



# THE BLOOD OF JESUS

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# THE BLOOD OF JESUS

## Preface

### A Testimony of Conversion

“I have been religiously inclined from my earliest years. When quite little I was wont to say my prayers many times over, for I had heard it said that everything done on earth was written down in heaven, and I wished to have as much as possible recorded there in my favour.

“When about ten years of age, I heard that there were some who did not believe that the Bible was the Word of God, and that led me to surmise that it was not sufficiently clear that it was from God; for if He had given a revelation of His mind to man, it must have come in such a form that it would have been impossible for any person to disbelieve it. I pictured to myself that if God chose to do it, He could put up in great letters along the heavens, ‘I AM THE LORD,’ and everybody would see it and believe; and if the Bible were from Him, its revelation would be so unmistakably clear that it would be impossible to doubt its divine origin.

“But this was not a settled conviction, and my incipient skepticism was suddenly dissipated by a dream. I thought that I felt an intense heat; and so terrible did it ultimately become that the heavens were rent asunder and wrapt in flames, and in the burning sky overhead I saw in large letters of fire, ‘I AM THE LORD.’ But I had at the same time a conviction that it was now too late for the persons who had been unbelieving to profit by it, and those who had not believed the Bible, speaking to them in the name of the Lord, would now find to their everlasting misery that it was true.

“Not having enjoyed an early training in Bible truth, I had many difficulties in reference to the doctrines of revelation, and especially regarding that of the Trinity. I could not comprehend whether God and Christ were one or two beings, and I was too timid at the age of twelve to ask my seniors.

“When at school I was deeply impressed with the solemnity and propriety of daily worship, and fervently wished, on returning home, to be able to have family worship; but my timidity was stronger than my convictions, and it was not attempted. Having no Christian friend to give me counsel, direction, and encouragement, my religious impressions by and by evaporated, and my character was left very much to the formative power of surrounding circumstances. But—having been instructed when at school in a neighboring town in what was right, and counseled, on leaving it, by a Christian lady of the

town, as to how I ought to conduct myself on my return home, and being put in a responsible situation—I felt a moral weight upon my spirit, and gravitated towards the good, the right, and the true.

“I was much given to reading, and from having abundance of the choicest books of a historical and literary character, I was permitted to gratify my taste. The acquisition of information was my great aim. I had an ardent thirst for knowledge, and every species of works—with the exception of light literature, for which I had a settled contempt—was devoured by me both day and night. Solid literature suited my disposition, and I stored my mind with useful information on a variety of subjects. I was once so engrossed with books that, when about fifteen years old, I left off going to church so that I might have the quiet of the Lord’s Day for reading. But this I soon discovered to be very wrong, and it was discontinued.

“In the course of years I became acquainted with the most evangelical minister in the town where I resided; and I left an eloquent preacher, whose discourses were to me only “a very lovely song,” and attended the ministry of the gospel of the grace of God. This very materially changed the current of my thinking and the kind of my reading. Being naturally susceptible of religious impressions, I became serious, devout, and religious. I carried my thirst for knowledge with me into my religion, and I searched the Scriptures and read religious books with an earnestness and constancy that were absorbing. I got Fleetwood’s<sup>1</sup> *Life of Christ* and read it many times, and so engrossing was it that I sometimes sat reading it until two or three o’clock in the morning, without weariness. The circumstances in which I was living, and the trials which thickened over my path, were no doubt instrumental in sobering my buoyant spirit and throwing me upon a course of religious duty.

“From the instructions of the pulpit and my own reading, I soon became, in some measure, acquainted with the system of Christian doctrine; and—believing that I was a real Christian because I knew about Christian truth and Christian experience, and had a liking for all that was good—I thought it was my duty to join myself to the church. I was quite able to answer all the questions that were put to me—for I was not asked, ‘Are you born again?’—I was admitted and, as a member, received the Lord’s Supper regularly. Even at that time I walked a considerable distance every Lord’s Day to attend a prayer-meeting at eight o’clock in the morning—but it was all ‘works,’ for I felt as if I were acquiring extraordinary merit by the performance of this extraordinary duty. I had a real pleasure in doing well. After this I attended a Bible class, and prepared so thoroughly for it that I was able to outshine all the rest in my knowledge of the subjects that were submitted for our consideration. In order the more thoroughly to master the contents of the Scriptures and satisfy my own mind, I set to reading the Bible with a commentary; and after having read it with one commentary, I got another, and perused it with the most

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<sup>1</sup> **William Fleetwood** (1656-1723) – English preacher in the Church of England; served as Bishop of St. Asaph and Bishop of Ely.

assiduous earnestness and perseverance. With these helps I passed many hours in searching the Scriptures and enjoyed it more than anything else; but it was from no love to God Himself, but simply to acquire information. I do not remember that I had a spiritual sense of sin, either before becoming a church-member or for a number of years after doing so, and consequently I read the Bible more with my *intellect* than with my *conscience* and my *heart*. I wanted ‘by searching’ to ‘find out God,’ ignorant of the fact that He can be known only through our spiritual necessities. I saw the truth, as I believed, clearly enough, but—never having been really convinced that I was an utterly lost sinner—I had never prayed from the heart, “Lord, save me, or I perish!”

“But in course of years I became less satisfied with my religion and with myself; and when unhappy, I did not go directly to Jesus, but on the contrary, I tried to read myself right, or pray myself right, or work myself right, and for a time I succeeded. I was most strict in all my deportment, conscientious and exemplary; and having a factitious conscience, I felt miserable if I failed any day to read a good deal or to perform other duties. Morning calls often annoyed me, proving, as they frequently did, an interruption in my round of prescribed duty; and when I met with agreeable, intelligent friends, and went thoroughly into their conversation, I forgot all about divine things; and when I was left to myself again, after a time of forgetfulness of God, I sometimes felt that I had tremendous leeway to make up, and I set about doing it with all my might. When thus drawn away from religion, I would sometimes have a protracted season of forgetfulness of God, but it was generally followed by a season of conflict, remorse, struggling, and persevering penance. To keep up a religion on my plan was a very difficult matter, and very unsatisfactory. When I did well, read well, and stored up Scripture truth in my mind, did my duty as a Sunday school teacher, tract distributor, and district visitor, and was sufficiently earnest, I felt myself all right; but if I failed in duty, I continued miserable.

“Being perfectly sincere and conscientious, consistent in my conduct, and considered truly pious by myself and others, I waded on through this legal mire for many years. It never occurred to me that there must be a radical defect about my religion. My heart was unsatisfied; my conscience, when in any measure awakened, was silenced by duty, but not satisfied by righteousness nor purged from dead works by the blood of the Righteous One. My error was in believing that religion consisted in *knowing*, apart from *realizing*; and, my conscience not being spiritually aroused, I persevered in my delusion for about a dozen of years.

“I believe now that there was one error which I committed, which tended more than anything to keep me in my unhappy condition. I considered my prayers so utterly unworthy to be presented to God, that instead of throwing myself in all my sinfulness and unworthiness before the throne of grace, and getting into immediate contact with the God of salvation, I employed exclusively the prayers of others. I frequently used ejaculatory<sup>2</sup> prayers of my own throughout the course of the day; but when I came before God

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<sup>2</sup> **ejaculatory** – uttered briefly and suddenly, as by impulse.

formally, I felt so utterly unworthy and unable to order my speech before Him, that I was always constrained to use the language of others—for, prayer being regarded as a meritorious duty, I felt that it must be done well in order to be accepted, and I feared to commit myself to a lengthened address to the divine Majesty. The Holy Ghost would have helped my infirmities and made intercession within me, but I had not the most remote conception that I might, by a believing glance of my eye towards heaven, secure His gracious aid. So instead of ‘praying in the Holy Ghost,’ I prayed merely in the words of my fellow-men—which sometimes met my condition, but more frequently did not, and always seemed to keep me at a distance from God and from enjoying direct *personal intercourse*<sup>3</sup> with ‘the Father of mercies’ (2Co 1:3).

“In the unsatisfactory manner that I have just described, I wasted and lost my young years, *and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse*. I had been *religious*, dutiful, and consistent; but it had been a mere ‘going about to establish [my] own righteousness’ (Rom 10:3), for my system of service ignored the central fact of divine revelation: that ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners’ (1Ti 1:15). ‘But God, who is rich in mercy’ (Eph 2:4), had compassion on me, and by the grace of His Holy Spirit, ‘reveal[ed] his Son in me’ (Gal 1:16), and turned ‘the shadow of death into the morning’ (Amo 5:8). The first gleam of gospel light that entered my darkened mind was in reading a little tract in which Luther’s conversion is referred to.<sup>4</sup> When the words of the Apostle’s Creed, ‘I believe in the forgiveness of sins,’ were pronounced in his hearing, he took them up and repeated them on his bed of sickness; but he was told he must believe not only in the forgiveness of David’s sins or Peter’s sins, but that he must believe in the *forgiveness of his own sins*. This truth became the inlet of pardon and peace to his soul, and on reading it I felt that my soul was being visited with celestial light—and I was led to see that pardon of sin was a present and personal blessing. But I was not satisfied that I believed aright.

“Shortly after, I was reading Romaine’s<sup>5</sup> ‘Life of Faith’ and came upon this sentiment: that ‘the weakest believer is as precious to Christ and as safe as the strongest.’ The Dayspring from on high visited me, and by and by, I felt myself bathed in the noon-tide radiance of heaven’s glorious light. The great Enlightener filled my soul with His transforming presence. He Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness had shined in my heart, ‘to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’ (2Co 4:6). I was conscious of a divine presence with me, and believed that the holy light which had entered my soul came directly from heaven. Christ from that moment became the great central object of my contemplation. Immediately as I became enlightened, Jesus appeared to be the center, sun, moon, and essence of revelation. With Him as a key, I

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<sup>3</sup> **intercourse** – communion; intimate communication.

<sup>4</sup> “Luther’s Conversion” by Horatius Bonar (1808-1889), available from Chapel Library.

