

SATAN SILENCED AND THE SINNER SAVED

A SERMON

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“It shall bruise your head.” Genesis 3:15

IN addition to what we said last Lord’s day morning upon the preceding clauses, I proceed to notice this morning what I believe to be the mind of the Holy Spirit in this clause of this verse, which you will at once perceive is not to be understood literally, because the bruising the serpent’s head literally would be a matter so insignificant, and a matter so useless, and the meaning amounting to just nothing at all; but if we take it in its mystic and proper sense, then it has an infinity and an eternity of significance. And this you will perceive by other similes that are used, as well as this, to illustrate and to instruct us into the mysteries of eternity. And hence, when the Jews asked the Savior, “What sign show you?” he said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again.” That, certainly, would have been a miraculous act of almighty power to have destroyed that temple, and have replaced it in three days; yet none of us could see any good that would result from such a circumstance as that. We are therefore assured that his words had a mystical meaning, and that it thus meant his death and his resurrection; and the death of Christ has in it an infinity and an eternity of importance, as also his resurrection. And so here, of course, by the serpent’s head, we must understand the counsel and power of the great enemy of our souls. And then, to bruise his head, I think, will fairly mean these three things: first, *dethronement*; second, *turning his counsel into foolishness*; and third, *final defeat*. I think these three things are fairly meant in the language of our text.

The apostle, before Agrippa, describes the conversion of the soul in a very beautiful way, in a way, I think, that reaches every real Christian. When the apostle would describe his mission to man, the mission that he received from the throne of God, he said, “To open their eyes.” It is the business of the enemy to blind our eyes to the gospel, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine in unto us. Now, to open their eyes to see the pit and the sword that await them; to open their eyes to see their own sad condition; to open their eyes to give them, in the Lord’s own time, to see that the redemption wrought by the Savior is a plenteous redemption, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; and, says the apostle, “to turn them from darkness to light.” And what light is that? Why, Jesus Christ; he is the light. And I know not anything truer than the Savior’s words upon this, “He that believes in me shall not abide in darkness.” So that to turn to the light is to turn to Jesus Christ; and there you will see how man can be just with God; there you will see how God can be just, and yet save by grace; there you will see mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other. And, says the apostle,

still describing this, “and from the power of Satan unto God.” So that here are the eyes opened to see your sad condition; and then your mind turned towards Christ, who is the true light, the light of life and the light of mercy, the light of salvation, the light of heaven, the light of eternity, a sun that will never go down. And then, says the apostle, “from the power of Satan unto God.” This is a very important clause. The word Satan means *an opposer, an adversary*; and so, the eyes may be opened, and you may be turned towards the light, while you are still somewhat under the power of Satan. It is a remarkable thing the apostle places deliverance from the power of Satan in the third clause. Yes, you may still be in a legal state, and say, Ah, that election! I shall never like that. Ah! then you are not out of the power of the adversary yet. Ah, that absolute predestination! I am afraid I can never like that. Ah, then, though your eyes are opened, and you are turned towards Jesus Christ, yet you have not done with aversion yet, with opposition yet; you are not free from Satan. Satan has a hope even now; he hopes he shall get you back again; but he will not, if the eyes are really opened, and you are turned in good earnest towards Christ Jesus, and feel you are spoiled for the world, though you are not yet delivered from Satan altogether.

