

A Mediator and a Ransom.

Notes of an address on Job 33 and 1 Tim. 2: 3-7.

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The truth of the gospel could scarcely be more beautifully expressed than it is in this passage in Timothy. It is a paragraph that contains a volume of truth in a very little space, and if a soul once gets the real meaning of it — lays hold of it for itself, it puts it into possession of peace with God. In Job 33 we have the very same thought illustrated by Elihu. Job was as busy as ever he could be, justifying himself, and goes the length of saying, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go" (Job 27: 6). He never made it out, however, for at the end of the story he is obliged to put his hand on his mouth and say, "Behold, I am vile" (Job 40: 4). The Lord seems to say, "I will never let you go, Job, till you have given up those filthy rags, your own righteousness, then *I* will justify *you*, I will give you my righteousness." When *you* get into the presence of God, like Job, *you* must say, "I am vile." Job went a little further in Job 42: 5, 6, and said, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth THEE. Wherefore, *I abhor* myself and repent in dust and ashes." One of the strongest words in our language, "*Abhor!*" "*I abhor* myself!" Have you let go your own righteousness, now, Job? "Ah! dust and ashes!" he replies. A sight of God produces this. Only the presence of God can enable any to let go their own righteousness; not that they have got any to let go, really, only they think they have. It is like some young man building his hopes on some rich relative, and going on counting, and expecting, and acting as if it were all right, and certain; but by-and-bye he finds he is not in the will at all, his hopes are all dashed, and he is left worse than a beggar. But, when you have got to this place, to *abhor yourself*, then what a comfort it is to turn round and find God *loves you*, is it not? to find "God our *Saviour*" instead of our Judge.

The common thought is that God is our Judge, and so He is; but who made Him a Judge? Who put God on the judgment seat? You did! I did! The sin and guilt of man have forced God into the place of judgment. God must judge sin, or else God and man would be both alike, neither of them thinking much about it, and there would be no righteousness; but, so far from His desiring to take the place of judgment, why, even here, to Job, He says, "I desire to justify thee (Job 33: 32). This is an answer to a question put by Job in the ninth chapter, when Bildad was putting barbed arrows into him, insinuating that he was a hypocrite, and informing him that "the hypocrite's hope shall perish," and, further, that "God will not cast away a perfect man" (Job 8: 13-20). In Job 9: 2, Job replies, "How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand" — much less the other 999 things. More, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." Job saw it was all of no use. Ah! Job knew very well, however much he might try to justify himself before his friends, yet in his heart of hearts he knew he could not stand before God. And, when he has learnt this thoroughly, the grace of God

comes in and shows him how he can be justified, how he can be saved, and that, beloved friends, is what I want to show you tonight. How *you* can be justified. How *you* can be saved, and how you can know it, too; and I would go farther and say, how you may be saved tonight, for God's salvation is a *present* salvation. Does the salvation of a sinner rest on what a sinner can do? No! On what Christ *will* do? No! but on what Christ *has* done. The sinner is utterly helpless, he can do nothing. Christ can do, nothing more, but Christ has done everything. "It is finished," is the dying Saviour's legacy to a lost, helpless, guilty sinner. How the grace of God pursues a man, seeking his soul; goes after him when he does not care a bit about it; seeks him that He may save him. He pursued Saul of Tarsus when he only hated Him. He is pursuing *you*, following *you* in grace tonight, though you do not care for Him and though you have come in here not caring even about the salvation of your own soul. You say, "Why do you single *me* out?" I'll tell you. Because I want *you* to be saved. Oh! let His grace, let His heart, who is thus pursuing you in love, win your heart for Him tonight.