<sup>5</sup> **William Romaine** (1714-1795) – Evangelical divine of the Church of England, author of the respected trilogy *The Life, The Walk, and The Triumph of Faith*. Born at Hartlepool, County Durham, and educated at Christ Church, Oxford.

thought I could understand all that ever was written on the subject of religion. My spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour (Luk 1:47), and self and its services were thought on only to be condemned as utterly vile and worthless. *Christ was all.*

“And as my soul was filled with divine light and glowing with the love of Jesus, I said to myself, as in amazement I remembered the dreary past, How could I have been so blind as not to see the way of salvation when it is so clearly revealed that Jesus Christ is all and in all, and we are complete in Him—not ‘in Him’ and our own doings combined, but *in Him alone!* The truth is as clear as the sun at noon-day, that Jesus is Himself the Sin-bearer and the Saviour, and I and my legal duties and conscientious penances are nothing but ‘filthy rags’ (Isa 64:6). I have read it a hundred times that Jesus came ‘to seek and to save that which was lost’ (Luk 19:10), and the same truth runs through the whole Word of God, and yet I never saw it until now. Oh, how blind I have been to the glory of Jesus! How sad to think that I have read so much about Him with the veil upon my heart, and have never seen His glory as a Saviour till this blessed hour! I now wished that every one could see the Lord as I saw Him. I wondered that they did not, and I thought I could point Him out to them so clearly and distinctly, as made of God unto us ‘wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption’ (1Co 1:30), that it would be impossible for them not to believe in Him, receive Him as theirs, and be filled with heavenly joy. But I found that ‘old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon.’<sup>6</sup>

“About this time, I heard a sermon that I wished to get good from; but the minister was drawing to a close, and I had found nothing in all he had said to satisfy my soul, when as a concluding sentence he repeated the words, ‘Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth’ (Rom 10:4)—and that was borne in upon my soul with much power of the Holy Ghost, so that I again found my heart filled with the light, life, and love of God. How clearly it appeared to me that Christ had in my stead satisfied all the demands of the Law! He had filled it up with His satisfaction from one end to the other, for thus I understood His being ‘the end of the law.’ He has abolished the Law as a ground of justification by fulfilling every one of its many demands, and He allows us to begin life with a righteousness as perfect as if we had fulfilled perfectly in our own persons every iota<sup>7</sup> that the Law of God exacts. I had no idea of this during my years of bondage; and the consequence was that in my blindness I presumptuously set about doing that which Christ had done for me, and which, had I gone on forever in the same legal track, I never could have done for myself.

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<sup>6</sup> **Philipp Melancthon** (1497-1560) – German reformer, collaborator with Martin Luther, the first systematic theologian of the Protestant Reformation, and intellectual leader of the Lutheran Reformation. The quote is by Melancthon, spoken of himself when he had had great expectations as he began to preach the Word of God, not realizing how much he needed the Spirit of the Lord, thinking he would convert everybody. He felt as though all he had to do was to proclaim gospel truths of God’s grace to people and they would believe. But he found out at last that “old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon,” and had to go back and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>7</sup> **iota** – ninth and smallest letter of the Greek alphabet; smallest part.

“When one’s eyes are opened by the Holy Ghost, how monstrous does it seem for the sinful creature to have been attempting to work out a righteousness that could be effected only by the Creator! ‘Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,’ and believing in Jesus, I found that, instead of needing *to begin* to fulfill the Law for myself, I was privileged to begin at ‘the end of the law.’ Instead of looking forward to being able to complete the fulfillment, I found that (on believing in Jesus) what I fancied would be the termination of a life of obedience, I had now presented to me in the gospel of Christ as the point from which I was to *start*. To get Christ in a moment as my perfect righteousness, after going about for the best part of my past life to establish a righteousness of my own, on account of which I had vainly thought to render myself acceptable to God, that was to me as ‘life from the dead’ (Rom 11:15).”

### **Misguided Efforts**

Is that [this long quotation just completed] my own experience? No, it is not mine; but the experience of another, which, having been submitted to me when about to write this preface, I considered so suitable that I have written it out, and given it as one of the most satisfactory reasons I could present for issuing the present little volume. There can be no doubt but there are many cases like the above. I fear that not a few of the strictly religious in all our churches are ignorant of the “true grace of God” (1Pe 5:12), which gives Jesus as “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom 10:4). I fear also that, in some cases, on account of a mixture of Law and gospel in public instruction, inquirers are left with the impression that they have something to *do* in order to obtain “justification of life” (Rom 5:18). And when we consider the hundreds of thousands who are being awakened by the Holy Ghost throughout our own and other lands, I believe that we could not engage in a more needful service than the preparation of a work such as the present, wherein “the righteousness of God *without the law* is manifested, even the righteousness of God *by faith of Jesus Christ* unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom 3:21-22).

We sometimes hear “the *claims* of Christ” pressed upon sinners; but this is to confound Christ with Moses, and represent His salvation as only an amended republication of the Law “given by Moses,” forgetting that “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Joh 1:17). “The gospel, strictly taken, contains neither claims, commands, nor threatenings, but is *glad tidings* of salvation to sinful men through Christ, revealed in doctrines and promises; and these revealed to men as *sinner*s, stout-hearted and far from righteousness. In the *good news* from heaven of help in God through Jesus Christ for lost, self-destroyed creatures of Adam’s race, there are no precepts. All these, the command to believe and repent not excepted, belong to and flow from the Law.



1. The gospel is the report of a peace purchased by the *blood of Christ* for poor sinners, and offered to them.<sup>8</sup>

2. The gospel brings a sound of liberty to captives, of pardon to condemned criminals, of peace to rebels, a sound of life to the dead, and of salvation to them that lie on the borders of hell and condemnation.<sup>9</sup>

3. It is not, indeed, the gospel of itself, but Christ revealed therein, that heals the sinner. It is Christ that is to be received, but He is received as offered in the gospel—and the gospel holds out Christ to the eye of faith. The gospel is with respect to Christ what the pole was with respect to the serpent (Num 21:8).<sup>10</sup>

4. The gospel does not therefore urge upon us claims that we cannot implement, but it places before us the free grace of God in Christ Jesus, and permits us to claim the Son of God as our Redeemer—and through Him to enjoy “all things” pertaining to the life of faith and the hope of glory. We are asked to *give* God nothing for salvation. He is the great Giver. Our proper position is to stand before Him as beggars in the attitude of *receiving*. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom 8:32).<sup>11</sup>

The gospel of the grace of God does not consist in pressing the duty defined by the words, “Give your heart to Christ,” although that is often unwisely pressed upon inquirers after salvation as if it were the gospel; but the very essence of the gospel is contained in the words, “Having liberty to enter into the holiest *by the blood of Jesus*, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high-priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb 10:19-22).

“Give your heart to Christ” is rather *law* than *gospel*. It is most proper that it should be done, for God Himself demands it; but merely urging the doing of it is far short of the gospel. The true gospel is: Accept the free gift of salvation from wrath and sin by receiving Jesus Himself, and all the benefits He purchased with “his own blood” (Act 20:28), and your heart will be His in a moment, being given to Him, not as a matter of law, but of love; for if you have the love of His heart poured into yours by His blessed Spirit, you will feel yourself under the constraining influence of a spontaneous spiritual impulse to

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<sup>8</sup> **Edward Fisher** (fl. 1640s-50s), from “Representers’ Answers to Queries,” in *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*; available online at [www.ChapelLibrary.org](http://www.ChapelLibrary.org).

<sup>9</sup> **Thomas Boston** (1676-1732) – Scottish Presbyterian minister and scholar. Author of *Human Nature in Its Fourfold State* (1720), *Notes to the Marrow of Modern Divinity* (1726), and many other treatises and sermons.

<sup>10</sup> **Ebenezer Erskine** (1680-1754) – Scottish evangelical divine and founder of the Secession Church of Scotland; supported Thomas Boston and the evangelical work *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*.

<sup>11</sup> **Ralph Erskine** (1685-1752) – one of the most popular preachers in the Church of Scotland in his day. A participant with Thomas Boston in the Marrow Controversy, his sermons were full of the love of God and the calls of Christ in the gospel. His most extensive publication was *Faith No Fancy*.

give Him, in return, your heart and all that you possess. It is right to give Him your heart; but unless you first receive His, you will never give Him yours.

## The True Grace of God

The design of the following pages is to exhibit “the true grace of God” “without the works of the law” and only “by the blood of Jesus” (Heb 10:19). Our great aim is the glory of Christ in the conversion of souls; and the means<sup>12</sup> employed to accomplish that end are simple statements concerning the great Scripture truth: that we are saved at once, entirely, and forever by the grace of God, “who is rich in mercy,” and that we have no part at all in the matter of our salvation save the beggar’s part, of accepting it as a “free gift” procured for us by “the precious blood of Christ” (1Pe 1:19).

And, as many are struggling to get up something of their own as a *price* to bring to God to *buy* salvation of Him, we have taken pains to show the entire uselessness of all such efforts; and have pointed out, we think, with some degree of clearness and by a variety of ways, that all true religion has a distinct beginning, and that that beginning dates from the time when a sinner stands at Calvary conscious of his utterly ruined condition, and realizes the truth that Jesus so completely satisfied God for sin, that He could say before He gave up the ghost, “It is finished” (Joh 19:30); so that “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph 1:7). “He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1Pe 2:24), and thereby, “having made peace by the blood of his cross” (Col 1:20), we may at once be “made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13), without anything of our own. *That* God—Who hath set Him forth “a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness” (Rom 3:25) in pardoning sin—will pardon all sin through faith in Him, for His own testimony is that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1Jo 1:7).

“*The blood of Jesus*” is the ground of peace with God to every believing sinner below, and it will be the subject of the everlasting song of the redeemed above. It is our *all* for acceptance with God, for pardon of sin, for “justification of life,” for adoption into God’s family, for holiness and glory. As the altar with its streaming blood stood at the very entrance of the ancient tabernacle, so the Lord Jesus Christ and “the blood of his cross” meet us at the very entrance of the Church of the redeemed. The blood-shedding of Jesus as “a propitiation<sup>13</sup> for our sins” (1Jo 2:2) lies at the very threshold of the Christian life. It is the alphabet of Christian experience to know the value of “the blood of sprinkling” (Heb 12:24). The first step in the Christian course is into the “fountain opened” (Zec 13:1).

“*The blood of Jesus*” is our great and only theme in the following pages. May the divine Spirit make them to every reader “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom 1:16).

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<sup>12</sup> **means** – something used as an instrument to achieve a purpose.

<sup>13</sup> **propitiation** – an appeasement; a sacrifice that turns away wrath.

In closing these prefatory pages, the writer may remark, that although it would have been both easy and delightful to have written it wholly himself, he has purposely introduced extracts from various writers belonging to different sections of the Church of Christ—Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, etc., that the anxious inquirer may enjoy the benefit of having saving truth presented to him in a variety of aspects, and may, at the same time, feel the moral effect of observing the perfect agreement of Spirit-taught Christians in the different branches of the Church of Christ, with regard to the one way of a sinner's acceptance with God, "*by the blood of Jesus.*"

It is again issued with the earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit would so bless it to all inquirers who read it, that they may "enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb 10:19), and learn to sing "with joyful lips" the redemption-song: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Rev 1:5-6).