And then, again, there is a covenant ordered in all things and sure. Ah! say you, that is all very well; but I like general invitations, and general offers, and general proffers. This is what you like, is it? That shows that you are not yet delivered from Satan; for, although you admit the truth to a certain extent, yet you like something else as well; you don't leave it to the Lord altogether; you have still got a little of the leeks and onions about you; you still savor of the fleshpots of Egypt; you have not done with those gospels yet. Well, all I say is, The Lord plunge you into the ditch of tribulation again and again, especially soul-trouble, till your own clothes shall abhor you; until you are brought to feel that it must be grace indeed to save you, if ever you get to heaven; that it must be mercy indeed that shall pardon you, if God can pardon such a wretch as you are; that it must be by the righteousness of another, indeed, if you ever appear righteous before God; that it must be by the responsibility and suretyship of another that you are eternally safe, if ever you reach the blissful realms of heaven. And when you are brought thus far, Satan will lose his power, and then you will be prepared for the next clause. You see here is the opening of the eyes; turning them from darkness to light; turning them from the world to the church, from the law to the gospel, from the first Adam to the last Adam; turning them to Christ, and then from the power of Satan. By-and-bye, down goes all the aversion. And hence our translators, I think, have beclouded that scripture in Hosea where it is said, “I will heal their backsliding,” *curabo aversionem eorum*, as the Latins more consistently render it, “I will heal their aversion, and I will love them freely.” And so, after the soul is made alive from the dead, this aversion may remain, but the Lord will heal that aversion. The medicines may be rather strong, and not very palatable perhaps, but, at the same time, they will be very effectual, you may depend upon it; for the Lord has declared that he will “thoroughly purge away your dross and take away all your tin.” Tin! say you, what is the tin? Why, a parcel of self-righteousness which you are taking for silver, and it is nothing but tin all the time; and the Lord, will take it away, and bring you forth as gold, after he has thus kept you in the furnace long enough. Then down will go Satan, and you will cling to every truth of the gospel with both hands, and with all your heart. You will say, Yes, I love this glorious gospel, from the origin to the mediation of it, from the mediation of it to the eternal triumph and certainty of it. And now you are prepared for the next clause. After the eyes are opened, turned from darkness to light, and from the power of the adversary, reconciled, brought out of this power, by which he inspires you with antipathy, and brought into real reconciliation, “And that they might receive forgiveness of sins.” That is just what you would like now, those of you that know what this experience is of which I

am now speaking; that is just what you would like, "That they might receive forgiveness of sins." Now, to receive Jesus Christ in the preciousness of his blood is to receive forgiveness of sins; to receive Jesus Christ in the fragrance of his name is to receive forgiveness of sins; to receive Jesus Christ as God's expression of immutable love to your soul, and that Savior endeared so that your soul is filled with love to him, and you can look to him and say, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Perhaps if you had gone to the woman, and said, Well, now, my good woman, you seem to love Jesus Christ; do you think your sins are forgiven you? Well, I don't know; my heart is full of love to him, my conscience is comfortable, my soul seems enlarged, and something makes me happy, I don't know what it is, at any rate I am happy. Why, says Jesus, the reason that your heart is so full of love to me, and you are so happy, is because your sins, which are so many, are forgiven. What! is that the meaning of this happiness? Is that the meaning of the love that I feel to his blessed name? Then:

"If sin be pardoned, I'm secure;
Death has no sting beside:
The law gave sin its damning power;
But Christ, my ransom, died;"

and I consequently must eternally live. There is the dethronement of Satan. I make no hesitation in saying it, that nothing but the blood of an incarnate God can blot out as a thick cloud your sins, and as a cloud your transgressions; it must be the blood of an incarnate God to achieve this wondrous end. If you are brought thus far, then you are made already meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light; if you should enter heaven this minute, you would meet with nothing there that would not be in entire keeping with the sentiments of your soul, the feelings of your soul, the affections of your heart. And so, it is the work of God thus to create us anew in Christ Jesus and prepare us for that eternity which is at hand. The apostle Paul, when dwelling upon this very point of Satan being cast down, to indicate what these persons are converted to, he says, and it is very significant too, in the 20th verse of the 16th of Romans, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Now, just notice what these persons were converted to in that same 20th verse. The apostle, by the Holy Ghost, brings in that promise, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." I hear one saying, Ah, Lord, you will never tread him down under my feet, I am such a sinner. I hear another saying, I don't know whether I am not as bad as the devil myself, or worse. I hear another saying, Well, that promise can't belong to me, for my old nature seems one with the devil, and I have so much of the devil about me, that I am afraid I shall be trodden down instead of him. I am down low enough now; and I am afraid I shall never get up. So, the apostle anticipates a great many complaints of this kind; and how do you think he closes that 20th verse? He throws in the remedy to keep them from despair, thus, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Then, if that's it, I will not despair. If it is by the grace of God that God will interpose on my behalf, then his grace is as much greater than my sins as he himself is greater than I am; I am but a creature; he is the Creator. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you", that settles the matter. Satan is dethroned, not only as the prince of darkness, by which he kept you altogether ignorant, but also as an angel of light, by which he would have deceived you with the vain conceit of your own supposed free-will agency, or duty, or power to believe, or something or other, for he cares not what kind of robe it is; if it is one that pleases you it will please him, so that it is not the robe of Christ's righteousness.

