

their unbelief and rebellion, God sent flying fiery serpents among them, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died.

They committed the sin, God inflicted the suffering. An agent is just as indispensable to the punishment of sin as to its commission.

It is a mistake to suppose that sin is its own punishment. The Lord sent the fiery serpents. God's instruments do not go anywhere, they are always sent; and the people among whom these instruments of destruction were sent, could neither remove them, nor run away from them. What then was to be done? The people were helpless, and hopeless unless help came down from on high. They began to see their danger, their weakness, their wickedness, the real cause of the fearful scourge or malady to which they were subjected, and they intreated Moses to intercede with the Lord on their behalf.

Notice in the *second* place the *remedy provided*. God in answer to the prayer of Moses, tells him to make a fiery serpent of brass and put it upon a pole.

There are two or three things worthy of our special observation here, because they very strikingly illustrate the remedy which has been provided by Christ for the salvation of our souls, and which is revealed in the Gospel.

God *appointed* the remedy for the Israelites. He, He only could provide it. It was Divine. This is emphatically true in reference to the remedy for our souls. Christ is a provided Saviour, a Divinely-provided Saviour; a Divine Saviour. Of course God was under no obligation to provide a remedy for any one of the serpent-bitten Israelites, and he might have left every one of them to perish. But no, he manifested his *sovereignty* in providing a remedy. So Christ Jesus, the God-provided remedy for our moral malady, is a sovereign remedy.

The serpent of brass was provided *for all* the serpent-bitten Israelites, and put upon a pole that all might look and live.

In like manner the Lord Jesus Christ is a Saviour for all, sent