

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE CROSS OUR GLORY.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 13TH, 1885, BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”—Galatians vi. 14.

ALMOST all men have something wherein to glory. Every bird has its own note of song. It is a poor heart that never rejoices: it is a dull packhorse that is altogether without bells. Men usually rejoice in something or other, and many men so rejoice in that which they choose that they become boastful and full of vain glory. It is very sad that men should be ruined by their glory; and yet many are so. Many glory in their shame, and more glory in that which is mere emptiness. Some glory in their physical strength, in which an ox excels them; or in their gold, which is but thick clay; or in their gifts, which are but talents with which they are entrusted. The pounds entrusted to their stewardship are thought by men to belong to themselves, and therefore they rob God of the glory of them. O my hearers, hear ye the voice of wisdom, which crieth, “He that glorieth, let him glory only in the Lord.” To live for personal glory is to be dead while we live. Be not so foolish as to perish for a bubble. Many a man has thrown his soul away for a little honour, or for the transient satisfaction of success in trifles. O men, your tendency is to glory in somewhat; your wisdom will be to find a glory worthy of an immortal mind.

The Apostle Paul had a rich choice of things in which he could have gloried. If it had been his mind to have remained among his own people, he might have been one of their most honoured rabbis. He saith in his Epistle to the Philippians, in the third chapter, “If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” He says that he profited

in the Jews' religion above many, his equals in his own nation; and he stood high in the esteem of his fellow-professors. But when he was converted to the faith of the Lord Jesus, he said, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." As soon as he was converted he forsook all glorying in his former religion and zeal, and cried, "God forbid that I should glory in my birth, my education, my proficiency in Scripture, or my regard to orthodox ritual. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul might also, if he had so chosen, have gloried in his sufferings for the cross of Christ; for he had been a living martyr, a perpetual self-sacrifice to the cause of the Crucified. He says, "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." He was once driven to give a summary of these sufferings to establish his apostleship; but before he did so he wrote, "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly." In his heart he was saying all the while, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The great apostle had yet another reason for glorying, if he had chosen to do so; for he could speak of visions and revelations of the Lord. He says, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, . . . caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man . . . how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." He was in danger of being exalted above measure by reason of the abundance of these revelations, and hence he was humbled by a painful thorn in the flesh. Paul, when hard driven by the necessity to maintain his position in the Corinthian church, was forced to mention these things; but he liked not such glorying, he was most at ease when he said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Brethren, notice that Paul does not here say that he gloried in Christ, though he did so with all his heart; but he declares that he gloried most, in "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," which in the eyes of men was the very lowest and most inglorious part of the history of the Lord Jesus. He could have gloried in the incarnation: angels sang of it, wise men came from the far East to behold it. Did not the new-born King awake the song from heaven

of “Glory to God in the highest”? He might have gloried in the life of Christ: was there ever such another, so benevolent and blameless? He might have gloried in the resurrection of Christ: it is the world’s great hope concerning those that are asleep. He might have gloried in our Lord’s ascension; for he “led captivity captive,” and all his followers glory in his victory. have gloried in his Second Advent, and I doubt not that he did; for the Lord shall soon descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, to be admired in all them that believe. Yet the apostle selected beyond all these that centre of the Christian system, that point which is most assailed by its foes, that focus of the world’s derision—the cross; and, putting all else somewhat into the shade, he exclaims, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Learn, then, that the highest glory of our holy religion is the cross. The history of grace begins earlier and goes on later, but in its middle point stands the cross.. Of two eternities this is the hinge: of past decrees and future glories this is the pivot. Let us come to the cross this morning, and think of it, till each one of us, in the power of the Spirit of God, shall say, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

I. First, as the Lord shall help me (for who shall describe the cross without the help of him that did hang upon it?) WHAT DID PAUL MEAN BY THE CROSS? Did he not include under this term, first, the fact of the cross: secondly, the doctrine of the cross: and thirdly, the cross of the doctrine?

