

HOW GOD CONDEMNED SIN NO. 932

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MAY 8, 1870
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,
God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,
and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.
Romans 8:3*

EVER since man has fallen away from God, two things have been highly desirable. The one, that he should be forgiven all his offenses, the other, equally if not more important, that he should be led to hate the sin into which he has fallen and love the purity and holiness from which he has become alienated. These two disabilities must be removed, or looking at the matter from a loftier point of view, these two purposes of divine mercy must be accomplished together.

It were impossible to make a man happy unless both be equally and simultaneously realized. If his sins were forgiven, and yet he loved sin, his prospects are dark, over his future the direst portents would loom. If he ceased to love sin, and yet were lying under the guilt of it, his present condition would rather be deeply miserable than happy—his conscience pure and sensitive being tortured with pangs of remorse.

By what process can the two requirements be met, or the double purpose be achieved? To use our common words, how can man be both justified and sanctified, obtain clearance from his guilt in the sight of God, and then be made holy and meet to appear in His presence?

Human reason suggests that a law should be given to man which he should keep. This has been tried, and the law which was given was the best law that could be framed. The law of God written on the conscience, of which the law given by Moses recorded in the book of Exodus is but a copy, is a perfect law. There is not a command in it that could be omitted. There is not one single arbitrary precept. The right must be true, the true must be right, and God's law is never otherwise than right and true.

“Of law,” said the judicious Hooker, “there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world, all things do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power.” If, therefore, that law which is promulgated from heaven should fail to make men what they should be, the fault will not be in the law, but in the man. As the text says, it was “weak through the flesh.”

Because of our flesh and our tendency to sin, our weakness and our defilement of nature, it could not do what, indeed, God never intended it should do, but what some have thought law might do, to repair the breach and to renovate the depraved. The principle of law, which is, “Do this and you shall be rewarded,” or “Do that and you shall be punished,” never can by any means achieve either of these two purposes.

The law cannot forgive past sin. It evidently has nothing to do with that question. The law says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” It can execute the sentence, but it can do no more. It ceases to be law if it lays aside the sword, and does not exact its own penalty. Yet it has been thought that surely law might make men love holiness, albeit experience and observation prove that it never has that effect.

Very often men have needed nothing more than the knowledge of sin to enamor them to it, and they have loved sin all the better for knowing it to be sin. The apostle Paul tells us that he had not known lust if the law had not said, “Thou shalt not covet.”

There was a citizen of Gaunt who had never been outside the city walls. For some reason or other the magistrate passed an order that he should not go outside. Strange to tell, up to the moment that the command had passed, the man had been perfectly easy, and never thought of passing the line, but as soon as ever he was forbidden to do it, he pined, and sickened, and even died moaning over the restriction.

If a man sees a thing to be law, he wants to break that law. Our nature is so evil, that forbid us to do a thing, and at once we want to do the thing that is forbidden, and in many minds the principle of law instead of leading to purity has even offered opportunities for greater impurity.

Beside, although you may point out the way of uprightness to a man, and tell him what is right and what is wrong with all the wisdom and force of counsel and caution, unless you can give him a heart to choose the right, and a heart to love the true, you have not done much for him.

This is just the province of law. It can write out its precepts on the brazen tablets, and it can brandish its fiery sword and say, "Do this or else be punished," but man, carnal man, only wraps himself the more closely in his self-conceit, and perseveres the more doggedly in his obstinate rebellion. He defies God, defers to his own reprobate mind, goes on in sin, and waxes worse and worse, knowing the judgment threatened, yet committing the transgressions prohibited, and taking pleasure in those that do such things as his boon companions.

Because of the malignity, as well as the infirmity of our flesh, the mere principle of law will never do anything to purify or ennoble our moral nature. It has been tried by eminent teachers and social reformers. Dr. Chalmers tells us that in his early ministry he used to preach morality, and nothing but morality till, he said, he had hardly a sober or an honest man left in the parish. The preaching of morality seemed to lead to immorality.

Something more is wanted than merely to din into men's ears what they ought to be, and what they ought to do. Something is wanted more effectually to renovate the heart and move the springs of action. The water is nought, and if you make it flow it is bitter. You want an ingredient to be cast into it that will heal its poison springs, and make them sweet and clear.

Now, in the text, we are told how God interposed to do by His grace what His law could not do. I will read it to you again, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." There are here, then, two things, first, *what God did*, He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh for sin. And then, *what was the immediate result of this*, He condemned sin in the flesh.

