

Three Crosses

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Scripture: Galatians 6:14

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“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.

WHENEVER we rebuke other people we should be prepared to clear ourselves of their offence. The apostle had been rebuking those who wished to glory in the flesh. In denouncing false teachers and upbraiding their weak-minded followers he used sharp language, while he appealed to plain facts and maintained his ground with strong arguments; and this he did without fear of being met by a flank movement, and being charged with doing the same things himself. Very fitly, therefore, does he contrast his own determined purpose with their plausible falseness. They were for making a fair show in the flesh, but he shrunk not from the deepest shame of the Christian profession; say, so far from shrinking, he even counted it honour to be scorned for Christ’s sake, exclaiming, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Galatians, and all others to whom his name was familiar, well knew how truly he spoke; for the manner of his life as well as the matter of his teaching had supplied evidence of this assertion, which none of his foemen could gainsay. There had not been in all his ministry any doctrine that he extolled more highly than this of “Christ crucified”; nor any experience that he touched on more tenderly than this “fellowship with Christ in his sufferings nor any rule of conduct that he counted more safe than this following in the footsteps of him who “endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” His example accorded with his precept. God grant, of his grace, that there may always be with us the like transparent consistency. Sometimes when we notice an evil, and protest as boldly and conscientiously as we can against it, we feel that our protest is too obscure to have much influence; it will then be our very best resource resolutely to abstain from the evil ourselves, and so, at least in one person, to overthrow its power. If you cannot convert a man from his error by an argument, you can at least prove the sincerity of your reasoning by your own behaviour; and thus, if no fortress is captured, you will at least “hold the fort,” and you may do more: your faithfulness may win more than your zeal. Vow faithfully within your own heart, and say frankly to your neighbour, “You may do what you will; but as for me, God forbid that I

should remove the old landmarks, or seek out new paths, however inviting, or turn aside from that which I know to be the good old way." A determined resolution of that sort, fully adhered to, will often carry more weight and exert more influence on the mind of an individual, especially of a waverer, than a host of arguments. Your actions will speak more loudly than your words.

The apostle in the present case warms with emotion at the thought of anybody presuming to set a carnal ordinance in front of the cross, by wishing to glory in circumcision or any other outward institution. The idea of a ceremony claiming to be made more of than faith in Jesus provoked him, till his heart presently grew hot with indignation, and he thundered forth the words, "God forbid!" He never used the sacred name with lightness; but when the fire was hot within him he called God to witness that he did not, and could not, glory in anything but the cross. Indeed, there is to every true-hearted believer something shocking and revolting in the putting of anything before Jesus Christ, be it what it may, whether it be an idol of superstition or a toy of scepticism, whether it be the fruit of tradition or the flower of philosophy. Do you want new Scriptures to supplement the true sayings of God? Do you want a new Saviour who can surpass him whom the Father hath sealed? Do you want a new sacrifice that can save you from sins which his atoning blood could not expiate? Do you want a modern song to supersede the new song of "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain"? "O foolish Galatians!" said Paul. O silly Protestants! I am inclined to say. We might go on in these times to speak warmly to many of the parties around us—the doting Ritualists, the puffed-up Rationalists, and the self-exalting school of modern thought. I marvel not at Paul's warmth. I only wish that some who think so little of doctrinal discrepancies, as they call them, could but sympathise a little with his holy indignation when he saw the first symptoms of departure from godly simplicity and sincerity. Do you not notice that a little dissembling of a dear brother made him withstand him to his face? When a whole company turned the cold shoulder to the cross of Christ it made him burn with indignation. He could not brook it. The cross was the centre of his hopes; around it his affections twined; there he had found peace to his troubled conscience. God forbid that he should allow it to be trampled on. Besides, it was the theme of his ministry. "Christ crucified" had already proved the power of God to salvation to every soul who had believed the lifegiving message as he proclaimed it in every city. Would any of you, he asks, cast a slur on the cross—you who have been converted—you before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you? How his eyes flash; how his lips quiver; how his heart grows hot within him; with what vehemence he protests: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." He spreads his eagle wing, and rises into eloquence at once, while still his keen eye looks fiercely upon every enemy of the cross whom he leaves far beneath. Oftentimes in his epistles you observe this. He burns, he glows, he mounts, he soars, he is carried clean away as soon as his thoughts are in fellowship with his Lord Jesus, that meek and patient Sufferer, who offered himself a sacrifice for our sins. When his tongue begins to speak of the

glorious work which the Christ of God has done for the sons of men it finds a sudden liberty, and he becomes as “a hind let loose; he giveth goodly words.” May we have something of that glow within our breasts to-night, and whenever we think of our Lord. God forbid that we should be cold-hearted when we come near to Jesus; God forbid that we should ever view with heartless eye and lethargic soul the sweet wonders of that cross on which our Saviour loved and died.