But lastly. Now we have glanced, then, at the dethronement of Satan, and his counsel turned into foolishness. I have said nothing about the crucifixion of the Savior yet, or else there is no event in the whole progress of time in which the counsel of hell was more conspicuously, or so conspicuously, turned into foolishness as in that circumstance; but upon that I must not enlarge. His counsel is overturned, and his power dethroned, in the conversion of a sinner, and in God's working for his people, interposing for them. How was Satan's head bruised at Calvary's cross, how was it done? There is one point, and only one; that I shall say a word upon here. It was done in this way, that the Lord Jesus Christ atoned for sin; Jesus Christ made reparation for the iniquities of his people; Jesus Christ destroyed sin, finished transgression, made an end of sin. If the people cannot be put into a position or a state entirely free from sin, and completely and infallibly justified before God, then Satan's counsel is not altogether but only partially overturned, his power is not altogether but only partially defeated. If there were a way in which the enemy could bring one sin before God against us, if there were a way in which the adversary could bring one fault before God against us, if there were a way in which the adversary could bring one unfulfilled commandment before God against us, if there were a way in which he could bring one blemish, one spot, one wrinkle before God against us, in that proportion, we should be defeated. But there is no way; so completely did the Savior destroy the possibility of anything being laid to the charge of those for whom he died, that the apostle is led on the stage, I was going to say, of all time, to make the challenge, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Satan himself cannot answer that in the affirmative; he is thrown by that circumstance into everlasting defeat, into eternal confusion; and this the primitive Christians understood, for they overcame the adversary by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. Satan may tell you, in order to fool you, and get other people to help him, of your faults; but if he go before God with your faults, he is met by the great Conqueror, an incarnate God; he is met by the great testimony that death is swallowed up in victory, and the sting of death is gone, and gone forever.

Here Satan is defeated, here his counsels are brought to nothing, turned into foolishness; and here his power is destroyed, turned into foolishness. His counsels have brought us into the state we are in by nature; that was his counsel, and he succeeded; and that counsel was never vitally, and effectually, and savingly turned into foolishness until Jesus Christ did it. Oh, how much we have gained by the fall of man. If there is no fall, we need no redemption; if no defilement, we need no sanctification; if no condemnation, we need no justification; if no death, we need no life; if no bondage, we do not need liberty. Now then, says Satan, I have got you all down. But God steps in and takes advantage of this. Now then, says the Lord, so far from my people losing anything by it, they shall gain by it; I will now give them a life that cannot die; I will now give them a holiness that is untarnishable, I will now give them a righteousness that is eternal and divine; I will now give them a standing as firm as my own eternal throne; and as he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, that in blessing he would bless. So that thanks be to God that you were the servants of sin, thanks be to God he suffered these ravages to abound, seeing he has thereby taken such advantage to display the riches of his grace in the destruction of sin, and death, and hell, and brought us up into a glory that surpasses every revelation that has been made. Creation does not reveal such a glory; the law does not reveal such a glory; the Jewish and Levitical dispensation did not reveal such a glory; here is a glory that surpasses all. Therefore, "thanks be to God that you were the servants of sin; but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered unto you." So that here the enemy is defeated and defeated forever. There is not a sin in

the Christian's life, past, and present, and to come, that was not laid upon Jesus and destroyed; and the church rises before a holy and a just God as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and ultimately triumphant as an army with banners. See, then, what Jesus Christ has done.

