

THE CURSE REMOVED

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A SERMON

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MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY AGO

*“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.”
Galatians 3:13*

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is #873, Christ Made a Curse For Us]

THE law of God is a divine law, holy, heavenly, perfect. Those who find fault with the law, or in the least degree depreciate it, do not understand its design and have no right idea of the law itself. Paul says, “We know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.” In all that we ever say concerning justification by faith, we never intend to lower the opinion which our hearers have of the law, for the law is one of the most sublime of God’s works.

There is not a commandment too many—there is not one too few. The law of the Lord is so incomparable that its perfection is a proof of its divinity. No human lawgiver could have given forth such a law as this which we find in the Decalogue. It is a perfect law, for all human laws that are right are to be found in that brief compendium and epitome of all that is good and excellent toward God, or between man and man.

But while the law is glorious, it is never more misapplied than when anyone attempts to use it as a means of salvation. God never intended men to be saved by the law. When He proclaimed it on Sinai, it was with thunders, and lightnings, and cloud, and fire, and smoke, as if He would say, “O man, hear My law, but tremble while you hear it! It is proclaimed with the blast of the trumpet exceeding loud, even as the great day of destruction will also be of which it is the herald, if you offend against it, and find none to bear your doom for you.”

It was written on stone, as if to teach us that it was a hard, cold, stony law—one which would have no mercy upon us, but which, if we go against it, would fall upon us and grind us to powder. O you who are trusting in the law for your salvation, you have erred from the faith—you do not understand God’s designs—you are ignorant of the truth that He has revealed to us by His Holy Spirit.

In the chapter from which our text is taken, the apostle says, “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”

The law was intended, by its terrors, to crush every hope of self-righteousness, and by its lightnings, to scathe and demolish every tower of our own works—that we might be brought humbly to accept a finished salvation through the one almighty Mediator who has magnified the law and made it honorable, and brought in an everlasting righteousness wherein we stand complete in Christ, if indeed we are in Him by a living faith.

So you perceive that all that the law does is to curse—it cannot bless. In all the pages of revelation, you will find no blessings that the law ever gave to one who had offended it. There were blessings for those who kept it completely—though none ever did—but no blessing is ever written for one offender. Blessings we find in the Gospel, curses we find in the law.

This afternoon we shall briefly consider, first, *the curse of the law*. Secondly, *the curse removed*. Thirdly, *the great Substitute who removed it* by “being made a curse for us.” And then, lastly, we shall

solemnly ask one another whether we are included amongst the innumerable multitude for whom Christ was “made a curse.”

I. First, then, let us consider “THE CURSE OF THE LAW.”

All who sin against the law are cursed by the law—all who disobey its commands are cursed, cursed instantly, cursed terribly.

We shall regard that curse, first, as being *a universal curse* resting upon everyone of the seed of Adam. Perhaps some here will be inclined to say, “Of course, the law of God will curse all those who are loose in their lives or profane in their conversation. We can all of us imagine that the swearer is a cursed man, cursed by God. We can suppose that the wrath of God rests upon the head of the man who is filthy in his life, the man who is degraded and under the ban of society.”

But my friends, the real truth is that the curse of God rests upon every one of us as by nature we stand before Him. You may be the most moral man in the world, yet the curse of God is upon you. You may be lovely in your life, modest in your carriage, upright in your behavior, almost Christ-like in your conduct, yet if you have not been born again—if you have not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit—the curse of God still rests upon your head.

If you have committed but one sin in your life, God’s justice is so inexorable that it condemns you for that one solitary offense. And though your life should henceforth be one continued career of holiness, if you have sinned but once, unless you have a saving interest in the blood of Christ, the thunders of Sinai are meant to terrify you and the lightnings of divine vengeance flash all around you.

Ah, my hearers, how humbling is this truth to our pride—that the curse of God is upon everyone who is of the seed of Adam, that every child born into this world is born under the curse since it is born under the law. Then, in addition to the curse that rests upon us because we are children of Adam, there is the further curse that comes through our own transgression.

The first moment that I sin, though I sin but once, I come beneath the curse quoted in the tenth verse of this chapter, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them”—cursed without hope of mercy apart from that blessed Savior who “hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

It is a dreadful thought that the trail of the serpent is over the whole earth, that the poison of sin is in the fountain of every human heart, that the blood in all our veins is corrupt, that we are all condemned already, that each one of us, without a single exception, whether he is a philanthropist, senator, philosopher, divine, prince, or monarch, is under the curse unless he has been redeemed from it by Christ.