Let us, then, in that spirit approach our text; and we notice at once three crucifixions. These are the summary of the text. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ that is, Christ crucified. “By whom,” or, “by which” (read it whichever way you like), “the world is crucified unto me”; that is, a crucified world. “And I unto the world”; that is, Paul himself, or the believer, crucified with Christ. I see, again, Calvary before me with its three crosses— Christ in the centre, and on either side of him a crucified person: one who dies to feel the second death, and another who dies to be with him in paradise. At these three crosses let us proceed to look.

I. First, then, the main part of our subject lies in CHRIST CRUCIFIED, in whom Paul gloried. I call your attention to the language; “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross.” Some popular authors and public speakers, when they have to state a truth, count it necessary to clothe it in very delicate language. They, perhaps, do not quite intend to conceal its point and edge; but, at any rate, they do not want the projecting angles and bare surfaces of the truth to be too observable, and therefore they cast a cloak around it; they are careful to scabbard the sword of the Spirit. The apostle Paul might have done so here, if he had chosen, but he disdains the artifice. He presents the truth “in the worst possible form,” as his opponents say— “in all its naked hideousness,” as the Jew would have it; for he does not say, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the death of Christ”; but in the cross. You do not realize, I think— we cannot do so in these days— how the use of that word “cross” would grate on ears refined in Galatia and elsewhere. In those days it meant the felon’s tree, the hangmans gibbet; and the apostle, therefore, does not hesitate to put it just so: “Save in that gibbet on which my Master died.” We have become so accustomed to associate the name of “the cross” with other sentiments that it does not convey to us that sense of disgrace which it would inflict upon those who heard Paul speak. A family sensitively shrinks if one of its members has been hanged; and much the same would be the natural feeling of one who was told that his leader was crucified. Paul puts it thus baldly, he lets it jar thus harshly, though it may prove to some a stumblingblock, and to others foolishness; but he will not cloak it, he glories in “the cross!”

On the other hand, I earnestly entreat you to observe how he seems to contrast the glory of the person with the shame of the suffering; for it is not simply the death of Christ, nor of Jesus, nor of Jesus Christ, nor of the Lord Jesus Christ, but of “our Lord Jesus Christ.” Every word tends to set forth the excellence of his person, the majesty of his character, and the interest which all the saints have in him. It was a cross, but it was

the cross of our Lord: let us worship him! It was the cross of our Lord Jesus the Saviour: let us love him! It was the cross of our Jesus Christ the anointed Messiah: let us reverence him! Let us sit at his feet and learn of him! Each one may say, "It was the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ"; but it sweetens the whole matter, and gives a largeness to it when we say, "It was the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh yes, we delight to think of the contrast between the precious Christ and the painful cross, the Son of God and the shameful gibbet. He was Immanuel, God with us; yet did he die the felon's death upon the accursed tree. Paul brings out the shame with great sharpness, and the glory with great plainness. He does not hesitate in either case, whether he would declare the sufferings of Christ or the glory which should follow.

What did he mean, however, by the cross? Of course he cared nothing for the particular piece of wood to which those blessed hands and feet were nailed, for that was mere materialism, and has perished out of mind. He means the glorious doctrine of justification— free justification— through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This is what he means by the cross— the expiation for sin which our Lord Jesus Christ made by his death, and the gift of eternal life freely bestowed on all those who by grace are led to trust in him. To Paul the cross meant just what the brazen serpent meant to Moses. As the brazen serpent in the wilderness was the hope of the sin-bitten, and all that Moses had to do was to bid them look and live, so to-day the cross of Christ— the atonement of Jesus Christ— is the hope of mankind, and our mission is continually to cry, "Look and live! Look and live!" It is this doctrine, this gospel of Christ crucified, at which the present age, with all its vaunted culture and all its vain philosophies, sneers so broadly, it is this doctrine wherein we glory. We are not ashamed to put it very definitely: we glory in substitution, in the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus in our stead. He was "made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "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." We believe in the imputation of sin to the innocent person of our covenant Head and Representative, in the bearing of the penalty by that substituted One, and the clearing by faith of those for whom he bore the punishment of sin.

