

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE CURSE; AND THE CURSE FOR US.

A Sermon

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“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”—Galatians iii. 10—14.

THE apostle tells us, in the eighth verse, that the gospel was preached to Abraham. Very briefly, very tersely, but very fully was the gospel proclaimed to him in these words, “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” The true gospel is no new thing, it is as old as the hills. It was heard in Eden, ere man was driven from the garden, and it has since been repeated in sundry ways and in divers places, even to this day. Oh, that its very antiquity would lead men to venerate it, and then to listen to its voice! It is “gospel,” or good news—the best of news for fallen men. Oh, that they would receive it with gladness!

The gospel blessing which was thus preached to Abraham, and to his seed, came to him by faith. He was justified by his faith, as it is written, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” The blessing, which is the soul of Abraham’s gospel, must come to us in the same way as it did to him, namely, by faith; and if we expect to find it in any other way, we shall be grievously mistaken. There were some in Paul’s day who were “of the works of the law,” and expected to obtain the blessing through their own doings; but they could not find it. We have many around us who are practically looking for gospel blessings upon legal principles. The object of our sermon is, to show them their certainty of failure; and, at the same time, to make clear that way of faith, by which the curse is rolled away, and the blessing comes to the chosen seed.

To begin with: our first head is this, *Blessedness comes not to those who are of the works of the law*; and the second head will be, *Blessedness comes to those who are of faith*. We shall need no other divisions, but we shall greatly need the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit, that these may be plainly and powerfully set forth before our minds.

I want so to speak that you shall go with me, not in hearing only,
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but in feeling and in believing, practically taking home and feeling the power of the truth. When a minister is studying a sermon, his best preparation comes through his feeling, himself, the power of his subject. He rehearses his discourse before the little audience of his own heart and conscience; and in observing the effect produced, he arrives at some idea of how the Word will operate upon others. He that has run the gauntlet of a truth, and felt all the heavy blows which it levels at his own conscience, is likely to deliver that truth to others with tender sympathy and full assurance. Such a preparation I think I have had, and I pray that you may be benefited by it.

I. Let us learn, at the outset, that BLESSEDNESS COMES NOT TO THOSE WHO ARE OF THE WORKS OF THE LAW.

First, observe *the fact*, as the apostle states it very positively: "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." You cannot be under the curse, and yet be partakers of the blessing. A man cannot be in darkness and in light at the same moment: he cannot be under the curse of the law and under the blessing of the gospel too. All who are of the works of the law are under the curse, and consequently none of them are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Note well the persons spoken of—"As many as are of the works of the law"; that is, all of you who hope, by the works of the law, to commend yourselves to God. We are all "of the works of the law" by nature, because it is our bounden duty, as creatures, to keep the law of our Creator. He is our Benefactor, our King, our Lord and God, and he has claims upon us which we ought not to disown. He has set forth those claims in the law of the Ten Commandments, and these are binding upon all of us, without exception. Because we have disobeyed that law, and denied to God his just claims, our violation of the law has brought us under its penalty, which is described as "the curse." No man has always kept all the law, and consequently every man that is of the works of the law has come under the curse, and must remain under it unless ransomed in the one appointed fashion. If you read those ten commands through, as you should do very carefully, you will have to pause at each one, and say, with solemn truthfulness, "I have broken this." Especially will this be the case if you remember the truth that the law is spiritual, and deals with thoughts, desires, imaginations, motives—yea, with your nature itself. Surely you will have to cry, "Guilty! guilty!" every way, and "guilty" every day. This being the case, you are under the curse. You may have been moral, and outwardly commendable; but the heart and intent are what the Lord looks at; and because you have not loved the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and have not loved your neighbour as yourself, you have come short of the demands of his righteous law, and you are under the curse.