These are three things, I think, enough to encourage us; first, that we are brought out of darkness into light, out of antipathy into reconciliation; second, that we see how the Lord God omnipotent reigns, turning the counsel of the adversary into foolishness; third, we see that the dear Redeemer has at Calvary's cross put sin away by the sacrifice of himself, not a fault could be laid before God to our charge. If ever I lament my want of experience, my want of talent, and want of power to express myself, and want of materials by which to set forth my thoughts, it is when I come to this subject. There is something so profound, there is something so infinitely endearing; it endears that God that appointed such a Savior, it endears that Savior that became actually such a Savior as he is; it endears the Eternal Spirit in such a revelation; it endears the truths of the gospel; it endears the people of God; it endears angels, that are one with us so far as to learn by the same the manifold wisdom of God; it endears the inheritance that awaits us, it endears heaven, it endears home, it endears everything pertaining to our eternal welfare. And this seems to embrace the great end to be answered, where all the glories must culminate, namely, in this one point, to be perfect before him in love. Nothing like love, the love of God; the pure, living, self-supporting, immutable love of God? And when are we happy? Ah! when we have a sense of that love, a hope of that love, when we have a lively apprehension of that love.

“When we taste that love,
Our joys divinely grow
Unspeakable, like those above,
And heaven begins below.”

But, again, Satan's head is bruised, not only in the conversion of a sinner; his counsel turned, by the Lord's working for his people, into foolishness, and by what the Savior has done; but there are four more great circumstances which I will just mention, and then close. First, the day of Pentecost; that is another manifestation of the truth of our text: “It shall bruise the serpent's head.” O! what an overturn on that day was there of Satan's counsel and of his power. 27th of Isaiah: “In that day,” the day of Pentecost, “the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword,” namely, the sword of the Spirit, wielded by the instrumentality of the apostle Peter, and wielded with more zeal perhaps than it would have been had not Peter have learnt what a heart he had got, and what grace it was that saved him and would never part with him; “shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent,” that pierced us through in the fall; “even leviathan that crooked serpent,” to deceive us, and the dragon to tyrannize over us; “and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.” Ah, what a wound did Satan receive in that day! His head has been bruised a great many times, all centering in Calvary's cross; that is the essential, all the others are the circumstantial, that was the great event. Then the next great event I mention is the continued, by the gospel, conversion of sinners from the day of Pentecost down to the end of time; that is the next great event; all showing that Christ has on behalf of his people bruised the serpent's head. There will never be such another day as the day of Pentecost while time shall last. The Bible is complete; the Lord will send no more apostles, but only ministers. Conversion will go on down to the end of time. Then the third great event is that of the resurrection at the last great day. Oh! when Satan is dragged to light, as he will be at that day, and exposed before assembled worlds as the liar against God and the murderer of the souls of

men, then shall he receive his final doom, to be cast with all that are one with him into that lake of fire which never can be quenched. And then the last event, or rather circumstance, shall be the endless glory of the saints. One feels lost in the contemplation of it. No termination: the joy in quantity is full, in duration is everlasting; the pleasures are infinite in their variety, they also roll on to all eternity; the soul and body formed and capacitated for that eternity, and never wear out. The more we look into this great subject, the more we see the greatness of the victory which the Redeemer has wrought.

May it be our increasing delight that we shall have to give thanks unto God that gives us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Fall of Angels; being the Closing Part of last Week's Sermon.

Let us try for a moment to understand the Fall of Angels. First, he is said to be a liar, and the father of lies. Now, if he is the father of lies, he produced the first lie which was produced; he therefore fell by a lie; he fell by a lie against God. He mysteriously conceived something against God's counsels, and against God's way; God's order of things did not do for him, and he therefore propagated this lie; conceived it himself and propagated it, and dragged others with him into that lie, this lie against God. What an awful being is Satan! a lofty angel to sink into the degradation, all the degrading names that are applied to him. What an awful thing then is false doctrine! Satan fell by false doctrine. Men make light of it, and yet it has turned this angel, and myriads more, into deadly enemies against God. Thus, then, it is clear that he fell by falsehood, for he is the father of lies. And then, if we go to the Epistle of Jude, I think it is pretty clear there that this falsehood was something against God. God was not good enough for him; and so, says Jude, "The angels which kept not their first estate;" there it is, "but left their own habitation." Why did they not keep it? Why, because they did not like it. A lie arose, and a dislike arose to their estate, to their principality. It is clear from those words that God had appointed them a principality, an estate, a position; but they did not like it, and so they left it, and God pursued them, and has reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Here, then, is apostacy, that Satan fell by something against God. And it is a solemn truth that a false god has always appeared better in the eyes of the world than the true God. There is a text I will just name, which I preached from, a few Friday evenings ago, in Holborn, 7th of Isaiah, where the people proposed to go against Judah, and make a breach therein, and to set up a king over us, even the son of Tabeal. Now, the word Tabeal is a compound word, made up of two Hebrew words, signifying "the good god." "Let us set a king up over us, the son of the good god;" that is, of the devil: for when the devil came into Eden, he appeared a much better god than the true God. Ah, that uncharitable God of ours won't let us eat of all the trees; he excludes us from one; but this god that is now come, he says, Eat of them all; have them all: that's the good god; we will follow him. If we follow the son of the good god, that will let us have universality, must have universality. And so the Jews, devil-like, for they were taught of the devil when they did it, they were dissatisfied with the principality that God appointed them, brought in idolatry, and left their estate, and will never go back to it again. As Satan and his angels will never recover their original estate, so the Jews will never recover their original standing; they are gone and gone forever. There is but one hope left now for Jew and Gentile, and that hope is the Lord Jesus Christ. Let him be despised, there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Thus, then, I think it is pretty clear that