Now we glory in this. We glory in it, not as men sometimes boast in a creed which they have received by tradition from their forefathers, for we have learned this truth, each one for himself by the inward teaching of the Holy Ghost, and therefore it is very dear to us. We glory in it with no empty boast, but to the inward satisfaction of our own hearts; we prove that satisfaction by the devout consecration of our lives to make it known. We have trusted our souls to its truth. If it be a fable our hopes are for ever shipwrecked, our all is embarked in that venture. We are quite prepared to run that risk, content to perish if this salvation should fail us. We live upon this faith. It is our meat and our drink. Take this away there is nothing left us in the Bible worth the having. It has become to us the

head and front of our confidence, our hope, our rest, our joy. Instead of being ashamed to preach it, we wish that we could stand somewhere where all the inhabitants of the earth should hear us, and we would thunder it out day and night. So far from being ashamed of acknowledging it, we count it to be our highest honour and our greatest delight to tell it abroad, as we have opportunity, among the sons of men.

But why do we rejoice in it? Why do we glory in it? The answer is so large that I cannot do more than glance at its manifold claims on our gratitude. We glory in it for a thousand reasons. We fail to see anything in the doctrine of atonement that we should not glory in. We have heard a great many dogs bark against it, but dogs will bay the moon in her brightness, and therefore we mind not their howlings. Their noise has sometimes disturbed, though never yet has it frightened us. We have not yet heard a cavil against our Lord or an argument against his atoning blood which has affected our faith the turn of a hair. The Scriptures affirm it, the Holy Ghost bears witness to it, and its effect upon our inner life assures us of it. The analogy between Jewish fasts and festivals and our Christian faith endorses it; there is a chasm that no man yet has been able to bridge without it; it lightens our conscience, gladdens our hearts, inspires our devotion, and elevates our aspirations; we are wedded to it, and daily glory in it.

In the cross of Christ we glory, because we regard it as a matchless exhibition of the attributes of God. We see there the love of God desiring a way by which he might save mankind, aided by his wisdom, so that a plan is perfected by which the deed can be done without violation of truth and justice. In the cross we see a strange conjunction of what once appeared to be two opposite qualities— justice and mercy. We see how God is supremely just; as just as if he had no mercy, and yet infinitely merciful in the gift of his Son. Mercy and justice in fact become counsel upon the same side, and irresistibly plead for the acquittal of the believing sinner. We can never tell which of the attributes of God shines most glorious in the sacrifice of Christ; they each one find a glorious high throne in the person and work of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Since it has become, as it were, the disk which reflects the character and perfections of God it is meet that we should glory in the cross of Christ; and none shall stay us of our boasting.

We glory in it, next, as the manifestation of the love of Jesus. He was loving inasmuch as he came to earth at all; loving in feeding the hungry, in healing the sick, in raising the dead. He was loving in his whole life: he was embodied charity, the Prince of philanthropists, the death King of kindly souls. But oh, his death! — his cruel and shameful death — bearing, as we believe he did, he wrath due to sin, subjecting himself to the curse, though in him was no sin— this shows the love of Christ at its highest altitude, and therefore do we glory in it, and will never be ashamed to do so.

We glory in the cross, moreover, because it is the putting away of sin. There was no other way of making an end of sin, and making reconciliation for iniquity. To forgive the transgressions without exacting the penalty would have been contrary to all the

threatenings of God. It would not have appeased the claims of justice, nor satisfied the conscience of the sinner. No peace of mind can be enjoyed without pardon, and conscience declares that no pardon can be obtained without an atonement. We should have distracted ourselves with the fear that it was only a reprieve, and not a remission, even if the most comforting promises had been given unsealed with the atoning blood. The instincts of nature have convinced men of this truth, for all the world over religion has been associated with sacrifice. Almost every kind of worship that has ever sprung up among the sons of men has had sacrifice for its most prominent feature; crime must be avenged, evil and sin cry from the ground, and a victim is sought to avert the vengeance. The heart craves for something that can calm the conscience: that craving is a relic of the ancient truth learned by man in primeval ages. Now, Christ did make his soul an offering for sin, when his own self he bare our sins in his own body on the tree. With his expiring breath he said, "It is finished!" Oh, wondrous grace! Pardon is now freely published among the sons of men, pardon of which we see the justice and validity. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath God removed our transgressions from us by the death of Christ. This and this alone will put away sin, therefore in this cross of Christ we glory; yea, and in it alone will we glory evermore.