—*William Reid; Edinburgh, Scotland; January 1863*

# 1. Forgiveness of Sins through the Blood of Jesus

The God of love, dear reader, in His written Word, which gives an account of the rich mercy He has provided for the guilty, tells you that you may be saved. His Word assures you that you may be saved from guilt, sin, and wrath. And that Word also informs you that your salvation depends not on anything you may do, but on what God has already done. Good news about God has reached our world, and in believing these glad tidings, you shall be saved. This is the good news:

“God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Joh 3:16).

“Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom 5:6).

“He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2Co 5:21).

If, by simply believing the good news about what God through Christ hath done for sinners, we become “partakers of Christ” (Heb 3:14), and are “accepted in the beloved” (Eph 1:6), it will become a matter of personal consciousness and spiritual joy that “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace” (Eph 1:7).

“Be it known unto you therefore, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things” (Act 13:38).

I beseech you to settle it in your mind that “forgiveness of sins” (Act 13:38) lies at the very threshold of the Christian life. It is a blessing needed and obtainable now. You must have forgiveness, or perish forever; you must have it *now*, or you cannot have peace. It is surely a most delightful thought that you may have the guilt of all your past sins blotted out at once and forever! God pardons freely and at once. He does not inculcate any preparation in order to pardon. One who knew the blessedness of enjoying His pardoning mercy testifies thus concerning it: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”; and this testimony was given on the ground of what he had affirmed in the same letter, that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1Jo 1:7-9).

He does *not* say: After you have repented more thoroughly, after you have spent days and weeks in agonizing prayer, after you become more thoroughly instructed in divine things, and after you pass through years of “trouble and sorrow,” then you may venture to hope for forgiveness. No; but, knowing that Christ died to put away sin, you are warranted, on simply taking the place of a sinner and accepting of Jesus as your Saviour, to believe that through the all-perfect merits of Christ you are pardoned that very moment, and enjoy perfect peace with God—for God “justifieth the ungodly” (Rom 4:5).

Peace with God through the forgiveness of all your sins may thus be obtained at any moment, seeing that you do not have to repent for it, work for it, or wait for it, but simply believe what God says regarding Christ “having made peace by the blood of his cross” (Col 1:20). “And being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:24)—that is, being fully satisfied that your sin has been forgiven you in a righteous way, being put away by “the precious blood of Christ” (1Pe 1:19); God being “well pleased for his righteousness’ sake” (Isa 42:21), “just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus” (Rom 3:26)—“peace that passeth all understanding” (Phi 4:7) will spring up spontaneously within your soul, like the fresh, flowing current of a perennial fountain.

In reference to the pardon of your sins, there is no time to be lost, for “the Holy Ghost saith, *To-day*” (Heb 3:7); and were you now refusing to listen, and dying in your sins ere tomorrow’s sun arose, you would inevitably perish eternally, notwithstanding your conviction of sin and anxieties of soul—for Jesus Himself assures us that “he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mar 16:16). Besides, you can do nothing else that will prove satisfactory to yourself, or well-pleasing to God, until you have obtained the forgiveness of your sins. And as pardon of sin is the first thing that you feel in need of, so it is the first thing that is presented by the God of love for your acceptance, for God is still to be found “in Christ reconciling sinners unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2Co 5:19).

Moreover, you will have your whole life and character affected in a most striking way by the scripturalness or unscripturalness of the views you now entertain of “the God of all grace” (1Pe 5:10), and the heartiness or hesitance with which you embrace His pardoning mercy. As a man’s position in the world is very materially affected by the character of his elementary education and early training, so is the position of even true believers in Christ materially affected, not only in this world but in the world to come, by their being thoroughly grounded or not grounded in the great elementary truths of the gospel of the grace of God, which preaches present pardon and immediate peace “to every one that believeth” (Rom 1:16). Your position as well as destiny, for time and for eternity, are now to be determined!

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that you should have thoroughly scriptural views and an intelligent experience of the grace of God as it is manifested to you, a sinner, in the person and work of His Son Jesus Christ. And again, the character of your service for God, and your success in winning souls, will very greatly depend upon the

clearness with which you realise your own salvation through the blood of Christ at the commencement of your Christian course; for how could you labour faithfully to bring others to feel the constraining power of the love of Christ, unless you yourself felt assured that He had loved you personally and put away *your* sin? The most useful life must ever be that which is firmly based on a knowledge of Christ crucified as the sole ground of acceptance with God, and on being justified and having peace “through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us” (1Th 5:9-10).

It will be found that those who do most for God and their fellow-sinners are such as the Reverend Robert M’Cheyne,<sup>14</sup> who knew himself to be forgiven by God and safe for eternity, of whom his biographer says that “he walked calmly in almost unbroken fellowship with the Father and the Son,” and who himself thus describes his own undoubted conversion in the only record he has left of it:

*“When free grace awoke me, by light from on high,  
Then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die;  
No refuge, no safety in self could I see—  
Jehovah Tsidkenu<sup>15</sup> my Saviour must be.  
“My terrors all vanish’d before the sweet name,  
My guilty fears banish’d, with boldness I came  
To drink at the Fountain, life-giving and free—  
Jehovah Tsidkenu is all things to me.”*

## 2. How Our Sins Are Taken Away by the Blood of Jesus

There is every reason why you should now intelligently and believingly behold the Lamb of God, “which taketh away the sin of the world” (Joh 1:29). You are not directed in this passage to a Saviour Who has already “taken away the sin of the world,” but to Him Who “*taketh* away the sin of the world.” The meaning plainly is that Jesus is the God-appointed “Taker-away” of sin for the world. We find Him asserting this when He says, “The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins” (Mat 9:6); “All power [or authority] is given me in heaven and on earth” (Mat 28:18). Jesus is the only and the all-sufficient, as He is the authorized Taker-away of sin for the world at large. The whole world is brought in guilty before God, “for all have sinned” (Rom 3:23). The true gospel

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<sup>14</sup> **Robert Murray M’Cheyne** (1813-1843) – Scottish Presbyterian minister of St. Peter’s Church, Dundee. A godly evangelical pastor and evangelist with a great love for souls, whose ministry was marked by deep personal holiness, prayer, and powerful evangelical preaching. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland.

<sup>15</sup> **Jehovah Tsidkenu** – transliteration of Hebrew: The Lord our Righteousness.

of God is that when any one belonging to our sinful world feels his sin to be oppressive, comes straight to “the Lamb of God” with it, frankly acknowledges it, and tells out his anxieties regarding it and his desire to get rid of it—he will find that Jesus has both the power and the will to take it away. And on seeing it removed from him by “the blood of his cross” (Col 1:20), “as far as the east is from the west” (Psa 103:12), he will be enabled to sing with a grateful heart and “joyful lips”:

*“I lay my sins on Jesus, The spotless Lamb of God;  
He bears them all, and frees us, From the accursed load.”*

You can never make an atonement<sup>16</sup> for your past sins, nor by personal obedience procure a title to the inheritance of glory; but Jesus is willing to *take away* all your sins and to give you His own title to the glorious kingdom, if you will only consent to entrust Him alone with your salvation.

“Well,” you may perhaps resolve, “I will go to Him, and cast myself upon His mercy, and *if I perish, I perish*” (Est 4:16). Ah, but you need not go to Him in that spirit, for it throws a doubt upon the all-sufficiency of His completed atonement for sin and His perfect, spotless life of obedience. Jesus Himself says, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him *should not perish*, but have everlasting life” (Joh 3:16). These being the “true sayings of God” (Rev 19:9), where, O friend, is there the least cause for you saying with hesitancy and doubt, “*If I perish, I perish*”? The proper thought you ought to have in reference to the glorious gospel is this:

God has so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son to die for sinners, and He assures me that if I, a perishing sinner, believe in Him, I shall not perish, but have everlasting life. I believe His Word, and reckon that if He gave His Son to die for us when we were yet sinners, He will with Him also freely give all such things as pardon and purity, grace and glory. And if, in accordance with His own gracious invitation, I rest my soul upon His manifested love in Christ Jesus, I believe that it will be as impossible for me to perish, as for God to change His nature—or to cancel the Word of grace and truth that the “blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin” (1Jo 1:7).

God the Father loved sinners so much as to send Jesus to die for them. Jesus loved sinners so much as to lay down His life for their redemption. The Holy Spirit loved sinners so much that He has written a record of God’s manifested love to them in Jesus Christ, and He Himself has come down in person to reveal that love to their souls that they may be saved. And if you, O anxious one, will now agree to God’s method of transferring all that divine justice demands of you to Jesus—“who was made of a woman, made under the law,” Who perfectly obeyed and pleased the Father in His holy life, and in death endured and exhausted the penalty due to sin—you will obtain pardon, peace,

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<sup>16</sup> **atonement** – to bring reconciliation by paying the debt owed for an offense.

grace, and holiness. The full tide of the love of God, which passeth knowledge, will flow into your soul, and in the spirit of adoption you will cry, “Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6), feel the constraining influence of the love of Christ, and live to the glory of Him Who “died” for us “and rose again” (2Co 5:15).

## The Railway Train

That I may make the method of a sinner’s salvation so “plain, that he that readeth it” (Hab 2:2) may have his mind’s eye so full of its meaning, “that he may run” at once to Jesus Christ as his divine sin-bearer, I will present the following homely and unmistakable illustration:

While standing one day on the platform of the Aberdeen Station of the North-Eastern Railway, I observed a carriage with a board<sup>17</sup> on it intimating that it ran all the way from Aberdeen to London. The doors of it were open, the porters were putting passengers’ luggage on the top of it, and a few individuals were entering, or about to enter, its different compartments. They looked for this particular carriage as soon as they had passed through the ticket-office, and on seeing “London” on it, they threw in their travelling-rugs, entered, and, seating themselves, prepared for the journey.

Having furnished themselves with tickets and railway guides, and satisfied themselves that they were in the right carriage, they felt the utmost confidence, and I did not observe any one of them coming out of the carriage, and running about in a state of excitement, calling to those around them, “Am I right? Am I right?”