The curse, too, while it is universal, *is also just*. There are many persons who think that the curse of God upon those who are undeniably wicked is, of course, right, but that the curse of God upon those who, for the most part, appear to be excellent, and who may have sinned but once, is an act of injustice. But when God pronounces the curse, He does it justly. He is a God of justice, and just and right are all His ways.

And mark you, man, if you are condemned, it shall be by the strictest justice. Even if you have sinned but once, the curse is a righteous one when it lights upon your head. Do you ask me how this is? I answer—You say that your sin is little. Then, if it be but little, how little trouble it might have taken you to have avoided it! If your transgression be but small, at how small an expense you might have refrained from it!

Some have said, “Surely the sin of Adam was but a little one—he did but take an apple and eat it.” Ay, but in its littleness was its greatness. If it was but a little thing to take the forbidden fruit, with how little trouble might the sin have been avoided! And because it was so small an act there was couched within it the greater malignity of guilt.

So, too, you may never have blasphemed your God, you may never have desecrated His Sabbath, yet insomuch as you have committed a little sin, you are justly condemned, for a little sin has in it the essence of all sin—and I know not but that what we call little sins may be greater in God’s sight than

those which the world universally condemns and against which the hiss of the execration of humanity continually rises. I say that God is just even though He should pronounce a curse upon all His creatures.

So tremble, O sinners, and “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

So the curse is universal and it is just.

But next, the curse of the law is also *fearful*. There are some who seem to think that it is a little matter to be under the curse of God, but oh! if they knew the fearful consequences of that curse, they would realize that it is indeed a terrible one. It were enough to make our knees knock together, to chill our blood, and to cause every hair of our head to stand on end, if we did but know what it is to be under the curse of God.

What does that curse include? It involves the death of the body and that is by no means an insignificant portion of its sentence. It also includes spiritual death—the death of that inner life which Adam had—the life of the spirit which can only be restored by the Holy Spirit who quickens whom He will.

And it includes, last of all, and worst of all, eternal death—that second death which can only be described by that awful—I had almost said, unutterable—word, “hell.” This is the curse which rests upon every man by nature. We make no exception of rank or degree, for God has made none. We offer no hope of exception of character or reputation, for God has made none.

The whole of us are shut up to this, that, so far as the law is concerned, we must die—die here, and die in the next world the death which never dies, “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,” even by a flood of tears of penitence if they could be shed. There we must be forever lost.

Could we estimate all the consequences of that curse, we might well afford to ridicule all the torments that tyrants could inflict upon us—we might well despise any injuries that this body might sustain—when we compare them with that awful avalanche of threatening which rushes down with resistless force from the mountain of God’s truth.

We hasten from this point, beloved, for it is fearful work to speak upon it. Yet we must not depart from it entirely until we have hinted at one thought more, and that is, that the curse of God which comes upon sinful men is *a present curse*. O my dear hearers, could I lay hold of your hands, if you be not converted, I would labor, with tears and groans, to get you to grasp this thought! It is not merely damnation in the future that you have to dread—it is condemnation now that is your portion.

Yes, my hearer, sitting where you are, if you are out of Christ, you are condemned already, your death warrant has been sealed with the great seal of the Majesty on high, and the angel’s sword of vengeance is already unsheathed over your head this afternoon. Whosoever you may be, if you are out of Christ, there hangs a sword over you, suspended by a single hair which death shall cut, and then that sword shall descend, dividing your soul from your body, and dooming both to eternal pains.

You might well start up from your seats in terror if you did but realize your true condition in God’s sight. You are reputable, you are respectable, you are honorable—perhaps right honorable—yet you are condemned men, condemned women. On the walls of heaven you are proscribed, your names are written up there among the deicides who have slain the Savior, among the rebels against God’s government who have committed high treason against Him. And perhaps even now the dark-winged angel of death is spreading his pinions upon the blast, hastening to hurry you down to destruction.

Say not, O sinner, that I would affright you. Say, rather, that I would bring you to the Savior, for whether you believe this or not, you cannot alter the truth thereof—that you are now, if you have not given yourself to Christ— “condemned already.” Wherever you sit, you are but in the condemned cell, for to the unconverted, the unrenewed, the unrepentant, this whole world is but one huge prison-house, wherein the condemned one does drag along a chain of condemnation till death takes him to the scaffold, where the fearful execution of terrific woe must take place upon him. This, then, is “the curse of the law.”