I think he meant, first of all, *the fact of the cross*. Our Lord Jesus Christ did really die upon a gibbet, the death of a felon. He was literally put to death upon a tree, accursed in the esteem of men. I beg you to notice how the apostle puts it—“the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In his epistles he sometimes saith “Christ,” at another time “Jesus,” frequently “Lord,” oftentimes “our Lord”; but here he saith “our Lord Jesus Christ.” There is a sort of pomp of words in this full description, as if in contrast to the shame of the cross. The terms are intended in some small measure to express the dignity of him who was put to so ignominious a death. He is Christ the anointed, and Jesus the Saviour; he is the Lord, the Lord of all, and he is “our Lord Jesus Christ.” He is not a Lord without subjects, for he is “our Lord”; nor is he a Saviour without saved ones, for he is “our Lord Jesus”; nor has he the anointing for himself alone, for all of us have a share in him as “our Chris”: in all he is ours, and was so upon the cross. When they bury a great nobleman, a herald stands at the head of the grave and proclaims his titles. “Here lieth the body of William Duke of this, and Earl of that, and Count of the other; Knight of this order, and commander of the other.” Even thus, in deep solemnity, with brevity and fulness, Paul proclaimeth beneath the bitter tree the names and titles of the Saviour of men, and styles him “our Lord Jesus Christ.” There are

enough words here to give a four-square description of the honour, and dignity, and majesty of him who has both Godhead and manhood, and “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” Be it for ever had in reverent remembrance that he who died upon the cross between two thieves counted it not robbery to be equal with God. By nature he is such that the creed well describes him as “Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God”; yet he “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant . . . and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” I declare this fact to you in words, but I think them poor, dumb things; I wish I could speak this matchless truth in fire-flakes! The announcement that the Son of God died upon the cross to save men deserves the accompaniment of angelic trumpets and of the harps of the redeemed.

But, next, I said that Paul gloried in *the doctrine of the cross*; and it was so. What is that doctrine of the cross, of which it is written that it is “to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God and the wisdom of God”? In one word, it is the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine that the Lord Jesus Christ was made sin for us, that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and that God hath set him forth to be the propitiation for our sins. Paul saith, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly”: and again, “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” The doctrine of the cross is that of sacrifice for sin: Jesus is “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The doctrine is that of a full atonement made, and the utmost ransom paid. “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.” In Christ upon the cross we see the Just dying for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; the innocent bearing the crimes of the guilty, that they might be forgiven and accepted. That is the doctrine of the cross, of which Paul was never ashamed.

This also is a necessary part of the doctrine: that whosoever believeth in him is justified from all sin; that whosoever trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ is in that moment forgiven, justified, and accepted in the Beloved. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Paul’s doctrine was, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy”; and it was his constant teaching that salvation is not of doings, nor of ceremonies, but simply and alone by believing in Jesus. We are to accept by an act of trust that righteousness which is already finished and completed by the death of our blessed Lord upon the cross. He who does not preach atonement by the blood of Jesus does not

preach the cross; and he who does not declare justification by faith in Christ Jesus has missed the mark altogether. This is the very bowels of the Christian system. If our ministry shall be without blood it is without life, for "the blood is the life thereof." He that preacheth not justification by faith knows not the doctrine of grace; for the Scripture saith, "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." Paul gloried both in the fact of the cross and in the doctrine of the cross.