Nor did I see any one refusing to enter, because the carriage provided for only a limited number to proceed by that train. There might be 80,000 inhabitants in and around the city; but still there was not one who talked of it as absurd to provide accommodation for only about seventy persons, for *practically* it was found to be perfectly sufficient. Trains leave the city several times a day, and it is found that one carriage for London in the train is quite sufficient for the number of passengers; and on the particular day to which I now refer, I noticed, that so ample was the accommodation, that one of the passengers had a whole compartment to himself. The carriage is for the whole city and neighborhood, but carries only such of the inhabitants as come and seat themselves in it from day to day.

God, in His infinite wisdom, has made provision of a similar kind for our lost world. He has provided a train of grace to carry as many of its inhabitants to heaven, the great metropolis of the universe, as are willing to avail themselves of the gracious provision.

When we call you by the preaching of the gospel, the meaning is that all who will may come, and passing through the booking-office of justification by faith alone, seat themselves in a carriage marked, “From Guilt to Glory.” Whenever you hear the free and

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<sup>17</sup> board – sign.



general offer of salvation, you need not stand revolving the question in your own mind, “Is it for me?”—for just as the railway company carries all who comply with their printed regulations, irrespective of moral character, so if you come to the station of grace at the advertised time—which is *now*, for “Behold, now is the accepted time” (2Co 6:2)—you will find the train of salvation ready. The only regulation to be complied with by you, in order to your being carried by it, is that you consent to let the Lord Jesus Christ charge Himself with paying for your seat—which cannot surely be anything but an easy and desirable arrangement, seeing you have no means of paying for yourself.

Were you coming to the railway station with no money in your pocket, and anxious to travel by a train about to start, in order to be put in possession of a valuable inheritance left to you by a friend; and were any one to meet you at the door of the ticket-office and say, “I will pay your fare for you,” you would not feel anything but the utmost satisfaction in complying with such a regulation. And is it not an easy matter for you, on coming to the station of Mercy, to submit to the regulation of the gospel, to let Jesus pay your fare for the train of Grace, that you may take your seat with confidence and be carried along the new and living way to everlasting glory?

### **Jesus Our Sin-bearer**

If we want to know the gospel and be saved, *we must know Jesus as our Sin-bearer*; for “Christ crucified” is the sum of the gospel and the richness of it. Paul was so taken with Jesus that nothing sweeter than Jesus could drop from his pen and lips. It is observed that he hath the word *Jesus* five hundred times in his epistles! “Jesus” was his constant subject of meditation, and out of the good treasure of the heart, his mouth spoke and his pen wrote. He felt that Christ was made of God unto him “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1Co 1:30), and glorying in the Lord and in His cross, he determined not to know anything among those to whom he preached and wrote, “save Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1Co 2:2). That faith which is not built on a dying Christ is but a perilous dream: God awaken all from it that are in it!

*“Christ alone is our salvation—Christ the rock on which we stand; Other than this  
sure foundation, Will be found but sinking sand.*

*Christ, His Cross and resurrection, Is alone the sinner’s plea;  
At the throne of God’s perfection, Nothing else can set him free.*

*“We have all things, Christ possessing; Life eternal, second birth;  
Present pardon, peace, and blessing, While we tarry here on earth;  
And by faith’s anticipation, Foretastes of the joy above,  
Freely given us with salvation, By the Father in His love.*

*“When we perfect joy shall enter, ’Tis in Him our bliss will rise;  
He’s the essence, soul, and centre, Of the glory in the skies:  
In redemption’s wondrous story, (Planned before our parents’ fall),  
From the cross unto the glory, Jesus Christ is all in all.”*

### 3. The Blood of Jesus, Not Conviction of Sin, the Foundation of Our Peace and Joy

If the Holy Ghost is awakening you to a true apprehension of your danger as a rebel against God's authority—a guilty, polluted, hell-deserving sinner—you must be in a deeply anxious state of mind, and such questions as these must be ever present with you: “What must I do to be saved? What is the true ground of a sinner's peace with God? What am I to believe in order to be saved?” Well, in so far as laying the foundation of your reconciliation is concerned, I wish you to observe that you have *nothing to do*; for the Almighty Surety of sinners said on Calvary, “It is *finished*” (Joh 19:30). Jesus has done all that the Holy Jehovah deemed necessary to be done to insure complete pardon, acceptance, and salvation to all who believe in His name. If you take Jesus as your Saviour, you will build securely for eternity. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1Co 3:11). He is the foundation-stone of salvation laid by God Himself, and on His finished atoning work alone you are instructed to rest the salvation of your soul—and not on anything accomplished by you, wrought in you, felt by you, or proceeding from you.

It is of the utmost importance to be clear as to the fact that it is the work of Christ *without* you, and not the work of the Spirit *within* you, that must form the sole ground of your deliverance from guilt and wrath, and of peace with God. You must beware of resting your peace on your feelings, convictions, tears, repentance, prayers, duties, or resolutions. You must *begin* with receiving Christ, and not make that the *termination* of a course of fancied preparation. Christ must be the Alpha and Omega.<sup>18</sup> He must be everything in our salvation, or He will be nothing.

Beware lest you fall into the common mistake of supposing that you will be more welcome and accepted of Christ if you are brought through a terrible process of “law-work.” You are as welcome to Christ now as you will ever be. Wait not for deeper convictions of sin, for why should you prefer conviction to Christ? And you would not have one iota more safety, though you had deeper convictions of sin than any sinner ever had. “Convictions of sin” are precious; but they bring no safety, no peace, no salvation, no security—but war, storm, and trouble. It is well to be awakened from sleep when danger is hanging over us, but to awake from sleep is not to escape from danger. It is only to be sensible of danger, nothing more.

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<sup>18</sup> **Alpha and Omega** – first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; complete beginning and end with nothing else added.

In like manner, to be “convinced of your sins” is merely to be made sensible that your soul is in danger—it is no more. It is not deliverance; of itself, it can bring no deliverance. It tells of no Saviour; it merely tells us that we need one. Yet there are many who—when they have had deep convictions of sin, strong terrors of the Law—congratulate themselves as if all were well. They say, “Ah, I have been convinced of sin; I have been under terrors; it is well with me; I am safe.” Well with you? Safe? Is it well with the seaman when he awakes and finds his vessel going to pieces upon the rocks amid the fury of the whelming surge? Is it well with the sleeper when he awakes at midnight amid the flames of his dwelling? Does *he* say, “Ah, it is well with me; I have seen the flames”? In this way sinners are not infrequently led to be content with some resting-place short of the appointed one. Anxiety to have *deep convictions*, and contentment with them after they have been experienced, are too often the means that Satan uses for turning away the sinner’s eye from *the perfect work of Jesus*, Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Our peace with God, our forgiveness, our reconciliation, flow wholly from the sin-atonement sacrifice of Jesus.

Behold, then, O Spirit-convinced soul, the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Joh 1:29)! In His death upon the cross, behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. In His death upon the cross, behold the mighty sacrifice, the ransom for the sins of many! See there the sum of all His obedience and sufferings! Behold the *finished* work!—a work of stupendous magnitude, which He alone could have undertaken and accomplished! Behold our sacrifice, our finished sacrifice, our perfected redemption, the sole foundation of our peace, hope, and joy. “He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1Pe 2:24). It is not said that our duties, prayers, fastings, convictions of sin, repentance, honest life, almsdeeds, faith, or our grace—it is not said that these bore our sins; it was Jesus, Jesus Himself, Jesus alone, Jesus, and none but Jesus, Who “bore our sins in his own body on the tree” (1Pe 2:24). Rest, then, in nothing short of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*“Christ has done the mighty work; Nothing left for us to do,  
But to enter on His toil, Enter on His triumph too.*

*“His the labour, ours the rest; His the death, and ours the life;  
Ours the fruits of victory, His the agony and strife.”*

## 4. A Letter about the Blood of Jesus

“I urge you,” an eminent author<sup>19</sup> wrote in reply to a dying man,<sup>20</sup> “to cast yourself at once, in the simplest faith, upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. All your true preparation for death is entirely *out* of yourself, and *in* the Lord Jesus. Washed in His blood, and clothed upon with His righteousness, you may appear before God divinely, fully, freely, and forever accepted. The salvation of the chief of sinners is all prepared, finished, and complete in Christ (Eph 1:6; Col 2:10).

“Again, I repeat, your eye of faith must now be directed entirely out of and from yourself *to Jesus*. Beware of looking for any preparation to meet death in yourself. It is all in Christ. God does not accept you on the ground of a broken heart, a clean heart, a praying heart, or a believing heart. He accepts you wholly and entirely on the ground of the Atonement of His blessed Son. Cast yourself, in childlike faith, upon that atonement—‘Christ dying for the *ungodly*’ (Rom 5:6)—and you are saved! Justification is a poor, law-condemned, self-condemned, self-destroyed sinner, wrapping himself by faith in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘which is unto all, and upon all them that believe’ (Rom 3:22). He, then, is justified and prepared to die, and he only, who casts from him the garment of his own righteousness, and runs into this blessed ‘City of Refuge,’ the Lord Jesus, and hides himself there from the ‘revenger of blood,’ exclaiming, in the language of triumphant faith, ‘There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus’ (Rom 8:1). Look to Jesus, then, for a contrite heart; look to Jesus for a clean heart; look to Jesus for a believing heart; look to Jesus for a loving heart—and Jesus will give you all.

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<sup>19</sup> **Octavius Winslow** (1808-1878) – Nonconformist pastor who became one of the most valued ministers of the nineteenth century. Preached at the opening of C. H. Spurgeon’s Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1861. Known for promoting an experimental knowledge of the precious truths of God.

<sup>20</sup> Some time ago, the Rev. Dr. Winslow of Bath received a letter from a youth, apparently near death, asking him to reply to it in the columns of our periodical, which he did, and the above quotation contains the most important part of his reply. The subjoined are Dr. Winslow’s note to the author, and the youth’s interesting note to Dr. Winslow:

“My Dear Sir, A few days ago, I received the following note. Will you allow a brief reply to the all-important question it contains, through the columns of your wide-spread and most useful journal? I write hurriedly, and on a journey, but I will endeavor to make the apostle’s reply to the awakened jailor my model for point and conciseness. And oh, may the same divine Spirit apply the answer with like immediate and saving result!”

“To the Rev. Dr Winslow; Dear Sir, You would greatly oblige a sinner, if you would... tell him what he must do to prepare to die, what is the preparation required by God, and when he is fit to die. By your doing so, you will greatly oblige a young person who feels that his time is short in this world. Now, what is justification? and when is a sinner justified?”

