

The Blessedness of Trusting in the Lord

by J.C. Philpot

The sermon emphasizes the blessedness of trusting in the Lord and the importance of putting our confidence in Him for salvation and guidance.

Scripture: Psalm 1:3, Psalm 92:12, Isaiah 58:11, Jeremiah 17:7, John 7:38, John 15:5

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Gods Blessing"

Description

J.C. Philpot preaches about the contrast between being under the curse of God and under His blessing, emphasizing the consequences of trusting in man versus trusting in the Lord. He explains the blessedness of those who trust in the Lord, comparing them to trees planted by the waters, nourished by the river of life and love, and bearing fruit even in times of drought. Philpot urges the listeners to examine their roots of faith and hope, ensuring they are connected to the source of life and love to maintain a green leaf of profession and continue yielding fruit as evidence of God's blessing.

Transcript

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on July 18, 1869, by J. C. Philpot

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Jer 17:7, 8

What a dreadful thing it is to be under the CURSE of God; to have his curse in our body, his curse in our soul, his curse in our family, in our substance, in our goings out, in our comings in; his curse in life, his curse in death, and his curse to all eternity. And how the fear and apprehension of this curse has made the hearts of many wither like the grass, filled them with gloomy forebodings night and day, and made them sink under apprehensions of dying in despair, and lying forever under the wrath of the Almighty!

But on the other hand, what bliss and blessedness there is in being under the BLESSING of the Lord; his blessing in body, his blessing in soul, his blessing in our families, his blessing in our substance, his blessing in life, his blessing in death, and his blessing through all eternity. And as there are many who have feared and trembled under his curse, when events proved in the end there was no real cause for

apprehension; so many have rejoiced, or thought they rejoiced in God's blessing, when it was all a delusion, for they were among those who said they would be blessed, though they added "drunkenness to thirst."

Thus we must not altogether take our fears and feelings, nor our doubts and apprehensions, of these matters as certain indications whether we are under the curse or under the blessing. But we must come to the word of God- that is the grand arbiter; that is God's own judgment of these matters; that speaks as the voice of God, and pronounces who, according to the mind of God and the estimate of God, are under God's curse; and who, according to the mind and estimate of God, are under his blessing. Now I do not know a more remarkable passage in the whole compass of God's word, to point out who are under the curse and who are under the blessing, than my text and the connection of it.

But the Holy Spirit, by the pen of Jeremiah, makes a contrast between those who are under the curse and those under the blessing; and he says of the former, speaking authoritatively in the name of the Lord- "Thus says the Lord- Cursed is the one who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord." The Lord here does not lay down a man's moral or immoral character as a test of salvation. He does not say, "Cursed is the thief, the adulterer, the extortioner, the murderer, the man who lives in open profanity." He puts all that aside, and fixes his eye and lays his hand upon one mark, which may exist or does exist with the greatest morality, and it may be with the highest profession of religion. "I will tell you," the Lord says, "who are under my curse. This is the person who trusts in man, who makes flesh his arm, and in so doing his heart departs from Me."

Now taking a wide and general survey, who is there free from this intimation of the Lord's eternal displeasure? Who can say he does not trust in man and make flesh his arm? Why all have done it and all will do it until they are taught better. The confidence of most stands wholly upon this ground. They trust in man, in themselves, or some other, and they make flesh their working arm, to work out their own plans of salvation, build up their own goodness, establish their own righteousness, and bring forth something in and by the creature with which they hope to gain eternity with God. But this is the point that God especially sets his hand upon as marking them, that in trusting in man and making flesh their arm, their heart departs from the Lord; it being impossible in God's view for a man to be neutral in these matters; it being impossible in the judgment of God for a man to trust in man, and make flesh his arm in one direction; and to trust in God and make the power of God his arm in another direction. God knows no such neutrality; he winks at no such half measures; he does not allow a man to stand with one leg upon self and one leg upon God; one foot on free will and one foot on free grace; to work with his own right arm his own righteousness, and take with his left gospel blessings. Such neutrality in the sight of God is as bad as it would be in the case of a war for a man, a subject of Queen Victoria, to stand neutral- be sometimes in favor of the Queen, and sometimes in favor of the invader. Such a man would deserve to be shot by both armies.