There are five different ways Elihu speaks of here, in which God may go after a soul, and I have little doubt that almost every heart in this hall has been sought, in one or more of these ways, by God, and will silently range itself in one or other of these classes. You will know, in your own souls, if any or all of these ways have been true of you. But, first, he brings out the person of the Saviour. It is all very well for me to tell you to come to Jesus, to believe on Jesus, but you say you want to know who He is; what kind of a Saviour He is. In Job 9: 33, Job had said, "Neither is there any Daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." What Job calls a "Daysman," Paul calls a "Mediator." "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." One who, in the dignity and majesty of His own person, can reach to all the glory of the throne of God; One who can meet the heart of God, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, One who can come down to all the degradation, and misery, and sin, and sorrow, and wretchedness of man. One who in the glory of His own person can lay one hand in righteousness on the very throne of God, and lay the other hand in tender love on the shoulder of the poor sinner. "But," you say, "do *you* know such an one?" I do! I do! His name is JESUS. *Jesus*, the *man* Christ Jesus. Elihu here presents himself as the type of Christ, and as Job had sighed for the Daysman, Umpire, or Mediator, he now steps in and fills up the gap between Job and God, saying, "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead; I also am formed out of the clay." That is, I am a man! Such is Christ, a man, a real man; the One to whom, for whom, the heavens were opened more than once when He was on earth, and whom the Father's voice from heaven proclaimed to be His own beloved Son, yet laid in a manger. The reputed son of Joseph the carpenter, actually the son of Mary, and really in His nature the Son of God. The reputed son of Joseph He must be, in order to claim the throne of David; actually the son of the woman He must be, to redeem man; but really the Son of God He must be, if He is to meet the claims of God! Oh! to think of being *loved* by this One. Son of God! Son of man! If Son of God, what is there He has not power to do? if son of man, He can understand and meet the needs of my heart. Trace Him through His life. Was there ever such an One? Think of those unknown thirty years at Nazareth. We get glimpses of it that let us know that, spent as it was at home, it was a life of perfection. He was the only One who ever lived a life suited to God, perfectly pleasing God. When He emerges into public life, at His baptism, the heavens are opened for the Father's voice to be heard proclaiming His pleasure in Him. Jesus is One who in the dignity, and beauty, and glory of His own person delights the very heart of God, but One whose heart is so ineffably tender that there is not the poorest or most wretched sinner who could not go to Him and tell out

to Him all his woe and all his sin. He bore my sorrows in His life, that He might sympathise; He bore my sins in His death, that He might save. This is the "Daysman," the "Mediator," this is "the man Christ Jesus." This is the One that God presents for your acceptance this evening. Are you afraid of such an One? The hypocrite might be afraid of Him, the Pharisee, the Sadducee, might be afraid of Him, but was there ever a trembling sinner afraid of Christ? Never! Never! "My terror," he says (verse 7), "shall not make thee afraid." But ah! there is a day coming when the terror of the Lord *shall* make you afraid; there is an hour coming when, if you despise His love and mercy, you *shall* quake before Him. But now is the day of His grace, and "My terror shall not make thee afraid" is the soft and thrilling word of the Saviour to the chief of sinners now.

Do you say "I am innocent"? That is a lie to begin with. Never was there one innocent since God put that pair in the Garden of Eden. If you are innocent you have no need of Christ, the Christ of Scripture, the only Christ I can present to you — the One who died because you are not innocent, died to make atonement for your guilt. Christ brings such boundless happiness to a soul, such wellsprings of joy unfathomable. There is nothing good, nothing really happy out of Christ. Have you everything this world can give you? its luxuries, its pleasures, its gaieties, its smiles? Soon you must leave them all behind, and pass away alone into eternity, and if you have not known Christ in time, will you ever know Him in eternity? No, never! If you have not slaked your thirst at the fountain of the water of life in time, think you, you will ever get one single draught thro' the endless ages of eternity? No, no! never! If you will not have Christ in time, you cannot have Him in eternity. If you enter eternity without Him, you must spend its long, its gloomy, its endless ages without Him; the word of God tells you so. It is *now* you must be His, if you would be His *then*.

But Job says, "He findeth occasion against me, he counteth me for his enemy; he putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths" (v. 10, 11). Well, and do you not think it is a good thing for God to mark the paths of a man, when he is going farther and farther from Him to mark his paths, and arrest him? Elihu says I will tell you the truth about God, show you the injustice of your thoughts of Him. I would ask you tonight, has the fear of the Lord never made you tremble yet? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Have you never felt it yet? If you are here tonight quarrelling with His goodness and grace, you are very far from having this wisdom. It is true there is ruin and wretchedness around, but who has made the ruin? It is man that has caused it, aided and abetted by Satan. It is not God who has caused it, but it is God who has come in to repair the breaches, to remedy what man has ruined; nay, more than this, man has ruined himself, and God brings in redemption, through Christ. If I come to the cross, what an answer to the thought that God is my enemy. Why, He has bruised His own Son that He might deliver me. So far from having a hard thought towards me, Elihu shows us here five ways God takes to seek to deliver me.