But the apostle also gloried in *the cross of the doctrine*, for the death of the Son of God upon the cross is the *crux* of Christianity. Here is the difficulty, the stumbling block, and rock of offence. The Jew could not endure a crucified Messiah: he looked for pomp and power. Multitudinous ceremonies and divers washings and sacrifices, were these all to be put away and nothing left but a bleeding Saviour? At the mention of the cross the philosophic Greek thought himself insulted, and vilified the preacher as a fool. In effect he said, "You are not a man of thought and intellect; you are not abreast of the times, but are sticking in the mire of antiquated prophecies. Why not advance with the discoveries of modern thought?" The apostle, teaching a simple fact which a child might comprehend, found in it the wisdom of God. Christ upon the cross working out the salvation of men was more to him than all the sayings of the sages. As for the Roman, he would give no heed to any glorying in a dead Jew, a crucified Jew! Crushing the world beneath his iron heel, he declared that such romancing should never win him from the gods of his fathers. Paul did not blench before the sharp and practical reply of the conquerors of the world. He trembled not before Nero in his palace. Whether to Greek or Jew, Roman or barbarian, bond or free, he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but gloried in the cross. Though the testimony that the one all-sufficient atonement was provided on the cross stirs the enmity of man, and provokes opposition, yet Paul was so far from attempting to mitigate that opposition, that he determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified. His motto was "We preach Christ crucified." He had the cross for his philosophy, the cross for his tradition, the cross for his gospel, the cross for his glory, and nothing else.

II. But, secondly, WHY DID PAUL GLORY IN THE CROSS? He did not do so because he was in want of a theme; for, as I have shown you, he had a wide field for boasting if he had chosen to occupy it. He gloried in the cross from solemn and deliberate choice. He had counted the cost, he had surveyed the whole range of subjects with eagle eye, and he knew what he did, and why he did it. He was master of the art of thinking. As a metaphysician, none could excel him; as a logical thinker, none could have gone beyond him. He stands almost alone in the early Christian church, as a master mind. Others may have been more poetic, or more simple, but none were more thoughtful

or argumentative than he. With decision and firmness Paul sets aside everything else, and definitely declares, throughout his whole life, "I glory in the cross." He does this exclusively, saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross." There are many other precious things, but he puts them all upon the shelf in comparison with the cross. He will not even make his chief point any of the great scriptural doctrines, nor even an instructive and godly ordinance. No, the cross is to the front. This constellation is chief in Paul's sky. The choice of the cross he makes devoutly, for although the expression used in our English version may not stand, yet I do not doubt that Paul would have used it, and would have called upon God to witness that he abjured all other ground of glorying save the atoning sacrifice.

"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood."

He would have called God to witness that he knew no ambition save that of bringing glory to the cross of Christ. As I think of this I am ready to say, "Amen" to Paul, and bid you sing that stirring verse—

"It is the old cross still,
Hallelujah! hallelujah!
Its triumphs let us tell,
Hallelujah! hallelujah!"

The grace of God here shone
Through Christ, the blessed Son,
Who did for sin atone;
Hallelujah for the cross!"

Why did Paul thus glory in the cross? You may well desire to know for there are many nowadays who do not glory in it, but forsake it. Alas that it should be so! but there are ministers who ignore the atonement; they conceal the cross, or say but little about it. You may go through service after service, and scarce hear a mention of the atoning blood; but Paul was always bringing forward the expiation for sin: Paul never tried to explain it away. Oh the number of books that have been written to prove that the cross means an example of self-sacrifice; as if every martyrdom did not mean that. They cannot endure a real substitutionary sacrifice for human guilt, and an effectual purgation of sin by the death of the great substitute. Yet the cross means that or nothing. Paul was very bold: although he knew that this would make him many enemies, you never find him refining and spiritualizing: the cross and the atonement for sin is a plain matter of fact to him. Neither does he

attempt to decorate it by adding philosophical theories. No, to him it is the bare, naked cross, all blood-bestained, and despised. In this he glories, and in none of the wisdom of words with which others vexed him. He will have the cross, the cross, and nothing but the cross. He pronounces an anathema on all who propose a rival theme—“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