"He shall be like the HEATH in the desert." You have seen, perhaps, the sorry heath, the ground not being good enough to produce food for man or beast; but it can produce a little stunted leaf, a few miserable reeds that just relieve the dry sand, please the eye, but contain in them no nutriment or utility. And so this person who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, is like the heath in the desert; with an 'appearance of verdure' and something like greenness and growth, and yet, when examined, a miserable crop that benefits neither himself nor anybody else; a few stunted starved specimens of miserable heath, that cannot feed a lamb or even sustain a goat. Such a man "shall not see when good comes." Good may come to others, but good will never come to him; a blessing may fall upon the righteous, but no blessing

shall fall upon him. Trusting in man, departing from the Lord, he sets himself out of the reach of God's blessing, puts himself into a place where God's mercy falls not, and therefore never sees when good comes, for there is no good for him.

"But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited." That is, a religion merely in name and appearance, without anything fruitful, god-like, or God-glorifying. And thus he lives and thus he dies under the eternal curse of the Almighty, as making flesh his arm and trusting in man.

Now it will be my object this evening, taking the words of our text, to contrast with such the character on whom God has pronounced his blessing; and you will see how the two differ in almost every point; how the Holy Spirit with his graphic and vigorous pen, has sketched both these characters and painted them in such life-like colors, that each stands out as it were in contrast to the other, that we may compare the two men in the curse and in the blessing, see the dealings of God with each, and thus, if we be under the blessing, gather for ourselves some good hope through grace, and have some testimony that not the curse rests upon us, but the blessing of the Lord which makes rich and he adds no sorrow with it.

In opening up the text, I shall, therefore, with God's help-

First, direct your thoughts to the blessedness of the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

Secondly, take up the comparison which the Holy Spirit has given us- that such a man resembles "a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river."

And Thirdly, speak of the fruits and blessings that spring out of his being thus planted by the hand of God by the waters and by the river- that he "shall not see when heat comes, but his leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

I. The BLESSEDNESS of the man who trusts in the Lord. I intimated in the opening of this discourse, that we were not to take our 'fears and feelings' as certain marks and indications of our state and standing before God. If we took our fears and feelings at certain stages of our experience, we would draw altogether a false conclusion. For instance, when the Lord begins his gracious work upon a sinner's heart, he opens to him the evil of sin; he sends the Holy Spirit with power into his conscience to apply his law; and with the law comes a curse. So that while he is in that state and stage of experience, under a sensible feeling of the wrath of God in his conscience, under the application of a fiery law, under the dismal apprehension of wrath to come, under miserable forebodings of what his state may be for time and for eternity, that man would draw altogether wrong conclusions if he concluded he must live and die in this miserable condition; that because he is now feeling the wrath of God, he will forever feel the wrath of God; because now under the curse of the law, he will live and die under the curse of the law; and because he has dismal forebodings of a dreadful eternity, it will be so on his death-bed.

We will take him at that stage, to throw a clearer light upon the whole subject, and we shall see the Lord sends his law into the man's conscience, and lets down a sense of his displeasure into his mind, for the very purpose of breaking him off from his trust in man and making flesh his arm, that he might not live and die under the curse attached to those who do trust in man and make flesh their arm. He, like others, trusted in himself; he, like others, made flesh his arm in working out, as he thought, a righteousness which would please God; in performing a number of good works, to build up a Babel tower to reach to heaven, and to satisfy the demands of a righteous law by yielding what the law demanded.

But wrath still pursuing, the curse still continuing, fear still prevailing, bondage still settling upon him, he is taught eventually by those means, the folly of making flesh his arm and trusting in man, in self, or anybody else. Thus preparatory to the blessing comes the curse; before the gospel comes the law; before the ceasing to trust man, and ceasing to make flesh his arm, comes the breaking of the arm and the destroying of the confidence in the flesh. Then taking him at that period, he is brought to this point, that he cannot put trust in himself nor in anybody else. Whenever he has put his trust in himself or anybody else, he has met with nothing but disappointment; whenever he has accepted anything from the creature, nothing has followed but vexation, destroyed hopes, and blighted expectations.

Now when he is in this state, the Lord begins to commune with him from the mercy seat- he draws him near to his gracious self; he begins to open up his word to his apprehension, enlightens the eyes of his understanding, drops some sweet promise into his heart, and discovers his truth in its sweetness and blessedness; or by some such operations of his grace- for we cannot limit the Lord- he has various ways of unfolding his truth to believing hearts- he brings this poor, tried, distressed, and exercised soul to look unto him. And the more the soul is enabled to look unto him, the more it sees in him his suitability to its wants and woes.

