

CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US

NO. 873

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 30, 1869,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us:
for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.”
Galatians 3:13.*

THE Apostle had been showing to the Galatians that salvation is in no degree by works. He proved this all-important Truth of God in the verses which precede the text, by a very conclusive form of double reasoning. He showed, first, that the Law could not give the blessing of Salvation, for, since all had broken it, all that the Law could do was to curse. He quotes the substance of the 27th Chapter of Deuteronomy, “Cursed is everyone who continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” And as no man can claim that he has continued in all things that are in the Law, he pointed out the clear inference that all men under the Law had incurred the curse. He then reminds the Galatians, in the second place, that if any had ever been blessed in the olden times, the blessing came not by the Law, but by their Faith, and to prove this, he quotes a passage from Habakkuk 2:4 in which it is distinctly stated that the just shall live by Faith, so that those who were just and righteous did not live before God on the footing of their obedience to the Law, but they were Justified and made to live on the ground of their being Believers. See, then, that if the Law inevitably curses us all, and if the only people who are said to have been preserved in gracious life were Justified not by works, but by *Faith*, then it is certain beyond a doubt that the Salvation and Justification of a sinner cannot be by the works of the Law, but altogether by the Grace of God through Faith which is in Christ Jesus.

But the Apostle, no doubt feeling that now that he was declaring that Doctrine, he had better declare the foundation and root of it, unveils in the text before us a reason why men are not saved by their personal righteousness, but saved by their Faith. He tells us that the reason is this—that men are not saved by any personal merit, but their salvation lies in Another—lies, in fact, in Christ Jesus, the Representative Man who alone can deliver us from the curse which the Law brought upon us; and since works do not connect us with Christ, but Faith is the uniting bond, Faith becomes the way of Salvation; since Faith is the hand that lays hold upon the finished work of Christ, which works *could not* and *would not* do, for works lead us to boast, and to forget Christ—Faith becomes the true and only way of obtaining Justification and Everlasting Life. In order that such Faith may be nurtured in us, may God the Holy Spirit this morning lead us into the depths of the great work of Christ! May we understand more clearly the nature of His Substitution, and of the suffering which it entailed upon Him. Let us see, indeed, the truth of the stanzas whose music has just died away—

*“He bore that we might never bear
His Father’s righteous ire.”*

I. Our first contemplation this morning will be upon this question, WHAT IS THE CURSE OF THE LAW HERE INTENDED?

It is the Curse of God. God who made the Law has appended certain penal consequences to the breaking of it, and the man who violates the Law becomes at once the subject of the Wrath of the Law-giver. It is not the curse of the mere Law of itself—it is a curse from the great Lawgiver whose arm is strong to defend His Statutes. Therefore, at the very outset of our reflections, let us be assured that the Curse of the Law must be supremely just, and morally unavoidable. It is not possible that our God, who delights to bless us, should inflict an atom of curse upon any one of His creatures unless the highest right shall require it; and if there is any method by which holiness and purity can be maintained without a

curse, rest assured the God of Love will not imprecate sorrow upon His creatures! The curse, then, if it falls, must be a necessary one—in its very *essence* necessary for the preservation of order in the universe, and for the manifestation of the Holiness of the Universal Sovereign. Be assured, too, that when God curses, it is a curse of the most weighty kind; the causeless curse shall not come, but God's curses are never causeless, and they come home to offenders with overwhelming power; sin must be punished, and when by long continuance and impenitence in evil, God is provoked to speak the malediction, I know that he whom He curses is cursed, indeed! There is something so terrible in the very idea of the Omnipotent God pronouncing a curse upon a transgressor, that my blood curdles at it, and I cannot express myself very clearly or even coherently. A father's curse, how terrible! But what is that to the malediction of the great Father of Spirits? To be cursed of men is no mean evil, but to be accursed of God is terror and dismay! Sorrow and anguish lie in that curse; death is involved in it, and that Second Death which John foresaw in Patmos, and described as being cast into a Lake of Fire (Rev 20:14). Hear the Word of the Lord by His servant Nahum, and consider what His curse must be—"God is jealous, and the Lord revenges; the Lord revenges, and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies...The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt and the earth is burned at His Presence, yes, the world and all that dwell herein. Who can stand before His indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him."

