find no ground for such a hope: and that we know right well. Our hearts condemn us and God is greater than our hearts. If we look at ourselves, how can we not despair? Let us look, therefore, not at ourselves but at Jesus; for Jesus, the Baptist tells us, is the Lamb of God which takes away sin. And, note it well, troubled heart, the Baptist did not make this declaration to those who had no sin, or even to those who, having it, knew not that they had it. What appeal, in fact, could such a declaration make to such men as that? He made it to those whom he had called with flaming speech to repentance; and who, with burning hearts, had come to his baptism of remission of sin. The message is, then, to you too whose hearts are sore with the sense of sin. To you and me also he cries to-day: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away sin." Is it not a joyful message to sin-stricken souls? Let others think of Jesus as they may. Let them hail him as a king: let them sit at His feet as a prophet: let them eagerly seek to follow in His steps. For you and me, sinners, He is most glorious and most precious, as a Saviour. Let others make elaborate inquisition into the possible reasons which led Him to come into this sinful world of ours. He Himself tells us that there were but two reasons which could have brought Him into the world—to judge the world, or to save the world. And, blessed be His name, He has further told us that it was actually to save the world that He came. This is the only reason that can satisfy our hearts, or even our reason,—that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. It is only as the Lamb of God that has been slain, to purchase unto God by His blood of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and to make them unto God a kingdom and priests who shall reign on the earth,—that the heavenly hosts in the apocalyptic vision hymn Him; and it is only as we catch a glimpse of this His true glory that we can worthily add our voices to His praise. It is only when we see in Him a slaughtered lamb, lying on a smoking altar, from which ascends the sweet savour of an acceptable sacrifice to God for sin, that we can rise to anything like a true sense of the glory of Jesus Christ, or in any degree give a sufficing account to our souls of His presence in the world.

"The Lord has come into His world!"

Nay, nay, that cannot be;
The world is full of noisomeness
And all iniquity:
He is the Lord of all the earth—
How could He stoop to human birth?

"The Lord has come into His world!"

A slaughtered Lamb I see,
A smoking altar on which burns
A sacrifice for me!
O blessed Lord! O blessed day!
He comes to take my sin away!

Behold the Lamb of God John 1:29

Wade Horton

INTRODUCTION: John was the forerunner who was sent before Christ and was just a "voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Matt. 3:3. He spoke the most wonderful words, "... Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. The lamb is the emblem of—

I. INNOCENCY

- A. Jesus was entirely innocent. He had no guilt nor guile.
- B. But He took our guilt and therefore became guilty.
- C. His nature was spotless, His life was perfect, His conduct unblamable. 1 Peter 1:19.
- D. He had not one sinful weakness or infirmity. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found...." 1 Peter 2:22.

II. MEEKNESS AND PATIENCE

- A. They railed on Him, despised Him, mocked Him and insulted Him.
- B. "... endured such contradiction of sinners against himself...." Heb. 12:3.
- C. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." Isa. 53:7.
- D. Before the priests, Pilate, Herod and on the cross He exemplified the meekness and patience of a lamb.

III. USEFULNESS

- A. There is no creature more useful than the lamb. Meat for food—wool for raiment.
- B. Jesus says, "... my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." John 6:55. "... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of

man, and..." V. 53.

C. Christ provides for us the best robe, the wedding garment and the garment of salvation.

D. Flesh for spiritual food, strength, health, etc. Raiment for comfort and protection.

IV. JESUS IS THE LAMB OF GOD

A. He is the only begotten of the Father; His essential co-equal. John 1:14. Yet He is the sacrifice of God to a lost world, the Lamb of God. John 1:29.

B. The love offering of the Father to a sin-infested world. John 3:16.

C. His work is to take "away the sin of the world." John 1:29. How? By sacrifice of Himself.

1. BY HIS OBEDIENCE AND DEATH HE TOOK AWAY THE CURSE OF SIN FROM THE WORLD.

a. The whole world was guilty, wrecked, helpless and condemned. Death was the penalty. Rom. 6:23.

b. He "... gave himself for us." Titus 2:14.

c. "... redeemed us to God by thy blood." Rev. 5:9.

d. "... he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. 9:26. "... he was manifested to take away our sins." 1

John 3:5.

2. HE TAKES AWAY GUILT OF SIN BY HIS JUSTIFYING GRACE

a. Titus 2:11-13: "For the grace of God that..."

b. Rom. 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through.

3. HE TAKES AWAY THE POLLUTION OF SIN BY HIS SPIRIT AND BLOOD.

a. His Spirit applies the blood, thus cleansing us from all sin.

b. Sanctified by the blood. Heb. 13:12: "... that he might sanctify the people with his own blood..." "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Heb. 2:11.

Let's look at THE ATTENTION CHRIST DEMANDS! Behold! Look! We can't see Him as the people in those days. He is now in the holy place in heaven.

V. BEHOLD HIM IN THE MYSTERY OF HIS INCARNATION

A. How that even though He was God, the Son, "... he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He stooped low to save the lost.

B. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of woman. A wedding of humanity and divinity. Luke 1:28-35.

C. "... though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8:9.

VI. BEHOLD HIM IN HIS SPOTLESS LIFE

A. He was holy, undefiled.

B. Don't look at the failure of professing Christians, look at Jesus, pure and spotless. 1 Peter 1:19: "... lamb without blemish and without spot."

VII. BEHOLD HIM IN THE OVERWHELMING AGONIES OF GETHSEMANE

A. Giving His soul an offering for sin.

B. Drinking the bitter cup.

C. "Father, let this cup pass from me."

VIII. BEHOLD HIM IN HIS SUFFERING ON THE CROSS

A. He was forced to Calvary's summit and crucified between two thieves.

B. Dying amid darkness of the heavens, shaking earth, bursting rocks.

C. He suffered like no other man and He did it all for sinful humanity.

IX. BEHOLD HIM IN HIS RESURRECTION

A. He was once dead, but alive again. Rev. 1:18: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore...."

B. He said, "... I am the resurrection, and the life...." John 11:25, 26.

C. No man could really take his life. He laid it down for us.

X. BEHOLD HIM AS MEDIATOR ON THE THRONE

A. His toil changed to rest, His suffering to glory, His cross to the throne and crown. He is presently making intercession for us. "... He is able also to save them to the uttermost... seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:25.