The more we look to the creature, the worse we find it; the more we look to self, the worse we find it; the more we trust in man or in one's own self, the greater is the disappointment.

But when we are drawn off from this vain-confidence and enabled by the power of grace to see who and what the Son of God is, and he is presented to our mind in the word, or in the sweet revelation of his person and work, and the Holy Spirit is pleased to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, and raise up a living faith in our soul, then we begin to see and feel how worthy he is of our confidence. We see his glorious Person- Immanuel, God with us- and all the glory of God shining forth in his most beautiful and blessed countenance; and this draws forth faith and love. And we see from time to time what a wondrous work he came to do, and how he did it completely. We are led to see how he came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; to make reconciliation for iniquity; to bring in an everlasting righteousness, and to do the whole will of God. And we find as we look unto him, trust in him, and cast the weight of our weary souls upon him, there is a stay, there is a support, there is an encouragement which we could never have found anywhere else.

We have tried the creature, and the more we leaned upon the creature, the weaker it was. But when we are brought off the creature and begin to lean upon the Lord, he honors that faith by showing us what a strong foundation is laid in his Person and work. Thus he sweetly draws us and encourages us by his alluring grace to come out of our miserable selves, in which there is nothing but confusion and disappointment, and bondage, sin, and misery, and to come to him and find rest and peace. And as we find the benefit and blessing of so doing, and God's face begins to shine as the face of the Father in Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities, then we begin to see what a suitable object of faith, this dear Son of God is; and the more we believe in him, the sweeter we find him; and the more he draws forth faith upon his glorious person and work, the more darkness is dispelled from the mind, the more bondage is loosened from the spirit, and the more peace and consolation are felt in the soul. This is trusting in the Lord. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord."

Now these lessons are taught us, that we might ever make the Lord our trust. Until we have had some discovery of this nature, some bringing near of the person and work of Christ- some sweet teaching to make him known and precious, some revelation of his person, blood, and work, there is no trust in him-

eternal matters are so at an uncertainty. But when he has made himself known and precious, then he teaches us by these things to trust in him.

Now he is determined to make us trust in him at all times and all seasons; because he won't continue these sweet feelings, nor ever indulge the soul by setting it at rest. But he will teach us to trust in him when we cannot see these manifestations. And thus it may be, he will bring upon us some trial in providence, or some affliction in the family, or some circumstance in grace that shall very much try the mind.

Now, perhaps, we are losing sight of Jesus, our best Friend by this time, and through unbelief and weakness, and the fermenting infidelity of our wretched heart, beginning again to trust in self and make flesh our arm. And what is the consequence? The Lord does not appear, and we get into bondage, confusion, and misery. Now the Lord has to teach us to trust in him, and therefore he will bring those things upon us whereby we shall have reason to trust him. If in providence we go to a friend for help and find that help withheld; or if, trusting in our own strength, we find it but weakness, our plans all disappointed, our finest schemes all turned upside down- what are we to do? Trust in the Lord! for all this is meant to bring us out of self-confidence, and leaning upon an arm of flesh, to trust in the Lord, and look to him- and him alone.

So it is in grace. It is easy to believe when the Lord is present; easy to walk upon the water when he upholds; but how are we in a storm? How do we get on when circumstances threaten, and conscience accuses, and temptations of various kinds start up- some to draw aside, and some to alarm and threaten? Why, like Peter, we begin to sink into the water. Now the Lord will teach us still to trust- not to live by sense nor sight, but to live by faith in the Son of God- to trust him in the dark; to look unto him, because there is nobody else that can do us any good; to hang upon him, because look where we will, all is darkness, confusion, guilt, and bondage, except in him and through him.

And thus, sometimes from sheer necessity, having no other refuge, driven out of all other hope, and having no other help- from sheer necessity, as in the case of Esther when she went to the king- from sheer necessity, having nobody else to look to, we are taught sometimes to trust in the Lord. And we shall always find, sooner or later, if we trust in the Lord and do not trust in ourselves- if we do not make flesh our arm, God will honor that faith and crown that trust with his manifested approbation. Therefore, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord!"

And is there not everything in the Lord to draw forth this trust? Look at his power. "All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth." O what almighty power! Where can we find power in any body else?- power in ourselves or power in a friend? All their strength is weakness when it comes to the point; all their help, when it comes to the push, fails and is broken. The Lord has all power, both in providence and in grace, "The silver and the gold are his, and the cattle on a thousand hills." He has but to speak and it is done.