Remember, also, the Prophecy of Malachi: "For behold, the day comes that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yes, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble. And the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Let such words, and there are many like they, sink into your hearts that you may fear and tremble before this Just and Holy Lord! If we would look further into the meaning of the curse that arises from the breach of the Law, we must remember that a curse is, first of all, a sign of displeasure. Now, we learn from Scripture that God is angry with the wicked every day. Though towards the persons of sinners God exhibits great long-suffering, yet sin exceedingly provokes His Holy Mind; sin is a thing so utterly loathsome and detestable to the purity of the Most High, that no *thought* of evil, or an ill word, or an unjust action is tolerated by Him. He observes every sin, and His Holy Soul is stirred thereby; He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; He cannot endure it; He is a God that will certainly execute vengeance upon every evil work. A curse implies something more than mere anger, it is suggested by burning indignation, and truly our God is not only *somewhat* angry with sinners, but His Wrath is great towards sin. Wherever sin exists, there the fullness of the Power of the Divine Indignation is directed. And though the effect of that Wrath may be for a while, restrained through abundant long-suffering, yet God is greatly indignant with the iniquities of men. We wink at sin, yes, and even harden our hearts till we *laugh* at it, and take *pleasure* in it, but oh, let us not think that *God* is such as we are! Let us not suppose that sin can be beheld by Him, and yet no indignation be felt! Ah, no, the most Holy God has written warnings in His Word which plainly inform us how terribly He is provoked by iniquity, as, for instance, when he says, "Beware, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." "Therefore, says the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease Me of My adversaries, and avenge Me of My enemies." "For we know Him who has said, Vengeance belongs to Me, I will recompense, says the Lord." And again, the Lord shall judge His people. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Moreover, a curse imprecates evil and is, as it comes from God, of the nature of a *threat*. It is as though God should say, "By-and-by I will visit you for this offense; you have broken My Law which is Just and Holy, and the inevitable penalty shall certainly come upon you."

Now, God has, throughout His Word, given many such curses as these—He has threatened men over and over again. "If he turns not, He will whet his sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready." Sometimes the threat is wrapped up in a plaintive lamentation. "Turn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?" But still it is plain and clear that God will not allow sin to go unpunished—and when the fullness of time shall come, and the measure shall be filled to the brim, and

the weight of iniquity shall be fully reached, and the harvest shall be ripe, and the cry of wickedness shall come up mightily into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth—then will He come forth in robes of Vengeance and overwhelm His adversaries! But God’s curse is something more than a threat; He comes at length to blows; He uses warning words at first, but sooner or later He bares His sword for execution. The Curse of God, as to its actual infliction, may be guessed at by some occasions where it has been seen on earth. Look at Cain, a wanderer and a vagabond upon the face of the earth; read the curse that Jeremiah pronounced by the command of God upon Pashur—“Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends, and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes shall behold it.” Or, if you would behold the curse upon a larger scale, remember the day when the huge floodgates of Earth’s deepest fountains were unloosed, and the waters leaped up from their habitations like lions eager for their prey! Remember the day of vengeance when the windows of Heaven were opened, and the great deep above the firmament was confused with the deep that is beneath the firmament, and all flesh were swept away—except only the few who were hidden in the Ark which God’s Covenant Mercy had prepared. Consider that dreadful day when sea-monsters whelped and stabled in the palaces of ancient kings; when millions of sinners sank to rise no more; when universal ruin flew with raven wings over a shoreless sea vomited from the mouth of death! Then was the Curse of God poured out upon the earth!