II. But now I must speak, in the second place, of THE REMOVAL OF THAT CURSE.

This is a sweet and pleasant duty. Some of you, my dear friends, will be able to follow me in your experience while I remind you how it was that in your salvation, Christ removed the curse from you.

First, you will agree with me when I say that the removal of the curse from us is done in a moment. *It is an instantaneous thing.* I may stand here one moment under the curse, and then, if the Spirit shall quicken me, and I breathe a prayer to heaven—if by faith I cast myself on Jesus—in one solitary second, ere the clock has ticked, my sins shall be all forgiven. Hart sang truly,—

***“The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God,
His pardon at once he receives,
Redemption in full through His blood.”***

You will remember in Christ’s life that most of the cures He wrought—yea, I believe all—were instantaneous cures. See! There lies a man stretched upon his couch, from which he has not risen for years. “Take up thy bed, and walk,” said Christ in majesty—and then, without the intervention of weeks of convalescence, “immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.”

There is another man. He is deaf and practically dumb. Christ said to him, “Ephphatha, that is, Be opened; and straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plainly.” Ay, and even in the cases where Christ healed death itself, he did it instantaneously. When that beautiful young creature lay asleep in death upon the bed, Jesus went to her, and though her dark ringlets covered up her eyes, which were glazed in death, Jesus did but take her clay-cold hand in His and say to her, “Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise,” then, “straightway the damsel arose, and walked.”

It is true that in conversion, Christ commences a work which is to be carried on through life in sanctification, but the justification of the sinner, the taking away of the curse, is done in a single moment. “Unwrite the curse,” says God, and it is done. The acquittal is signed and sealed—it takes not long.

I may stand here at this moment and I may have believed in Christ but five minutes ago—still, even if I have believed in Christ for only that short time, I am as fully justified, in God’s sight, as I would be should I live until these hairs are whitened by the sunlight of heaven, or as I shall be when I walk among the golden lamps of the city of palaces. God justifies His people at once. The curse is removed in a single moment. Sinner, hear that! You may be now under condemnation, but ere you can say “now” again, you may be able to say, “There is therefore now no condemnation to me, for I am in Christ Jesus.”

Mark, beloved, in the next place, that this removal of the curse from us, when it does take place, is *an entire removal.* It is not merely a part of the curse which is taken away. Christ does not stand at the foot of Sinai and say, “Thunders, diminish your force!” He does not catch the lightning now and then and bind its wings. But when He comes, He blows away all the smoke, He puts aside all the thunder, He quenches all the lightning—He removes it all. When Christ pardons sin, He pardons all sin.

You may be old and grey-headed, and hitherto unpardoned, but though your sins exceed in number the stars of the sky, one moment suffices to take them all away. Mark that—*all!* That sin of midnight, that black sin which, like a ghost, has haunted you all your life. That hideous crime. That unknown act of blackness which has darkened your character. That awful stain upon your conscience—they shall all be taken away in a moment.

And though you have a stain upon your hand, which you have often sought in vain to wash out with the mixtures which Moses can give you, you shall find, when you are bathed in Jesu’s blood, that you shall be able to say, “All clean my Lord. All clean. Not a spot, all is gone. I am completely washed from head to foot, the stains are all removed.” It is the glory of this removal of the curse that it is all taken

away. There is not a single atom of it left. Hushed now is the law's loud thunder—the sentence is completely reversed and there is no fear of it left.

We must also say, upon this point, that, when Christ removes the curse, *it is an irreversible removal*. Once let me be acquitted by God and who is he that can condemn me? There are some, in these days, who teach that God justifies, and yet, after that, condemns the same person whom He has justified. We have heard it asserted pretty boldly that a man may be a child of God today—hear it, you heavens, and be astonished!—and be a child of the devil tomorrow. We have heard it said, but we know it is untrue, for we find nothing in Scripture to warrant it.

We have often asked ourselves—Can men really believe that, after having been begotten again by God unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—that new birth can fail and die? We have asked ourselves—Can men imagine that, after God has once broken our chains, and set us free, He will call us back and bind us once again, like Prometheus, to the great rocks of despair? Will He once blot out the handwriting that is against us and then record the charge again? Once pardoned, then condemned?