angels fell by false doctrines; they conceived a falsehood against God; they were dissatisfied with their estate. I have seen, these last few years, ministers who appeared to be satisfied with God's free-grace order of things; but alas! now they are become branches that are withered, and they are cast forth. Thus, then, angels fell; and man followed fallen angels. Adam and Eve fell by receiving falsehoods. Satan knew how powerful in his own case falsehood had been; and that which had been so powerful to throw him down, he knew would be the most powerful to throw others down. He tried it, and alas! succeeded; and he still tries, and still carries on his deceptions. What a mercy to be delivered from falsehood and delusion, and to be brought to know the truth, and to say with David, when, contemplating God's order of things, and the provision he had made for poor sinners, David says, "I shall be satisfied;" so shall I, David; "I shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, even of your holy temple." I shall want to go nowhere else; in my Father's house is bread enough for time and eternity. And of each true Christian it shall be said, "O, Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full of the blessing of the Lord."

But just a word in conclusion upon the enmity. There is the woman, a loved woman, that is, the church, chosen, consecrated, divinely guarded, shall be eternally glorified. That is the order of things against which Satan is enmity. This enmity manifests itself in the profane world, and it manifests itself more closely and pointedly in the empty and false professing world. So that we see the presence of Satan, wherever you see enmity against God's truth, that is the mark of Satanic presence; it is the spirit of disobedience; it is Satan that now works in the children of disobedience. He instigated, as you know, Judas to betray the Savior, and the Jews to crucify him. But just contrast the enmity of the world, for the world is, I am sorry to say, it is a solemn thing to say, but, viewed in the light of the Bible, the world is a fair representative of what the devil himself is. There is, here and there, a soul plucked from that dreadful image of hell, and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ; but with the exception of these that thus bear the image of the Son of God, the world, professing and profane, are the representatives of what Satan is. He is the god of this world, and they are representatives of their god. Ah, how can men come, and women too, sometimes, into this place as well as others, and hear the solemn sanctions of eternity, and sit, and grin, and smile, and make light of it, and go away and ridicule both the speaker and the things that he has spoken? Little do such persons think, when they are so behaving, that they are mere representations then of the old serpent. We might say to such, How would you like to have your portion with him, to be cast into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? This enmity of such persons is blind enmity, it is unholy enmity, it is unrighteous enmity, it is deadly enmity, and will be requited at the last by the Judge of all. But the hatred wherewith the woman hates the serpent is the hatred of understanding; she knows what she hates. She hates the wiles of the devil. The church stands fast, and she hates understandingly. The church knows what she hates; she understands what she hates; her hatred is a hatred of understanding. She hates delusions and rejects them. She hates holily, she hates righteously, she hates the devil effectually, and hates him finally; and in this, her love to her husband and her hatred to delusion, she shall stand clear at the last. Thus, how true it is, the Lord has put enmity between the church and Satan. We see, on the one hand, what an awful thing it is to be in that state of enmity; on the other hand, the blessedness of being reconciled to God, and to have the living God to be our Friend now, and our Friend forever.