Look yet again, further down in time. Stand with Abraham at his tent door, and see towards the east the sky all red at early morning with a glare that came not from the sun; sheets of flames went up to Heaven, which were met by showers of yet more vivid fire, which descended from the skies. Sodom and Gomorrah, having given themselves up to strange flesh, received the Curse of God, and Hell was rained upon them out of Heaven until they were utterly consumed! If you would see another form of the Curse of God, remember that bright spirit who once stood as servitor in Heaven—the son of the morning, one of the chief of the angels of God! Think how he lost his lofty principality when sin entered into him! See how an archangel became an archfiend, and Satan, who is called Apollyon, fell from his lofty throne, banished forever from peace and happiness, to wander through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none, to be reserved in chains of darkness unto the Judgment of the Last Great Day. Such was the curse that it withered an angel into a devil! It burned up the cities of the plain! It swept away the population of a globe! Nor have you yet the full idea. There is a place of woe and horror; a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is darkness. There those miserable spirits who have refused repentance, and have hardened themselves against the Most High, are forever banished from their God, and from all hope of peace or restoration. If your ear could be applied to the gratings of their cells; if you could walk the gloomy corridors wherein damned spirits are confined, you would then, with chilled blood, and hair erect, learn what the Curse of the Law must be—that dread malediction which comes on the disobedient from the hand of the Just and Righteous God!

The Curse of God is to lose God’s favor, and consequently to lose the blessings which come upon that blessing—to lose peace of mind, to lose hope, ultimately to lose life itself—for “the soul that sins, it shall die.” And that loss of life, and being cast into Eternal Death is the most terrible of all, consisting as it does in everlasting separation from God, and everything that makes existence truly life. It is a destruction lasting *forever*. According to the Scriptural description of it, it is the fruit of the Curse of the Law. Oh, heavy tidings have I to deliver this day to some of you! Hard is my task to have to testify to you the terrible Justice of the Law! But you would not understand or prize the exceeding Love of Christ if you heard not the curse from which He delivers His people—therefore hear me patiently! O unhappy men, unhappy men who are under God’s Curse today; you may dress yourselves in scarlet and fine linen; you may go to your feasts, and drain your full bowls of wine; you may lift high the sparkling cup, and whirl in the joyous dance, but if God’s Curse is on you, what madness possesses you! O Sirs, if you could but see it, and understand it, this Curse would darken all the windows of your mirth! O that you could hear, for once, the voice which speaks against you from Ebal, with doleful repetition—“Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field; cursed shall be your basket and your store; cursed shall be

the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your land, the increase of your cattle, and the flocks of your sheep; cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.” How is it that you can rest while such sentences pursue you? Oh, unhappiest of men are those who pass out of this life still accursed! One might weep tears of blood to think of them! Let our thoughts fly to them for a moment, but O, let us not continue in sin, lest our spirits be condemned to hold perpetual companionship in their grief! Let us fly to the dear Cross of Christ, where the Curse was put away, that we may never come to know, in the fullness of its horror, what the Curse may mean!

II. A second inquiry of great importance to us this morning is this—WHO ARE UNDER THIS CURSE?

Listen with solemn awe, O sons of men! First, especially, and foremost, the Jewish nation lies under the Curse, for such I gather from the connection. To them the Law of God was very peculiarly given beyond all others; they heard it from Sinai, and it was to them surrounded with a golden setting of ceremonial symbols, and enforced by solemn national Covenant. Moreover, there was a word in the commencement of that Law which showed that in a certain sense it peculiarly belonged to Israel. “I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” Paul tells us that those who have sinned without Law shall be punished without Law, but the Jewish nation, having received the Law, if they broke it, would become peculiarly liable to the Curse which was threatened for such breach. Yet further, all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth are also subject to this Curse for this reason—that if the Law were not given to all from Sinai, it has been written by the finger of God, more or less legibly, upon the conscience of all mankind. It needs no Prophet to tell an Indian, a Laplander, a South Sea Islander, that he must not steal—his own judgment so instructs him; there is that within every man which ought to convince him that idolatry is folly, that adultery and unchastity are villainies, that theft and murder, and covetousness are all evil.