I take it that this was so, first, because Paul saw in the cross *a vindication of divine justice*. Where else can the justice of God be seen so clearly as in the death of God himself, in the person of his dear Son? If the Lord himself suffers on account of broken law, then is the majesty of the law honoured to the full. Some time ago, a judge in America was called upon to try a prisoner who had been his companion in his early youth. It was a crime for which the penalty was a fine, more or less heavy. The judge did not diminish the fine; the case was clearly a bad one, and he fined the prisoner to the full. Some who knew his former relation to the offender thought him somewhat unkind thus to carry out the law, while others admired his impartiality. All were surprised when the judge quitted the bench and himself paid every farthing of the penalty. He had both shown his respect for the law and his goodwill to the man who had broken it; he exacted the penalty, but he paid it himself. So God hath done in the Person of his dear Son. He has not remitted the punishment, but he has himself, endured it. His own Son, who is none other than God himself—for there is an essential union between them—has paid the debt which was incurred by human sin. I love to think of the vindication of divine justice upon the cross; I am never weary of it. Some cannot bear the thought; but to me it seems inevitable that sin must be punished, or else the foundations of society would be removed. If sin becomes a trifle, virtue will be a toy. Society cannot stand if laws are left without penal sanction, or if that sanction is to be a mere empty threat. Men in their own governments every now and then cry out for greater severity. When a certain offence abounds, and ordinary means fail, they demand exemplary punishment; and it is but natural that they should do so; for deep in the conscience of every man there is the conviction that sin must be punished to secure the general good. Justice must reign, even benevolence demands it. If there could have been salvation without an atonement it would have been a calamity; righteous men, and even benevolent men, might deprecate the setting aside of law in order to save the guilty from the natural result of their crimes.

For my own part. I value a just salvation: an unjust salvation would never have satisfied the apprehensions and demands of my conscience. No, let God be just, if the heavens fall; let God carry out the sentence of his law, or the universe will suspect that it was not righteous; and when such a suspicion rules the general mind, all respect for God will be gone. The Lord carries out

the decree of his justice even to the bitter end, abating not a jot of its requirements. Brethren, there was an infinite efficacy in the death of such a one as our Lord Jesus Christ to vindicate the law. Though he is man, yet is he also God; and in his passion and death he offered to the justice of God a vindication not at all inferior to the punishment of hell. God is just indeed when Jesus dies upon the cross rather than that God's law should be dishonoured. When our august Lord himself bore the wrath that was due for human sin, it was made evident to all that law is not to be trifled with. We glory in the cross, for there the debt was paid, our sins on Jesus laid.

But we glory because on the cross we have an unexampled *display of God's love*. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Oh to think of it, that he who was offended takes the nature of the offender, and then bears the penalty due for wanton transgression. He who is infinite, thrice holy, all glorious, for ever to be worshipped, yet stoopeth to be numbered with the transgressors, and to bear the sin of many. The mythology of the gods of high Olympus contains nothing worthy to be mentioned in the same day with this wondrous deed of supreme condescension and infinite love. The ancient Shasters and Vedas have nothing of the kind. The death of Jesus Christ upon the cross cannot be an invention of men; none of the ages have produced aught like it in the poetic dreams of any nation. If we did not hear of it so often, and think of it so little, we should be charmed with it beyond expression. If we now heard of it for the first time, and seriously believed it, I know not what we should not do in our glad surprise; certainly we should fall down and worship the Lord Jesus, and continue to worship him for ever and ever.

I believe again, thirdly, that Paul delighted to preach the cross of Christ as *the removal of all guilt*. He believed that the Lord Jesus on the cross finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. He that believeth in Jesus is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. Since sin was laid on Jesus, God's justice cannot lay it upon the believing sinner. The Lord will never punish twice the same offence. If he accepts a substitute for me, how can he call me to his bar and punish me for that transgression, for which my substitute endured the chastisement? Many a troubled conscience has caught at this and found deliverance from despair. Wonder not that Paul gloried in Christ since it is written, "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory." This is the method of salvation which completely and eternally absolves the sinner, and makes the blackest offender white as snow. Transgression visited upon Christ has ceased to be, so far as the believer is concerned. Doth not faith cry, "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea"? O sirs, there is something to glory in in this, and those who know the sin-removing power of the cross will not be hindered in this glorying by all the

powers of earth or hell.