“One faith’s touch *of* Christ, and one divine touch *from* Christ, will save the vilest sinner. Oh, the dimmest, most distant glance of faith, turning its languid<sup>21</sup> eye upon Christ, will heal and save the soul. God is prepared to accept you in His blessed Son, and for His sake He will cast all your sins behind His back and take you to glory when you die. Never was Jesus known to reject a poor sinner that came to Him empty and with ‘nothing to pay.’ God will glorify His free grace in your salvation, and will therefore save you *just as you are*, ‘without money and without price’ (Isa 55:1).

“I close with Paul’s reply to the anxious jailer, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved’ (Act 16:31). No matter what you have been, or what you are, plunge into the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness’ (Zec 8:1), and you shall be clean, ‘washed whiter than snow’ (Psa 51:7). Heed no suggestion of Satan, or of unbelief. Cast yourself at the feet of Jesus, and if you perish, perish there! Oh no! perish you never will, for He hath said, ‘Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out’ (Joh 6:37). ‘Come unto *me*’ (Mat 11:28) is His blessed invitation; let your reply be, ‘Lord, I come! I come! I come! I entwine my feeble, trembling arms of faith around Thy cross, around Thyself; and if I die, I will die cleaving, clinging, looking unto Thee!’ So act and believe, and you need not fear to die. Looking at the Saviour in the face, you can look at death in the face, exclaiming with good old Simeon, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation’ (Luk 2:29). May we, through rich, free, and sovereign grace, meet in heaven, and unite together in exclaiming, ‘Worthy is the Lamb; for he was slain for us!’ (Rev 5:12).”

*“How glorious is Thy name, Through all the ransom’d host,  
O worthy Lamb, Who came, To seek and save the lost!”*

*“Thou art, beyond compare, Most precious in our sight!  
Than sons of men more fair, And infinite in might!”*

*“Thy perfect work divine, Makes us forever blest;  
Here truth and mercy shine, And men with God do rest.”*

## **5. Salvation through the Blood of Jesus, the Gift of God**

Dear Reader, As I am anxious that the one grand theme—salvation through the blood-shedding of Jesus alone—should be set before you in a variety of aspects that, if you miss it in one, you may realise it in another, I would now present it as a gift of grace.

“For by *grace* are ye saved” (Eph 2:8).

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<sup>21</sup> **languid** – showing a disinclination for physical exertion or effort.

“The *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:23).

“For God so loved the world that he *gave* his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Joh 3:16).

One of the English Reformers said,

“Here God, Who is infinite and unspeakable, gives after such a manner as passeth all things. For that which He gives, He gives not as the wages of desert,<sup>22</sup> but of mere love. This sort of giving, which has its spring in love, makes this gift more excellent and precious. And the words of Christ are plain that God loveth us.

“And as God, *the Giver*, is exceedingly great, so is the gift that He giveth, which is His only Son...“And as God giveth by love and mercy, so do we take and receive by faith and not otherwise. Faith only—that is, trust in the mercy and grace of God—is the very hand by which we take this gift. This gift is given to make us safe from death and sin...

“But thou wilt say, ‘Why does He not show this to me alone? Then I would believe and think surely that it appertained to me.’ But it is for a great consideration that God speaks here so generally, to the intent, verily, that no man should think that he is excluded from this promise and gift. He that excludes himself must give an account why he does so. ‘I will not judge them,’ saith He, ‘but they shall be judged of their own mouth’...We are saved, then, only by the mercy of God, and we obtain this grace only by faith, without virtue, without merits, and without works. For the whole matter that is necessary to the getting of everlasting life and remission of sins, is altogether and fully comprehended in the love and mercy of God through Christ.”<sup>23</sup>

*“Blessed be God our God! Who gave for us His well-beloved Son,  
His gift of gifts, all other gifts in one. Blessed be God our God!*

*“He spared not His Son! ’Tis this that silences each rising fear,  
’Tis this that bids the hard thought disappear; He spared not His Son!”*

Dr. Chalmers<sup>24</sup> wrote in a letter to a friend,

“I must say that I never had so close and satisfactory a view of the gospel salvation as when I have been led to contemplate it in the light of a simple offer on the one side, and a simple acceptance on the other. It is just saying to one and all of us,

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<sup>22</sup> **desert** – that which is deserving; merit.

<sup>23</sup> **Thomas Bacon** (1510-1558) – Principal of Physwick Hostel, Caius in 1521, and from 1552 fifteenth master of Gonville Hall, Cambridge (later Gonville and Caius College); quoted from *Works of Thomas Bacon*.

<sup>24</sup> **Thomas Chalmers** (1780-1847) – Presbyterian theologian, preacher, and leader of the Free Church of Scotland. He was educated at St. Andrews, and pastored at Kilmany, Fife and Tron Church, and St. John’s, Glasgow.

‘There is forgiveness through the blood of My Son: take it’—and whoever believes the reality of the offer takes it. It is not in any shape the reward of our own services...it is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is not given because you are worthy to receive it, but because it is a gift worthy of our kind and reconciled Father to bestow. We are apt to stagger at the greatness of the unmerited offer, and cannot attach faith to it till we have made up some title of our own. This leads to two mischievous consequences. It keeps alive the presumption of one class of Christians, who still are thinking that it is something in themselves and of themselves that confers upon them a right to salvation; and it confirms the melancholy of another class, who look into their own hearts and their own lives, and find that they cannot make out a shadow of a title to the divine favour. The error of both lies in their *looking to themselves* when they should be *looking to the Saviour*. ‘Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth’ (Isa 45:22).

“The Son of man was so lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (Joh 3:14-15). It is your part simply to lay hold of the proffered boon.<sup>25</sup> You are invited to do so; you are entreated to do so; nay, what is more, you are commanded to do so. It is true you are unworthy, and without holiness no man can see God (Heb 12:14); but be not afraid, only believe! You cannot get holiness of yourself, but Christ has undertaken to provide it for you. It is one of those spiritual blessings of which He has the dispensation,<sup>26</sup> and which He has promised to all who believe in Him. God has promised that, with His Son, He will freely give you all things (Rom 8:32), that He will walk in you and dwell in you (2Co 6:16), that He will purify your heart by faith (Act 15:9), that He will put His laws in your heart, and write them in your mind (Heb 8:10).

“If I were to come as an accredited agent from the upper sanctuary, with a letter of invitation to you, with your name and address on it, you would not doubt your warrant to accept it. Well, here is the Bible, your invitation to come to Christ. It does not bear your name and address, but it says ‘Whosoever’—*that* takes you in [includes you]; it says ‘all’—*that* takes you in; it says if ‘any’—*that* takes you in. What can be surer or freer than that?”

Old Traill<sup>27</sup> of London says,

“We glory in any name of reproach of Christ that is cast upon us, for asserting a) the absolute boundless freedom of the grace of God, which excludes all merit and everything like it; b) the absoluteness of the covenant of grace,<sup>28</sup> for the covenant

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<sup>25</sup> **proffered boon** – offered blessing or gift.

<sup>26</sup> **dispensation** – authority to dispense, dispose, and distribute.

<sup>27</sup> **Robert Traill** (1642-1716) – Puritan minister; born in Elie, Fifeshire, Scotland.

<sup>28</sup> **covenant of grace** – God’s gracious, eternal purpose of redemption, conceived before the creation of the world, first announced in Genesis 3:15, progressively revealed in history, accomplished in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and appropriated by faith in Him.

of redemption<sup>29</sup> was plainly and strictly a conditional one, and the noblest of all conditions was in it. The Son of God's taking on Him man's nature and offering it in sacrifice, was the strict condition of all the glory and reward promised to Christ and His seed (Isa 53:10-11), wherein all things are freely promised. That faith that is required for sealing a man's interest in the covenant is promised in it and wrought by the grace of it (Eph 2:8). That faith at first is wrought by, and acts upon, a full and absolute offer of Christ, and of all His fullness; an offer that hath no condition in it, but that native one to all offers: *acceptance*—and in the very act of this acceptance, the acceptor doth expressly disclaim all things in himself, but sinfulness and misery.

“That faith in Jesus Christ doth justify (although, by the way, it is to be noted that it is never written in the Word that faith justifieth actively, but always passively, that a man is justified by faith, and that God justifieth men by and through faith—yet admitting the phrase) only as a mere instrument, receiving that imputed righteousness of Christ for which we are justified;<sup>30</sup> and that this faith, in the office of justification, is neither condition, nor qualification, nor our gospel righteousness, but in its very act a renouncing of all such pretences.

“We proclaim the market of grace to be free (Isa 4:1-3). It is Christ's last offer and lowest (Rev 22:17). If there be any price or money spoken of, it is no price, no money. And where such are the terms and conditions, if we be forced to call them so, we must say, that they look more like a renouncing than a boasting of any qualifications or conditions. Surely the terms of the gospel bargain are *God's free giving, and our free taking and receiving.*”

It is quite natural for us, born as we are under the Law, and brought up under the *restraining* influences of religion and civilisation, to suppose that we can be saved only by conforming to certain rules and implementing certain conditions. It is difficult to lay aside the performing of all duties as a means of being accepted graciously by God, and to submit to be sought and saved simply as lost sinners by a loving Redeemer, Who delivers us from guilt, corruption, and perdition, “without money and without price” (Isa 55:1).

An eminent writer of last century says truly,

“The gospel is much clouded by legal terms, conditions, and qualifications. If my doctrine were: Upon *condition* that you did so and so—that you believe, repent, mourn, pray, obey, and the like—*then* you shall have the favour of God, I dare not for my life say that is the gospel. But the gospel I desire to preach to you is: Will you have a Christ to work faith, repentance, love, and all good in you, and to

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<sup>29</sup> **covenant of redemption** – term used by some to describe the eternal purpose of redemption: God the Father purposed to give a people and a kingdom to His Son, and God the Son agreed to accomplish this purpose by His life, death, and resurrection.

<sup>30</sup> **imputed righteousness...justified** – for more on this, see Free Grace Broadcaster #187, “Justification,” and FGB #191, “Imputed Righteousness”; both available from Chapel Library.



stand between you and the sword of divine wrath? Here there is no room for you to object that you are not qualified, because you are such a hardened, unhumbled, blind, and stupid wretch. For the question is not: Will you remove these evils, and then come to Christ? but, *Will you have a Christ* to remove them for you? It is because you are plagued with these diseases that I call you to come to the Physician, [so] that He may heal them. Are you guilty? I offer Him unto you for righteousness. Are you polluted? I offer Him unto you for sanctification. Are you miserable and forlorn? I offer Him as made of God unto you complete redemption. Are you hard-hearted? I offer Him in that promise, 'I will take away the heart of stone' (Eze 36:26). Are you content that He break your hard heart? Come, then, and put your hard heart into His hand."