Now, inasmuch as all men in some degree have the Law within, to that degree they are under the Law, and the Curse of the Law for transgression comes upon them. Moreover, there are some in this House this morning who are peculiarly under the Curse. The Apostle says, “As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” Now, there are some of you who choose to be under the Law—you deliberately choose to be judged by it. How so? Why, you are trying to reach a place in Heaven by your own good works; you are clinging to the idea that something you can *do* can save you; you have therefore elected to be under the Law, and by so doing you have chosen the Curse, for all that the law of works can do for you is to leave you still accursed, because you have not fulfilled all its commands. O Sirs, repent of so foolish a choice, and declare from now on that you are willing to be saved by Divine Grace, and not at all by the works of the Law! There is a little band here who feel the weight of the Law, to whom I turn with brightest hope, though they themselves are in despair. They feel in their consciences today, that they deserve from God the severest punishment; this sense of His Wrath weighs them to the dust. I am glad of this, for it is only when we come consciously and penitently under the Curse, that we accept the way of escape from it. You do not know what it is to be redeemed from the Curse till you have first felt the slavery of it; no man will ever rejoice in the liberty which Christ gives him till he has first felt the iron of bondage entering into his soul. I know there are some here who say, “Let God say what He will against me, or do what He will to me, I deserve it all! If He drives me forever from His Presence, and I hear the Judge pronounce that awful sentence, ‘Depart, accursed one,’ I can only admit that such has been my heart, and such my life, that I could expect no other doom.” O you dear Heart, if you are thus brought down, you will listen gladly to me while I now come to a far brighter theme than all this! You are under the Curse as you now are, but I rejoice to tell you that the Curse has been removed through Jesus Christ our Lord! O may the Lord lead you to see the plan of Substitution, and to rejoice in it!

III. Our third and main point this morning, is to answer the question, HOW WAS CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US?

The whole pith and marrow of the religion of Christianity lies in the Doctrine of “Substitution,” and I hesitate not to affirm my conviction that a very large proportion of Christians are not Christians at all, for they do not understand the fundamental Doctrine of the Christian creed, and alas, there are preachers who do not preach, or even *believe* this cardinal Truth of God. They speak of the blood of Jesus in an indistinct kind of way, and comment upon the death of Christ in a hazy style of poetry—but they do not strike this nail on the head, and lay it down that the way of Salvation is by Christ’s becoming a Substitute for guilty man! This shall make me the more plain and definite! Sin is an accursed thing; God, from the necessity of His Holiness, must curse it; He must punish men for committing it; but the Lord’s Christ, the Glorious Son of the Everlasting Father, became a Man and suffered in His own proper Person, the Curse which was due to the sons of men, so that, by a vicarious Offering, God, having been Just in punishing sin, could extend His bounteous Mercy towards those who believe in the Substitute. Now for this point, “But, you inquire, how was Jesus Christ a *Curse*?” We beg you to observe the word “made.” “He was *made* a curse.” Christ was no Curse in Himself; in His Person He was spotlessly Innocent, and nothing of sin could belong Personally to Him; in Him was no sin. “God made Him to be sin for us.” And the Apostle expressly adds, “who knew no sin.” There must never be supposed to be any degree of blameworthiness or censure in the Person or Character of Christ as He stands as an Individual! He is in that respect without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—the Immaculate Lamb of God’s Passover.

Nor was Christ made a Curse of necessity; there was no necessity in Himself that He should ever suffer the Curse—no necessity except that which His own loving Suretyship created. His own intrinsic Holiness kept Him from sin, and that same Holiness kept Him from the Curse. He was made sin for us, not on His own account, not with any view to Himself, but wholly because He loved us, and chose to put Himself in the place which we ought to have occupied. He was made a Curse for us, not again, I say, out of any personal need, or out of any personal necessity, but because He had voluntarily undertaken to be the Covenant Head of His people, and to be their Representative, and as their Representative to bear the Curse which was due to them. We must be very clear here because very strong expressions have been used by those who hold the great Truth of God which I am endeavoring to preach, which strong expressions have conveyed the Truth they meant to convey, but also a great deal more. Martin Luther’s wonderful book on Galatians, which he prized so much that he called it his Catherine Born (that was the name of his beloved wife, and he gave this book the name of the dearest one he knew)—in that book he says plainly, but be assured did not mean what he said to be *literally* understood, that Jesus Christ was the greatest Sinner that ever lived—that all the sins of men were so laid upon Christ, that He became all the thieves and murderers and adulterers that ever were, in one. Now, he meant that God treated Christ as if He *had been a great Sinner*—as if He had been all the sinners in the world in one—and such language teaches that Truth very plainly. But Luther, in his boisterousness, overshoots his mark, and leaves room for the censure that he has almost spoken blasphemy against the blessed Person of our Lord! Christ never was, and never could be a *Sinner*—and in His Person, and in His Character, in Himself considered, He never could be anything but the Well-Beloved of God, and blessed forever, and well-pleasing in Jehovah’s sight! So that when we say that He was a Curse, we must lay stress on those words, “He was *made* a curse.” He was constituted a Curse, set as a Curse.