After expounding these matters, I will try, in the third place, to show you *how this bears upon the two desirable things I speak of*, namely, the forgiving of the offender, and the making the offender from thenceforth yearn after holiness and purity.

I. First, and very briefly, let me tell you WHAT, ACCORDING TO THE TEXT, GOD DID—He sent His Son.

We believe in one God, but though we understand not the mystery of the Divine Existence, we accept the propositions declared in Scripture, clearly apprehending the obvious sense of the terms employed, and heartily assenting to the truth of the facts revealed. Thus we believe that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and we worship these three as the one God, the triune God of Israel.

The second person of that blessed unity in Trinity was sent by the Father to this earth. He is God the Father's Son, "the only begotten of the Father." What that means we do not attempt to define, of the matter of fact we feel no doubt, of the manner thereof we can offer no explanation.

We suppose that the relationship implied in the words "Father" and "Son" is the nearest description that the Divine Mind can present to our feeble intelligence of that ineffable fellowship, but we do not assume therefore that it explains to us anything, or was intended to explain anything as the basis of an argument or of a theory concerning the profound doctrine itself. It is a great mystery.

Indeed, were there no mystery in God, He were no God to us, for how then should we fear Him with the reverence due unto His name? The fact of there being mysteries should never stagger us, poor worms of a day, when we have to think or speak of the infinitely glorious JEHOVAH.

So, however it came to pass, that in the fullness of time God sent His Son. He is called in the text, “His own Son,” to distinguish Him from us who are only His sons by creation or His sons by regeneration and adoption. He sent His own Son, and He sent Him in the flesh.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born into this world, He took upon Himself our manhood. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and the apostles declare that they beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The text uses very important words. It says that God sent His Son “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” not in the likeness of flesh, for that would not be true, but in the same likeness as our *sinful flesh*. He was to all intents and purposes like ourselves, tempted in all points like as we are, though without sin, with all our sinless infirmities, with all our tendencies to suffer, with everything human in Him except that which comes to be human through human nature having fallen.

He was perfectly man, He was like ourselves, and God sent Him in the likeness of sinful flesh. Though it is eighteen hundred years ago and more, the Christmas bells seem to ring on. The joy of His coming is still in our hearts. He lived here His two or three and thirty years, but He was sent, the text tells us, for a reason which caused Him to die. He was sent for sin. This may mean that He was sent to do battle with sin, or that He was sent because sin was in the world, or best of all, He was sent to be a sin-offering. He was sent that He might be the substitute for sinners.

God’s great plan was this, that inasmuch as His justice could not overlook sin, and sin must be punished, Jesus Christ should come and take the sin of His people upon Himself, and upon the accursed tree, the cross of ignominious note, should suffer what was due on our behalf, and that through His sufferings the infinite love of God should stream forth without any contravention of His infinite justice. This is what God did. He sent His Son to Bethlehem, He sent His Son to Calvary, He sent his Son down to the grave, and He has now recalled Him unto the excellent glory where He sits at the right hand of God.

II. Ask you now, secondly, WHAT WAS THE IMMEDIATE RESULT OF THIS?

Why, brethren, the immediate result was that God condemned sin. Let me show you how He did it. The very fact that God—I must use language which is for us, not for Him—was under necessity, if He would save men and yet not violate His justice, *to send His Son, condemned sin*, for it said, “This sin is such an evil, such a plague, such a curse, that it cannot be stamped out of the world unless God Himself comes down among the sons of men.”

His usual presence among men in the power that sustains nature, it seemed, was not enough to put out sin. So venomous was the serpent, that there must be born a seed of the woman that should bruise that serpent’s head.

This world of ours was such an Augean stable, that omnipotence itself must come down and turn the sluices of divine perfection right through the hideous heap, or else washed it never could be. Therefore down from the highest glory came the Savior, that He might achieve a task which the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, but which He in the likeness of sinful flesh undertook to accomplish.

Moreover, *the life of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth condemned sin*. You can often condemn an evil best by putting side by side with it the palpable contrast, the purity to which it is so thoroughly alien, so totally opposite. So blameless was the conduct of this most blessed Man of Nazareth throughout His entire career, that even those who accept not His deity do homage to His integrity.

We have had in our own day, and in our midst, we grieve to say, some who have blasphemed our faith with bitterest words, but even they have paused as if they stood abashed when they came to survey the character of Him whose divinity and mission they refused to acknowledge. They have seen about His life a something that they saw nowhere else, and if they have not adored, they have admired.