I beseech you to remember that *this is a matter which concerns you now*. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse:" not only shall you be so in the day when "Depart, ye cursed," will be the final and hopeless doom of the wicked; but to-day you are under the curse if you are of the works of the law. If the unsaved could really understand and believe this, they would hardly keep their seats

If you are not by Christ redeemed from the curse of the law, if you have not by faith appropriated his great sacrifice, you are under the present curse of God. Even the gospel does not bless you, for "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Son of God." O my hearer, I could weep to think that you are under the curse. A death-bed is a dreadful place to an unpardoned sinner; but I am not speaking of a death-bed, I am now talking of the seat whereon you now sit in health and strength: if you are of the works of the law, that seat now upbears a man under the curse. I am not talking now of thieves and murderers, and such like; I am speaking of as many as are of the works of the law, and specially of those who believe that they are keeping the law, and are looking for salvation by their obedience. Those who think that they are not to be numbered with the guilty, and need not to be saved by grace, these are of the works of the law by their own choice, and they are under the curse. If you come before God in your own self-righteousness, you are, by that very act and deed, proven to be under the curse. This brand of Cain is not on your brow, but the curse is working in your heart. As this city of London seemed last night and this morning to lie under a cloud charged with tempest, so does the man who looks to the law for life abide under a cloud of wrath which may burst upon him at any moment. Oh, that the gloom and oppression of spirit which comes of that cloud of threatening would pain you greatly, and drive you to Christ for shelter!

That you may no longer abide in false security, I pray you for a few moments *weigh those words*, "*under the curse.*" I do not feel as if I could expand them or expound them; but I must simply repeat them: "**UNDER THE CURSE!**" The Lord make those words to pierce your souls! This is not my language, remember; it is not even the word of the apostle Paul as a man; for he speaketh by inspiration when he saith, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." How shall I pronounce these words with sufficient solemnity? When the sermon is printed, in what type shall the printer set up these words, "**UNDER THE CURSE**"? "The curse causeless shall not come," but this is a curse with a cause of overwhelming conclusiveness. It is a curse that was pronounced of old by the authority of the Lord, and confirmed by the Amens of assembled Israel; it is, in fact, the essence of all those curses which of old were declared on Mount Ebal, the rolling thunder of threatened wrath. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse," even as the Shorter Catechism puts it, "They have lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so are made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever." Dare you sleep to-night under the curse? Will you wake to-morrow and go forth to your business under the curse? Can you sport, and laugh, and frolic, under the curse? God grant we may be sufficiently sensible to be filled with anguish at the sound of these dreadful words—"under the curse"!

The apostle goes on to give a *Scriptural confirmation of this fact*. He says, "For it is written." He is writing a part of the New Testament under inspiration of the Holy Spirit; but he turns back to the Old, and gives authority to his writing by showing that it always was

the mind of the Spirit, "for it is written." If anything be written by the pen of inspiration, it is true, and we accept it as infallible. I hope you are not among those who trifle with the inspiration of any part of Holy Writ; for if so, this text has no power with you. "It is written" is a thing of omnipotent authority with many of us. "It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." This is the summary of the whole passage in the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, and also of the fifteenth verse of the eighth chapter of that book.

Attend to each word of the passage quoted. *There is no exemption of persons.* "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law." Every offender comes under the curse. Is it the king, the priest, the nobleman?—he is under the curse. Or is it the poorest of the land—the slave, the beggar, the fallen woman?—sin brings them under the curse. Prince or pariah, it is all the same if the law be not perfectly continued in, the curse follows. The sentence is sweeping; there are no exceptions to its killing force. You may have kept the law in many points, but if you have broken it in one, you are under its curse. If you want to send a message by the telegraphic wire, it may be perfectly sound for one hundred miles, but if it is only broken in one inch, nay, if it is simply cut across, you cannot send the message by it. No blessing can come to a man by the law unless the law has been perfectly kept; but one single infraction of the law involves the curse. The possibility of blessing on the footing of justice is gone when sin enters in. Thus, every man of every rank and grade, and external character, since he has not continued in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, has come under the curse.