And then, again, we must emphasize those other words, “*for us*”—not on His own account at all—but entirely out of Love to us, that we might be Redeemed. He stood in the sinner’s place, and was reckoned to be a Sinner, and treated as a sinner, and *made* a Curse for us. Let us go farther into this Truth of God. *How* was Christ made a Curse? In the first place, He was made a Curse because all the sins of His people were actually laid on Him. Remember the words of the Apostle—it is no Doctrine of mine, mark you, it is an Inspired Sentence, it is *God’s* Doctrine—“He made Him to be sin for us.” And let me note another passage from the Prophet Isaiah, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”; and yet another from the same Prophet, “He shall bear their iniquities.” The sins of God’s people were lifted from off them, and imputed to Christ, and their sins were looked upon as if Christ had committed them! He

was regarded as if He had been the Sinner; He actually and in very deed stood in the sinner's place. Next to the imputation of sin came the Curse of sin. The Law, looking for sin to punish, with its quick eye detected sin laid upon Christ, and as it must curse sin wherever it was found, it cursed the sin as it was laid on Christ; so Christ was *made a Curse*. Amazing and awful words, but as they are Scriptural words, we must receive them. Sin being on Christ, the Curse came on Christ, and in consequence our Lord felt an unutterable horror of soul; surely it was that horror which made Him sweat great drops of blood when He saw and *felt* that God was beginning to treat Him as if He had been a Sinner; the Holy Soul of Christ shrunk with deepest agony from the slightest contact with sin, so pure and perfect was our Lord that never an evil thought had crossed His mind, nor had His Soul been stained by the glances of evil. And yet He stood in God's sight, a *Sinner*, and therefore a solemn horror fell upon His Soul.

The heart refused its healthful action, and a bloody sweat bedewed His face; then He began to be made a Curse for us, nor did He cease till He had suffered all the penalty which was due on our account. We have been accustomed in divinity to divide the penalty into two parts, the penalty of loss, and the penalty of actual suffering. Christ endured both of these. It was due to sinners that they should lose God's Favor and Presence, and therefore Jesus cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" It was due to sinners that they should lose all personal comfort; Christ was deprived of every consolation, and even the last rag of clothing was torn from Him, and He was left like Adam, naked and forlorn. It was necessary that the soul should lose everything that could sustain it, and so did Christ lose every comfortable thing. He looked, and there was no man to pity or help; He was made to cry, "But I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." As for the second part of the punishment, namely, an actual infliction of suffering, our Lord endured this, also, to the uttermost, as the Evangelists clearly show. You have read full often the story of His bodily sufferings. Take care that you never depreciate them; there was an amount of physical pain endured by our Savior which His body never could have borne unless it had been sustained and strengthened by union with His Godhead. Yet the sufferings of His Soul were the soul of His sufferings. That Soul of His endured a torment equivalent to Hell itself; the punishment that was due to the wicked was that of Hell, and though Christ suffered not Hell, He suffered an equivalent of it.