XI. WE SHOULD BEHOLD HIM WITH REVERENCE AND HUMILITY

We should bow down before Him and worship Him. Psalm 95:6.

Angels and all the hosts of heaven worship Him.

Behold Him with shame and contrition. Isa. 53:5: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was...." "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." Zech. 12:10.

XII. BEHOLD HIM WITH EYE OF FAITH

"Look unto me, and be ye saved...." Isa. 45:22.

"... if I be lifted up... [I] will draw all men unto me." John 12:32.

"All that... come to me... I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37.

CONCLUSION: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and...." 1 John 1:9.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD FROM BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR

The great message

John's prior life was Divinely ordered for this evangelical apprehension of Jesus. Born of the lineage of Levi, he renounced all priestly heritage and claim, and even attendance at the Temple; and thus was lifted above the class interests and sordid motives which might have swayed him toward the worldly and temporal expectations of the Messiah, and disentangled himself from the meshes of rabbinical tradition. By his seclusion, the direct reading of the Old Testament, and his communion with God, his perception would be farther cleared to discern the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ and the innermost case and necessity of that kingdom--redemption by sacrifice. Notice

I. The TENDERNESS of the message.

1. A Lamb--symbol of sweetness, innocence, harmlessness, patience; an idea peculiarly grateful to hearts pierced with sin and worn weak by the anguish of self-accusation.
2. An idea the opposite of the "wolf" element in man--oppression, injustice, self-seeking, revenge.
3. The first death was a murder. Lamb-like virtues have never been admired.

II. The PREPARATION of the message. The all but universal hope of the Jews was of a warring, conquering King. How fitting that the disappointment should be broken by the proclamation of a Lamb! By His very peacefulness and harmlessness many would be prepared to surrender their misconceptions.

III. The SIGNIFICANCE Of the message.

1. The Divine appointment of the Lamb.
2. His atoning character, as foreshadowed by the prophets.
3. The redemption through His blood.

IV. The DEFINITENESS of the message. The "sin" of the world taken away from every one who will accept Him for a Saviour.

V. The PECULIARITY of the message. What an antithesis to other kings, whose path has been reddened with blood, and who have come and gone without the slightest benefit to the race. Christ comes to deliver and bless.

VI. The BREADTH of the message. "The world." not Jews merely. (A. B. Groshart, D. D.)

I. THE PECULIAR NAME WHICH THE BAPTIST GIVES TO CHRIST. The Lamb of God. Let us serve Him faithfully as our Master. Let us obey Him loyally as our King. Let us study His teaching as our Prophet. Let us walk diligently after Him as our Example. Let us look anxiously for Him as our coming Redeemer of body as well as soul. But above all, let us prize Him as our Sacrifice, and rest our whole weight on His death as an atonement for sin. Let His blood be more precious in our eyes every year we live.

II. THE PECULIAR WORK WHICH THE BAPTIST DESCRIBES JESUS AS DOING.

1. Christ is a Saviour; not a conqueror, a philosopher, a moralist.
2. A complete Saviour; not merely makes vague proclamations of pardon and mercy, but takes away sin.
3. An almighty and universal Saviour. He died not for Jews only, or a few persons, but all mankind.
 - (1) His work on the cross was more than enough to make satisfaction for the sins of all.
 - (2) His blood was precious enough to wash away all guilt.
 - (3) But the efficiency of Christ's atonement is for those only who believe.
4. A perpetual and unwearied Saviour "taketh." He is daily doing this.

III. THE PECULIAR OFFICE WHICH THE BAPTIST ATTRIBUTES TO CHRIST.

1. This baptism is not the baptism of water.
 - (1) It does not consist either of dipping or sprinkling.
 - (2) It does not belong exclusively to infants or adults.
 - (3) It cannot be given to any minister or layman of whatever church.
 - (4) It is a baptism which the Head of the Church keeps wholly in His own hands.

It consists of the implanting of grace into the inward man. It is the same thing with the new birth. It is a baptism, not of the body, but of the heart. It is a baptism which the penitent thief received, though neither dipped nor sprinkled by the hand of man. It is a baptism which Ananias and Sapphira did not receive, though admitted into church-communion by apostolic men. (Bishop Ryle.)

Israel's Messiah

I. JOHN'S PROCLAMATION OF THE MESSIAH.

1. His person identified (Joh 1:30).
2. His calling declared (Joh 1:20).
 - (1) Divine in its appointment. The Lamb chosen, provided, sent by, and consecrated and belonging to God.
 - (2) Saving in its character: to realize and fulfil all that had been foreshadowed by the paschal lamb, the lamb for burnt-offering, and the suffering Servant of Jehovah.
 - (3) World-wide in its destination: not for Israel alone, or believers simply, but for humanity at large (Joh 3:16; Joh 12:32; 1Jn 2:2; 1Ti 2:6; 1Ti 4:10). Upon the ground of Christ's expiation, a bona fide offer of forgiveness is made to the world (Eph 1:7).
3. His dignity announced.
 - (1) His higher being (Joh 1:15).
 - (2) His loftier calling.
 - (3) His nobler name.

II. JOHN'S KNOWLEDGE OF MESSIAH.

1. When it originated. At the Baptism (Joh 1:33). Prior to this John may have had surmises, hopes, expectations, but not certain knowledge; neither have we without the Father's testimony, to which also Christ (Joh 5:37), John (1Jn 5:9; 1Jn 5:11), and Peter (2Jn 1:16) appeal.
2. Whence it proceeded. From the Spirit. It was no deduction or conclusion of His own. From the same source proceeds all spiritual understanding of Christ or His truth (Joh 14:26; Joh 16:13-15; 1Jn 2:20; 1Jn 2:27; 1Jn 5:20; cf. 1Co 2:14).
3. On what it rested.
 - (1) An open heaven. As in ancient times, to Jacob (Gen 28:12), Isaiah (Isa 6:1), Ezekiel (Eze 1:1), Daniel (Dan 10:5-6), and afterwards to Stephen (Act 7:5-6), Paul (2Co 12:4), Rev 4:1). This a symbolic representation. The heavens had opened, that God's Son might come forth, and that Christ's brethren might enter in: for the outflow of grace to men, and for the entrance of men to glory.
 - (2) A descended Spirit. Of this the dove an emblem. The permanent endowment of Jesus with the fulness of the Spirit convinced the Baptist.