He glories in it, again, as *a marvel of wisdom*. It seemed to him the sum of perfect wisdom and skill. He cried, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" The plan of salvation by vicarious suffering is simple, but sublime. It would have been impossible for human or angelic wisdom to have invented it. Men already so hate it and fight against it that they never would have devised it. God alone out of the treasury of his infinite wisdom brought forth this matchless project of salvation for the guilty through the substitution of the innocent. The more we study it, the more we shall perceive that it is full of teaching. It is only the superficial thinker who regards the cross as a subject soon to be comprehended and exhausted: the most lofty intellects will here find ample room and verge [scope] enough. The profoundest minds might lose themselves in considering the splendid diversities of light which compose the pure white light of the cross. Everything of sin and justice, of misery and mercy, of folly and wisdom, of force and tenderness, of rage and pity, on the part of man and God, may be seen here. In the cross may be seen the concentration of eternal thought, the focus of infinite purpose, the outcome of illimitable wisdom. Of God and the cross we may say:

"Here I behold his inmost heart,
Where grace and vengeance strangely join;
Piercing his Son with sharpest smart
To make the purchased pleasures mine."

I believe that Paul gloried in the cross, again, because it is *the door of hope*, even to the vilest of the vile. The world was very filthy in Paul's time. Roman civilization was of the most brutal and debased kind, and the masses of the people were sunken in vices that are altogether unmentionable. Paul felt that he could go into the darkest places with light in his hand when he spoke of the cross. To tell of pardon bought with the blood of the Son of God is to carry an omnipotent message. The cross uplifts the fallen and delivers the despairing. Today, my brethren, the world's one and only remedy is the cross. Go, ye thinkers, and get up a mission to the fallen in London, leaving out the cross! Go, now, ye wise men, reclaim the harlots, and win to virtue the degraded by your perfumed philosophies! See what you can do in the slums and alleys without the cross of Christ! Go talk to your titled reprobates, and win them from their abominations by displays of art! You will fail, the most cultivated of you, even to win the rich and educated to anything like purity, unless your themes be drawn from Calvary, and the love which there poured out its heart's blood. This hammer breaks rocky hearts, but no other will do it. Pity itself stands silent. Compassion bites her lip and inwardly

groans, she has nothing to say till she has learned the story of the cross; but, with that on her tongue, she waxes eloquent; with tears she entreats, persuades, prevails. She may but stammer in her speech; like Moses, she may be slow of utterance; but the cross is in her hand, as the rod of the prophet. With this she conquers the Pharaoh of tyrannic sin; with this she divides the Red Sea of guilt; with this she leads the host of God out of the house of bondage into the land of promise which floweth with milk and honey. The cross is the standard of victorious grace. It is the light-house whose cheering ray gleams across the dark waters of despair and cheers the dense midnight of our fallen race, saving from eternal shipwreck, and piloting into everlasting peace.

Again, Paul, I believe, gloried in the cross, as I often do, because it was *the source of rest* to him and to his brethren. I make this confession, and I make it very boldly, that I never knew what rest of heart truly meant till I understood the doctrine of the substitution of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, when I see my Lord bearing away my sins as my scapegoat, or dying for them as my sin-offering, I feel a profound peace of heart and satisfaction of spirit. The cross is all I want for security and joy. Truly, this bed is long enough for a man to stretch himself on it. The cross is a chariot of salvation, wherein we traverse the high road of life without fear. The pillow of atonement heals the head that aches with anguish. Beneath the shadow of the cross I sit down with great delight, and its fruit is sweet unto my taste. I have no impatience even to haste to heaven while resting beneath the cross, for our hymn truly says:

“Here it is I find my heaven,
While upon the cross I gaze.”