*"I've found the pearl of greatest price! My heart doth sing for joy;  
And sing I must, a Christ I have! Oh what a Christ have I!*

*"My Christ, He is the Lord of lords, He is the King of kings;  
He is the Sun of Righteousness, With healing in His wings.*

*"My Christ, He is the Tree of Life, Which in God's garden grows;  
Whose fruits do feed, whose leaves do heal; my Christ is Sharon's Rose.*

*"Christ is my meat, Christ is my drink, my medicine and my health;  
My peace, my strength, my joy, my crown, my glory, and my wealth."*

## **6. The Blood of Jesus, Our Only Ground of Peace with God**

### **The Work of the Holy Spirit**

When you who are anxious about your soul are hearing much prayer offered by Christians for the Holy Spirit, you may conclude that the first thing you also have to do is to pray for the Holy Spirit; but Jesus Himself sets you right in this matter when He says, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (Joh 6:29). If you desire to do this at the throne of grace, by all means repair thither, but do not go to it to do anything else at present. Believers in Jesus pray "in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20) that He may revive the work of God in themselves and in their fellow-believers, lead awakened souls to Jesus, and convince sinners of their wickedness and unbelief. But, as your only foundation for peace, pardon, purity, and glory is to be found in the blood-shedding of Jesus, your more immediate occupation is to "behold the Lamb of God" (Joh 1:29).

No doubt, the quickening presence of the Holy Spirit is most essential to your seeing Jesus to the saving of your soul, and you should by all means expect His gracious presence to be vouchsafed as you contemplate the crucified Redeemer; but it is unscriptural to seek the *sanctification* of your heart through the Spirit before the *justification* of your person through Christ—and it is equally unscriptural to mix the two, and depend partly on the one and partly on the other; for Jesus, and Jesus only, is the object on which your anxious eyes must rest for peace with God and a change of heart. “It is Christ that died” (Rom 8:34); and the Spirit’s office is to direct you to Him Who said on Calvary, “It is finished” (Joh 19:30). It is nowhere written in Scripture, the work of God’s Holy Spirit cleanseth us from sin, but it is written that “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1Jo 1:7). What you are called upon, then, more especially to do, is to *receive Jesus as your Redeemer*, that you may “have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph 1:7); for it is written, “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (Joh 1:12).

We are not required to be prepared as sons, and then come and be accepted of God—to be justified and have our sins pardoned through Jesus—but we are instructed to come to Jesus in order to our being justified freely by His grace, and made sons through living union with Him Who is the eternal Son of God. We are justified freely as *sinners*, and being thus accepted in the Beloved, we become *sons* of God, and have the nature, experience, and walk of His children. Awakened sinner! begin at the beginning of the alphabet of salvation, by looking upon Him Who was pierced on Calvary’s cross for our sins. Look to the Lamb of God, and keep continually looking unto Jesus—and not at your repentings, resolutions, reformation, praying, reading, hearing, or anything of yours as forming any reason why you should be accepted, pardoned, and saved—and you will soon find peace, and take your place among them that “worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phi 3:3).

## **The Passover**

I do not know a more striking illustration of salvation by the blood of Jesus alone, than that which is furnished by the sprinkling of the blood of the passover lamb on the homes of the Israelites, on the eve of their redemption from the bondage of Egypt. The blood on the lintel secured Israel’s peace.

There was nothing more required in order to enjoy settled peace, in reference to the destroying angel, than the application of “the blood of sprinkling.” God did not add anything to the blood, because nothing more was necessary to obtain salvation from the sword of judgment. He did not say, “When I see the blood *and* the unleavened bread or bitter herbs, I will pass over.” By no means. These things had their proper place and their proper value; but they never could be regarded as the ground of peace in the presence of God.

“It is most needful to be simple and clear as to what it is that constitutes the ground-work of peace. So many things are mixed up with the work of Christ, that souls are plunged in darkness and uncertainty as to their acceptance. They know that there is no other way of being saved but by the blood of Christ; but the devils know this, and it avails them nought. What is needed is to know that we *are* saved—absolutely, perfectly, eternally saved. There is no such thing as being partly saved and partly lost, partly justified and partly guilty, partly alive and partly dead, partly born of God and partly not. There are but the two states, and we must be in either the one or the other.

“The Israelite was not partly sheltered by the blood, and partly exposed to the sword of the destroyer. He knew he was safe. He did not hope so. He was not praying to be so. He was perfectly safe. And why? because God hath said, ‘When I see the blood, I will pass over you’ (Exo 12:13). He simply rested upon God’s testimony about the shed blood. He set to his seal that God was true. He believed that God meant what He said, and that gave him peace. He was able to take his place at the paschal-feast in confidence, quietness, and assurance, knowing that the destroyer could not touch him when a spotless victim had died in his stead.

“If an Israelite had been asked as to his enjoyment of peace, would he have said, ‘I know there is no other way of escape but by the blood of the lamb, and I know it is a divinely perfect way; and, moreover, I know that that blood has been shed and sprinkled on my door-post—but somehow, I do not feel quite comfortable. I am not quite sure if I am safe. I fear I do not value the blood as I ought, nor love the God of my fathers as I ought?’ Would such have been his answer? Assuredly not; and yet hundreds of professing Christians speak thus, when asked if they have peace. They put their *thoughts about the blood* in place of the blood itself, and thus, in result, make salvation as much dependent upon themselves as if they were to be saved by works.

“Now, the Israelite was saved by the blood *alone*, and not by his thoughts about it. His thoughts might be deep or they might be shallow; but, deep or shallow, they had nothing to do with his safety. He was not saved by his thoughts or feelings, but by the blood. God did not say, ‘When *you* see the blood, I will pass over you.’ No; but ‘When *I* see the blood.’ What gave an Israelite peace was the fact that Jehovah’s eye rested on the blood. This tranquillized his heart. The blood was outside and the Israelite inside, so that he could not possibly see it—but God saw it, and that was quite enough.

“The application of this to the question of a sinner’s peace is very plain. Christ, having shed His blood as a perfect atonement for sin, has taken it into the presence of God and sprinkled it there; and God’s testimony assures the believer that everything is settled on his behalf. All the claims of justice have been fully answered, sin has been perfectly put away, so that the full tide of redeeming love may roll down from the heart of God along the channel that the sacrifice of Christ has opened for it.

“To this truth the Holy Ghost bears witness. He ever sets forth the fact of God’s estimate of the blood of Christ. He points the sinner’s eye to the accomplished work of the

cross. He declares that all is done, that sin has been put far away and righteousness brought nigh—so nigh, that it is ‘to all them that believe’ (Rom 3:22). Believe what? believe what God says because He says it, not because they feel it.

“Now, we are constantly prone to look at something in ourselves as necessary to form the ground of peace. We are apt to regard the work of the Spirit *in* us rather than the work of Christ *for* us, as the foundation of our peace. This is a mistake. We know that the operations of the Spirit of God have their proper place in Christianity, but His work is never set forth as that on which our peace depends. The Holy Ghost did not make peace, but Christ did; the Holy Ghost is not said to be our peace, but Christ is. God did not send ‘preaching peace’ by the Holy Ghost, but ‘by Jesus Christ’ (Act 10:36; Eph 2:14, 17; Col 1:20).

“The Holy Ghost reveals Christ; He makes us to know, enjoy, and feed upon Christ. He bears witness to Christ, takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He is the power of communion, the seal, the witness, the earnest, the unction. In short, His operations are essential. Without Him, we can neither see, hear, know, feel, experience, enjoy, nor exhibit aught of Christ. This is plain, and is understood and admitted by every true and rightly-instructed Christian.

“Yet, notwithstanding all this, the work of the Spirit is not the ground of peace, though He enables us to enjoy the peace. He is not our title, though He reveals our title and enables us to enjoy it. The Holy Ghost is still carrying on His work in the soul of the believer. He ‘maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered’ (Rom 8:26). He labours to bring us into more entire conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. His aim is ‘to present every man perfect in Christ’ (Col 1:28). He is the author of every right desire, every holy aspiration, every pure and heavenly affection, every divine experience; but His work in and with us will not be complete until we have left this present scene and taken our place with Christ in the glory—just as in the case of Abraham’s servant, his work was not complete until he presented Rebekah to Isaac.

“Not so the work of Christ *for* us; that is absolutely and eternally complete. He could say, ‘I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do’ (Joh 17:4); and, again, ‘It is finished’ (Joh 19:30). The blessed Spirit cannot yet say He has finished the work. He has been patiently and faithfully working for the last nineteen hundred years as the true, the divine Vicar<sup>31</sup> of Christ on earth. He still works amidst the various hostile influences that surround the sphere of His operations. He still works in the hearts of the people of God, in order to bring them up, practically and experimentally, to the divinely-appointed standard; but He never teaches a soul to lean on His work for peace in the presence of divine holiness. His office is to speak of Jesus; He does not speak of Himself. ‘He,’ says Christ, ‘shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you’ (Joh 16:4). He can only present Christ’s work as the solid basis on which the soul must rest forever. Yea, it is on the ground of Christ’s perfect atonement that He takes up His abode and carries on His op-

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<sup>31</sup> **Vicar** – deputy; viceregent.

erations in the believer. ‘In whom also *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise’ (Eph 1:13). No power or energy of the Holy Ghost could cancel sin; the blood has done that. ‘The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin’ (1Jo 1:7).

“It is of the utmost importance to distinguish between the Spirit’s work *in* us and Christ’s work *for* us. Where they are confounded, one rarely finds settled peace as to the question of sin. The type<sup>32</sup> of the passover illustrates the distinction very simply. The Israelite’s peace was not founded upon the unleavened bread or the bitter herbs, *but upon the blood*. Nor was it, by any means, a question of what *he* thought about the blood, but what God thought about it. This gives immense relief and comfort to the heart. God has found a ransom, and He reveals that ransom to us sinners in order that we might rest therein, on the authority of His Word and by the grace of His Spirit. And although our thoughts and feelings must ever fall far short of the infinite preciousness of that ransom, yet, inasmuch as God tells us that He is perfectly satisfied about our sins, we may be satisfied also. Our conscience may well find settled rest where God’s holiness finds rest.