Lessons:

1. The twofold character of Christ's salvation.
 - (1) The removal of sin.
 - (2) The implantation of a new life by the Spirit.
2. The twofold condition of receiving Christ's salvation.
 - (1) Repentance, symbolized by baptism.
 - (2) Faith upheld in beholding the Lamb of God.
3. The twofold qualification for preaching Christ's salvation.
 - (1) A knowledge of Christ.
 - (2) An acquaintance with self.
4. The twofold evidence that Christ is the Son of God.
 - (1) He can open heaven by removing sin.
 - (2) He can qualify for heaven by imparting the Spirit. (T. Whitelaw, D. D.)

The Lamb of God

I. THE OBJECT OF SAVING FAITH. The Lamb of God was the original and universal sacrifice. The early worshippers were instructed to offer a lamb. A lamb was the morning and evening sacrifice. Isaiah lift has reference to it. John pointed to the substance, of which these were shadows: Jesus in all His humiliation, down to the moment of His expiring cry. To this believers of previous dispensations looked forward. John would hays the faith of his hearers to coincide with that of Abel, Abraham, and the Old Testament saints. The way of life has never varied. Never has a soul been saved, never will a soul be saved, but by the Lamb of God.

II. THE DUTY TO WHICH JOHN SUMMONED HIS HEARERS.

1. To receive the tidings he conveyed to them. No event had ever occurred like this. Man's attention in every age is imperatively called to this. It is the great central truth on which all history hangs. If rightly received, the message must tell on the entire character.
2. To banish from them whatever might oppose the reception of the message. The Jews had much to do in this way. The natural operation of the heart is to establish a righteousness of its own. Men depend on good character, station in the Church, the use of means. But we must be made to lose confidence in any such hope.
3. To rest positively on Christ.

III. THE PARTIES CALLED TO THIS DUTY.

1. Generally all men, in every condition, of every character.
2. Those who thirst, and are conscious that they need a resting place, an object on which to bestow their affections, to satisfy their hearts.
3. Those who are pierced by God's arrows of conviction. (J. Beith, D. D.)

The Lamb of God

I. THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE VICTIM. Gentleness and innocence are suggested by lambs generally. Besides this, the lamb selected for sacrifice was to be without blemish. And Jesus was gentle. "He did not cry," etc. This was not the gentleness of weakness, for He calmed the storm and raised the dead. He was "without spot"--"holy, harmless, undefiled."

II. THE DEATH OF THE VICTIM. The lamb was slain in sacrifice. So the death of Christ was the chief feature of His life--predicted, prominent in His own mind, the chief feature of the gospels and epistles.

III. SALVATION IS CONNECTED WITH THE DEATH OF THE VICTIM. Ancient prophecy spoke of Him as "wounded for our transgressions." He Himself said, "As Moses lifted up," etc. The apostles proclaimed salvation through His death.

IV. CONSIDER WHAT, AS SAVIOUR, HE DOES.

1. He takes away the guilt and penalty of sin. It was not the guilt of separate sins that the Lamb of God expiated. It was sin itself.
2. He takes away the power of sin. He destroys sin itself.

V. THIS HE DOES FOR ALL MANKIND. The whole world needed salvation, and we may infer that the supply is co-extensive with the want. As He commands the gospel to be preached to every creature, there must be a gospel for every creature; and those who do not actually obtain salvation fail only "because of unbelief." (Newman Hall, LL. B.)

The Lamb of God

I. THE SAVIOUR DESIGNATED "The Lamb of God."

II. HIS WORK DESCRIBED, "Taketh away the sin of the world."

III. FAITH ENJOINED. "Behold the Lamb of God."

IV. DUTY URGED.

1. Let the careless and impenitent behold Him.
2. Let those who are trusting in their own merits behold Him.
3. Let penitent sinners behold Him.
4. Let Christians, for their habitual comfort and strength, behold Him. (Newman Hall, LL. B.)

The Lamb of God

We must admit two postulates.

1. That the world and all its inhabitants are sinners.
2. That there is a Saviour who takes away the sin of the world. Let me direct your attention to

I. THE BEING HERE MENTIONED. The Israelites found that the forgiveness of their sins was connected in some way with the sacrificial offerings, and therefore came too generally to suppose that there was some inherent virtue in the victims. They were pleased with the shadow instead of looking to the substance. The Baptist broke in upon this lifeless form of things, and, pointing to Christ, said, "Behold," etc. All types are now to merge in the Antitype. The communion bears something of the same relation as the morning and evening and passover lambs bore to Christ. Beware, then, of the mistake of the Jews.

1. In pointing to the Lamb of God, John conveys an important lesson to us. Men expect forgiveness either from the goodness of God or their own good works. Look not on these refuges of lies. Behold the only Being who taketh away sins.
2. Christ is called the Lamb of God, because appointed by God and accepted by God.

II. THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF HIS FUNCTIONS.

1. He endured the Cross, not to raise the Jewish nation to a temporal sovereignty, nor to enrich mankind with wealth and pleasure, nor to acquaint the minds of the inquisitive with philosophy and science. Had that been so, He had been acceptable to Jews, politicians, and philosophers. But by taking away sin, the very ends sought for are most thoroughly achieved. Take away that, and you take away the world's darkness and the world's misery.

2. There are two great evils which sin has entailed.
 - (1) It has brought us under condemnation, taken away our title to heaven, and left us outcasts.
 - (2) It has subjected us so to its ascendancy and power, that every affection and appetite is the minister of sin, and we are

disqualified for the joys of heaven. To save us, therefore, Christ takes away the guilt and condemnation, and also the power and pollution of sin.

3. The salvation is universally offered, on the condition of faith.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORDS "BEHOLD," etc. We may suppose the Baptist addressing himself to

1. Angels. As ye wing your flight on errands of mercy, ye do behold Him; for into these things the angels desire to look.
2. Fallen angels. Beheld the issue of your evil efforts, the promised bruiser of the serpent's head!
3. Sinners. Turn from trusting in your useless efforts. Why will ye die!
4. Ye people of God, behold the author of that joy and peace with which your hearts are filled. (J. Cumming, D. D.)