So in grace- who can speak peace to a troubled conscience but he? Who can take a load of guilt off the mind but he? Who can calm anxious fears but he? Who can pardon sin, forgive iniquity, heal backsliding, cast all our transgressions into the depths of the sea, and reveal a sense of mercy and love, but he? Thus we see he has all power; and when we can behold by the eye of faith the heights, lengths, depths, and breadths of his dying love, and see that those whom he loves, he loves unto the end- that he never will leave nor forsake the objects of his eternal mercy- this draws forth out of the heart a trust in him, a looking once more, as Jonah looked in the whale's belly- a looking once more to him, even from the very ends of the earth. Now this is a blessed man, who has the approbation of God upon him, and sometimes a sweet

testimony of God himself in his conscience.

But it is said further of such a man, that "the Lord is his HOPE"- not "in the Lord," but the Lord himself is his hope; because he is the hope of Israel. And he is worthy of that hope. Wherever there is trust, there will be hope, because hope is connected with trust, grows out of it, and is the fruit of it. And it is this hope that encourages the soul still to go on seeking his face, pleading his word, and looking to him for a fulfillment in answer to prayer. When trust begins to droop, hope droops with it; as faith becomes weak in the soul, hope also languishes. But as faith is drawn forth into living exercise, and with faith comes trust, then hope lifts up its head as a co-worker with faith and love, and strengthens itself in the Lord, as David did.

Hope is compared to an anchor, sure and steadfast, entering within the veil; and it takes firm hold of the Son of God as an intercessor and mediator between God and man. And thus the Lord becomes our hope. The man who has this hope and who trusts in the Lord, is pronounced to be blessed. And though his hope may coexist with many doubts and fears, many temptations and trials, many sinkings and givings way- for an anchor is only of use in a storm- yet still, the Lord being his hope, he will ride out the gale; his ship shall not drive upon the rocks, but in due time it shall enter the harbor of eternal rest. This is the man whom God has pronounced blessed!

II. The COMPARISON- that such a man resembles "a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river." The Lord has given us a very striking figure, which I shall now endeavor, with God's blessing, to open up. In those hot eastern climates, trees cannot live or bear fruit except on mountain slopes, or else when planted by rivers; for the power of the sun is so intense, the atmosphere so dry, and the drought so lasting that a tree withers and dies away for lack of water and nutriment. The heath may stand it in the wilderness, but the tree would die under the drought that lets the heath live. Therefore, this man whom the Lord has blessed, is compared to a tree planted by the waters.

By these waters we may understand the teachings, testimonies, operations, work, and witness of the blessed Spirit, water being often in Scripture a type and figure of the Holy Spirit in his divine operations in the hearts of God's saints. And to be planted by the waters is to be brought into contact with the operations and influences, teaching and testimony of this holy and blessed Comforter. God plants his people by these waters that they may irrigate, so to speak, the roots of their religion; that they may not dry up, wither away, and become fruitless and worthless; but be so planted by the waters of God's grace in the operations of the Holy Spirit as to keep their leaf green, make the stem grow, cause the blossom to come out on the boughs, and in due time the branch to bear fruit.

And perhaps we may consider the ordinances of God's house- the operations of his grace under a preached word, the teaching of the Holy Spirit privately in the soul, and his blessed intercession in the heart at the throne of grace, as connected with these waters. It is a very blessed thing to be brought where the waters flow with any measure of purity and clearness; to be brought into contact with a gospel ministry, so that the power of God's word in the ministry may water your religion; keep your soul alive in the things of God; strengthen your faith, hope, and love; confirm the good work of God in you; bring forth the verdant leaf of profession, and crown it with gospel fruit. And as the people of God delight in the waters, as being so salutary and so refreshing, as they love their gentle murmur, and delight in the coolness and refreshment derived from them, they will bring themselves, and with themselves their religion, to these waters, that they may derive from them the nutriment that God has put into them.

It is because these waters, like Shiloh's stream, flow so gently and so stillly, that the Lord's people come from time to time to the house of God to get their souls refreshed by the word, read the Scriptures in private, fall upon their bended knee before the throne of grace, and seek the Lord according to his own word- "Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find." And there, now and then, these waters will gently flow into their souls, and it will be found that they gently bathe the roots of their religion so that it shall not wither and come to nothing- but be maintained in their soul with some degree of strength and verdure.

