

God had said to Balaam, "*Thou shalt not go,*" "*Thou shalt not curse this people.*" That ought to have silenced him. He ought to have said, There is an end of it, if God says, No. But he was perverse as he could be.

What a terrible plague the people of God are to the world ! They are, in one sense, a pest to it, if walking faithfully. If they are killed, they only multiply the more ; there is no getting rid of them, nor doing anything with them. There are principles and motives and ways in the children of God that the world cannot get rid of. Balaam says to Balak, "If thou wouldst give me thine house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord." How pious he is become now ! If he might have gone, he would. But though he cannot do what he would for Balak, he still keeps up his credit as a prophet of the Lord. Just as if he had the secret of the Lord, he says, "Tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more" (Ver. 19). There has been the money offered, but Balaam speaks as if he was connected with God. This is the way men often act. They claim a connection with God, but disclaim connection with God's people. But this will not do. It is in connection with His people that the cross comes in, and that is the test for a man.

Now God lets Balaam go, and he is delighted at it ; but God *chose* him to go now. And his way was as perverse as ever. God intended him to go,