The Lamb of God

I. A POINTING TO CHRIST. We can imagine these words spoken in heaven, and angels desiring to look into them. We can imagine them spoken in hell and devils "beholding Him, but not nigh." But, alas! on earth how few point or look. The rich man points to his wealth, the young man to his pleasures, the Pharisee to himself; but those who belong to Christ point to Him.

II. A NAME OF CHRIST.

1. Open your Bibles, and you will see this name above every other. View Him
 - (1) In the patriarchal days; in the sacrifice of Abel.
 - (2) Under the law, as the Paschal Lamb.
 - (3) In Psa 23:1-6.
 - (4) In Isa 53:1-12.
 - (5) In the gospels.
 - (6) In the epistles (1Pe 1:19).
 - (7) In the Apocalypse.
2. He was God's Lamb because
 - (1) God's property was in Him. He was God's Son, Servant,

Angel, Prophet, Messenger.

- (2) God's Name was in Him.
- (3) God's love was in Him.
- (4) God's power was in Him.

III. A WORK OF CHRIST. He takes our sins away.

1. From the sinner's heart.
2. From God's Book.
3. From God's bar.
4. From God's sight.
5. To His cross.
6. To His grave. (R. S. Brooke, M. A.)

The Lamb of God

1. John had urged the duty of repentance. Now when Jesus made His appearance, John discloses the great object to be accomplished by Him--viz., the pardon of sin. For this mere repentance is insufficient, for it can never remove the penalty of a broken law. It only prepares the penitent to avoid transgression in the future by inspiring a sorrow for and a hatred of sin; so John did not tell the Jews that they would be forgiven because of their repentance; but urged it as an indispensable condition of securing Christ's blessing. When he had done this, he bade them behold the Saviour.

2. The term "Lamb"

(1) Has respect to disposition and character, and is significant of innocence, meekness, and unresisting submission (Isa 53:7). But there were, doubtless, many others to whom the term could be applied besides Christ. But this did not make them saviours from sin. Had Jesus been only a lamb in this sense, He might have been thus qualified for a teacher. But would not John have added something indicative of his Teacher's office? To choose a lamb for illustration, and to mean by "taking away the sin of the world" the influence of sagacious instruction, is utterly confusing and unintelligible; and then, if Christ saves by His instruction, why was not Paul called a saviour of men?

(2) But the term has respect to an atoning sacrifice, by which pardon of sin is secured. And it would be very natural for John, as a Jew, familiar with the Mosaic offerings, and with their application in Isaiah lift., to use the term in this sense. The same idea was familiar to Paul (1Co

5:7), Peter (1Pe 1:18-19; cf. Ex 12:5), and John Rev 5:8-14).

3. Jesus is the Lamb of God. This cannot be a mere term of excellence, like "mountains of God," but either the Lamb who belongs to, or is provided by, God. The former would make an inept and frigid meaning; for John is showing the relation in which Christ

stands to man. The latter, therefore, is the meaning. Every Jew had to provide and present as a sin-offering a lamb without spot or blemish. What each had done for himself, God now does for all men.

(1) Christ takes away sin. The Hebrews employed the phrase as meaning to bear the punishment or consequences of sin, or to expiate sin, or to forgive it. Either of the first two meanings will answer well here (1Pe 2:24; Gal 3:13; 2Co 5:29). So Christ takes away sin by removing its condemning and soul-destroying power. The Greek verb means first to lift up and then to raise up and remove, as one lifts a burden and conveys it away. And so Christ took the burden of our sins, and this load He carried away.

(2) He takes away the sin of the world. Other conditions are required besides His expiatory death. The sinner must be penitent, and behold the Lamb with the eye of faith. This done, salvation is as wide as the world of men; and so the proffer is universal. (Moses Stuart.)

The Lamb of God

I. THE OBJECT WHICH WAS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. The abolition of the world's sin: a most desirable object. Were any one to offer to take away the world's sorrow, or its toil and trouble, or its care, what a benefactor he would be. But how much more when the Son of God comes from heaven and suffers to take away its sin. Because the sting and bitterness is nothing but that. But we are led aside from the truth by the consideration of second causes and immediate results, and so forget the nature of sin and disregard the Baptist's invitation. And yet sin is the universal curse, and those who are unacquainted with sorrow are sinful; and sin unrepented of will bring the bitterest sorrow. The need, then, of the abolition of sin is

1. Universal.
2. The greatest of our needs. Other needs man can remedy; but no man can help his brother here.
3. The most pressing.
4. In proportion we do not feel this, our sin is the greater.

II. THE MEANS ORDAINED FOR ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT. Such a need in God's universe could not be without a remedy. This was provided in the Lamb of God, which expression looks back to Isa 53:1-12. and Gen 22:1-24. Christ was the Lamb of God in being God's appointed sacrifice, and the sacrifice offered by God. He was the federal head of our race, the one Being in whom our race was gathered up, who took upon Himself the penalty of sin. His great qualification for this was his sinlessness. Two conclusions

1. That if Christ was the Lamb of God He must have been an adequate provision for dealing with the world's sin.
2. That He must have been the exclusive sacrifice for sin. There was no other means appointed by God; there can be no other means devised by man.

III. THE METHOD OF APPLYING THESE MEANS.

1. Christ takes away the punishment of sin--sin with all its accidents and qualities.
2. Christ destroys the power of sin in the heart.
3. You cannot get rid of sin by resolutions or efforts, but only by faith in Him. There is in us a sinful will which prompts to sin. We cannot get rid of that by thwarting or disciplining our sinful will. We can only do it by taking cognizance of a higher will in Christ. And as we believe in Him we submit to His will, and become inspired with a fresh will which prompts to good and not to evil. (Stanley Leathes, B. D.)

The Lamb of God

1. How long our first parents remained innocent is not revealed; but we scarcely read of their fall before we read also of their restoration. The gates of Paradise are hardly closed before the altar of atonement is erected at the entrance. The flame of the Cherubic sword is blended with the flame of the consuming sacrifice. The promise of salvation was sealed by blood, not of bears and lions, but of oxen, sheep, and lambs. Blood being put for life, the lesson taught was

- (1) that man was a sinner, and that sin must be punished;
- (2) that sin might be forgiven and the sinner saved. The offerer placed his hands upon the victim and confessed his sin, thereby symbolically transferring his guilt.