“Beloved reader, if you have not as yet found peace in Jesus, we pray you to ponder this deeply. See the simplicity of the ground on which your peace is to rest. God is well pleased in the finished work of Christ—‘well pleased for his righteousness’ sake’ (Isa 42:21). That righteousness is not founded upon your feelings or experience, but upon the shed blood of the Lamb of God; and hence your peace is not dependent upon your feelings or experience, but upon the same precious blood, which is of changeless efficacy and changeless value in the judgment of God.

“What then remains for the believer? To what is he called? to keep the feast of unleavened bread, by putting away everything contrary to the hallowed purity of his elevated position. It is his privilege to feed upon that precious Christ Whose blood has cancelled all his guilt. Being assured that the sword of the destroyer cannot touch him because it has fallen upon Christ instead, it is for him to feast in holy repose within the blood-stricken door, under the perfect shelter that God’s own love has provided in the blood of the cross. May God the Holy Ghost lead every doubting, wavering heart to find rest in the divine testimony contained in those words, ‘When I see the blood, I will pass over you’ (Exo 13:13).”<sup>33</sup>

*“Until I saw the blood, ’twas hell my soul was fearing;  
And dark and dreary in my eyes the future was appearing,  
While conscience told its tale of sin,  
And caused a weight of woe within.*

*“But when I saw the blood, and looked at Him Who shed it,  
My right to peace was seen at once, and I with transport read it;*

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<sup>32</sup> **type** – symbol with some of the same characteristics of that which is represented.

<sup>33</sup> No source is given in the original for this long quotation.—*Editor*

*I found myself to God brought nigh,  
And "Victory" became my cry.  
"My joy was in the blood, the news of which had told me,  
That spotless as the Lamb of God, my Father could behold me,  
And all my boast was in His name,  
Through Whom this great salvation came.  
"And when, with golden harps, the throne of God surrounding,  
The white-robed saints around the throne their songs of joy are sounding;  
With them I'll praise that precious blood,  
Which has redeemed our souls to God."*

## **7. Regeneration through the Blood of Jesus**

### **Necessity of Regeneration**

Dear reader, Jesus spoke of regeneration as essential to salvation, and it is possible you may feel as if that experience stood between you and the "precious blood of Christ" (1Pe 1:19). It seems as if it did, but it does not—for we are saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is "shed on us abundantly *through Jesus Christ our Saviour*" (Ti 3:6). It can do you only good to consider the necessity of being born again, for it will show you at once your utter helplessness and the all-sufficiency of the blood of Jesus alone to give you peace with God and a new heart. We do not shrink from the fullest statement of the truth of Scripture on this point, for it will be found that it does not clash in the very least with the truth, which I am specially desirous to impart, that we are not accepted as righteous in God's sight otherwise than in Christ; for, says the Word, "He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2Co 5:21). The necessity of being born again will show us only the more clearly that we must be saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone. Turn to and read the third chapter of the Gospel by John, and then ponder the following thoughts on this vitally important subject and see how you are stripped of every plea for mercy arising from yourself, and laid down as a lost sinner at the cross of Christ, needing to be saved by "*grace*" alone.

Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, asserts the absolute necessity of regeneration when He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Joh 3:3). And farther on He says, as solemnly and decidedly, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"

(Joh 3:5). He gives a fact as the reason of this necessity: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (Joh 3:6). “Flesh” or corrupt human nature—man as he is—is unfit to enter God’s kingdom, and will ever continue so. No self-regeneration is to be expected. The total depravity of human nature renders a radical spiritual change of absolute necessity. The whole race, and every individual “man,” is utterly depraved in heart, his will averse from good; his conscience is defiled, his understanding is darkened, his affections are alienated from God and set upon unworthy objects, his desires are corrupt, his appetites ungoverned. Unless the Holy Spirit impart a new nature, and work an entire change on the whole faculties of his mind by “the washing of water by the word” (Eph 5:26), cleansing away his filthiness of spirit as water cleanses away outward defilement, he must remain an unfit subject for God’s holy kingdom.

## **Our Depravity**

And observe that Jesus spoke of two classes only—those who are “*fleshy*” and those who are “*spiritual*.” We are naturally connected, as are all mankind, with those who are “*born of the flesh*,” who, on that very account, cannot even so much as “*see the kingdom of God*”—and we can get out of our natural state only by a spiritual birth, for only “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Joh 3:6). All of us being born of parents who were themselves fallen and corrupt, are necessarily infected by the hereditary taint of depravity of nature. Besides, “the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be. So then they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God” (Rom 8:7-8), and cannot enter into His kingdom. Attempts at morality are of no account with God. A moral Nicodemus was told he required something deeper and more comprehensive than conformity to a certain standard that passes with the world for morality (Joh 3). God’s standard of holiness is not *morality*, but *spirituality*.

But some may say that, by publishing such extreme views, we may make many well-meaning persons feel disgusted at religion, and go off from it altogether. But it is not our fault if they do so on account of the insufferableness of divine truth. Are you convinced that Scripture is right when it says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer 17:9)? Do you believe that, as a man in the flesh, you are more like Satan than God?—incapable of knowing, loving, or serving God, and, although in reputation for the highest morality, utterly unfit for entering into His holy kingdom?

It is, no doubt, hard to believe that one’s own self is so bad as I have indicated, and none but the Holy Spirit can truly convince us of it; but does not Jesus represent our condition as utterly depraved, as “flesh”? Does He not solemnly say that, without a *new birth from above*, not one—no, not even a moral, learned, inquiring Nicodemus—can *see or enter* the kingdom of God? He does not say that he *may* not, but that he *cannot* enter—leaving it to be inferred that it is *morally impossible*.

And this arises from the fact of its being a kingdom, as well as from the fact of our depravity. An anarchist has a decided dislike to constitutional and settled government; so

a man, who hates the laws by which God's kingdom is governed, cannot be a loyal subject of His holy administration. God would require to change *His* nature before He admitted any of us into His kingdom with *our* nature unchanged. But as God cannot change, *we must be changed* if we would see or enter His kingdom. Before we can be happy and loyal subjects of it, we must be "born again"; and, being new creatures, have its laws written in our minds and hearts.

Besides, as a professor in one of our colleges has well remarked,

"It is a principle of our nature that, in order to happiness, there must be some correspondence betwixt the tastes, the dispositions, the habits of a man, and the scene in which he is placed, the society with which he mingles, and the services in which he is employed. A coward on the field of battle, a profligate in the house of prayer, a giddy worldling standing by a death-bed, a drunkard in the company of holy men, feel instinctively that they are misplaced—they have no enjoyment there."

And what enjoyment could unregenerate men have in God's kingdom, on earth or in heaven?<sup>34</sup> Even the outward services of the sanctuary below are distasteful to them in proportion to their spirituality. As long as preachers keep by the pictorial and illustrative—and speak of the seasons of the year, the beautiful earth and the ancient sea, mountains and plains, rivers and lakes; fields, flowers and fruits; sun, moon, and stars—they comprehend the discourse and applaud it. But when the deeply spiritual and eternally important form the theme, they feel listless, and characterize it as dull, prosy, and uninteresting. But if we cannot enjoy a highly spiritual discourse, it must be because we are "carnal" and want<sup>35</sup> the spiritual "sense" that always accompanies the new birth; for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Co 2:14).

## Being Made New

And is it not an alarming truth that this being "born again" is not a making of ourselves better, but a being made anew spiritually by God Himself! This appears evident from what Jesus said during His conversation with Nicodemus. His words are these, "Except a man be born of water and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Joh 3:5). This great change is effected by the Holy Spirit, through means of the living "water" of the Word of God—the testimony of Jesus—and is of a spiritual nature,

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<sup>34</sup> "If a man of a carnal mind is brought into a large company, he will have much to do; if into a company of Christians, he will feel little interest; if into a smaller company engaged in religious exercises, he will feel less; but if taken into a closet and forced to meditate upon God and eternity, this will be insupportable"—John Owen (1616-1683); called "The Prince of the Puritans," Congregationalist, chaplain in the army of Oliver Cromwell and vice-chancellor of Oxford University. Most of his life he served as a minister; his written works run to twenty-four volumes and are among the best resources for theology.

<sup>35</sup> **want** – lack.



“for that which is born of the Spirit *is spirit*.” It consists not in outward reformation, but inward transformation. We must be regenerated in soul in order to be truly reformed in life. The change is of such a nature that it is sure to be manifested outwardly if it exists inwardly. If you wish to have a holy life, you must be born again. Praying, weeping, striving against sin, and obeying God’s laws, is just so much labour lost unless you have in the first place this “born-again” experience.

## Through Christ

Ah! but you say, as you read this hard saying, “This lays me entirely prostrate before God, a sick and dying sinner; and I may give myself up to despair at once, for such an experience is utterly beyond my reach.” No, not at all! You may well despair of *self*, for self is incurably bad, but you are by this shut up to trust in “Jesus only” (Mar 9:8). For remember, Jesus continued to lay before this Jewish ruler atonement through Himself, lifted up as a Mediator<sup>36</sup> and God’s free love to a perishing world, embodied in the gift and work of His Son. You want to be born again? Well, Jesus would have you look to the Son of man lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (Num 21:8-9), and you will thus be pardoned and made to live. You say you are prostrated and helpless, with the poison of the serpent coursing through you, sick and dying—and you want to live, to experience such a new life as shall prove not only a present counteractive to the virus of this terrible death-poison, but also an enduring spiritual reality? Well, Jesus says, in this conversation with the inquiring ruler, that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Joh 3:16).

God sent His Son not to condemn the perishing men of the world to lie in their corrupt and diseased condition and to perish forever, but that He Himself might die that they might be pardoned and *saved!* And those who are recovered from the disease of corruption, tell us that they were “born again” *not* by lying in their corruption and crying for a new nature, and expecting it to come in some arbitrary and different way from that of faith; but their uniform testimony is, “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth” (Jam 1:18). We are new creatures, “being born again by the word of God” (1Pe 1:23); and “whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1Jo 5:1).<sup>37</sup>

The realization of regeneration being by faith in Jesus, you must fill your eyes with the atoning cross if you would have your guilt removed, and you must direct your eyes to the risen Living One at the right hand of God; and through Him get out of the old

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<sup>36</sup> **Mediator** – a go-between; one who intervenes between two hostile parties for the purpose of restoring them to a relationship of harmony and unity. See Free Grace Broadcaster #183, “Christ The Mediator,” available from Chapel Library.