And now, can your minds conceive what that must have been? It was an anguish never to be measured, an agony never to be comprehended. It is to God, and God, alone, that His griefs were fully known. Well does the Greek liturgy put it, "Your unknown sufferings," for they must forever remain beyond guess of human imagination! See, Brothers and Sisters, Christ has gone thus far—He has taken the sin, taken the Curse, and suffered all the penalty; the last penalty of sin was death, and therefore the Redeemer died. Behold, the mighty Conqueror yields up His Life upon the tree; His side is pierced; the blood and water flows forth, and His disciples lay His body in the tomb. As He was first numbered with the transgressors, He was afterwards numbered with the dead. See, Beloved, here is Christ bearing the Curse instead of His people; here He is, coming under the load of their sin, and God does not spare Him, but smites Him as He must have struck us. He lays His full vengeance on Him. He launches all His thunderbolts against Him; He bids the Curse wreak itself upon Him, and Christ suffers all, sustains all.

IV. And now let us conclude by considering WHAT ARE THE BLESSED CONSEQUENCES OF CHRIST'S HAVING THUS BEEN MADE A CURSE FOR US.

The consequences are that He has Redeemed *us from* the Curse of the Law. As many as Christ died for, are forever free from the Curse of the Law, for when the Law comes to curse a man who believes in Christ, he says, "What have I to do with you, O Law? You say, 'I will curse you,' but I reply, 'You have cursed Christ instead of me; can you curse twice for one offense?'" Behold how the Law is silenced! God's Law, having received all it can demand, is not so unrighteous as to demand anything more; all that God can demand of a believing sinner, Christ has already paid, and there is no voice in earth or Heaven that can accuse a soul that believes in Jesus! You were in debt, but a Friend paid your debt! No writ can be served on you; it matters nothing that *you* did not pay it, it is paid, and you have the receipt. That is sufficient in any court of equity. So with all the penalty that was due to us, Christ has borne it. It

is true I have not borne it—I have not been to Hell, and suffered the full Wrath of God—but Christ has suffered that Wrath for me, and I am as clear as if I had myself paid the debt to God, and had myself suffered His Wrath. Here is a glorious foundation to rest upon! Here is a rock upon which to lay the foundation of eternal comfort! Let a man once get to this; my Lord outside the city's gate bleeding and dying for me as my Surety on the Cross; He discharged my debt, why, then, great God, Your thunders I no longer fear! How can You strike me now? You have exhausted the quiver of Your Wrath—every arrow has been already shot forth against the Person of my Lord, and I am in Him clear, and clean, and absolved, and delivered—even as if I had never sinned! “He has redeemed us,” says the text.

How often I have heard certain gentry of the modern school of theology sneer at the Atonement, because they charge us with the notion of its being a sort of business transaction, or what they choose to call, “the mercantile view of it.” I hesitate not to say that the mercantile metaphor expresses rightly God's view of Redemption, for we find it so in Scripture. The Atonement is a *ransom*—that is to say, a price paid, and in the present case, the original word is more than usually expressive—it is a payment for, a price instead of. Jesus did, in His sufferings, perform what may be forcibly and fitly described as the payment of a ransom, the giving to Justice, a *quid pro quo* for what was due on our behalf for our sins. Christ, in His Person, suffered what we ought to have suffered in *our* persons; the sins that were ours were made His; He stood as a sinner in God's sight, though not a sinner in Himself; He was punished as a Sinner, and died as a Sinner upon the tree of the Curse. Then having exhausted His imputed sinnership by bearing the full penalty, He made an end of sin, and He rose again from the dead to bring in that Everlasting Righteousness which at this moment covers the persons of all His Elect, so that they can exultingly cry, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's Elect? It is God who Justifies; who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes, rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