2. But how can sin be transferred to a dumb animal (Heb 10:4)? And yet the voice of the whole dispensation cries "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." How shall these discordant sounds be tempered into unison? Only by looking beyond the sacrifice to another which it represents. In Christ these seeming contradictions are reconciled. That which was pleasing in the sight of God for His sake, was abhorrent when considered apart from Him. The faith of old believers, therefore, was the same as ours, only darkened by the symbols which the Antitype has now abolished.

3. We cannot tell how far the doctrine of atonement was maintained without corruption in the age immediately preceding the Advent. The great mass of the people had undoubtedly lost sight of it; but others certainly felt their lost and wretched state, and looked with a prospective faith to the coming and dying of the Lamb of God. Their hopes were naturally stimulated by the Baptist. But he did satisfy them being a preacher of righteousness--not a sacrifice for sin. But having strengthened their sense of guilt and need of expiation by the preaching of the law, John led them to the altar and pointed to the Lamb of God.

4. Two to whom these words were addressed followed Jesus--a sufficient proof that they were waiting for Him, and prepared for His reception. But in what did their preparation consist? Not in personal merit; they were sinners. Not in superior wisdom; they were

fishermen. In one point, it is true, they were peculiarly enlightened, and in that consisted their peculiar preparation to receive the Saviour. They knew that they were lost, and that He alone could save them; so that when their former master said, "Behold the Lamb of God," they followed Him at once. And so it has been ever since. In all cases the same preparation is necessary, a sense of need and a conviction of the Saviour's being able to supply it.

5. This doctrine lies at the basis of all efforts for the reformation
 - (1) of the individual,
 - (2) of the community. (J. A. Alexander, D. D.)

Forgiveness of sins through the atoning sacrifice of Christ is a blessing which it is the glory of God to reveal, and the privilege of Christians to experience

I. SIN, WHICH IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW, JUSTLY EXPOSES THE OFFENDER TO THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH. God created man upright; made him subject to law; encouraged his obedience by promises, and threatened disobedience with the penalty of death. Man transgressed: all men have transgressed; so the condemnation rests upon all.

II. THE GRACIOUS GOD, THOUGH JUSTLY OFFENDED BY THE SINS OF MEN, HAS IN MERCY MADE PROVISION FOR THE RESTORATION OF ALL WHO REPENT AND BELIEVE. That death may be abolished, sin must be removed. Sin has been atoned for, and therefore can be removed by the sacrifice of Christ. It is removed by a penitent trust in that sacrifice.

III. TO THE FAITH OF BELIEVERS THE DIVINE PROVISION WAS EXHIBITED IN THE TYPE AND PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (Lev 16:1-34.; Isa 53:1-12.). In the former one victim was slain to represent the death of Christ; the other went away alive to represent Christ as living again after having borne our sins.

IV. ALL THESE TYPES AND PROPHECIES WERE FULFILLED BY THE ATONING DEATH AND TRIUMPHANT RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD.

V. THROUGH THE SACRIFICE AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, SINNERS OF ALL CONDITIONS ARE ENTITLED TO THE BLESSINGS OF REDEMPTION. Consider

1. The influence of these truths upon the mind (Rom 5:1-5).
2. The encouragement hereby given to the returning sinner.
3. The madness of expecting salvation in any other way. (T. Slatterie.)

The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world

I. WHO IS THIS LAMB OF GOD. Christ Jesus typified by the paschal lamb; which was

1. Without spot (Heb 9:14).
2. Separated the tenth day.
3. Killed.
4. The blood sprinkled on the post so that the destroying angel might pass 1Pe 1:2; Heb 10:22).
5. Boasted with fire.
6. It expiated sin typically, Christ really (1Jn 2:2).
7. It was meek and patient in all its sufferings: so Christ (Isa 53:7).

II. WHAT SIN DOTHE HE TAKE AWAY?

1. Original (Rom 5:19).
2. Actual (Eph 1:7).
3. Habitual (Act 3:26).

III. HOW DOTHE CHRIST TAKE AWAY SIN?

1. He became man (Joh 1:14).
2. In the human nature He assumed He suffered death (Php 2:8).
3. The human nature in Him dying, by that death He expiated the sins of human persons (Isa 53:5-6).
4. By this means He took our sins away from us, Himself becoming our sin-offering (2Co 5:21).
5. And so He takes away whatever in sin is prejudicial to us; as
 - (1) The guilt.
 - (2) The curse (Gal 3:13).
 - (3) The strength of sin. USE. Behold this Lamb of God.
 1. In the manger.
 2. In the temple.
 3. In the garden.

4. In the judgment-hall.
5. Upon the cross.
6. Ascending.
7. Now at the right hand of God. (Bp. Beveridge.)

The great work of Christ, and the great work of the preacher

I. THE GREAT WORK OF CHRIST. Sin always implies the existence of law, knowledge of law, capability of obeying law, and actual departure from law. Christ came to take sin away.

1. This work is of all works most difficult. In some respects it is impossible. Its fact cannot be taken away, nor its memory, nor its influence; but its painful consciousness, its controlling power, its polluting influences, and its dawning consequences can. But this transcends all human power. Senators, sages, poets, priests have tried and failed. Christ alone can do it, and has done it.

2. This work is of all works the most indispensable, Sin is the foundation of all man's suffering, physical, political, social, religious. The work required is to dry up this fountain. Sin must be taken away from our literature, governments, institutions, hearts, before the world can be saved. This is the great work of Christ.

II. THE GREAT WORK OF THE PREACHER. To point to the Lamb of God. This designation suggests

1. Sinlessness.
2. Sacrifice. Christ's was voluntary, all-sufficient, exemplary.
3. Divinity. Christ was God's messenger and atoner. The preacher's work, therefore, is not to deal in controversies or speculations. The world wants a Saviour, not a system or a creed. (D. Thomas, D. D.)