Here is perfect cleansing, and hence a divine security, guarded by the justice of God; and hence a “peace of God, which passeth all understanding.” To try to entice me away from the truth of substitution is labour in vain. Seduce me to preach the pretty nothings of modern thought! This child knows much better than to leave the substance for the shadow, the truth for the fancy. I see nothing that can give to my heart a fair exchange for the rest, peace, and unutterable joy which the old-fashioned doctrine of the cross now yields me. Will a man leave bread for husks, and quit the home of his love to dwell in a desolate wilderness? I dare not renounce the truth in order to be thought cultured. I am no more a fool than the most of my contemporaries, and if I could see anything better than the cross I would as willingly grasp it as they; for it is a flattering thing to be thought a man of light and leading; but whither shall I go if I quit the rock of the atoning sacrifice? I cannot go beyond my simple faith that Jesus stood in my stead, and bore my sin, and put my sin away.

This I must preach; I know nothing else. God helping me I will never go an inch beyond the cross, for to me all else is vanity and vexation of spirit. Return unto thy rest, O my soul! Where else is there a glimpse of hope for thee but in him who loved thee and gave himself for thee?

I am sure Paul gloried in the cross yet again because he saw it to be *the creator of enthusiasm*. Christianity finds its chief force in the enthusiasm which the Holy Ghost produces; and this comes from the cross. The preaching of the cross is the great weapon of the crusade against evil. In the old times vast crowds came together in desert places, among the hills, or on the moors, at peril of their lives, to hear preaching. Did they come together to hear philosophy? Did they meet at dead of night when the harriers of persecution were hunting them, to listen to pretty moral essays? I trow [believe] not. They came to hear of the grace of God manifest in the sacrifice of Jesus to believing hearts. Would your modern gospel create the spirit of the martyrs? Is there anything in it for which a man might go to prison and to death? The modern speculations are not worth a cat's dying for them, much less a man. A something lies within the truth of the cross which sets the soul aglow; it touches the preacher's lips as with a live coal, and fires the hearers' hearts as with flame from the altar of God. We can on this gospel live, and for this gospel die. Atonement by blood, full deliverance from sin, perfect safety in Christ given to the believer, call a man to joy, to gratitude, to consecration, to decision, to patience, to holy living, to all-consuming zeal. Therefore in the doctrine of the cross we glory, neither will we be slow to speak it out with all our might.

III. My time has gone, or else I had intended to have enlarged upon the third head, of which I must now give you the mere outline. One of Paul's great reasons for glorying in the cross was its action upon himself. WHAT WAS ITS EFFECT UPON HIM?

The cross is never without influence. Come where it may, it worketh for life or for death. Wherever there is Christ's cross there are also two other crosses. On either side there is one, and Jesus is in the midst. Two thieves are crucified with Christ; and Paul tells us their names in his case: "the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." Self and the world are both crucified when Christ's cross appears and is believed in. Beloved, what does Paul mean? Does he not mean just this—that ever since he had seen Christ he looked upon the world as a crucified, hanged up, gibbeted thing, which had no charms for him, whose frown he did not fear, whose love he did not court. The world had no more power over Paul than a criminal hanged upon a cross. What power has a corpse on a gibbet? Such power had the world over Paul. The world despised him, and he could not go after the world if he would, and would not go after it if he could. He was dead to it, and it was dead to him; thus there was a double separation.

How does the cross do this? To be under the dominion of this present evil world is horrible; how does the cross help us to escape? Why, brethren, he that has ever seen the cross looks upon the world's pomp and glory as a vain show. The pride of heraldry and the glitter of honour fade into meanness before the Crucified One. O ye great ones, what are your silks, and your furs, and your jewellery, and your gold, your stars and your garters, to one who has learned to glory in Christ crucified! The old clothes which belong to the hangman are quite as precious. The world's light is darkness when the Sun of Righteousness shines from the tree. What care we for all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof when once we see the thorn-crowned Lord? There is more glory about one nail of the cross than about all the sceptres of all kings. Let the knights of the Golden Fleece meet in chapter, and all the Knights of the Garter stand in their stalls, and what is all their splendour? Their glories wither before the inevitable hour of doom, while the glory of the cross is eternal. Everything of earth grows dull and dim when seen by cross light.