It has put away our sins, blessed be God, so that this load and burden no more weigh us down! We do not speak at random now. It has breathed hope and peace and joy into our spirits. I am sure that no one knows how to glory in the cross unless he has had an experimental acquaintance with its peace-breathing power. I speak what I do know, and testify what I have felt. The burden of my sin laid so heavy upon me that I would sooner have died than have lived. Many a day, and many a night, I felt the flames of hell in the anguish of my heart, because I knew my guilt, but saw no way of righteous forgiveness. Yet in a moment the load went from me, and I felt overflowing love to the Saviour. I fell at his feet awe-stricken that ever he should have taken away my sin and made an end of it. That matchless deed of love won my heart to Jesus. He changed my nature and renewed my soul in that same hour. But, oh, the joy I had! Those who have sunk to the very depths of despair, and risen in a moment to the heights of peace and joy unspeakable, can tell you that they must glory in the cross and its power to save. Why, sirs, we must believe according to our own conscience. We cannot belie that inward witness. We only wish that others had been as deeply convinced of sin, and as truly led to the cross to feel their burden roll from off their shoulder as we have been, and then they, too, would glory in the cross of Christ. Since then we have gone with this remedy in our hands to souls that have been near despair, and we have never found the medicine to fail. Many and many a time have I spoken to people so depressed in spirit that they seemed not far from the madhouse, so heavy was their sense of sin; yet have I never known the matchless music of Jesus' name, in any case, fail to charm the soul out of its despondency. "They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed." Men who, because they thought there was no hope for them, would have desperately continued in sin, have read that word "hope" written in crimson lines upon

the Saviour's dying body, and they have sprung up into confidence, have entered into peace, and henceforth have begun to lead a new life. We glory in the cross because of the peace it brings to every troubled conscience which receives it by faith: our own case has proved to our own souls its efficacy, and what we have seen in others has confirmed our confidence.

Yet we should not glory so much in the cross, were we not convinced that it is the greatest moral power in all the world. We glory in the cross because it gets at men's hearts when nothing else can reach them. The story of the dying Saviour's love has often impressed those whom all the moral lectures in the world could never have moved. Judged and condemned by the unanswerable reasonings of their own consciences, they have not had control enough over their passions to shake off the captivity in which they were held by the temptations that assailed them at every turn, till they have drawn near to the cross of Jesus, and from pardon have gathered hope, and from hope have gained strength to master sin. When they have seen their sin laid on Jesus, they have loved him, and hated the sin that made him to suffer so grievously as their substitute. Then the Holy Ghost has come upon them, and they have resolved, with divine strength, to drive out the sin for which the Saviour died; they have begun a new life, ay, and they have continued in it, sustained by that same sacred power which first constrained them, and now they look forward to be perfected by it through the power of God. Where are the triumphs of infidelity in rescuing men from sin? Where are the trophies of philosophy in conquering human pride? Will you bring us harlots that have been made chaste; thieves that have been reclaimed; angry men, of bearlike temper, who have become harmless as lambs, through scientific lectures? Let our amateur philanthropists, who suggest so much and do so little, produce some instances of the moral transformations that have been wrought by their sophistries. Nay; they curl their lips, and leave the lower orders to the City Missionary and the Bible Woman. It is the cross that humbles the haughty, lifts up the fallen, refines the polluted, and gives a fresh start to those who are forlorn and desperate. Nothing else can do it. The world sinks lower and lower into the bog of its own selfishness and sin. Only this wondrous lever of the atonement, symbolized by the cross of Christ, can lift our abject race to the place of virtue and honour which it ought to occupy.