1st, "God speaketh once, yea twice" (verse 14). The voice of God has been heard by you. He has spoken and you have not heeded. Perhaps, twice this very day you have heard the voice of God through His Word. Tell me, are you converted yet? Have you come to Jesus yet? No, you have not! You are here tonight and still unsaved. You have heard the Word of God but you have not perceived it. You have let it go by you unheeded. Some of us who know the Lord can look back and remember how many times He spoke to us, and we did not listen. We were engulfed by the whirlpool of gaiety and pleasure, and His Word was nothing to us; His voice was not

perceived. But has He given you up, given up His pursuit of your soul? No, and if the voice has passed till now, unheeded, uncared for, come to Jesus this evening, listen to His voice this evening, I beseech you. Though you may have fortune, favour, everything that the world can place at your feet, you know that anything this world can give cannot fill your heart. Your heart is empty still if you have not Christ! You are unblessed still if you have not Christ! You are unsaved still if you have not Christ! You are lost, lost, if you have not Christ! You do not like the word "lost?" But it is true. Does it sound harsh? God says it. There is no middle ground, the word of God fixes you, either still among the *lost*, still among the *dead*, still among the *unsaved*, *without Christ*; or *found*, *alive*, *saved*, having Christ. "This my son was *dead* and is *alive* again, he was *lost* and is *found*." Do not turn to your neighbour. It is *you* I am talking to. You. I want *your* soul tonight. You say, "Why are you so much in earnest, why are you so anxious?" I will tell you. I am persuaded of the reality of heaven and its blessedness; I am persuaded of the reality of hell and its torments; I am persuaded of the reality of the salvation of God, and can I be anything else but earnest, very much in earnest? I beg of you, awake! I entreat you by the terrors of a coming judgment-day. I entreat you by the light of an open heaven. I entreat you by the darkness of that gloomy scene the portals of hell disclose. I implore you where you sit just now, affectionately implore you, entreat you, — pause, consider, rush not headlong into that terrible abyss. Hear, hear the word of God, once, twice spoken to you! Will you turn your back on that love; will you turn a deaf ear to that voice, that voice that speaks as never man spake?

2ndly: But God has another way, "In a dream in a vision of the night," etc. (verse 15.) He will try again in the night, when the eyes are heavy with slumber. God goes to that slumbering one, and awakens his soul by a dream. I could tell you of many an one who thus has been met by God. It may be that some here can remember some terrible dream, something that caused them to awake trembling and affrighted. But, tell me, tell me, did you heed the warning voice; did you turn to God with the morning light, or are you still unheeding? Tell me, will you still go on despising, rejecting?

3rdly : There is another way God has of pursuing a soul, "He keepeth back his soul from the pit and his life from perishing by the sword" (verse 18), i.e., He preserves from sudden danger. Well do I remember when I was a boy of 16, a brother of mine fired at and shot a partridge. The bird, wounded mortally, flew awhile and then fell into the water. "Fetch it, he said, and I plunged into the sea. The bird was not worth sixpence, but I risked my life, risked my soul, to get it. Only the mercy of God brought me to shore, a few more yards and I must have sunk, for I was quite exhausted, the distance was long and the tide strong against me. But He spared me, that He might save me. He has saved me now. Perhaps, some of you can remember a time when He thus delivered you from some sudden peril. He spared your life to save your soul; but, tell me, is it saved? Not yet? Then see, He has another way of reaching your hardened and careless heart.

4thly : "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed," etc. This is a way God constantly takes to awaken a soul. One is laid upon a sick bed, perhaps a careful physician has done all that human skill can do, and tender relatives have watched around that couch, and lavished every loving care upon the sufferer, but the case seems hopeless, and the soul is trembling on the very threshold of eternity. God steps in. "I must have that soul," He says; "I will bless the means, I will bring back that one from the very gates of hell." Perhaps many of you can remember some