The excellency of the Christian, Atonement

I. Christ excels in the NATURE OF THE VICTIM.

1. The faultlessness of the Saviour. According to Judaism the lamb of sacrifice must be a year old, and without a blemish. Thus Jesus went through the four seasons--the spring, summer, autumn, winter of existence, without receiving or inflicting injury. Without blemish in the inward life, without spot in the outward character. Many are without spot to men, but are conscious of being full of spots unto God. Jesus was without spot to God.

2. His Divine appointment. According to Judaism, the lamb of sacrifice was separated from the flock days before it was slain. And Jesus was marked out from the foundation of the world.

(1) This verse teaches us that a Lamb slain is the central idea of creation and that in this light the universe was planned. The idea of sacrifice is the scarlet thread that stretches from eternity to eternity. God sprinkled the door posts of creation with blood when He framed them.

(2) The Lamb slain is also the centre of the Divine nature. Sacrifice is the deepest principle of God Himself. Christ was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world. In eternity the Father anointed the Son to be a priest and a sacrifice with the consecrating oil of the Holy Ghost. The Gospel does not create this principle, it only reveals it. God purchased His Church with His own blood.

3. His Divine nature. The Lamb of God is partaker of the nature of God. According to Judaism, the sacrificial lamb was to be brought up on the farm of the offerer: for this reason that it must cost some thought and pains, and consequently be something united to him by a tie of affection. And Jesus was a Lamb which God reared upon His own farm. "I was by Him as one brought up with Him"; according to the Chaldee paraphrase. "I was nursed at His side." But He was not only "of God." He was God. This it was that imparted efficacy to His sufferings.

II. It excels in THE EFFICACY OF THE WORK. The Jewish sacrifices brought sin to remembrance; Christ's sacrifice took it away.

1. Look at Christ as bearing the sin of the world. But to bear it He must go under it. In the Old Testament to forgive means literally to carry. "Who is a God like unto Thee that pardoneth (lit. beareth) iniquity?" Other Gods pardoned. Jehovah carried sin; under the Old Testament in respect of covenant, under the New through Incarnation and imputation.

2. Christ bore sin away. "Christ hath wholly purchased us from the curse of the law" (Welsh translation). How? By fully paying.

3. Christ bore it away once for ever. The Jewish sacrifices had to be repeated; but Christ cancelled it once for all.

III. It excels in the AREA OF ITS INFLUENCE. The Jewish sacrifices availed for one nation only. Christ's sacrifice is intended for the benefit of the world.

1. Sin, not sins; sin in its root, its deepest, bitterest nature.

2. The sin of the world. When the Great Western Railway was first made in South Wales, it was constructed on the broad-gauge principle; but the directors years afterwards judged it expedient to convert it from the broad gauge into the narrow gauge. In the history of the way of salvation, however, the contrary process was observed,--the narrow gauge under the Old Testament, and the broad gauge under the New.

3. All the sin of all the world. According to Judaism, a sacrifice was not left for all sins, such as adultery, murder, Sabbath

desecration--sins committed with a high hand. Whoever was found guilty of these was to be "cut off from among his people." But the sacrifice of Christ covers all, not a single sin excepted. (J. Cynddylan Jones, D. D.)

Objections met

It has been said that the view of Christ's work here put into the Baptist's mouth could not have been entertained by him because

I. The pre-Christian times were not acquainted with the idea of a suffering Saviour. But this idea is not foreign to the Old Testament, with which the Baptist may be presumed to have had some acquaintance.

II. The disciples of Jesus were incapable of understanding this idea (Mat 16:22). But though not understood by, the idea cannot be shown to have been strange to them; while, even if it was, that would not prove it to have been strange to John, who was reared as a prophet.

III. The idea which was only at a later period in the Christian Church fully developed could hardly have been anticipated by individual reflection. But the Baptist refers to Divine inspiration as the source of his knowledge (verse 23).

IV. The Baptist expected a theocratic and not a suffering Messiah (Mat 11:3). But John's doubts were occasioned, not by Christ's sufferings, but by His delay in asserting His Messianic dignity. Besides, it is not safe to argue from the thoughts of a prisoner to the views of the same individual at liberty. (T. Whitelaw, D. D.)

John's call for attention

In that simple "Behold," we have the highest and crowning direction for the right reception of the Christ. It was a look that betrayed the whole world into sin and condemnation, and it is a look that again unites men with their proper Lord, and recovers them from their guilt and misery. But it must be an earnest look--a look of faith,--a look of appreciative confidence--a look which transfers the whole trust and affection of the heart to the object on which it rests,--a look which draws after it the entire wish and desire of the soul. Such a look Andrew had, when he rushed in search of his brother Simon, saying, "We have found the Messiah!" Such a look Philip had, when he went to Nathanael exclaiming, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, did write!" (verses 41-45). And such a look, my brethren, is in the power of every one of us this day. Oh the blessedness of our privileges! (J. A. Seiss, D. D.)

Christ the Passover Lamb

The Passover was close at hand (2:13). We know its significance, and what a fundamental importance the deliverance from Egypt had for the history of Israel as well as for its knowledge of salvation. This fact stands so alone that only the day of the new salvation is to be compared with it, and the latter again has such a fitting type in no fact of the Old Testament history as it has in the former. Now the Baptist knew that the time of the final closing salvation had dawned, and that Jesus was the one bringing it. Why should he not, above all, compare this salvation and Him who brought it with that first typical redemption of Israel? Then, however, that Lamb was the means of sparing the nation. For its sake destruction passed over the people. Thus now will Jesus be the means of sparing. (C. E. Luthardt, D. D.)

Christ the Lamb and the Lion

Doth not St. John call Christ "a Lion"? (Rev 5:5). Why then doth the Baptist call Him a Lamb? The lion and the lamb, the prophet Isaiah tells us, shall both "dwell together in the days of Christ": but may they both be together in the Person of Christ? not only in one place together, but also in one case together? Different respects may tie discordant titles unto one subject. His courage against Satan, whom He conquered, His patience among men, whom He suffered, declared there was met in one Messiah the stoutness of a lion, and the meekness of a lamb. St. Bernard's distinction so determines it; He rose like a lion, but he suffered like a lamb. (R. Clerke, D. D.)