Another blessing flows from this satisfactory Substitution. It is this, that now the blessing of God, which had been up to then arrested by the Curse, is made most freely to flow. Read the verse that follows the text—“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” The blessing of Abraham was that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed. Since our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away the Curse due to sin, a great rock has been lifted out from the riverbed of God's Mercy, and the Living Stream comes rippling, roiling, swelling on in crystal tides, sweeping before it all human sin and sorrow, and making glad the thirsty who stoop down to drink there. O my Brothers and Sisters, the blessings of God's Grace are full and free this morning! They are as full as your necessities! Great Sinners, there is great Mercy for you! They are as free as your poverty could desire them to be, free as the air you breathe, or as the cooling stream that flows along the waterbrook. You have but to trust Christ, and you shall live! Be you who you may, or *what* you may, or *where* you may—though at Hell's dark door you lie down to despair and die—yet the message comes to you, “God has made Christ to be a Propitiation for sin. He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ has delivered us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. He who believes, has no Curse upon him; he may have been an adulterer, a swearer, a drunkard, a murderer, but the moment he believes, God sees none of those sins in him; He sees him as an innocent man, and regards his sins as having been laid on the Redeemer and punished in Jesus as He died on the tree. I tell you, if you believe in Christ this morning, my Hearer, though you are the most damnable of wretches that ever polluted the earth, yet you shall not have a sin remaining on you after believing! God will look at you as pure! Even Omniscience shall not detect a sin in you, for your sin shall be put on the Scapegoat, even Christ, and carried away into forgetfulness so that if your transgression is searched for, it shall not be found! If you believe—there is the question—you are clean! If you will trust the Incarnate God, you are delivered! He who believes is justified from all things. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved,” for, “he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved. And he that believes not shall be damned.”

I have preached to you the Gospel—God knows with what a weight upon my soul, and yet with what holy joy! This is no subject for gaudy eloquence, and for high-flying attempts at oratory; this is a matter to be put to you plainly and simply. Sinners—you must either be cursed of God, or else you must accept Christ as bearing the Curse instead of you. I do beseech you, as you love your souls, if you have any sanity left, accept this blessed and Divinely-appointed way of Salvation! This is the Truth of God which the Apostles preached, and suffered, and died to maintain; it is this for which the Reformers struggled; it is this for which the martyrs burned at Smithfield; it is the grand basic Doctrine of the Reformation, and the very Truth of God. Down with your crosses and rituals! Down with your pretensions to good works, and your crouching at the feet of priests to ask absolution from them! Away with your accursed and idolatrous dependence upon yourself! Christ has finished salvation-work, altogether finished it! Hold not up your rags in competition with His fair white linen—Christ has borne the Curse—bring not your pitiful penances, and your tears all full of filth to mingle with the precious Fountain flowing with His blood! Lay down what is your own, and come and take what is Christ's! Put away, now, everything that you have thought of being or doing by way of winning acceptance with God! Humble yourselves, and take Jesus Christ to be the Alpha and Omega, the First and Last, the Beginning and End of your Salvation.

If you do this, not only shall you *be* saved, but you *are* saved! Rest, you weary one, for your sins are forgiven! Rise, you lame man, lame through lack of Faith, for your transgression is covered; rise from the dead, you corrupt one, rise like Lazarus from the tomb, for Jesus calls you! Believe and live! The words in themselves, by the Holy Spirit, are soul-quickenings; have done with your tears of repentance, and your vows of good living until you have come to Christ! Then take them up as you will. Your first lesson should be none but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus! O come to Him! See, He hangs upon the Cross; His arms are open wide, and He cannot close them, for the nails hold them fast; He waits for you; His feet are fastened to the wood as though He meant to tarry, still. O come to Him! His heart has room for you; it streams with blood and water—it was pierced for you. That mingled stream is—

*“Of sin the double cure,
To cleanse you from its guilt and power.”*

An act of Faith will bring you to Jesus. Say, “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.” And if you do so, he cannot cast you out, for His Word is, “Him who comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

I have delivered to you the weightiest Truth of God that ever ears heard, or that lips spoke—put it not from you! As we shall meet each other at the Last Tremendous Day, when Heaven and Earth are on a blaze, and the trumpet shall ring and raise the dead, as we shall meet each other then, I challenge you not to put this from you! If you do, it is at your own peril, and your blood is on your own heads; I plead with you to accept the Gospel I have delivered to you; it is Jehovah's Gospel; Heaven itself speaks in the words you hear today! Accept Jesus Christ as your Substitute. O do it now, this moment, and God shall have Glory, but *you* shall have SALVATION! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 22.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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