such time in your history, when your life hung as by a thread, and perhaps you thought you were very peaceful then, quite calm in view of death, not afraid to meet it, and you say you do not feel that calm and peacefulness now. Ah! Satan knows well enough how to give a soothing draught to a dying soul. Perhaps he told you — you had never done anything in your life that was much amiss, that you were as good as your neighbours, and God was very merciful. But tell me, though, was your soul washed *then* in the blood of Jesus? Was that the ground of your peace, that He had met death and Satan for you? Or were you just deluded by Satan? He knows how to administer an anodyne to a dying soul — how to make a death-bed easy. Think you his power is not exerted then? Ah! have you never heard that word of God the wicked have "no bands in their death"? Go down on your knees and thank God you did not die then! I can very well remember the time when I was thus laid low. Had I that peace, you ask? Had I that balmy feeling? No! Not I! I knew the truth too well. I knew I was lost! lost! I knew that if I died I should be lost for ever, and my cry was "Lord spare me, and I will serve thee." I doubt not many of you have thus been brought back from the brink of the grave, but has it brought you to Jesus? God delights to carry by the lips of some one the message of His love and grace to a soul thus on the very verge of eternity. "One among a thousand," perhaps, only, will speak the word of the Gospel of peace; nine hundred and ninety-nine will pass by your bed with never a word of Jesus; never a message from God for you; but one may bring you that message, "deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Ah! this blessed Jesus has opened a doorway. God has found the ransom. God has estimated it. God has provided it, and He sends out that message, "deliver that man from going down to the pit; I have found *a ransom*." CHRIST is the RANSOM; He is also the Mediator. "He gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 4: 6). This is one of the most magnificent statements in all the word of God; I hardly know anything to equal it. "He *gave himself* a ransom for all." The moment your heart believes in Christ liberty is yours, peace is yours, salvation is yours, blessing is yours, everything is yours. This is the Glad Tidings that was "to be testified in due time." Thank God it is due time still. The due time still runs on, and Christ is still waiting to receive you; not now as a Judge but as a Saviour. The One who has met the claims of God is your Friend and Saviour. There He is, alive in heavenly glory for you to trust in, and the moment you trust in Him you get a present salvation. All God asks of you is to believe in Christ. "Will there not be works," you say? Of course there will be works. "Will there not be a change," you ask? Of course there will be a very mighty change! I have very little belief in conversion where there is not this mighty change; a perfect revolution. Instead of having self for a centre, you get Christ for a centre; instead of having self to think about, and self to be seeking to please, you have Christ to think about, and Christ to please, and Christ to serve; Christ, who has given Himself a ransom for you. With regard to works, they come in in their right place. When we know Christ we seek to please Him. We work for Him, not to get life, but because we have got it. We do not labour to work out our own righteousness, for "He will render unto man his righteousness" (verse 26). "You cannot justify yourself," God says, "but, now, I can justify you, because I have righteously condemned and dealt with your sins in the person of that blessed substitute on the cross," and the consequence is, when your soul is brought to God, the blood of Christ washes your sins away, you know you are saved, and your heart is left free to please, and serve, and follow Christ.

But there is a 5th way God takes in dealing with a soul, which I can only say a few words on rapidly. "He looketh upon man and if any say I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the

light" (verses 27, 28), i.e., if any soul honestly confesses his guilt. It is scarcely possible, but there might be one such case here tonight. A soul who had never heard the voice of God speaking before; never heard the word of God simply preached; never been aroused by a dream; never been preserved from sudden and imminent danger; never been brought back from sickness nigh unto death, from the brink of the grave. If there is such an one here, let me say, you have heard the word of God tonight; you have heard the voice of God tonight; you have heard the gospel simply preached, and you are responsible *now*; responsible to take your place before God in simple and honest confession, owning your guilt. Then comes the precious word "He will deliver his soul from going down into the pit; and his life shall see the light," i.e., the knowledge of a present and full salvation. If you are looking only to Christ, resting only on Christ, why, it is what His death has secured for you, that you should *know* the forgiveness of your sins; know what His death has done for you. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There is nothing more to be done, nothing more to be waited for. Christ can do nothing more, and you can do nothing at all. When an anxious man asked "What must I do to be saved?" the answer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It is all God asks from you. Christ has gone up on high in all the perfection of His work for us, and God delights to say, as the fruit and consequence of His death and finished work, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." If He says that in the Old Testament, He says in the New Testament "Who gave *himself* a ransom for all." Oh! what a Saviour! and God would "have all men to be saved." I would tell the whole world if I could gather them together to listen to me, that when man's efforts were utterly useless, when he could do nothing, Christ "gave himself," and ah! if there is one word that could touch a heart that has never been touched before it is this, *He gave Himself! He gave Himself!* and, if He gave Himself unsought, unasked, uncalled for, has He not a claim on your heart? Shall not your heart be Christ's from this moment? Has he not a claim upon it? I can only say, if I had been undecided up till this very moment, I would decide for Christ tonight. Oh! had I ten thousand hearts I would give them all to Christ tonight! And, do not be ashamed to own Him; do not be ashamed to confess Him; do not be ashamed to go home and make a stand for Christ. He was not ashamed to stand for you, and to be scorned, and derided, and spit upon; He was not ashamed to die between two malefactors for you, and do not you be ashamed to own Him. May God give you — each one — tonight to know rest and peace in Himself. W. T. P. W.