There was a condemnation of sin in His very look. The Pharisees felt it. They could not meet or encounter Him without discovering and exposing what hypocrites they were. All sorts of men felt it. They could not fail to see through the purity of His life what crooked, ugly, deformed lives their own were in comparison with His, and thus the very existence of Christ, and the example of Christ, condemned sin.

But what shall we who are His disciples say to that assemblage of graces found only in Him, each sparkling with peerless luster, and all blending with such exquisite gracefulness that we are at once moved with awe and touched with love as we contemplate Him? Such majesty, yet such meekness in His mien, such solemnity yet such tenderness in His speech, so impartial in judgment yet so forgiving in temper, so full of zeal yet so equally full of patience, so keen to detect malice yet so slow to resent it, such a wise Mentor in the inner circle of His followers yet such a gentle sympathizing friend.

Say, my brethren—why I think some of us never commit a trespass or betray an infirmity, but we say, and say it to ourselves, Would Christ have done this? And the remembrance of His holy, harmless life condemns sin in our conscience.

God condemned sin still further *by allowing it to condemn itself*. The scoff has always been on this wise, “Oh, sin, sin! well, it is a mere trifle,” and the most of men disdain to allow that their particular transgressions are at all heinous. “No, we never killed anybody, we never committed adultery, we are not thieves, ours are only sins of a common sort. There can be no harm in us.” But see now, God seemed to say, “I will let sin do what it can. I will let sin ripen in this world. I will let it grow to its perfection and men shall see henceforth what sin is from that sample.”

“What am I aiming at,” do you ask? Why, there came into this world a Man perfectly innocent, harmless, gentle, meek, loving, tender. All His words were love, all His actions were kindness. He raised the dead, He healed the sick, He spoke nothing but peace and goodwill towards men. And what did sin do? Sin said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth. It is not fit that He should live.”

Sin murdered the perfect man, as it would lay violent hands on all who interfere with its evil maxims and base habits, and utterly destroy all goodness if it could. It convicted itself. Ferocious as a wild beast, it is always to be feared and hated, for it never can be tamed or trusted.

That Man came into this world on an errand, and that errand was one of disinterested mercy and pure affection. He need not have come, He had nothing to gain by it, He never did gain anything while here. They would have made Him a king, but He would not be a king. His was all disinterested kindness, benevolence to His bitterest foes.

When they nailed His hands to the wood, they could get nothing vindictive from His lips, but He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” He came to save His enemies. Now surely sin will not touch such a blessed Being as this! Surely sin will say, “I hate His holiness, but I reverence His philanthropy!” Not so, sin shouted, “Crucify him! crucify him!” Sin made a jest of His prayers, and mocked at His tears.

As we hold and believe, *this Man was no other than God, God’s Son*. You know how the willfulness and atrocity of this sin against Christ is represented to us in the parable of a certain man that had let out his vineyard unto husbandmen. He sent unto them his servant that at the time of the crops they should pay a portion of the produce, but they treated him despitefully, and when he sent another they beat him, and stoned another. At last he said, “I will send my son; they will surely reverence my son.” But they said, “This is the heir; let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.”

And so with this very God, they seemed to say, “Let us kill him,” and though they could not give a death blow to His deity, they showed that they would if they could, and red-handed sin stands out before the world this day as a deicide. It would wreak its vengeance on Him that inhabits eternity if it could, and hurl destruction at the lawgiver, to secure a triumph for its own lawlessness.

The fool hath said in his heart, “There is no God,” and the great aim of human nature is to get rid of God in fact as well as in faith. This it attempts to do, either by discoursing of Him in an abstraction, or by setting up blocks of wood and stone in simple credulity, as a correct representation of His fashion or

His attributes. To the one true and glorious God men will not pay any allegiance. If sin had power equivalent to its purpose, had it means to accomplish its menace, it would cast down the throne of the Most High, and assail JEHOVAH Himself in the heaven of His dwelling.

Oh, thou abominable thing, sin! You stand convicted. God shall smite you, you accursed thing. You have condemned yourself by your own act and deed, even where your craftiness has been foiled and your desperate prowess has issued in defeat.