We know that if Paul had met with such teachers, he would have said, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” There is no condemnation now to us who are “in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” It is a sweet thought to me that even Satan himself can never rob me of my pardon. I may lose my copy of it, and lose my comfort from it, but the original pardon is filed in heaven. It may be that gloomy doubts may arise, and I may fear that I am not forgiven, yet I can say—

*“O my distrustful heart,
How small thy faith appears!
But greater, Lord, Thou art
Than all my doubts and fears:
Did Jesus once upon me shine?
Then Jesus is for ever mine.”*

I love, at times, to go back in thought to that hallowed hour when I first realized that my sins were all forgiven for Christ's sake. There is much comfort in recalling that blessed hour when first we knew the Lord.

*“Dost mind the place, the spot of ground
Where Jesus did thee meet.”*

Perhaps you do. Perhaps you can look back to the very place where Jesus whispered to you that you were His. Can you do so? Oh, what comfort it will give you! For remember, once acquitted, you are acquitted forever. So says God's Word. Once pardoned, you are clear forever. Once set at liberty, you shall never be a slave again. Once Sinai's wrath has been appeased, it shall never thunder against you again.

Blessed be God's name, we have been brought to Calvary, and we shall be brought to Zion too. At last we shall stand before God and even there we shall be able by grace to say,—

*“Great God, we are clean!
Through Jesu's blood we are clean.”*

III. Now we are brought, in the third place, to observe THE GREAT SUBSTITUTE by whom the curse is removed.

“The curse of the law” was not easily taken away. In fact, there was but one way whereby it could be removed. The lightnings were in God's hand—they must be launched—He said they must. The sword

was unsheathed. Divine justice must be satisfied, God vowed that it must. Vengeance was ready. Vengeance must fall, God had said that it must. How then was the sinner to be saved?

The only answer was this. The Son of God appears and He says, “Father, launch Your thunderbolts at Me! Here is My breast, plunge the sword of justice in here! Here are My shoulders, let the lash of vengeance fall on them!” Thus Christ, our Substitute, came forth, and stood for us, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

It is our delight to preach the doctrine of substitution because we are fully persuaded that no Gospel is preached where substitution is omitted. Unless sinners are plainly and positively told that Christ stood in their room and stead, to bear their guilt and carry their sorrows, they never can see how God can “be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

We have heard some preach a Gospel something after this order—that, though God is angry with sinners, yet, out of His great mercy, for the sake of something that Christ has done, He does not punish them, but remits the penalty. Now we hold that this is not God’s Gospel, for it is neither just to God nor safe for man. We believe that God never remitted the penalty, that He did not forgive the sin without punishing it, but that He exacted the full penalty without the abatement of a solitary jot or tittle—that Jesus Christ, our Savior, did drink the veritable cup of our redemption to its very dregs—that He did suffer beneath the crushing wheels of divine vengeance, the selfsame pains and sufferings which we ought to have endured. Oh, the glorious doctrine of substitution!

When it is preached fully and rightly, what a charm and what a power it has! Oh, how sweet is the work to be able to tell sinners that, although God has said, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” their Maker has Himself bowed His head to death in their place, and thus God is able righteously to pardon all believers in Jesus because He has met all the claims of divine justice on their account.

Should there be one here who does not yet understand the doctrine of substitution, let me repeat what I have said. Sinner, the only way in which you can be saved is this. God *must* punish sin. If He did not, He would undefine Himself. But if He has punished sin in the person of Christ for you, you are fully absolved, you are quite clear.

Christ has suffered what you ought to have suffered, and you may well rejoice in that. “Well,” say you, “I ought to have died.” But Christ has died! “I ought to have been sent to hell.” But Christ has suffered that which is a full equivalent, and which completely satisfies God’s demands. The cup which His Father gave Him, He drank to its dregs—

*“At one tremendous draught of love
He drank damnation dry”—*

for all who believe in Him. All the punishment, all the curse was laid upon Him—now it is all gone forever. Yet it had not gone without having been taken away by the Savior. The thunders have not been reserved, the lightnings have been launched at Him. Divine justice is satisfied because Christ has endured the full penalty of all His people’s guilt.

IV. Now we come to answer that last question, HOW MANY OF US CAN SAY THAT CHRIST HAS REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, HAVING BEEN MADE A CURSE FOR US?