Christ bearing the sins of the world

The other day I saw a contrivance to judge a man's strength by the power of his breath--you breathe into the machine, and by the weight you lift will be accurately estimated the power of your lungs. And Jesus Christ keeps the stars floating by the power of His breath just as children keep bubbles on a summer eve; He breathes and the planets swim as feathers in a breeze; but He who upholds the stars with His word, who bears with ease the burden of ten thousand worlds, bends and staggers under the weight of your sins. "The Lord hath made the iniquity of us all to meet on Him." Sin came from all directions; a multitude of sins from our own neighbourhood went that day on a pilgrimage to Mount Calvary; iniquity poured in from all quarters, and fell in terrible cataracts on the devoted head of the patient victim. "He was wounded for our transgressions," etc. (J. Cynddylan Jones, D. D.)

Praise of Christ the Lamb of God

A gentleman travelling in Norway went to see the church in a certain town. Looking up at its tower he was surprised to see the carved figure of a lamb near the top. He inquired why it was placed in that position, and was told that when the church was being built a workman fell from the high scaffold. His fellows saw him fall, and horror-stricken rushed down expecting to find him dashed to pieces. But to their surprise and joy he was almost unhurt. How had he escaped? & flock of sheep was passing by the church at the

moment of his fall, and he fell amongst them and right on the top of a lamb. The lamb was crushed to death, but the man was saved. And the lamb was carved on the tower at the height from which he fell to commemorate his escape. Shall we then not give the highest place of honour to the Lamb of God who was crushed beneath our load. (F. E. Turner.)

The value of Christ's sacrifice

How can one atone for thousands? asked the North American Indians of the missionary Brainerd. The missionary solved their difficulty by showing that one sovereign is worth two hundred and forty pence--one gold coin being equal in value to many copper ones, the difference in the metal making a difference in the value. Similarly the sufferings of one God-man are a sufficient propitiation for the sins of millions of mere men, the difference in the rank constituting a difference in the worth. (J. C. Jones, D. D.)

How weighty must be the blood of the Lamb, by whom the world was made, to turn the scale when weighed against the world! (Augustine.)

Christ's work not frustrated by His rejection

I am aware the objection is often made, that "if Christ taketh away the sin of the world, and yet the vast majority of men die in their sins and are lost, Christ's work for many was wrought in vain." I see no force in this. I think we might as well argue, that because sin came into the world and marred creation, creation was in vain. We are not talking of the works of men, but of the eternal Word, and we must be content to see much in His works that we do not entirely understand. Though multitudes are lost, I have no doubt the last day will prove that nothing that Christ did for them was in vain. (Bp. Ryle.)

The sacrificial lamb of the Mohammedans

It is noticeable that although modern Islam rejects the idea of the sacrifice of Christ, the custom of sacrifice is still commanded; as, for instance, for certain offences during the Pilgrimage. Something approaching to the Jewish Day of Atonement is thus described by an American missionary in India: "On a great day with the Mohammedans of Calcutta they offered their yearly sacrifice, the atonement for sin. A lamb or a kid without spot or blemish is taken to the priest or moulvie; the person who presents the offering lays his hands on the animal's head, saying: 'For my head I give thine.' Then he touches the ears, the mouth, the eyes, etc., of the sacrifice, still repeating: 'For my ears, thy ears; for my mouth, thy mouth; for my eyes, thy eyes;' and so on till he has mentioned all that he has to say. Then he exclaims: 'For my life, thy life;' and as he pronounces these words the priest plunges a knife into the kid's heart, and pronounces an absolution for the sinner. Is not this a strange custom, showing that the Mohammedan also acknowledges the necessity of an atonement, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin?" (S. S. Times.)

The death of Christ the preacher's theme

In one of the old-fashioned mansions in the United States there is still to be seen a brass-bound clock upon the staircase landing with the hands fixed at the minute and hour when Washington died. The grandfather of the present owner was a pall-bearer at the funeral of the great republican, and set the hands where they have ever since remained. Even so the preacher's finger must ever point the multitude to Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (H. O. Mackey.)

Christ the preacher's theme

Among those who visited Dr. Carey, the great Baptist missionary, in his last illness was Alexander Duff, the Scotch missionary. On one occasion he spent some time talking chiefly about Carey's missionary life, until the dying man whispered "Pray." Duff knelt down and prayed, and then said "good.bye." As he passed from the room, he thought he heard a feeble voice pronouncing his name, and turning, found that he was recalled. He stepped back accordingly, and this is what he heard, spoken with a gracious solemnity: "Mr. Duff, you have been speaking about Dr. Carey, Dr. Carey: when I am gone say nothing about Dr. Carey--speak about Dr. Carey's Saviour." Duff went away rebuked and awed, with a lesson in his heart that he never forgot. (H. O. Mackey.)

We must look to Christ

When I was in Belfast I knew a doctor who had a friend, a leading surgeon there, and he told me that the surgeon's custom was, before performing any operation, to say to the patient, "Take a good look at the wound, and then fix your eyes on me, and don't take them off till I get through." I thought at the time that was a good illustration. Sinner, take a good look at the wound tonight, and then fix your eyes on Christ, and do not take them off. It is better to look at the remedy than at the wound. See what a poor wretched sinner you are, and then look at the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He died for the ungodly and the sinner. Say "I'll take Him," and may God help you to lift your eye to the Man on Calvary. And as the Israelites looked upon the serpent and were healed, so may you look and live to-night. (D. L. Moody.)

Jesus the propitiation for sin

When our Lord was thus set forth by John, it is well to note the special character under which He was declared. John knew much of the Lord Jesus, and could have pictured Him in many lights and characters. He might especially have pointed Him out as the great moral example, the founder of a higher form of life, the great teacher of holiness and love; yet this did not strike the Baptist as the head and front of our Lord's character, but he proclaimed Him as one who had come into the world to be the great sacrifice for sin. Lifting up his hand and pointing to Jesus, he cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He did not say,

"Behold the great Exemplar;" no doubt he would have said that in due season. He did not even say, "Behold the king and leader of a new dispensation;" that fact he would by no means have denied, but would have gloried in it. Still, the first point that he dwells upon, and that which wins his enthusiasm is, "Behold the Lamb of God." John the Baptist views Him as the propitiation for sin, and so he cries, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" (C. H. Spurgeon.)