Observe that *there is no limit of time.* It says, "continueth not." What if a man should have kept the law, in his own judgment, for many years, his service is not over. Men join our army for a certain number of years, and then they are discharged; but a man is under the law so long as he lives; neither can he escape from under its yoke by the mere lapse of time. And so, if we had accomplished obedience for twenty years, yet still, if in the next year we broke the law, we should come under its curse. A thief is not excused because he was heretofore honest, nor a murderer because aforesaid he had not shed blood. He that "continueth not" comes under the lash. My conscience clearly sees the utter impossibility of my ever obtaining justification by the works of the law. If, up till now, I had never sinned, which, alas! is very, very far from being the case, yet I should still stand in jeopardy every hour; for, being tempted, I should yet fall and perish, if my footing were that of the law. Even the just could not live by legal principles; their only hope is to live by faith. As for us defiled and polluted sinners, we are, from the beginning, out of the running, if the race be by works: no lapse of time will enable us to start; and if we did start, no time would arrive when we could say, "It is finished." A Methuselah would be under the law in his nine hundredth year. Still might the curse fall on him, even though, up till then, he had stood firm. Thus saith the Lord, "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he

shall even die thereby." On that footing none of us all could hope to remain free from the curse; but the case is worse, for if we are of the works of law, we are already under the curse.

Observe that *there is no indulgence as to certain sins*. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all things*." What a range these words have! Yet they do not so much concern ceremonial things as the moral conduct of daily life. If you will turn to Deuteronomy xxvii., from which Paul is quoting, you will find that the works which are mentioned in detail as bringing the curse, are not works of worship, and oblation, and ritual, but of morality or immorality; works which concern the moral law. We must continue in the keeping of the Ten Commandments, and abide in the spirit of them in "all things"; or, if not, it is utterly impossible that the law can ever save us: all it can do is to put us under its curse.

Once more, *here is no narrowing of the demand*. It is put, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law *to do them*." If a man does nothing wrong, yet if he fails to do that which is right, he is guilty. Omission is as truly a defect as commission. He misses the mark who shoots beyond it or falls short of it. If thou makest a single omission of duty, on the footing of law thou art a lost man. If thou hast omitted, at any time, to love the Lord thy God with the whole force and intensity of thy nature, if thou hast omitted in any degree to love thy neighbour as thyself, thou hast committed a breach of the law. Not to obey is to disobey. Who can plead innocence, if this be so? How cutting is the sentence, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law *to do them*!" It is an awful passage! It seems to me to shut up the gate of hope by works; yea, to nail it up. I bless God it does fasten this door effectually; for if there seemed to be half a chance of getting through it, we should find men still struggling for entrance. Salvation by self is man's darling hope: salvation by doings, feelings, or something or other of their own, is the favourite delusion of sinners. We may bless God that he has rolled a great stone at the mouth of the grave of legal hope. He has dashed in pieces as with a rod of iron the earthen vessel which held the treasures of our conceit. "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

To complete this, the apostle gives us a piece of what I must call *side evidence*. He has stated the fact, and confirmed it by Scripture; he now gives side evidence from other Scriptures. Some might say, "There have been just men: men have been justified in the sight of God." Yes, saith Paul, turning to one passage out of very many which he might have quoted from Holy Scripture, the Lord saith by his servant Habakkuk, "The just shall live by faith." The only just men that ever have existed since the fall have been justified by faith; and that their faith was of the essence of their justification is clear, since they lived by faith. It is not said that the just shall rejoice by faith, but they shall "*live by faith*." Their very existence as just men hung upon their faith. They had no life before God except as they believed and lived. The apostle argues that since the just men of the old covenant were justified by faith, it is clear we cannot be justified by the law; for the law is not of faith, since the law saith

nothing of believing, but speaks only of doing. The law speaketh nothing of grace, nothing of mercy, but only of justice and merit. If anything that may be called mercy is due to men, it is clearly not mercy, but justice; for all that is due is of justice. The law speaketh not of believing, it speaketh only of doing—"The man that doeth those things shall live in them." The one teaching of the law is—"Obey and live; disobey and die." Inasmuch as those who did live unto God lived by their faith, it is clear it was not by the works of the law. Thus the apostle argues, negatively and positively, showing how men were not justified, and showing how they were justified; and thus he makes it plain as a pikestaff that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.