We glory in the cross for so many reasons that I cannot hope to enumerate them all. While it ennobles our life, it invigorates us with hope in our death. Death is now deprived of its terrors to us, for Christ has died. We, like him, can say, "Father, into thy hands we commend our spirit." His burial has perfumed the grave; his resurrection has paved the road to immortality. He rose and left a lamp behind which shows an outlet from the gloom of the sepulchre. The paradise he immediately predicted for himself and for the penitent who hung by his side has shown us how quick the transition is from mortal pains to immortal joys. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord," is the cheering

prospect. Glory be to Christ for ever and for ever that we have this doctrine of “Christ crucified” to preach.

II. The second cross exhibits THE WORLD CRUCIFIED. The apostle says that the world was crucified to him. What does he mean by this? He regarded the world as nailed up like a felon, and hanged upon a cross to die. Well, I suppose he means that its character was condemned. He looked out upon the world which thought so much of itself, and said, “I do not think much of thee, poor world! Thou art like a doomed malefactor.” He knew that the world had crucified its Saviour— crucified its God. It had gone to such a length of sin that it had hounded perfect innocence through the streets. Infinite benevolence it had scoffed at and maligned. Eternal truth it had rejected, and preferred a lie; and the Son of God, who was love incarnate, it had put to the death of the cross. “Now,” says Paul, “I know thy character, O world! I know thee! and I hold thee in no more esteem than the wretch abhorred for his crimes, who is condemned to hang upon the gibbet and so end his detested life.” This led Paul, since he condemned its character, utterly to despise its judgment. The world said, “This Paul is a fool. His gospel is foolishness and he himself is a mere babbler.” “Yes,” thought Paul, “a deal you know of it! In this we unite with him. What is your judgment worth? You did not know the Son of God, poor blind world! We are sure that he was perfect, and yet you hunted him to death. Your judgment is a poor thing, O world! You are crucified to us. Now, there are a great many people who could hardly endure to live if they should happen to be misjudged by the world or what is called “society.” Oh yes, we must be respectable. We must have every man’s good word, or we are ready to faint. Paul was of another mind. What cared he for aught the world might say? How could he wish to please a world so abominable that it had put his Lord to death. He would sooner have its bad opinion than its good. It were better to be frowned at than to be smiled upon by a world that crucified Christ. Certainly, its condemnation is more worth having than its approbation if it can put Christ to death: so Paul utterly despised its judgment, and it was crucified to him. Now, we are told to think a great deal about “public opinion,” “popular belief,” “the growing feeling of the age,” “the sentiment of the period,” and “the spirit of the age.” I should like Paul to read some of our religious newspapers; and yet I could not wish the good man so distasteful a task, for I dare say he would sooner pine in the Mammertine prison than do so; but, still, I should like to see how he would look after he had read some of those expressions about the necessity of keeping ourselves abreast with the sentiment of the period. “What,” he would say, “the sentiment of the world! It is crucified to me! What can it matter what its opinion is? We are of God, little children, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one; would ye heed what the world, that is lying in the wicked one, thinks of you or of the truth of your Lord? Are you going to smooth your tongue, and soften your speech, to please the world that lieth in the wicked one!” Paul would be indignant with such a proposition. He said, “the world is crucified to me.” Hence he looked upon all the world’s pleasures as so much rottenness, a carcass nailed to a cross. Can you fancy Paul being taken to the Colosseum at Rome? I try to imagine him made to sit on one of

those benches to watch a combat of gladiators. There is the emperor: there are all the great peers of Rome and the senators; and there are those cruel eyes all gazing down upon men who shed each others' blood. Can you picture how Paul would have felt if he had been forced to occupy a seat at that spectacle? It would have been martyrdom to him. He would have closed his eyes and ears against the sight of what Rome thought to be the choicest pleasure of the day. They thronged the imperial city; they poured in mighty streams into the theatre each day to see poor beasts tortured, or men murdering one another: that was the world of Paul's day; and he rightly judged it to be a crucified felon. If he was compelled to see the popular pleasures of to-day, upon which I will say but little, would he not be well-nigh as sick of them as he would have been of the amusements of the amphitheatre at Rome?