A saving message

It is told of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, that when about to preach in the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, in 1857, he went down a short time before the service to arrange where the platform should be placed, and whilst trying the various positions he cried aloud, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" A man was at that time at work in the Palace, who heard the text spoken under such unusual circumstances. It went with power to his heart, convinced him of sin, and led him to the sin-atoning Lamb, in whom he found forgiveness, peace, and joy.

The atonement and the Scriptures

A Socinian preacher once said to Mr. Newton, "Sir, I have collated every word in the Hebrew Scriptures seventeen times; and it is very strange if the doctrine of atonement which you hold should not have been found by me." Mr. Newton replied, "I am not surprised at this; I once went to light my candle with the extinguisher on it. Prejudices from education, learning, etc., often form an extinguisher. It is not enough that you bring the candle; you must remove the extinguisher."

The great remedy

Hannah More relates that Dr. Johnson, on his deathbed, was in great distress of mind. Not being comforted by ordinary conversation, he desired to see a minister. Mr. Winstanley was named, and the doctor requested him to be sent for. Mr. Winstanley did not come, but wrote to the doctor as follows:--"Sir,--I beg to acknowledge the honour of your note, and am very sorry that the state of my health prevents my compliance with your request. I can easily conceive what would be the subject of your inquiry. I can conceive that on the near approach of death what you once considered mere peccadilloes have risen into mountains of guilt, on whichsoever side you look you see only positive transgression, defective obedience; and hence in self-despair are eagerly inquiring, 'What must I do to be saved?' I say to you in the language of the Baptist, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!'" When this was read to the doctor he anxiously asked, "Does he say so?" The consequence was that he was brought to the renunciation of himself and a simple reliance on Jesus as his Saviour.

Free trade with heaven established by Christ

Under the Old Testament no free trade was carried on between heaven and earth, no unrestricted commerce, for the duty was so high--a lamb being taken from one farm, a bullock from another, a heifer from the third, a goat from the fourth, and fowls from the poor, to pay the imposed duty; but the sacrifice once offered on Calvary for the sin of the world has, I am glad to tell you, established Free Trade for ever. (J. C. Jones, D. D.)

The message for sinners

John Wesley, preaching to an audience of scholars and noblemen, used the "generation of vipers" text, and flung denunciation right and left. "That sermon should have been preached at Newgate," said a displeased courtier. "No," said the fearless apostle, my text there would have been, "Behold the Lamb of God," etc. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

A young telegraph operator was anxious about his soul. After a sleepless night he went to his duties; while restless and absorbed in the thought of being a sinner he heard the click of his instrument, and with great astonishment and emotion spelt out this message:--"From H--, Windermere, to J-- B-- , Warkworth. 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world'; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." This was sent as an answer to a letter from a young man who also was seeking peace. It acted as a double blessing, showing to both operator and receiver the way of salvation. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

The sin of the world

I think John the Baptist in this text speaks about sin as we think of a terrible epidemic from which individual men suffer, and which we are accustomed to speak of as that by which we are all affected. The symptoms may vary in individual cases; the course of the disease may sometimes be more or less rapid; and there may be great differences in the pain which it inflicts on different men. When we speak of the cholera or some malignant fever, we regard those who suffer from it as smitten down by some terrible power which travels from house to house, and involves all its victims in one common peril; that some poison is in the blood of those who suffer; that they are all wrestling with the same ghastly enemy; and that they are all in danger of the same doom. Now it is thus that John the Baptist thought of sin. What we describe as the accidental lapses of individual men were to him the symptoms and the result of something vaster and more dreadful; the sins of individual men were to him only the revelations of an evil energy which had taken possession of the race. There was a great confederacy into which all men had entered, consciously or unconsciously--a confederacy against the authority of God, and against the eternal law of righteousness. Different men break different commandments; their individual transgressions vary according to their circumstances, their training, or their temper. But no man stands apart--no man refuses to share in the great revolt against the majesty of heaven. Where there is not a profligate, reckless disobedience, there is indifference to the Divine authority--an indifference which is just as fatal, and involves a separation from God as positive as it he had been an active antagonist to it. This is a common sin. This is a sin in which we are all sharers, and in which

we still share if we are not redeemed, and constitutes an essential moral element and characteristic spirit of the world, but it finds expression in infinitely various ways. Now, I can imagine some of you saying--Did He take away the sin of the world? What signs are there that He has done it? Sin is here still. There is no solitary country the world over that is redeemed from it. It stains this century, as it has stained every century that has gone by. Will you consider it as guilt--guilt which one does recognize, and which fills the heart with terror, with dark and gloomy anticipations of the just penalty with which it must be visited. Well, millions upon millions who have appealed to Christ will tell you that its guilt has been taken away. Or will you consider sin as involving the terrible necessity of the separation of the soul from God. This is one of its worst and most malignant effects. We see, as the result of our sin, that we are driven away from that Divine presence--that our sin comes between us and the favour of Heaven--and we find that we cannot break through it, and speak to God face to face. God is holy, and by the necessity of His nature shrinks from contact with sin. Well, Christ has taken sin away even in that sense. If sin is no longer a dominant power in this world, there is something here that is stronger than it; there is the liberty into which we can enter through Christ Jesus our Lord. He has taken it away as the authority by which we were controlled, and through Him we are able to enter into the fullest freedom, and to keep God's commandments. I admit that sin has not disappeared from the world, but God has done His part towards causing it to disappear. He can give eternal life, but He cannot receive it for us; we must receive it. All He could do to take away our sin He has actually done; and we ought to rejoice with great exulting joy in the redemption that is wrought for us through Christ Jesus our Lord. Now there are two or three considerations I wish to impress upon you before I close, suggested by this subject.

1. In the first place, in this work of the Lord we are all deeply concerned.
2. Again, that which He has done excludes altogether the plea that you are helplessly under the power of sin.
3. Again this takes away the excuse for persisting in sin.
4. If you remain under the power of sin, it is by your own choice. All sin is, no doubt, the result of choice.
5. Finally, the truth that we have been considering excludes all hope that if we fail to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour that we shall ever obtain God's mercy and eternal life. (R. W. Dale, M. A.)