Thus, brethren, I have shown you that Christ's coming condemned sin, Christ's life condemned it, and by putting Christ to death, sin condemned itself. But here comes the peculiar doctrine of our faith. God condemned sin *by bruising Christ*, by suffering Him to be put to death, by deserting Him in the hour of nature's extremity, by permitting His soul to undergo an agony beyond all conception.

Sirs, our sin, your sin, my sin, the sin of as many as do believe or ever shall believe in Jesus, was laid on Him, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." He was the Father's Best-beloved. He had never offended, and the Father loved Him. Will He not spare Him? Will He not spare Him?

Infinite love loved us, and infinite love loved Christ, but infinite love said, "I cannot pass by sin without punishment, what justice demands, must be done." And it was love that made the Father pour forth the vials of His wrath upon the head of the only begotten Son, till in the garden He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Oh, there was an inner sweat, of which those outward drops were but the faint types! His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and then on the cross He died. I have often painted you that scene, but for the present I forbear. His inward sufferings, His soul-sufferings, were the soul of His sufferings.

*"'Twas thus the Lord of life appeared,
And sigh'd, and groan'd, and pray'd, and fear'd;
Bore all incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough, and none to spare."*

There and then He made expiation for man's guilt. What a condemnation that was of sin! I think it were as though the righteous Judge of all the earth had said, "I cannot suffer sin, I cannot pass by sin, even if it lie on the innocent one. I must smite even My own Son if sin be imputed to Him. I cannot and will not clear the guilty. The Judge of all the earth am I, if My Son should be spared, or My law should be put on one side, the thousands of worlds I govern might well be in high revolt against Me."

Poised was the cause in the impartial scales of justice, and on His Son He visited our transgressions, into His hands the cup of wrath was given, against Him the sword of vengeance was unsheathed, of Him the uttermost penalty was exacted, that we for whom He surety stood might be clear by His dying, justified by His rising from the dead, and henceforth accepted in the Beloved.

Now I know it will be said, "But why did not God exercise the sovereign prerogative of mercy, and at once forgive sin? Why did He not by His own absolute fiat condone the offense and pardon the offenders?" I reply, how then could God have condemned sin? If sin is only such a simple misdemeanor as an arbitrary act of God can forgive, then its evil were not infinite in turpitude, the prolific parent of crimes and curses numberless.

But if there must be an atonement for it, an atonement as wonderful as that which I have essayed to preach to you, then sin descried in the light of that altar-fire where it was propitiated, appears worse than felonious, worse than any word I can use, more hideous than any ghastly form I can depict. Its summary condemnation alone could vindicate the unimpeachable holiness of the Judge.

Someone else may say, "But if the righteous law be really so spiritual, and carnal man so weak, why not alter the law and adapt it to the exigency?" I reply again, because such a procedure would not condemn the sin. On the contrary, it would condemn the law. It would be an admission that the law originally was too severe. It would be making an apology for sinners, and henceforth encourage them to

sin with both hands greedily. To relax the prescript, and forego the punishment, were to trifle with sin and make the law to be a thing contemptible. The criminal will ask to have it altered still, and lowered to suit his basest passions.

But would not a part-punishment have sufficed, and then let the rest be excused? I answer, No. That too, would have condemned the law for having asked a greater punishment than was absolutely necessary. Whatever was laid down as being the necessary punishment of sin must be enforced, *or else God changes*, the statute is set aside, and the law breaks down altogether.

The only way to condemn sin to the full is this—let the sin be punished, and if there be one found who, without a breach of justice, may be permitted to suffer in the stead of another, let him so suffer. But let care be taken that it is no sham, but a reality, that sin, from the dignity of the sufferer, from the amount of the suffering, from the completeness of the atonement, is effectually and thoroughly condemned.

Thus far have I led you. God has sent His Son into the world, and has thus condemned sin by His Son's life and death.

III. Now thirdly, I come to the main business of this evening, which is TO SHOW YOU HOW THIS DOES WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO.

There were two desirable things, you will remember, that I started with. The first was that the offender should be pardoned. You can clearly see how that is done. If Jesus did suffer in my stead, henceforth it becomes not only mercy that absolves me, but justice that seals my acquittal.

*“Since Christ hath my discharge procured,
And freely, in my room, endured
The whole of wrath divine;
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine.”*

If Jesus paid the debt, it is paid, and I am clear. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Your only question, dear hearers, is—have you a part in the sufferings of Christ? Was He a substitute for you? According to this grand old Book, on which we fix our trust as an infallible guide in this matter, Jesus died for every soul that trusts Him. So is it written—“He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.”