We further read that this tree spreads out her roots by the river. This river is considered to be the river John speaks of, and which he saw in vision; the river of the water of life. And Ezekiel saw it issuing out of the Temple. It is the river of life and love. And as it is a goodly tree the Lord has planted by the waters, it has roots- roots of faith and hope and love; and these roots are very much in love with this river, because it contains the waters of life and love which irrigate these roots, mount up through the rootlets into the branch, and make it green and verdant. The tree spreads out her roots to the river that it may suck up all the nutriment it can; for it finds there is such blessedness in having such a river of life and love flowing by it, and such blessedness in having roots that can dip into this river and draw life and love out of it into the soul, so as to fill it with all joy and peace in believing. It is never satisfied except its roots can get into the river of life and love and draw life and love out of it.

When the river seems to flow scanty and low, the roots seem to dry up for lack of contact with the river; and if the roots begin to dry up, everything suffers in the tree; because the source of nutriment being cut off through the withering of the root, there is no life or love drawn up from the river into the soul, to spread itself over every spiritual faculty, as the water of the river spreads itself over the literal tree. And thus these roots take great delight in the river, because they find in the river a suitable nutriment; it being designed for that purpose and flowing out of the throne of God and the Lamb, to give life to this tree and maintain it in verdure and being.

There are times and seasons, and many such in the soul, when this river does not seem to flow into the roots- and we find the misery of it. Darkness, deadness, coldness, bondage, worldly-mindedness all creep in; and we find there is something wrong- some gracious influence suspended, some communication apparently cut off, something lacking in our religion that we cannot supply, but which has to be supplied by the river of life and love. And thus as the work is God's, and not our own; as he who has begun, carries on; as he who gave the river, gave the roots; as he who gave the roots, gave the tree from which those roots spring; and as that tree is under his special blessing, as a tree of righteousness that his own right hand has planted- he will take care that in due time the river of life and love shall once more flow- the roots shall once more dip into it, once more draw nutriment out of it- it shall once more feed faith, hope, and love, and once more the tree shall be manifested as a tree of righteousness.

III. And now to our third point- what is the FRUIT and consequence of this?

1. "He shall not see when heat comes." Here he is contrasted with the man under the curse- he was not to see when good came. He saw no good, because no good was needed; and when good came to others, good came not to him, because he was under the curse of God as trusting in man.

Now take the contrast- another man is under the blessing of God. The Lord has thoughts of peace, mercy, and love toward him. He has pronounced him blessed, and he goes on to ratify this blessing by giving him good which he did not give to the other. And as when good came to others, good came not to the man

under the curse, because he trusted in man; so when heat comes to others, heat does not come to the man who trusts in the Lord, or rather the consequences; for heat may come without the consequences. The heat that withers, dries up, and brings to nothing all other religion, all other hopes, and all other confidence, does not affect this man under the blessing of God, for he has a 'spiritual religion'- the roots of which are in the river. And, therefore, when the heat comes it dries up all religion whose roots are not in the river; but it makes that thrive all the more which is fed by the river of life and love. Instead of withering and drying up his religion, acting together with the river of life and love, the heat only makes it more fruitful.

As in the man under the curse, good comes to others, not to him; so in the man under the blessing, heat comes to others to burn and dry them up; but it does not come to him to burn and dry him up, because his roots are in the river. If you took two trees, and planted one where there was no water, and planted the other by the riverside in a hot country, the tree planted where there was no water would sooner or later wither and die; but the tree planted by the rivers of water would not wither and die, because the river flows by, to keep it alive and make it fruitful.

Temptation may be compared to heat. "Look not upon me, because I am black." (Canticles 1:6.) The burning sun of temptation withers up everybody's religion but his who is planted by the rivers of water; sooner or later, all 'mere profession' dries up and withers except that which is of the operation of God. But God takes care that neither the profession nor the possession of the religion which he gives shall dry up and wither, because he takes the tree of righteousness with his own hand, and plants that tree by the rivers of water; and he keeps his work upon the soul alive by enabling it to draw up through its roots nutriment to maintain it in vigor, and make it fruitful in every good word and work.

2. "Her leaf shall be green." It is a very blessed thing for the live profession to have a green leaf. How many once apparently green leaves have become brown and withered and almost ready to fall off. Is your leaf green? How does your profession appear before others? Do your families see greenness in your leaf? Do the members of the church that you are connected with see that your leaf still is green? And those among whom your daily business lies, do they look to your profession and see it all withered, and brown, and dry, like a tree in autumn, before the leaves fall; or do they see a verdure and greenness about your profession that commends itself to their conscience?