The first part of our discourse has been entirely doctrinal, some of you have not cared for it, because you did not feel that you were interested in it. It was natural that it should be so. At the reading of a will, does the servant stay to listen? Nay, for there is nothing for her. But if a man is a son of the testator, how eagerly does he open his ears to catch every sound that he may know whether the estate has been left to him or not? However badly the lawyer may read the will, he is anxious to hear every word that he may learn if he is to have a portion among the children.

Now, beloved, let us read the will again to see if you are among those for whom Christ was the Substitute. The usual way with most of our congregations is this—they write themselves down as

Christ's long before they know whether God has done so or not. You make a profession of religion, you wear a Christian's cloak, you behave like a Christian, you take a seat in a church or a chapel, and you think you are Christianized at once.

Yet many in our congregation who fancy that they are Christians, have made a great mistake. Let me beg you not to suppose that you are believers in Christ because your parents were, or because you belong to an orthodox church. Religion is a thing which we must have for ourselves, and it is a question which we all ought to ask—whether we are savingly interested in the atonement of Christ and have a portion in the merit of His agonies?

Come, then, my friend, let me put a question or two to you. And first let me ask you this—*Were you ever condemned by the law in your own conscience?* “Nay,” say you, “I know not what you mean.” Of course you do not, and you have therefore no true hope that you are saved. But I will ask you yet again—Have you ever been condemned by the law in your conscience? Have you ever heard the law of God saying in your soul, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them”? And have you felt that you were thus cursed?

Did you ever stand before God's bar, like a poor condemned criminal before his judge, ready for execution? Have you, as John Bunyan would have put it, ever had the rope around your neck? Have you ever seen the black cap placed upon the head of your Judge? Have you even thought yourself about to be turned off from the gallows? Have you ever walked the earth as if, at every step, it would open beneath your feet and swallow you up? Have you ever felt yourself to be a worthless, ruined, sin-condemned, law-condemned, conscience-condemned sinner? Have you ever fallen down before God and said, “Lord, You are just. Though You do slay me, I will say that You are just, for I am sinful and deserve Your wrath”?

As the Lord lives, if you have never felt and spoken like that, you are still a stranger to His grace, for the man who acquits himself, God condemns. And if the law condemns you, God will acquit you. So long as you have felt yourself condemned, you may know that Christ died for condemned ones and shed His blood for sinners.

But if you fold your arms in self-security, if you say, “I am good, I am righteous, I am honorable,” be you warned of this—your armor is the weaving of a spider and it shall be broken in pieces. The garments of your righteousness are light as gossamer and shall be blown away by the breath of the Eternal in that day when He shall unspin all that nature has ever woven. Ay, I bid you now take heed of this—if you have never been condemned by the law, you have never been acquitted by grace.

Now I will ask you another question—*Have you ever felt yourself to be acquitted by grace?* “No,” says one, “I have never expected to feel that. I thought that we might perhaps know it when we came to die, or that a few eminent Christians might possibly then know themselves to be forgiven, but I think, sir, you are very enthusiastic to ask *me* whether I have ever felt myself forgiven.”

My dear friend, you make a great mistake. If a man had been a galley slave, chained to an oar for many a year, and if he were once set free, do you think that he would not know whether he were free or not? Do you think that a slave, who had been toiling in bondage for years, when once he trod the land of freedom, if you should say to him, “Do you know that you are emancipated?” do you think that he would not know it?

Or if a man who has been dead in his grave, were to be awakened to life, do you think he would not know it? He will know himself to be alive as the emancipated slave will know that he is a free man. If you have never felt your chains fall off you, then your chains are still on you, for when God breaks our chains off us, we know ourselves to be free.

The most of us, when God set us free from our prison-house, did leap for very joy. And we remember that the mountains and the hills did break forth before us into singing, and all the trees of the field did clap their hands. We shall never forget that gladsome moment. It is indelibly impressed upon our memory—we shall remember it to life's last hour.

I ask you again—Did you ever feel yourself to be forgiven? And if you say, “No,” then you have no reason to think that you are forgiven. If the Lord has never whispered in your ear, “I, even I, am he that blots out your transgressions”—you have no right to think yourself pardoned. Oh, I beseech you, examine yourself and know whether you have been condemned by the law, and whether you have been acquitted by grace!