Have you these personal evidences? Do you unfeignedly trust Him? Then you are forgiven. You are this night absolved, you may rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom you have now received the atonement. Your sins, past, present, and to come, are all blotted out.

*“Here's pardon for transgressions past,
It matters not how black their cast;
And O my soul, with wonder view,
For sins to come, here's pardon too.”*

The red mark is drawn across the bill, it is discharged. The load of obligation is gone, from its thralldom thou are released. The sin of the believer has ceased to be. Christ has been punished in his stead. Is not that simple enough for all of you to understand, and Scriptural enough for all of you to receive?

But how comes the second necessity to be supplied? How does this tend from now on to make such a man pure in heart, and produce in his very soul an aversion and a total abhorrence of sin? This is not difficult to apprehend if you will give it a little quiet consideration.

When the Holy Spirit comes with power into a man's heart, and renews his nature (oh, matchless miracle!)—a miracle that has been wrought many times in this house, at that moment the unhallowed

and the impure are made chaste, the dishonest are made honest, and the ungodly are made to love God—“for if any man be in Christ he is a new creature.”

Such motives as the following now begin to influence his mind—The man says, “Did God, instead of forgiving my sin without a penalty, make the anointed Substitute smart for it? Then I reverence the lawgiver, the mighty lawgiver who would not, even though He is love itself, suffer His law to be broken. I reverence that dreadful Judge of all the earth, who, though I be His child, yet since I had offended, would not spare me for my sin, but executed the penalty that was due to me upon Himself.

Himself! for Christ His Son is one with Him, and dear to His Father’s soul. Why, more than that, it makes me feel an intense love to Him. What, was He so just, and yet was He so determined to save me, that He would not spare His only Son, but freely gave Him up to die? O blessed God, I tremble at Your justice, which yet I come to admire, but oh! Your love—what shall I say of it? It wins my love. I must love You, my God, the just and yet the gracious One. I must love Thee.”

Then there comes into the heart *an enmity against the sin which caused the suffering of Christ*. “What,” says the heart, “did sin make my Redeemer, who gave Himself for me, suffer? Then, away with it, it must be a foul, vile thing, to put such a blessed One as He to death. I will not tolerate it.” It makes the soul cry, “Revenge” against itself, a blessed vengeance it decrees against all sin.

“Bring out the gallows, and let sin be hanged thereon. The dearest idol I have known, bring out the hammer and the axe, and let it be broken in pieces. The choicest transgression I have ever nurtured in my bosom, I see what a viper it is, and I shake it into the fire, away with it. If it grieves my Christ, and makes Him bleed, my own beloved Savior, away with it, away with it!”

And let me tell you, there is another matter that comes in and supplies the basis for holiness, such a basis as cannot be found anywhere else. The man says, “Now I am pardoned through the love of Jesus Christ and the shedding of His precious blood, I have God for my Father, and He is my friend, there is no one to part me from Him, my sin was laid on another, it has been expiated, and it is gone: I am saved, I am forgiven.”

The man is happy, the man is cheerful, the man is joyful, and what springs up? “Now,” says he, “there is that glorious Christ of God who has wrought this for me, and I see Him with the eyes of faith. I see Him in heaven, and I am His man—body, soul, and spirit. I am not my own, He has bought me with His blood, I lay myself at His feet, what He bids me do I will do, what He asks of me I will give, what He forbids me, it shall be my joy never to touch.”

Here breaks forth in the soul an enthusiastic love to the person of Jesus Christ, which, as it burns and glows like a refining fire, becomes a great motive-power to the spirit to pursue holiness in the power of God. When do the soldiers fight best, sirs? When you have read their rules to them as to how they must keep place, and how they must load their guns, and fire in due order? No, law does not inflame the soldier with martial ardor, though it is good in its place.

But just when the battle lingers—take an instance from our own history—just when the battle was about to turn with the Ironsides, and the Cavaliers were coming on with one of Rupert’s hot charges, ready to break the line, and the brave old Ironsides were half inclined to turn, up came the general old Noll, riding on his horse, and they passed the word along, “’Tis he, boys, here he comes!” and every man grew into a giant at once. They stood like iron columns, like walls of granite, and the Cavaliers as they came on broke like waves against rocks, and dashed away, and were heard of no more. It was the presence of the man that fired each soldier.