Now you never can maintain the leaf in any degree of greenness or verdure, unless the roots of your religion are in contact with the river of life and love. Your leaf is sure to get speckled, spotted, brown, and withered, unless this blessed river of life and love mounts up through the roots, fills it with sap and juice, banishes the dryness that would creep over it, and makes it green and verdant.

It is a blessed thing, and one might almost say a rare thing, for man or woman, after many years of profession, still to stand in the house of the Lord and the courts of our God with a green leaf. Many seemed in times past to have green leaves- where are they? Their leaf has become withered, their profession dry, and they have been like the chaff which the wind has driven away. If your profession stands for a single day with any degree of verdure and greenness upon it, and is not spotted and speckled or become brown and dry- it is only because there is a river of life and love that bathes the roots of your religion.

3. "And shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." "Careful" means worried as to the consequences of the year of drought. Last year was a year of drought- then we felt the need of water. When the springs are low, the brooks dried up, and the rain ceases to fall, we soon see the

consequence upon the parched soil. Though this may not apply to the present year- we have had already so much wet and cold- yet were the hot, dry weather long continued, we might suffer from a year of drought now as we suffered last year.

But this godly man is said not to be worried in the year of drought, because he does not depend only upon the rain from heaven, but upon the river which flows by- the river of life and love. Therefore, he is not so worried in the year of drought, lest the leaf withers and the fruit drops off, and he be thrown out of the vineyard as a withered stump- because he knows that there is this blessed river of life and love, the power of which is felt in his soul- and while this river runs and his religion dips its roots into it, the year of drought will not utterly consume him. He may languish, as we may languish, under the burning heat; the branches may decline; there may be a temporary effect come over the whole tree. But still it will be protected more or less, by the river of life and love, so that it shall not be utterly burnt up.

4. "Neither shall cease from yielding fruit." God looks for fruit. According to the parable, the owner of the vineyard came every year looking for fruit. Our Lord came to the fig tree expecting to find fruit. "Every branch in me that bears no fruit, he takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, he prunes it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:2) Now we never can bear fruit by trusting to an arm of flesh, or leaning upon our own doings and duties. To lean upon an arm of flesh, brings us away from the river of life and love.

But when we can (to refer to the beginning of our text) trust in the Lord, and have the Lord for our hope, and then feel some flowing in of the river of life and love, then there will be a bearing fruit; and the bearing of this fruit will prove the goodness of the tree, the goodness of him who planted the tree, the blessedness of the river that waters the roots of the tree, and the certainty that the whole is under the blessing of God.

But into what a narrow compass this brings most people's religion! How it cuts down thousands as if with the heavy strokes of a broadsword. Take all those with a religious profession, or without of a profession- who make flesh their arm and trust in themselves, and see how the curse of God is upon them, and what a sweeping of all these there is, into destruction.

Now take the reverse. Fix your eye upon those whom God has blessed, and ask yourself how many you know, and whether you are one of those, who have been brought by the work and witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart, to trust in the Lord and to make the Lord your hope. And look and see how far your religion stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God; and if it has a root to it; and if these roots of your religion are fed and nurtured by being planted by the waters, and sustained, and fed, and nourished by the river of life and love.

You may receive these things or reject them; pronounce them as "mere babblings of narrow-minded, bigoted men," or receive them as common truths on the testimony of God's word. But if my preaching, whether it be true or false, comes short or not of the reality- it can never alter God's testimony. He has recorded it with a "Thus says the Lord." Those whom he has cursed must be cursed, whatever blessing man may pronounce upon them; and those whom God has blessed will remain blessed, whatever curse man may denounce against them.

We must stand in one of those two positions- under the curse or under the blessing- we must be under God's displeasure or under his approbation. And therefore those who are anxious about their souls and want matters right between God and conscience, will be led from time to time to examine these matters in the light of divine teaching, and weigh them up in the balance of the sanctuary, that they may come to

some clear understanding how they stand for eternity. And O, if they can find themselves under the blessing of the Lord, what a theme for gratitude, what a debt of endless praise will flow from their lips- that the kind and merciful Redeemer has had pity upon them and blessed them with every spiritual blessing- and it will be their happy lot to bless him who blessed them, and put his rightful crown upon him!

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