My dear hearers, let us deal faithfully and personally with the solemn truth now before us. I pray that everyone may examine himself to see whether he is of the works of the law. Are we legal in our feelings? Are we relying upon self and its doings? Does any one among us feel that there is not in London a more deserving person than himself? Because he is a good church or chapel-goer, does he think himself accepted of the Lord? Because of confirmation, or baptism, or attendance on the sacrament, does he hope to be saved? Because of his decent and respectable life, does he reckon himself just? If such be the hope of any one of you, you are confessedly "of the works of the law," and it is not my word, but the Word of the Lord, that you are under the curse. Think of this, you who are so very good, so free from fault! There is nothing else for you but the curse. You are not in the same way as those men who are mentioned in the Scriptures as justified; for they lived by faith, and you hope to live by works. As you are not in the same way, neither will you come to the same end. It is a thought which vexes you, and possibly even makes you angry, that you should be under the curse; but it will be well for you to know the truth, however black it looks. Nothing remains but a fearful looking for of judgment; for where there is even now a curse, what else can there be but fiery indignation at the last?

We will stay no longer upon this most searching truth. Alas, I cannot bring it home to the conscience! It needs a miracle of grace to get this truth into the heart of man, and to make him feel the full terror of it. It is so repugnant to our proud human nature, that we incline to any error which will obscure it. Come, Holy Spirit, with thy divine light, and flash this truth upon the sinner's eyes in such a way that he must see it!

II. Secondly, THIS BLESSEDNESS COMES TO THOSE WHO ARE OF FAITH, even to those who look for salvation to the Lord Jesus, in whom God declares himself to be just, and the justifier of him that believeth.

On this point I shall run on much the same lines as under the first division of the subject. Here we have a *blessed fact*: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." If the former truth, that we are under the curse, should make us sit uneasily, this blessed doctrine should make us dance for joy. The ransom is paid; we are free. "Christ hath redeemed *us*"; that is, so many as believe in him. He hath "redeemed us from the curse of the law"; "he hath bought us out from under the curse." Our deliverance from the curse is by a

process similar to that by which slaves are set free, namely, by their being bought with a price.

We are not merely delivered from the curse by a moral change in us, but by a redemptive work for us. Christ was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood. A ransomed captive is by the ransom justly freed, and has a right to his freedom which none may question. You that believe in Jesus, are freed from the curse of the law, and justly freed from it. The law cannot curse you, though you have broken it, and in your own persons incurred its penalty. Since you are in Christ Jesus, the law has not a word to say against you; the reason we will show you directly, but the fact is so, and therein you should rejoice. "He that believeth in him is not condemned." So far from being condemned, the believer is "accepted in the Beloved," and this is our happy privilege at this hour. Let us joy in God, and rest in peace, being justified by faith.

But then the apostle goes on to *show the manner of it*. The fact is clear; oh, for a grip of it! The manner of our deliverance is this—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." I do not understand language at all, unless this means substitution. Christ was made a curse for us; that is to say, in our room, and place, and stead he bore our sin, and the curse which came of it. The curse of the law, which otherwise must have fallen upon us, fell upon the Anointed of the Lord, who stood sponsor for us. Jesus was accursed of men. Oh, how they hated and loathed him! How clamorously the Jews cried, "Away with him! Crucify him, crucify him!" The curse of men might have been of small account, though it cost our Lord many a sorrow; but his Father hid his face from him! Hear ye that bitterest of all bitter cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Here is the wormwood and the gall, the quintessence of woe. He was ever blessed, yet was he made a curse. In him was no sin, yet "He made him to be sin for us." He was always in himself the Beloved of the Father; but when he stood in the sinner's stead, a voice was heard, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," and then "it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." I do not like to use a word of my own, in trying to open up this mystery: I will not even try to explain it, but will bid you look down into the depths of it for yourselves. He was "*made* a curse for us": he was not such by nature; it needed a special arrangement to put him in that condition. Not only did the curse pass over him in its results, but the word says, "He was made a curse." It is wonderfully expressive; and yet more wonderfully it veils the inexpressible. "He was made a curse." O thou divine Son, thou ever-blessed One, thou perfect One, thou altogether lovely One, how can such words apply to thee? Yet they do so apply, for the Holy Spirit speaketh of thee in this wise. Here is our hope, and here our joy, even in this abyss of woe: "He was made a curse for us." The penal consequences of sin were so visited upon the great Substitute that he vindicated the law of God in the highest conceivable manner. Remember those words: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." These are the

echo of that prophetic sentence—"The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "He bare the sin of many." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He bare our sins that he might bear them away by the fact of bearing them himself. This is the central doctrine of the gospel; and although to-day it is slighted, here I stand, by God's grace, to declare it in plain terms while my tongue can move. I know no other hope for lost men but this—that the justice of God has been vindicated by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is by faith in him that men are delivered from the curse of the law, because he was made a curse for them.

The apostle, speaking in this second part, as it were, in the same way as in the former portion, goes on to *confirm this by Scripture*. He says again, "For it is written." Beloved, that is the nail on which everything must hang: "It is written," "It is written." Never let us get away from "It is written." May we hold fast to God's Word, if we give up everything else! "It is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Read the twenty-third verse of the twenty-first chapter of Deuteronomy. The instructed in Jewish manners and customs tell us that the usual way of putting to death by the Jews was by stoning, and a person who committed murder was stoned to death usually, but he was afterwards hanged upon a tree. He was hanged up that men might see that he was taken from the earth, and that the curse of God was upon him for his crime. The law was that he should not remain on the tree after sundown, and this law saved the Jews from that barbarity which once defaced our own country, by gibbets with men hanging in chains upon them year after year. A man who had committed murder was hung up till the sun went down; and then he was buried, and, if I remember rightly, they usually buried the tree, and the nails, and the garments of the criminal, that the memory of him might be put away, and the land should not be polluted. This being the case, it was remarkable that our Lord should die by a death which was evidently intended in the divine decree to exhibit him as made a curse. The felon's gibbet, the mode of death for slaves, was adopted by the Roman governor, who knew nothing whatever of the divine purpose, but yet carried it out. By the mode of his death our Lord was exhibited as "made a curse for us." Oh, look you to the Crucified! While the darkness gathers around us on this murky morning, let it remind you of the gloom which gathered around your Saviour. Remember the hour when the concentrated essence of darkness and of eternal night gathered about his blessed person while he hung exposed to death upon the tree. Darkness was the fittest surrounding for the agony which racked his soul. Our Lord endured within him a darkness greater than that without him. The darkness seemed to say that his griefs could not be seen or understood of men. He suffered within the sacred chamber of an impenetrable midday midnight. None could see the heights and depths of what was meant by his being "made a curse."

"There my God bore all my guilt;
This through grace can be believed;
But the horrors which he felt
Are too vast to be conceived."

Notice, furthermore, *the consequence of all this*: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." Our Lord Jesus Christ was made a curse for us that he might deliver us from the curse of the law, and that in consequence we might be blessed. The flood of blessing was ready to flow along its channel, but the river-bed was blocked by a huge rock. The stream was dammed up by our iniquity. What was to be done? The hindrance could only be moved by that great Lord, whose hands were pierced, and whose feet were nailed to the cross. He by his great self-sacrificing act of love, lifted the rock from its place, cast it right away, and enabled the stream of blessing to flow freely down to us. This day there is no curse for the believer; but every blessing awaits him. All who are in Christ, the great seed of Abraham, are blessed with faithful Abraham. The covenant may be summed up in this one word—Blessing, blessing, blessing—blessing *for* the believer, and blessing *through* him.

What was the blessing of Abraham? It was, first, *justification*. It was "accounted to him for righteousness." God counts them righteous who believe in Jesus. He not only absolves you from sin, but he justifies you, accounts you as having kept the law. Oh, rejoice in this, and be glad!

The next blessing to Abraham was *the promise*. God had given him a great promise of a spiritual inheritance. To us the Holy Spirit is the earnest of that future inheritance: and Christ has so wrought for us "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Wherever the Spirit of God dwells, the covenant is fulfilled: you have in the Spirit the foretaste of the promised rest, you have the initial stages of the promised perfection, you have the dawn of the promised glory. The Spirit is the earnest of the inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory. Beloved, see what has come to you, then, through the substitutionary work of Christ; justification is yours as truly as it was Abraham's, and you are as assuredly justified as Abraham was. The promise also comes to you even as it did to Abraham; for you are Abraham's seed in Christ, and you are blessed with faithful Abraham; therefore you may rejoice to-day with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

All this, you observe, is by faith: "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit *through faith*." O dear hearers, I am very sorry for some of you, for you have no faith, and therefore no grace. Why should not my sorrow be turned into joy? May God the Holy Ghost lead you to believe in Christ Jesus to-day! My wonder is that any believe, from one point of view; and then my next wonder is that anybody should not believe. Is it not marvellous that God should give his own dear Son, God like himself, and that God should thus come among men, and put on human flesh and blood, and that in his wonderfully complex person he should bear the consequences of our sin? It is a miracle that God should, by suffering, magnify his own law, and that the Supreme Judge should himself bear the curse, instead of the culprit, and thus vindicate the principles of eternal rectitude. Even hell itself could not more fully prove the displeasure of God against evil, nor make the moral government of the universe more

honourable. The doctrine of substitution must be true; it could not have been invented by human wit. *Primâ facie* it bears the mark of truth upon it. It is the most wonderful story that ever was told: God himself condescends to suffer in the place of his enemies, he bears the sin of those who are rebels against his divine authority, that without injury to his justice or taint upon his righteousness, he might pardon sin, and receive the sinner into favour. Herein is love indeed! Here is justice truly vindicated, and great love glorified. Love both devised the plan and carried it out, and this day love makes it effectual in all who believe in Jesus.

O my hearers, I cannot be content to preach this glorious truth to you; I hunger and thirst that you may receive it! Oh, that you would now look to Jesus and live! Behold him on the cross! Behold your God, whom you have offended, clothed in your nature, and dying in your stead, that you may live! The serpent of brass is on the pole: the serpent has bitten the people, they are ready to die; and lo, on the pole another serpent is uplifted. The curse destroys you; the Lord uplifts him who was made a curse. Those who looked to the brazen serpent found life and healing in that look; and even so there is life from sin by looking to him who was made sin for us. Though the serpent's poison was deadly, its bites were cured by a look at the brazen serpent; and even so my Lord becomes a man, and, as a man, bears our sin in his own body on the tree, that he might from that tree cry to guilty men, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Oh, that you would look to Jesus by faith! I began by lamenting that we are under the curse; but if you will trust in my Lord, I shall conclude by bidding you rejoice that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law."

I have done when I just say these two or three practical words: *Humbly let us own the great evil of sin.* What a horrible thing sin must be, that it should compel God to curse his creatures! God is love, but even love curses sin. God is full of pity and compassion; but this very God must curse those who hope to be saved by his law, and yet break that law. Child of God, dost thou ever trifle with sin? Cease from that fatal folly; for God does not trifle with it—he curses it. O man, see what a polluting thing thy sin must be, since there is no removing it save by the blood of the only begotten Son of God! If thou hast ever had faint views of thine own guilt, cease from them at once. Only by the interposition of God himself couldst thou be saved from guilt. How great that guilt! Lie low before thy Lord. Confess thy sin with a broken heart. Wonder that thy heart is not more broken than it is, and that thou hast not a greater horror of its tremendous, its infinite evil.

Next, let me say to you, *heartily accept the way of salvation by faith in Christ.* I cannot make out why men quarrel with justification by faith as they now do. There is an old proverb which saith, "It is a pity for any man to quarrel with his bread-and-butter." But to quarrel with the means of your livelihood is nothing in folly compared with cavilling at God's way of salvation. Why do you refuse a method so simple, so just to God, so safe to man? Why do men desire to find

fault with it? I am very old-fashioned, so *they* say; but does their new fashion offer men anything better than the old way? I am not too old to learn; but I am not so young as willingly to go further and fare worse. I cannot see what there is in the new theology which even pretends to be better than the old. I suppose that eminent divine is eminently superior to me who is so orthodox as to say that our Lord Jesus Christ by his death did something or other, he does not know what, which in some way or other, he does not quite know how, is connected with the reconciliation of man to God. This is rather a cloudy gospel. I do not think that such a dim statement would cheer a mouse, much less a broken-hearted, dying sinner. I do not see that his plan, or want of plan, has any glory over that which I declare to you. But he is orthodox: very many of his brethren go far further, and altogether deny the expiatory sacrifice. I cannot pretend to have fellowship with such: they take from me my hope. I was a broken-hearted sinner, crushed under guilt, crying out in despair, and expecting soon to be in hell; and it was only when I learned that the Lord Jesus suffered in my stead that I found peace of conscience. Substitution is still the rock on which I build, and I know of no other on which a man can wisely base his hope for eternity. Comfort in the cross I have never lost, and I am not going to cast away my confidence in it to please the philosophers of the season. The old farmer would not change his horse, "For," said he, "I have not seen a nag that will carry me better than my own." The doctrine of the cross has carried me so far without a stumble, and I hope to enter heaven by its means. I am glad to sing with the children—

"He knew how wicked we had been,
And knew that God must punish sin:
So, out of pity, Jesus said
He'd bear the punishment instead."

Glorious atonement! Accept it, poor soul! Do not let the devil set thee cavilling at thine only hope. This is the available way of salvation for thee, thou lost one! Thou self-condemned one, this is a way which will suit thee! If thou art so very good, and so very wise, I know that this gracious method will not attract thee; but thou wilt kick at it. This does not make me think any the less of it; for I remember that our Lord is set to be a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to those who stumble at his word, being disobedient. If you will not have him, do not deceive yourselves, we never thought you would. You do but prove that the Father hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hath revealed them unto babes. You come not to him because you are not of his sheep, as he said unto you. If you were brought low, and felt your need of him, then should we hope that Jesus reckoned you among his redeemed. If you would hear his voice and follow him, then should we know that you belonged to the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep; but as you disregard him, you will be driven away with the goats.

Further, *let us now gratefully extol our Redeemer*. Join all of you to magnify the Lord your Saviour. We do not half praise him as we ought. I might even ask, Do we say anything about him? Six

days in the week we talk about all sorts of things, and say little or nothing about him, and yet he has redeemed us. The fact of his being made a curse for us ought to fill our mouths with thanksgiving and our tongues with singing all the day long. Blessed be the Redeemer's name! "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Extol him now and evermore: if you have not done so before, begin at once. Get your music ready. "O sing unto the Lord a new song."

Then go and tell other people about your Lord's redemption. The theme will win attention if properly set forth. Let no one within fifty miles of you be without a knowledge of this great redemption by Christ's being made a curse for us. Men try to hide this truth, therefore cause it to shine out everywhere. Vindicate the name of your great Lord by telling everybody that he hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. If I could set you all preaching this blessed doctrine, I should rejoice indeed. Rest in it, and rejoice in it, and then repeat it till others also know and believe it. Even now the day begins to brighten up, the murky darkness is abating: I hope our hearts will rejoice in harmony with the day. The Lord send us out into a world delivered from darkness. May we make it brighter by setting before it this great truth! To our glorious Substitute be glory for ever and ever! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians iii.

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