To Paul, too, all the honours of the age must have been crucified in like manner. Suppose that Paul settled his mind to think of the wretches who were reigning as emperors in his day! I use the word advisedly, for I would not speak evil of dignities; but really I speak too well of them when I call them wretches. They seem to have been inhuman monsters — “tyrants whose capricious folly violated every law of nature and decency,” to whom every kind of lust was a daily habit, and who even sought out new inventions of sensuality, calling them new pleasures. As Paul thought of the iniquities of Napoli, and all the great towns to which the Romans went in their holidays— Pompeii and the like— oh, how he loathed them! And I doubt not that if the apostle were to come here now, if he knew how often rank and title are wont to sink all true dignity in shameful dissipation, and what flagrant profligacy is to be found in high quarters, he might as justly consider all the pomps and dignities and honours of the world that now is to be as little worth as a putrid carcase hanging on a tree and rotting in the sun. He says, “The world is crucified to me: it is hanging on the gallows to me, I think so little of its pleasures and of its pomps.”

Alike contemptuously did Paul judge of all the treasures of the world. Paul never spent as much time as it would take to wink his eye in thinking of how much money he was worth. Having food and raiment he was therewith content. Sometimes he had scarcely that. He casually thanks the Philippians for ministering to his necessities, but he never sought to store anything, nor did he live with even half a thought of aggrandizing himself with gold and silver. “No,” he said, “this will all perish with the using,” and so he treated the world as a thing crucified to him. Now, Christian man, can you say as much as this — that the world, in its mercantile aspect, as well as in its motley vices and its manifold frivolities, is a crucified thing to you? Now, look what the world says. “Make money, young man, make money! Honestly if you can, but by all means make money. Look about you, for if you are not sharp you will not succeed. Keep your own counsel, and rather play the double than be the dupe. Your character will rise with the credit you get on 'Change.” Now, suppose that you get the money, what is the result? The net result, as I often find it, is a paragraph in one of the newspapers to say that So-and-so Esquire's

will was proved in the Probate Court under so many thousands. Then follows a grand squabble among all his relatives which shall eat him up. That is the consummation of a life of toil and care and scheming. He has lived for lucre, and he has to leave it behind. There is the end of that folly. I have sometimes thought of the contrast between the poor man's funeral and the rich man's funeral. When the poor man dies there are his sons and daughters weeping with real distress, for the death of the father brings sadness and sympathy into that house. The poor man is to be buried, but it can only be managed by the united self-denials of all his sons and daughters. There is Mary out at service; she, perhaps, contributes more than the others towards the funeral, for she has no family of her own. The elder son and the younger brothers all pinch themselves to pay a little; and the tears that are shed that evening when they come home from the grave are very genuine: they do suffer, and they prove their sorrow by rivalling one another in the respect they pay to their parent. Now you shall see the rich man die. Of course everybody laments the sad loss: it is the proper thing. Empty carriages swell the procession to the grave by way of empty compliment. The mourners return, and there is the reading of that blessed document the will; when that is read the time for tears is over in almost every case. Few are pleased; the one whom fortune favours is the envy of all the rest. Sad thoughts and sullen looks float on the surface, not in respect to the man's departure, but concerning the means he has left and the mode in which he has disposed of them. Oh, it is a poor thing to live for, the making of money and the hoarding of it. But still the genius of rightly getting money can be consecrated to the glory of God. You can use the wealth of this world in the service of the Master. To gain is not wrong. It is only wrong when grasping becomes the main object of life, and grudging grows into covetousness which is idolatry. To every Christian that and every other form of worldliness ought to be crucified, so that we can say, "For me to live is not myself, but it is Christ; I live that I may honour and glorify him."

When the apostle said that the world was crucified to him, he meant just this. "I am not enslaved by any of its pursuits. I care nothing for its maxims. I am not governed by its spirit. I do not court its smiles. I do not fear its threatenings. It is not my master, nor am I its slave. The whole world cannot force Paul to lie, or to sin, but Paul will tell the world the truth, come what may." You recollect the words of Palissy, the potter, when the king of France said to him that if he did not change his religion, and cease to be a Huguenot, he was afraid that he should have to deliver him up to his enemies. "Sire," said the potter, "I am sorry to hear you say, 'I am afraid,' for all the men in the world could not make Palissy talk like that. I am afraid of nobody, and I must do nothing but what is right." Oh, yes; the man that fears God and loves the cross has a moral backbone which enables him to stand, and he snaps his fingers at the world. "Dead felon!" says he, "dead felon! Crucifier of Christ! Cosmos thou callest thyself. By comely names thou wouldst fain be greeted. Paul is nothing in thine esteem; but Paul is a match for thee, for he thinks as much of thee as thou dost of him, and no more." Hear him as he cries, "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." To live to serve men is one thing, to live to

bless them is another; and this we will do, God helping us, making sacrifices for their good. But to fear men, to ask their leave to think, to ask their instructions as to what we shall speak, and how we shall say it—that is a baseness we cannot brook. By the grace of God, we have not so degraded ourselves, and never shall. “The world is crucified to me,” says the apostle, “by the cross of Christ.”