So was it with the world's *approval*. Paul would not ask the world to be pleased with him, since it knew not his Lord, or only knew him to crucify him. Can a Christian be ambitious to be written down as one of the world's foremost men when that world cast out his Lord? They crucified our Master; shall his servants court their love? Such approval would be all distained with blood. They crucified my Master, the Lord of glory; do I want them to smile on me, and say to me, "Reverend Sir" and "Learned Doctor"? No, the friendship of the world is enmity with God, and therefore to be dreaded. Mouths that spit on Jesus shall give me no kisses. Those who hate the doctrine of the atonement hate my life and soul, and I desire not their esteem.

Paul also saw that the world's *wisdom* was absurd. That age talked of being wise and philosophical! Yes, and its philosophy brought it to crucify the Lord of glory. It did not know perfection, nor perceive the beauty of pure unselfishness. To slay the Messiah was the outcome of the culture of the Pharisee, to put to death the greatest teacher of all time was the ripe fruit of Sadducean thought. The cogitations of the present age have performed no greater feat than to deny the doctrine of satisfaction for sin. They have crucified our Lord afresh by their criticisms and their new theologies; and this is all the world's wisdom ever does. Its wisdom lies in scattering doubt, quenching hope, and denying certainty; and therefore the wisdom of the world to us is sheer folly. This century's philosophy will one day be spoken of as an evidence that softening of the brain was very usual among its scientific men. We count the thought of the present moment to be methodical madness, Bedlam out of doors; and those who are furthest gone in it are credulous beyond imagination. God hath poured contempt upon the wise men of this world; their foolish heart is blinded, they grope at noonday.

So, too, the apostle saw the world's *religion* to be nought. It was the world's religion that crucified Christ, the priests were at the bottom of it, the Pharisees urged it on. The church of the nation, the church of many ceremonies, the church which loved the traditions of the elders, the church of phylacteries and broad-bordered garments—it was this church, which, acting by its officers, crucified the Lord. Paul therefore looked with pity upon priests and altars, and upon all the attempts of a Christless world to make up by finery of worship for the absence of the Spirit of God. Once see Christ on the cross, and architecture and fine display become meretricious, tawdry things. The cross calls for worship in spirit and in truth, and the world knows nothing of this.

And so it was with the world's *pursuits*. Some ran after honour, some toiled after learning, others laboured for riches; but to Paul these were all trifles since he had seen Christ on the cross. He that has seen Jesus die will never go into the toy business; he puts away childish things. A child, a pipe, a little soap, and many pretty bubbles: such is the world. The cross alone can wean us from such play.

And so it was with the world's *pleasures* and with the world's *power*. The world, and everything that belonged to the world, had become as a corpse to Paul, and he was as a corpse to it. See where the corpse swings in chains on the gibbet. What a foul, rotten thing! We cannot endure it! Do not let it hang longer above ground to fill the air with pestilence. Let the dead be buried out of sight. The Christ that died upon the cross now lives in our hearts. The Christ that took human guilt has taken possession of our souls, and henceforth we live only in him, for him, by him. He has engrossed our affections. All our ardours burn for him. God make it to be so with us, that we may glorify God and bless our age.

Paul concludes this epistle by saying, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." He was a slave, branded with his Master's name. That stamp could never be got out, for it was burned into his heart. Even thus, I trust, the doctrine of the atonement is our settled belief, and faith in it is part of our life. We are rooted and grounded in the unchanging verities. Do not try to convert me to your new views; I am past it. Give me over. You waste your breath. It is done: on this point the wax takes no further impress. I have taken up my standing, and will never quit it. A crucified Christ has taken such possession of my entire nature, spirit, soul, and body, that I am henceforth beyond the reach of opposing arguments. Brethren, sisters, will you enlist under the conquering banner of the cross? Once rolled in the dust and stained in blood, it now leads on the armies of the Lord to victory! Oh that all ministers would preach the true doctrine of the cross! Oh that all Christian people would live under the influ-

ence of it, and we should then see brighter days than these! Unto the Crucified be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah liii.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—289, 282, 281,