And so it is now with us. We believe in Jesus Christ. We know that He is with His church. He was dead, but He rose again. He has gone to heaven, but His Spirit is with us—King of kings, and Lord of lords is He. If He seems to sleep in the midst of our ship, yet He sleeps with His hand on the helm, and He will steer the vessel rightly. And now the love that we bear His name steers our souls to holiness, to self-denial, to seek after God, to make full proof of the faith and the fellowship of the Gospel, to seek to become like God, and to be absorbed into God that He may be all in all.

This is what was wanted—a stimulus potent enough, under God’s grace, to break through the barriers of sin. What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God has accomplished by sending His own dear Son in the likeness of sinful flesh for sin, and having condemned sin in the flesh, He has now removed its guilt, and destroyed its power.

To the best of my ability, I have thus set before you a doctrine in which my own heart finds perfect rest. I would that you all had the like rest, the same sweet heart’s ease in your breasts. Two words of counsel I must address to you before I close.

One is, *I do beseech you to receive this doctrine*. It is of God, it is true. They who first bore witness to it were humble fishermen. Unsophisticated as they were, they had no motive for inventing it, indeed, it is a theory which they had not the brains to invent if they had tried. They nearly all of them died for it. They never gained honor or emolument by professing or publishing it, but they endured contumely and persecution, even to the loss of their lives, for testifying to what they saw and heard.

Ah! since then the church has had long lines of martyrs. Who could help bearing the same witness, fortified with the same assurances, whatever it might cost them, however they might be ridiculed as ignorant, old-fashioned, and not up to the progress of the age? I pray you accept this—specially would I address myself to those of you whom I have preached to for so long, who yet are unsaved.

I do not know what forms of speech to use with some of you, or in what shape to fashion my appeal. If I thought that coming round to your pews, and kneeling down before you, and entreating you to receive Christ would have any effect upon you, I would fain do it. I have prayed very anxiously that if perhaps my voice should not be the one, that God would bless to your conversion, my brother’s voice next Sabbath day, or that of some one else on the following Sabbath on which I shall be absent, may have the effect of leading you to Christ.

O that you may but be saved! I will make no terms with God if you will but accept Christ.

I am somewhat of the mind of a dear little girl, who is now dying, if she has not already departed. She sent a little note in pencil to her minister, and it was delivered at the prayer meeting. “A little believer in Christ, nine years of age, asks the prayers of the people for her father, for he is an unbeliever.”

She was visited by her minister, and she said to him, “O sir, I have asked father to come and hear you preach. I thought he might get saved, but he mocks at it, and will not come, but sir, he must hear you preach one day, and that is when I shall be buried, for I shall soon be with Jesus. O sir! when he stands at the grave do be sure to tell him about the love of Christ, and say that I asked you to do so, for perhaps when I am dead that might help to break his heart.”

Oh, yes! if anything would break your hearts, that were a mercy if it happened. If the preacher himself were dead, if his interment in the grave could bring you to the Savior, it were a cheap price to pay. Only may God save you, may the Holy Ghost renew you. May the Savior wash you in His precious blood, and I shall be well content.

The other word is this. You that profess to be Christians, to believe what I have told you, *take care that you do not give the lie to it*. Not everyone that says, “I am a Christian” is so. Nay, nay. It is a heathenish nation this, that has had the impudence to call itself Christian. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it,” is as true today as when Christ uttered it.

To be a Christian in name is nothing worth, to be a Christian in the power of these truths, having received Christ Jesus the Lord, and being rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith as ye have been taught, that is to be a Christian in all good conscience. If your lives should be unholy, if you trades-people should be dishonest, if you rich people should be proud and selfish, if you poor people should be envious, if any of you should be drunken, if you should be loose in speech, if you should be unclean in deed or in conversation, men may say, “The preacher has only laid down a theory, let him show us facts.”

Well, but I can show facts. I bless God that I have it in my own soul to say that I believe the most of you do so live as to prove these things, even though there should be others of you of whom I tell you even weeping, that you are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Enemies! of all enemies the worst of enemies too, because while professing to be actuated by them you live in opposition to the teachings of Jesus.

O blessed Savior! wounded worse by Thy treacherous friends than by Thine open foes. O holy faith! more damaged by thy professors than by thy antagonists. The Lord grant us to walk and live in holiness, and in His fear, till the Master shall come, as come He will a second time without a sin-offering unto salvation.

Finally, brethren and sisters, farewell. Let me dismiss you with a blessing.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ISAIAH 53

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