And lastly, my dear friends, I may have, and doubtless do have, many present here who have simply come to spend an hour, but who have no care, no interest, no concern about their souls, who are, perhaps, utterly careless as to whether they are condemned or not. If I could speak to you as I could wish, I would speak—

*“As though I ne’er might speak again,
And as a dying man to dying men.”*

When I remember that, likely enough, I shall never see the faces of many of you again, I feel that there is a deep and an awful responsibility lying upon me to speak to such of you as are careless. There are some of you who are putting off the evil day, or you are saying, “If I am condemned, I care not for it.”

Ah, my friend! If I saw you asleep upon your bed when the flames were raging in your chamber, I would shout in your ear, or I would drag you from your couch of slumber. If I knew that while you had a fatal disease within you, you would not take the medicine which alone could cure you, I would upon my knees implore you to take that medicine.

But alas! here you are, many of you, in danger of eternal destruction—and you have a disease within your souls that must soon destroy them forever. Yet what careless, hardened, thoughtless creatures you are, just caring for the body and not seeing Christ to be the Savior of your souls. As the angels laid hold upon Lot, and said to him, “Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed,” so would I do to you.

I would come to each one of you and say, “My brother, carelessness may avail you now, but carelessness will not stop the voice of death when *he* speaks. Indifference may silence *my* voice in your conscience now, but when that grim skeleton tyrant comes to address you, indifference will not do then. You may laugh now, you may dance now, you may be merry now, your cup may be full to the brim now—but what will you do in that day when the heavens are clothed with glory, when the books are opened, when the great white throne is set, and when you come before your Maker to be acquitted or condemned?

I beseech you, forestall that day. I beg of you, for Christ’s sake, to picture yourself before your Judge—conceive of Him there in yonder heavens seated upon His throne—imagine that you are now looking upon Him. O my hearer, what will you do? You are before the judgment throne, without Christ as your Savior. “Rocks, hide me, for I am naked!”

But you are dragged out, sinner, naked before your Judge. What will you do now? I see you bend your knee, I hear you cry, “O Jesus, clothe me now!” “Nay,” says Jesus, “that robe can never be worn by you now.” “Savior, have mercy upon me even now.” “Nay,” says He, “I called, but you refused. I stretched out My hand, but no man regarded; you set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof, so now I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear comes.”

Am I talking realities or mere fictions? Why, realities, and yet, if I were reading a novel to you, you would be lost in tears. But when I tell you God’s truth, that soon His throne shall be set and we shall all appear before Him, you sit unmoved and remain careless concerning that great event. But be it known to every careless sinner that death and judgment are not the unimportant things that they may have fancied, everlasting wrath and eternal severance from God are not such light things to endure as they may have conceived. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Have I one here who is saying, “What must I do to be saved, for I feel myself condemned?” Hear you Christ’s own words—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not

shall be damned.” Do you ask me what it is to believe? Hear, then, the answer. To believe is to look to Jesus. That little word “look” beautifully expresses what a sinner is to do. There is little in its appearance, but there is much in its meaning.

Believing is letting the hands lie still and turning the eyes to Christ. We cannot be saved by our hands—but we are saved when we look to Jesus by faith. Sinner, it is no use for you to try to save yourself. To believe in Christ is the only way of salvation—and that is, throwing self behind your back and putting Christ right before you.

I can never find a better description than that of the Negro—“to believe is to fall flat down upon the promise, and to lie there.” To believe is to do as one might do in a stream. It is said that if we were to fold our arms and lie motionless upon the water, we would not sink. To believe is to float upon the stream of grace. I grant you that there will be much that you will *do* afterwards, but you must *live* before you can do. The Gospel is the reverse of the law. The law says, “Do, and live.” The Gospel says, “Live first, then do.” The thing for you to say, poor sinner, is just this, “Lord Jesus, here I am. I give myself to You.”

I never had a better idea of believing in Jesus then I once had from a poor countryman. I may have mentioned this before, but it struck me very forcibly at the time and I cannot help repeating it. Speaking about faith, he said, “The old enemy has been troubling me very much lately, but I told him that he must not say anything to me about my sins—he must go to my Master, for I had transferred the whole concern to Him—bad debts and all.” That is believing in Jesus.

Believing is giving up all we have to Christ and taking all that Christ has to ourselves. It is changing houses with Christ, changing clothes with Christ, changing our unrighteousness for His righteousness, changing our sins for His merits. Execute the transfer, sinner, or rather, may God’s grace execute it and give you faith in it. And then the law will no longer be your condemnation, but it shall acquit you.

May Christ add His blessing! May the Holy Spirit rest upon us and may we all at last meet in heaven! Then will we sing “to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

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