III. Then he finishes up with the third crucifixion, which is, I AM CRUCIFIED TO THE WORLD. We shall soon see the evidence of this crucifixion if we notice how they poured contempt upon him. Once Saul was a great rabbi, a man profoundly versed in Hebrew lore, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and much admired. He was also a classic scholar and a philosophic thinker, a man of great mental powers, and fit to take the lead in learned circles. But when Paul began to preach Christ crucified — “Bah,” they said, “he is an utter fool! Heed him not!” Or else they said, “Down with him! He is an apostate!” They cursed him. His name brought wrath into the face of all Jews that mentioned it, and all intelligent Greeks likewise. “Paul? He is nobody!” He was everybody when he thought their way: he is nobody now that he thinks in God’s way.

And then they put him to open shame by suspecting all his motives, and by misrepresenting all his actions. It did not matter what Paul did, they were quite certain that he was self-seeking; that he was endeavouring to make a fine tiling of it for himself. When he acted so that they were forced to own that he was right, they put it in such a light that they made it out to be wrong. There were some who denied his apostleship, and said that he was never sent of God; and others questioned his ability to preach the gospel. So they crucified poor Paul one way and another to the full.

They went further still. They despised, they shunned him. His old friends forsook him. Some got out of the way, others pointed at him the finger of scorn in the streets. His persecutors showed their rancour against him, now stoning him with lynch-law, and anon with a semblance of legality dragging him before the magistrates. Paul was crucified to them. As for his teaching, they decried him as a babblers—a setter-forth of strange gods. I dare say they often sneered at the cross of Christ which he preached as a nine days’ wonder, an almost exploded doctrine, and said, “If you do but shut the mouths of such men as Paul, it will soon be forgotten.” I have heard them say in modern times to lesser men, “Your old-fashioned Puritanism is nearly dead, ere long it will be utterly extinct!” But we preach Christ crucified; the same old doctrine as the apostles preached, and for this by the contempt of the worldly wise we are crucified.

Now, dear Christian friends, if you keep to the cross of Christ you must expect to have this for your portion. The world will be crucified to you, and you will be crucified to the world. You will get the cold shoulder. Old friends will become open foes. They will begin to hate you more than they loved you before. At home your foes will be the men of your own household. You will hardly be able to do anything right. When you joined in their revels you were a fine fellow; when you could drink, and sing a lascivious song, you

were a jolly good fellow; but now they rate you as a fool; they scout you as a hypocrite; and slanderously blacken your character. Let their dislike be a badge of your discipleship, and say, “Now also the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world. Whatever the world says against me for Christ’s sake is the maundering of a doomed malefactor, and what do I care for that? And, on the other hand, if I be rejected and despised, I am only taking what I always expected— my crucifixion— in my poor, humble way, after the manner of Christ himself, who was despised and rejected of men.”

The moral and the lesson of it all is this. Whatever comes of it, still glory in Christ. Go in for this, dear friends, that whether ye be in honour or in dishonour, in good report or in evil report, whether God multiply your substance and make you rich, or diminish it and make you poor, you will still glory in the cross of Christ. If you have health, and strength and vigour to work for him, or if you have to lie upon a bed of languishing and bear in patience all your heavenly Father’s will, resolve that you will still glory in the cross. Let this be the point of your glorying throughout your lives. Go down the steps of Jordan, and go through Jordan itself, still glorying in the cross, for in the heaven of glory you will find that the blood-bought hosts celebrate the cross as the trophy of their redemption.

Are you trusting in the cross? Are you resting in Jesus? If not, may the Lord teach you this blessed privilege. There is no joy like it. There is no strength like it. There is no life like it. There is no peace like it. At the cross we find our heaven. While upon the cross we gaze all heavenly, holy things abound within our hearts. If you have never been there, the Lord lead you there at this very hour; so shall you be pardoned, accepted, and blest for aye. The Lord grant that you all may be partakers of this grace for Christ’s sake. Amen.