

novel we find her convinced in the description that “She walks steadily toward the door” (R 249). Why did Faulkner prolong the period of Temple’s uncertainty in the published version? The answer can be found in studying the nature of Faulkner’s concept of faith itself.

As we have mentioned Faulkner’s concept of faith might have been strongly influenced by Jeremy Taylor. Thus with reference to Taylor, the best way to tackle the problem of Temple’s salvation is to examine closely the moving scene in the jail in Act III during which the troubled Temple at last confronts the composed Nancy on the night before her execution.

Temple tells Nancy that she must face the future and her crucial need of finding the peace that Nancy has. Nancy tries to convince her with the very simple phrase, “Trust in Him” (R 242). With her complete belief in heaven, a complete faith in her own future, Nancy is hardly bothered by the past. Temple, however, doesn’t understand how one who has undergone such hardships can say something like that. Nancy answers, “I don’t know. But you got to trust Him. Maybe that’s your pay for the suffering” (R 242). There follows a short exchange between Nancy and Stevens. Stevens asks, “Whose suffering, and whose pay? Just each one’s for his own?” Nancy replies composedly, “Everybody’s. All suffering. All poor sinning man’s.” When Stevens tries to clarify: “The salvation of the world is in man’s suffering. Is that it?” Nancy affirms that it is. At this point Temple, who has listened in her agony, bursts into questions:

But why must it be suffering? He’s omnipotent, or so they tell us. Why couldn’t He have invented something else? Or, if it’s got to be suffering, why can’t be just your own? Why can’t you buy back your own sins with your own agony? . . . Do you have to suffer everybody else’s anguish just to believe in God? (R 243)

Temple concludes with the question that comes from the deepest reaches of her soul: “What kind of God is it that has to blackmail His customers with the whole world’s grief and ruin?” To Temple the idea that one person can atone for the sins of others is utterly incomprehensible.

Here we should notice that Faulkner presents the doctrine that sin demands a sacrifice. In *The Sound & the Fury*, Preacher Shegog gives a message on the passage that “Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). The Hebrews sacrifice animals for the atonement of man’s sins as shown in the story of Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 22:1–14). When God ordered Abraham, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Mori’ah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you,” Abraham obeyed Him with no doubt. His faith was rewarded. When he had bound the lad and took the knife to slay him, God called to him from heaven and said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” And He provided a ram for the offering. The same kind of substitution occurred when the people of Israel were ready to leave their bondage in Egypt. Moses said, “For the Lord will pass through to slay 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 enter your houses to slay you.” The people obeyed him. They sprinkled the blood of a lamb over their doors and they were saved because of the blood of the lamb (EX. 12:21–27).

Taylor, referring to St. Augustine, reminds us that atonement of sin requires sacrifice:

“Here, O Lord, burn and cut my flesh, that thou mayest spare me for ever.” For so said our blessed Savior, “Every sacrifice must be seasoned with salt, and every sacrifice must be burnt with fire;” that is, we must abide in the state of grace; and if we have committed sins, we must expect to be put into the state of affliction; and yet the sacrifice will send up a right and untroubled cloud, and a sweet smell, to join with incense of the altar, where the eternal Priest offers an never-ceasing sacrifice. (HL 377)

Furthermore Taylor contemplates Christ as a holy sacrifice: