THE STERN PEDAGOGUE

NO. 1196

A SERMON
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"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."
Galatians 3:24-26

NEITHER the Jewish law of ten commands, nor its law of ceremonies were ever intended to save anybody. It was not the intent of the ceremonial law in itself to effect the redemption of the soul, by a set of pictures it set forth the way of salvation, but it was not itself the way. It was a map, not a country, a model of the road, not the road itself.

The blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, could not really take away sin. These sacrifices and offerings were but types of the great sacrifice which in due time was presented by the true priest. There was no inherent virtue in the victims that were slain, or in the services that were observed by the worshippers!

Those sacred rites were intended to portray to the minds of the people the real sacrifice which was in the fullness of time to be offered by our Lord Jesus Christ, but they could do nothing more. The king's portrait is not himself, the engraving of a banquet is not the feast itself, and so the grand old ceremonial law was but a shadow of good things to come, but contained not the substance of spiritual blessings.

Neither was the moral law of the ten commands proclaimed on Mount Sinai ever given with the view of sinners being saved by it. When that law was announced by God, He knew that everyone to whom He gave that law had already broken it, and that consequently they could not keep its precepts, or claim justification by their conformity to its requirements. He never intended it to be a way of salvation.

Hundreds of years before He had revealed His covenant of grace and the way of faith to His servant Abraham, and the law was not meant to disannul the ancient promise.

To look at the law as a Savior is to place Sinai in the place of Zion, and so to misuse and abuse the law. It was sent with quite a different purpose, as we shall presently try to show you. It was sent to be our schoolmaster till Christ came—the schoolmaster of a world in its minority that had need to be under tutelage until it attained full age, which would not happen until Christ should be born of a woman, and the doctrine of salvation by faith in Him should be fully preached and known.

Now I shall try and show, first, *the office of the law*. Then, secondly, *the design of that office*—"to bring us to Christ." And thirdly, *the termination of that office*, "After faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

I. We begin with THE OFFICE OF THE LAW.

It is to be a schoolmaster. Here I must endeavor to explain the figure. A schoolmaster nowadays is not at all like the personage Paul intended. He speaks of a *pedagogue*, an official seldom if ever now seen among men. This was not a person who actually officiated as master in the school, and gave instruction in the school itself, but one—a slave generally—who was set to take the boys to school, and to watch over them, and to be a sort of general supervisor of them, both in school and out of school, and at all times.

A pedagogue was very generally employed in the training of the young. Indeed, it was a common and customary thing for the sons of the Greek and Roman nobility to have appointed over them some trustworthy servant of the family who took them in charge. The boys were entirely under these servants, and thus had their spirits broken in and their vivacity restrained.

As a rule, these pedagogues were very stern and strict—they used the rod freely, not to say cruelly, and the condition of the boys was sometimes no better than slavery. The boys, (as it was supposed to be for their good) were kept in perpetual fear. Their recreations were restricted, even their walks were under the surveillance of the grim pedagogues. They were sternly held in check in all points and were thus disciplined for the battle of life.

As for the young women, they also had some elderly woman of grim appearance who tried to keep them out of mischief, and suppress anything like cheerfulness or girlish glee. It was considered necessary for young people that they should suffer from rigid discipline and bear the yoke in their youth. So they were all put under pedagogues, whoever they might be—pedagogues armed with penalties and devoid of sympathies.

Now Paul, taking up this thought, which was his idea in the word "schoolmaster," says the law was our pedagogue, our guardian, our custodian, ruler, tutor, governor until Christ came.

Well, then, what is the business of the law as a pedagogue? The business of the law is, first, *to teach us our obligations to God*. Let us ask ourselves if we have ever heard the law teaching us in that way. Brethren, read the law of ten commands and study each separate precept, and you will find that in those ten short precepts you have all the moral virtues, the full compass of your accountability to God, and of your relationship to your fellow men.

It is a wonderful condensation of morals. The essence of all just decrees and statutes lies there. Perfection is there photographed, and holiness mapped out. No one has ever been able to add to it without creating an excrescence, not a word could be taken from it without causing a serious omission. It is the perfect law of God and tells us exactly what we ought to be. If we are in any degree deficient, we are to that extent guilty before God.

Now, when the law comes to a man's conscience, it reveals to him the divine standard of right—holds it up before him—makes him look at it—and apprises him that the commandments do not merely refer to acts and deeds, but with equal force to the words and thoughts from whence they proceed.

I warrant you it is a humbling day when a man gets to understand that for every idle word he has spoken he will be brought to account, and when he hears again that his desires and imaginations will all come under divine scrutiny. How startled is the purest mind when it understands that whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart, so that even glances of the eye and thoughts of the heart are offenses of the law.

The law of God takes cognizance of the entire nature and reveals the evil which lurks in every faculty. The mere imagination of sin is sinful—the very conception of it, albeit that we should reject it and never carry it into act, would still be a stain upon our minds, and render us impure before the thrice holy God.

This is one of the first works of the law—to show us what spotless purity it demands and to reveal to us the matchless perfection which alone can meet its requirements. He who has once gazed upon the blinding light of legal holiness will tremble at the memory of it, and abhor himself in dust and ashes as he feels how far short of it he falls.

Having done that, the law acts as a schoolmaster next by *showing us our sinfulness*. We are naturally prone to account ourselves very good. Our own opinion of ourselves is seldom too low, most generally it is a rather high one. But just as a stern pedagogue would say to a boy who was getting a little proud, "Come along, sir, I must take you down a little," so the law takes us down. It says, "Look at that precept, you have not kept that. And consider this other precept, for you appear to have forgotten it."

"Look," says the law, "you talk about your holiness, but have you loved the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your might? And have you loved your neighbor as yourself?"

And then, when conscience, who is a great friend of this pedagogue, replies, "Indeed I have done nothing of the kind," the conviction of sin comes home to the soul and sadness reigns. You will tell me, "This is very unpleasant—to be made to feel that you are sinful." Ay, but it is very necessary, there is no getting to Christ in any other way. Christ died for sinners, and if you are not sinners, what interest can

you have in His death? why should you think that He died for you? You must be convinced of your sinfulness before you can possibly realize the value and need of salvation.

It is the business of the law to lay before you the straight line, that you may see your crooks, and put before you the pure gold, that you may discern the humbling fact that what you thought to be pure metal is only so much worthless dross. It is the part of this pedagogue to bring you down, to humble you and make you feel how sinful you have been.

When the law has carried our education thus far, its next business is to *sweep away all our excuses* and stop our mouths as to all self-justifying pleas. Did you ever know a boy without an excuse? I never did. I think I never knew a girl either. We all make excuses readily enough. But those rough, surly pedagogues always answered the boy's idle apologies by giving the offender an extra stroke of the whip for daring to impose upon his guardian. And that is what the law does with us. We say to it, "We have not done exactly as we ought, but then think of poor human nature!"

Ah! how often we make that excuse, and the law says, "I have nothing to do with the poverty of human nature. This is what God commands, and if you do not obey you will have to be cast away forever from His presence."

The law makes no diminution of its claims because of fallen human nature. And what is more, when the law comes with power to a man's conscience he does not himself dare to plead human nature, for of all pleas that is one of the most fallacious.

A man will say, "Well, I know I drank to intoxication, but that is merely gratifying an instinct of human nature." Now, just suppose that this drunkard, when he gets sober, falls into the hands of a thief, will he not give the rogue in charge to a policeman? But what if the defense is set up that it was human nature that robbed him? See what he will say about it. Says he, "I will get human nature locked up for twelve months if I can." He does not recognize soft speeches about human nature when anyone does wrong to him, and he knows, in his own soul, that there is no valid defense in such a plea when he does wrong to God.

What if human nature be bad? That only proves that the man ought to be punished more. A man stands before my Lord Mayor tomorrow morning. He is brought up for a thief, charged with having picked somebody's pocket, and he says, "My Lord Mayor, I ought to be forgiven, for the fact is, it is my nature to steal. I have stolen so long that whenever I see a pocket I feel a disposition at once to put my hand into it, such is the infirmity of my nature."

What does the Lord Mayor say? He replies very gravely, "Why, I see that it is not merely in actions that you are guilty, but your very nature is poisoned with dishonesty. I shall give you a double punishment, your plea is not an excuse, but an aggravation."

So when the law comes it sweeps all excuses away and makes us see how hollow, false, and even wicked they are. Men, like boys, will say that circumstances were such that they could not help doing amiss, but the law, like a stern pedagogue, says, "I have nothing to do with circumstances. Whatever your circumstances are there is your duty, and you have not done it, and not having done it, you must be punished for your offense."

Where does Moses, in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, speak about exonerating or even extenuating circumstances? God spake all these words, saying, "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them."

That is to say, not under any circumstances. "Thou shalt not steal," not under any circumstances. Circumstances are not taken into account, the law sweeps that excuse away, and makes men speechless before the judgment seat.

Many transgressors argue, "Well, but I have not done worse than other people." To which the law replies, "What hast thou to do with other people? Each individual must stand or fall on his own account

before the law. The law is to you. If another has broken it he shall be punished even as you shall, inasmuch as you have broken it."

Then the man cries, "But I have been better than others." But says the law, "If you have not perfectly walked in all the ways of the Lord your God to do them, I have nothing to do with comparing you with others. For this is my sentence, 'Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.'"

Now, my dear hearers, these are not my words, they are the Words of God by His servant Moses, and there they stand like a flaming sword, turning every way and blocking up the legal road to the tree of life. Conscience, when it is really awakened by the law, confesses herself condemned and ceases to uphold her plea of innocence. How can it be otherwise when the law is so stern?

Then, peradventure, the man will say, "I mean to do better in the future." To which the law replies, "What have I to do with that? It is already due that you should be perfect in the future, and if you should be perfect, in what way would that wipe out your old offenses? You have only done what you ought to have done."

But the man cries, "I repent of having done wrong." "Ay," says the law, "but I have nothing to do with repentance." There is no provision in the ten commands for repentance. Cursed is the man that breaks the law, and that is all that the law has to say to him.

Over the top of Sinai there were flames exceeding bright, and a trumpet sounded exceedingly loud, but there were no drops of the rain of pity there. Storm and tempest, thunderings and lightnings appalled the people, so that they trembled in the camp, and such must be the sights and sounds we witness as long as we are under the law.

Having thus swept away excuses, this pedagogue does the next thing which pedagogues did to boys. It begins *to chide us and to chasten us*. And it *will* chide too. I know it. I had the law frowning and shaking its fist at me for years before I got from under it. Glad enough was I to escape from it, for well do I remember the weight of its cudgel—that cudgel of crab tree of which John Bunyan speaks. I warrant you it can give you such sore bones, so that you cannot lie down upon the bed of your self-confidence to take a rest.

"Why," says the law, "you have done this and that, and the other, and you know you have. You have sinned against light, and against knowledge, and against conscience, and against love, and against mercy." And every one of these brings another blow from the great rod, till we are all wounds and bruises, and we seem to ourselves to be covered with putrefying sores.

The law will serve us as the pedagogue did the boy—it will accompany and follow us up everywhere. The old pedagogue went with the boy to the playground, he did not let him play in peace. He went upstairs to bed with him, he did not let him go to sleep without a last frown. And he woke him up in the morning much earlier than he liked to be awakened, and made him come out of his bed, whether he liked it or not. He could never go anywhere without this pedagogue with him, poor child.

And so it is when the law gets hold of a man—really gets hold of him. Does he go to the theater to find pleasure in sin? the law will go with him there and make him feel more wretched there than when he was at home. He may get among the frivolous, and try to sing some old song to get rid of his feelings, but the more he tries to drown his misery, the more the dark forebodings come before his mind. He cannot rest.

The law keeps on saying, "What are you doing now? Why, you are only going from bad to worse." The law also smites the awakened conscience again and again, and frightens him with what is soon to come. "Suppose you were to die where you now are," says the law. "Suppose you were now to appear before your Maker, unforgiven, where would you be?"

Perhaps in this kind of feeling a man goes to the house of God. The law follows him there. If the preacher preaches a contorting sermon, the law says, "This is not for you. You have nothing to do with that. You are under my government, not under Christ." The sweeter the promise, the more bitter will be the taste of the sermon in the poor sinner's mouth. For the law says, "You have broken my injunctions.

You have violated my statutes. There is nothing for you but eternal punishment—to be driven forever from the presence of God." "Hard lines," say you. You do not like this pedagogue. No, nor did I, when I was under him. Glad was I when the day came that I was of age.

Do you see what the drift of it all is? Why, the drift of it is to make you despair of being saved by your good works, and to make you feel that you can do nothing right apart from Jesus. You are forced by the law to cry out, "Why, I cannot do anything right. I have tried and failed. I have tried again and have failed. I thought I was going to improve myself into an angel, but I seem to be worse every day. I thought surely the law would have smiled on me and said, 'That is well done,' but when I have done my best I am still condemned, I am allowed no peace!"

No, dear soul, and if God means to save you, you never will have any peace till you come to Christ. The man whom God does not intend to save is often left without the law, to enjoy his portion in this life as best he may. What is the use of worrying that man? He may as well have peace in this life, for he will never see the face of the Lord in heaven.

But the Lord's elect are made to feel the rod, and by that rod they are so beaten that they are driven out of all heart and confidence in themselves, and made to turn to Jesus to find salvation by some better method than by their own works. The law is our schoolmaster to whip us to Christ—our pedagogue to flog us and beat us till we are heartily sick of self, and look for our hope and confidence in some other source.

II. Thus I have shown you the office of the law, and I have entrenched upon the second head, which is, THE DESIGN OF THIS OFFICE.

The law is not intended to conduct any man to despair. "But did not you say it was, just now?" No, I did not. I said it was sent to drive a man to despair *of himself*. That is the despair which hails the Gospel, and the sooner we have it the better. It would be quite another matter if we were driven to despair absolutely.

Brethren, the law says, "You shall not indulge the hope of being saved by me. I will whip it out of you." And it does this effectually, but it is not meant that the man should say, "Well, if I cannot be saved by my works there is no hope of my being saved at all." Oh, no! it is that he may then ask, "What *must* I do to be saved?" and may get this answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Its office is not to urge us to make an amalgam of works and faith, as some suppose. There are those who say, "I cannot keep the law, but if I believe in Jesus, then the blood of Jesus will make up for my sins and deficiencies." That is not the way of salvation! Nobody will ever get to heaven that way.

If you have any engagements with the law, you must pay it twenty shillings in the pound. It will not take a composition of any sort whatever, you must satisfy its utmost demands or it will give you no rest, either in time or in eternity. If you say to the law, "I will give you so much in works and so much in grace," the law does not deal in that way, it must be paid by a legal tender of current coin of the king's realm. It demands works, and it will have nothing but works, and those absolutely perfect and in full tale and measure. The law repudiates amalgamation and so does the Gospel of free grace.

If you have anything to do with Jesus, you must get right away from your own good works. I mean from all reliance upon them, and come to rest in Him, and Him alone, for it never will be Christ and company. He will save from top to bottom, from first to last, or else not at all. Not a drop of His blood and then a drop of your tears. Not a work from Christ and then a work from you. Oh no! Such hideous patchwork cannot be endured. It is not the object of the law to drive you to a compromise.

But its object is this—to make you accept salvation as the free gift of God—to make you stand and own that you are a sinner, and accept a free, full, perfect forgiveness, according to the infinite grace of the eternal Father. The law is meant to keep you always holding on to salvation by grace.

For my part, I cannot bear that preaching which is partly law and partly grace. I have had enough of the law. If you had known five years of its rigor—five years of discipline of the pedagogue—you would never want to see even his back any more. When a man once knows what law-work is in his soul, he knows the difference between that and the Gospel, and he will not have linsey-woolsey. He needs to

have the pure white linen all of one material, and that material free grace. It must not be "Yea, nay," but "Yea, yea"—grace, grace, all grace, nothing but grace, and not grace and works, not Moses and Christ, but Jesus only. The grace must be pure and unadulterated.

It is a grand thing when this schoolmaster makes a man stick to grace, and so flogs and whips him that he never wants to go back to the law any more, for brethren, nobody is so happy in the liberty of Christ as the man who has thoroughly known the bondage of the law.

I think I have repeated to you a story my old friend Dr. Alexander Fletcher once told me. He said he was passing by the Old Bailey, or some other of our jails, and he saw a couple of boys turning somersaults, standing on their heads, making wheels of themselves, and all sorts of things, and he stopped and said, "Why, boys, whatever are you at? You seem to be delighted." And one of them said, "Ay, and you would be delighted too if you had been locked up in that jail three months. You would jump when you came out." And the good old doctor said he thought it was very likely he should. If he had been a prisoner there he should hardly know how to express his delight in getting out.

Now, if a man has been once pummeled by the law, if he has felt his sin and misery, and the impossibility of obtaining any relief by the way of human merit, when he comes to see that Christ has kept the law for him, comes to know that he is saved, and saved perfectly by an act of faith in Jesus Christ, that henceforth he lives under new conditions, and is not under the law but under grace. He is the man to know the sweets of liberty because aforetime the iron had entered into his soul. He is the man to kiss the emancipator's feet, for was he not heavily ironed in the days of his former estate?

This, then, is the design of the law—to make us sick of self and fond of Christ, to condemn us that we may accept free grace, to empty us that God may fill us, to strip us that God may clothe us, in a word, to kill us that Christ may make us alive.

III. Now to our last point—THE TERMINATION OF THE LAW'S OFFICE. When does it terminate?

The text says, "But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster." We come to believe in Jesus, and then the pedagogue troubles us no more. No, there is a great change in his behavior. When the young Roman, or we will say a young Hebrew, who had come under the Greek law, was under thirteen and a-half years old, this pedagogue was always beating, and cuffing, and buffeting him for his faults. But when he was a day over the time, then, according to the law, he was free from the tutelage of the pedagogue.

Do you think the pedagogue struck him that morning? He knew better. He had whipped him yesterday, but now he must know his master and render him another sort of service. The lad is come to his full age and is under other regulations. Under the old Roman law a man was not of full age till he was twenty-five.

According to that law the pedagogue might be insulting and domineering over him when he was three or four-and-twenty. But when his young master had come of age he changed his talk altogether, matters wore another phase. And so when a man becomes a believer he has come of age, and the schoolmaster's rule is over, he is no longer under his former tutors and governors, for his time of liberty appointed by the Father is come. He is not under the pedagogy of the law any longer, for Christ's work has set him entirely free therefrom.

Certainly, a man sees the office of the law as pedagogue ended when he ascertains that Christ has fulfilled it. I read the ten commands and say, "These thundered at me and I trembled at them, but Christ has kept them, kept them for me. He was my representative in every act of His obedient life and death, and before God it is as if I had kept the law, and I stand accepted in the Beloved. When Jesus Christ is seen of God, God sees His people in Him, and they are justified through His righteousness because they have faith in Him. "He that believeth in him is not condemned."

Oh, is it not a thousand mercies in one that the grand old cannons of the law are no longer turned against us? Christ has either spiked them or else turned them on our enemies by fulfilling the law, so that they are on our side instead of against us.

The law ceases its office as schoolmaster when it comes to be written on our hearts. Boys have their lessons on slates, but men have their laws in their minds. We trust a man where we should carefully watch a boy. When the child becomes a man his father and mother do not write down little rules for him, as they did when he was a child in petticoats, neither do they set servants over him to keep him in order. He is trusted. His manliness is trusted. His honor is trusted. His best feelings are trusted.

So now, brethren, we who have believed in Jesus have the law written here in our hearts, and it corresponds with what is written there in the Scriptures. And now we do not say of a sin, "I am afraid to do that, for I should be lost if I did." We do not want to do it. We loathe it. And of a virtue we do not say, "I must do that, or else I shall not be a child of God." No, we love to do it, we want to do it, the more of holiness the better.

We love the law of the Lord and desire to keep its statutes unto the end. We no longer have, "Thou *shalt*" and "Thou *shalt not*," constantly sounding in our ears as we did when we were children. We are men in Christ Jesus, and now our sacred passions delight to run in the way of God's commandments and if the old nature rebels grace is given to put it down. There is a daily conflict, but the new life that is within us cannot sin because it is born of God, and it keeps down the old nature so that we walk in the ways of righteousness after the example of our Lord.

A warfare goes on, but we are no longer children. When faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. This is not Antinomianism, for we are not against the law, but the law that once was on the stony table, and there was broken, is now written on the fleshy tablet of a renewed heart, and the Lord sweetly inclines us to keep His testimonies and observe His statutes.

Moreover, we get free from the law when we take up our heirship in Christ. I am afraid some Christians have never fully done this. Can you say, beloved, "I have believed in Jesus, and therefore I am one with Him. Whatever Christ is before God that I am, for I am a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

"'So near, so very near to God,
I cannot nearer be,
For in the person of His Son
I am as near as He.

"'So dear, so very dear to God,
I cannot dearer be,
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
Such is His love to me.'"

Can you say, "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure? As long as Jesus lives I cannot die, for it is written, 'Because he lives, I shall live also.'

"'My name from the palms of His hands
Eternity cannot erase,
Impressed on His heart it remains
In marks of indelible grace.'"

When a man gets there, and knows that his standing does not depend on himself, but that he is what he is in Christ, that Christ has done everything for him and has saved him so that he can challenge every accuser in the words of Paul, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?"—when he gets there, then he can truly say that he is no longer under a schoolmaster.

O brethren, read the eighth and ninth chapters of Romans. Get into the spirit of the apostle when he rejoiced and triumphed in the complete salvation of Christ. Get away from all beliefs that you have

something still to do in order to save yourself. Get to know that you have only to work out what God works in. With fear and trembling to fetch out from within, and show in your outward life, what God by the eternal Spirit works in your heart, and you will find that you are no longer under the law.

If there be any unconverted persons here, and I am afraid there are a great many, I beseech you do not abide under the law, for the law can do nothing for you but curse you. Give up all hope of being saved by anything that you can do, and agree to be saved by what Christ has done. Plead guilty, plead guilty and then God will say, "I absolve you." Plead guilty, and plead the blood of Jesus, and this done, you are accepted in the Beloved.

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One;
There is life at this moment for thee,"

for every soul that will confess its guiltiness and renounce all hope of self-salvation, and fly away to the wounds of Jesus.

And how shall I urge you, O Christian, never to go back to the law? Do not begin to judge yourself as if you were under the law. What if you are a sinner? It is true you are. Confess your sin and mourn over it, but remember there is a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness in the house of David. That sin of yours was laid on Christ before you committed it. It was laid on the scapegoat's head of old and put away. And at this moment you are still clean in the sight of God through that great washing which you have received in the precious blood.

Do not imagine that God will change His mind about you. He never did and never can change His mind. He has said concerning each soul that believes in His dear Son, "He that believeth in him is not condemned." Ye are complete in Christ Jesus, in Him you have righteousness and strength, in Him you may even glory. Get away from legal doctrines and stand upon the Gospel rock, and you will be happy and holy all your days.

Let me speak to those of you who are engaged in Christian service. When you try to teach others always keep the law in its proper place. I remember hearing a sermon from this text, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," in which the preacher so thoroughly missed the mark as to leave the inference upon the minds of his hearers that, after all, our good works and repentance would save us.

Now, that is not the Gospel. Neither ought it to be preached as such. We preach up good works with all our might as the result of faith, as the outgrowth of faith, but not as the groundwork of salvation. We tell you that the tree of human nature must be altered first, or the fruit cannot be good. There will be no pears upon that crab-tree till you change the stock. Do not, therefore, go preaching to crab-trees and tell them to bear pears and apples.

We testify that Christ is able to change a man's nature, and then good fruits will come as a matter of course, but I am afraid that in many Sunday schools the children are taught a different doctrine, somewhat after this fashion—"Now, dear children, be very good and obey your parents, and love Jesus, and you will be saved." That is not the Gospel, and it is not true.

Often do I hear it said, "*Love* Jesus, dear children." That is not the Gospel. It is "Trust Him"—"Believe." Not love, but faith is the saving grace. And that love of Jesus of a sentimental kind, which does not spring out of faith in Him is a spurious emotion, a counterfeit love, not at all the love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

The root of the matter is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and that is the Gospel for a child of two years of age, and the Gospel for a man of a hundred. There is only one Gospel for all that are born on the face of the earth—"Believe in Jesus." Not your doing, not your obeying the law, you have broken that. You have put yourself out of all possible hope in that direction. But your acceptance of what Christ has done will save you at once, save you forever!

But why should I multiply words? I do not know how to put the whole matter in a simpler form, or to commend it more plainly to your understanding. It is not the mere exposition of a few verses of

Scripture, or the clearing up of some small critical difficulty. Rather would I have you consider it a direction of vital importance to every seeking soul, a counsel of thrilling interest to every tried and exercised heart.

Oh, how anxious I am to make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way! I wish that all of you, especially our young friends, would learn and often repeat that hymn of Dr. Watts till it becomes indelibly fixed on their memory—

"The law commands and makes us know
What duties to our God we owe;
But 'tis the Gospel must reveal
Where lies our strength to do His will.

"The law discovers guilt and sin,
And shows how vile our hearts have been;
Only the Gospel can express
Forgiving love and cleansing grace.

"What curses doth the law denounce
Against the man that sins but once!
But in the Gospel Christ appears,
Pardoning the guilt of numerous years.

"My soul, no more attempt to draw
Thy life and comfort from the law;
Fly to the hope the Gospel gives,
The man that trusts the promise lives."

And remember, last of all, that the law which is so sharp and terrible to men when it only deals with them for their good, will if you and I die without being brought to Christ, be much more terrible to us in eternity, when it deals with us in justice for our punishment. Then it will not be enshrined in the body of Moses, but terrible to tell, it will be incarnate in the person of the Son of God sitting upon the throne. He will be at once the Lawgiver, the Judge and the Savior, and you that have despised Him as the Savior will have to appear before Him as your Judge. No such judge as He, His justice will be clear and undiluted now that His mercy has been scorned.

Oil is soft, but set it on fire and see how it burns! Love is sweet, but curdle it to jealousy and see how sour it is! If you turn the Lamb of Zion into the Lion of the tribe of Judah, beware, for He will tear you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver. Rejected love will change its hand. The pierced hand was outstretched with invitations of mercy, but if these be rejected—O sirs, I am telling you the solemn truth, and hear it, I pray you, ere I send you away—if from that hand that was pierced you will not take the perfect salvation which He is prepared to give to all who confess their guilt, you will have to receive from that selfsame hand the blows of that iron rod which shall break you in pieces as a potter's vessel.

Fly now, and kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way while His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—GALATIANS 4

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—567, 647, 565

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.