<sup>37</sup> “Everyone who really believes is said to be born of God; and as every true believer is a converted man, it follows that the production of saving faith is equivalent to the work of regeneration... Conversion properly consists in a sinner being brought actually, intelligently, and cordially, to close and comply with God’s revealed will on the subject of His salvation.”—Professor Buchanan, D.D., LL.D.

creation with its condemnation and death, into the new creation with its justification and life, if you would know what it is to be “born again” and have your heart filled with divine life (see Rom 6 and Eph 2). This is the truth that Jesus taught in His conversation with Nicodemus; and the whole drift of the Gospel in which it occurs is a copy of the mind of Christ on this point—for the writer says, towards its close, “These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Joh 20:31).

If you still feel that you know nothing of being “born again,” bring your mind into broad and immediate contact with the *whole* of this conversation. Do not close the book and moan over the misery of your state, as it is now discovered to you by the awakening truths contained in John 3:3-9; but go on until you take in the discovery of the plain, gracious, free, and righteous way of getting out of your death and misery, as you have it laid down by Jesus, when He speaks (from John 3:14-17) of His own all-sufficient sacrifice, His Father’s unexampled love and gracious purpose towards perishing sinners, and His willingness to save and give eternal life to everyone who believes in Him. “*He that hath the Son hath life*” (1Jo 5:12).

## **8. Faith in the Blood of Jesus Essential to Salvation**

### **What Faith Is**

It is our *belief* of God’s testimony concerning His own grace and Christ’s work that brings us into possession of the blessings concerning which that testimony speaks. Our reception of God’s testimony is confidence in God Himself and in Christ Jesus His Son; for where the testimony comes from a person or regards a person, belief of the testimony and confidence in the person are things inseparable. Hence it is that Scripture sometimes speaks of confidence or trust as saving us (see the Psalms everywhere, e.g., 13:5, 52:8; also 1Ti 4:10, Eph 1:12), as if it would say to the sinner, “Such is the gracious character of God, that you have only to put your case into His hands—however bad it be—only to trust Him for eternal life, and He will assuredly not put you to shame.” Hence, also, it is that we are said to be saved by the *knowledge* of God or of Christ; that is, by simply *knowing* God as He has made Himself known to us (Isa 5:3,11; 1Ti 2:4; 2Pe 2:20)—for “this is life eternal, that they might *know* thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Joh 17:2). And, as if to make simplicity more simple, the apostle, in speaking of the facts of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, says, “By which also ye are saved, if ye *keep in memory* what I preached unto you” (1Co 15:1-2).

God would have us understand that the way in which we become connected with Christ so as to get eternal life is by “knowing” Him, or “hearing” Him, “trusting” Him. The testimony is inseparably linked to the person testified of; and our connection with the testimony, by belief of it, thus links us to the person. Thus it is that faith forms the bond between us and the Son of God, not because of anything in itself, but solely because it is only through the medium of truth known and believed that the soul can take any hold of God or of Christ. Faith is nothing, save as it *lays hold of Christ*, and it does so by laying hold of the truth concerning Him. “By grace are ye saved *through faith*; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8).

Faith, then, is the link, the one link between the sinner and God’s gift of pardon and life. It is not faith and *something else* along with it; it is faith *alone*; faith that takes God at His word, and gives Him credit for speaking the honest truth when making known His message of grace, His “record” of eternal life concerning “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world” (Joh 1:29).

## Objections Answered

Horatius Bonar tells us the following.<sup>38</sup>

“If you object that *you cannot believe*, then this indicates that you are proceeding quite in a wrong direction. You are still laboring under the idea that this believing is a work to be done by you, and not the acknowledgment of a work done by another. You would fain *do* something in order to get peace, and you think that if you could only do this great thing, ‘believing’—if you could but perform this great act called faith—God would at once reward you by giving you peace. Thus faith is reckoned by you to be the *price* in the sinner’s hand by which he buys peace, and not the mere holding out of the hand to get a peace that has already been bought by another. So long as you are attaching any meritorious importance to faith, however unconsciously, you are moving in a wrong direction—a direction from which no peace can come.

“Surely faith is not a *work*. On the contrary, it is a ceasing from work. It is not a climbing of the mountain, but a ceasing to attempt it, and allowing Christ to carry you up in His own arms. You seem to think that it is your own act of faith that is to save you, and not the object of your faith—without which your own act, however well performed, is nothing. Accordingly, you bethink yourself, and say, ‘What a mighty work is this believing, what an effort does it require on my part, how am I to perform it?’ Herein you sadly err, and your mistake lies chiefly here, in supposing that your peace is to come from the proper performance on your part of an act of faith—whereas it is to come entirely from the proper perception of Him to Whom the Father is pointing your eye, and

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<sup>38</sup> From *God’s Way of Peace* by Horatius Bonar (1808-1889), Scottish Presbyterian minister known for personal application of biblical truth; writer of popular poems, religious tracts, and hymns, many of which are still sung throughout the English-speaking world. (Paperback available from Chapel Library.)

in regard to Whom He is saying, ‘Behold my servant whom I have chosen, look at Him, forget everything else—everything about yourself, your own faith, your own repentance, your own feelings—and look at Him!’ It is in Him, and not in your poor act of faith, that salvation lies; and out of Him, not out of your own act of faith, is peace to come.

“Thus mistaking the meaning of faith, and the way in which faith saves you, you get into confusion, and mistake everything else connected with your peace. You mistake the real nature of that very inability to believe of which you complain so sadly. For that inability does not lie, as you fancy it does, in the impossibility of your performing aright this great act of faith, but of ceasing from all such self-righteous attempts to perform any act, or do any work whatsoever, in order to your being saved. So that the real truth is that you have not yet seen such a sufficiency in the one great work of the Son of God upon the cross, as to lead you utterly to discontinue your mistaken and aimless efforts to work out something of your own. As soon as the Holy Spirit shows that you have this entire sufficiency of the great propitiation, you cease at once from these attempts to *act* or *work* something of your own, and take, instead of this, what Christ has done. One great part of the Spirit’s work is not to enable the man to do something that will help to save him, but so to detach him from his own performances that he shall be content with the salvation that Christ finished when He died and rose again.

“But perhaps you may object further, that *you are not satisfied with your faith*. No, truly, nor are you ever likely to be. If you wait for this before you take peace, you will wait till life is done. The Bible does not say, ‘Being satisfied about our faith, we have peace with God’; it simply says, ‘Being justified by faith, we have peace with God’ (Rom 5:1). Not satisfaction with your own faith, but satisfaction with Jesus and His work—this is what God presses on you. You say, ‘I am satisfied with Christ.’ Are you? What more then do you wish? Is not satisfaction with Christ enough for you, or for any sinner? Nay, and is not this the truest kind of faith? To be satisfied with Christ, that is faith in Christ. To be satisfied with His blood, that is faith in His blood. What more could you have? Can your faith give you something that Christ cannot? or will Christ give you nothing till you can produce faith of a certain kind and quality, whose excellences will entitle you to blessing?

“Do not bewilder yourself. Do not suppose that your faith is a price, a bribe, or a merit. Is not the very essence of real faith just your being satisfied with Christ? Are you really satisfied with Him, and with what He has done? Then do not puzzle yourself about your faith, but go upon your way rejoicing, having thus been brought to be satisfied with Him, Whom to know is peace, life, and salvation.

“You are not satisfied with your faith, you say. I am glad that you are not. Had you been so, you would have been far out of the way indeed. Does Scripture anywhere speak of your getting peace by your becoming satisfied with your faith? Nay; does it not take for granted that you will, to the very last, be *dissatisfied* with yourself, with your faith, with all about you and within you—and satisfied with Jesus only? Are you then satisfied with Him? Then go in peace! For if satisfaction with Him will not give you peace, noth-

ing else that either heaven or earth contains will ever give you peace. Though your faith should become so perfect that you were entirely satisfied with it, that would not pacify your conscience or relieve your fears. Faith, however perfect, has of itself nothing to give you, either of pardon or of life. Its finger points you to Jesus. Its voice bids you look straight to Him. Its object is to turn away from itself and from yourself altogether, that you may behold Him, and in beholding Him be satisfied with Him; and, in being satisfied with Him, have ‘joy and peace.’

*“Faith is not what we feel or see, it is a simple trust  
in what the God of love has said of Jesus as the ‘Just.’*

*“What Jesus is, and that alone, is faith’s delightful plea,  
It never deals with sinful self, nor righteous self, in me.*

*“It tells me I am counted ‘dead,’ by God, in His own Word,  
It tells me I am ‘born again,’ in CHRIST, my risen Lord.*

*“If He is free, then I am free, from all unrighteousness;  
If He is just, then I am just; He is my righteousness.”*

## **9. The Blood of Jesus, the Believer’s Life of Peace**

I now leave off addressing myself specially to the unconverted awakened, that I may lay a few thoughts before brethren in Christ who are awakening to a deeper sense of their obligations and responsibilities.

We are living in a most important era of our world’s history! How melancholy the condition, and how ominous of evil the attitude of the earth’s nations! Warlike powers confront each other and the blood of their embattled hosts is shed in torrents! How persevering and successful is man in carrying forward his gigantic schemes and favourite movements! Strange is it also, that an all but universal cry for regeneration among earth’s nations should be made simultaneously with a cry for the Holy Ghost to achieve for the professing Church a mighty spiritual revival.

We cannot help being stimulated in our exertions for the cause of Christ, by contiguity to unceasing earthly activity manifested on every side; but were this our only incentive to action, our zeal would be spurious, for all effort and activity in promoting the gospel that are the offspring of mere imitation—and originate only in proximity to the activity displayed by the world, instead of being based on personal faith in Christ and living communion with God—form nothing higher and nothing better than “a fair show in the flesh” (Gal 6:12).

But we have reason to believe that a mighty breath of the divine Spirit is now passing over the earth. The Church of the living God, scattered throughout the different denominations, has been feeling its influence; and the result of His gracious presence and quickening power is appearing in greatly increased religious activity and zeal for the conversion of souls. This is matter for thankfulness. We need to have a renewal of our youth that we may be healthy, fresh, and vigorous to engage energetically in the great work that is to be done for God in these eventful days that are now passing over us. And let us ever bear in mind that the grand prerequisite to thorough usefulness is that we ourselves should be,

“strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that *Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph 3:16-19).

If we would be filled with the grace of God and refreshed in our souls, it is essential, at such a time as the present, that we should constantly recall and deeply ponder the great foundation truths on which we rested at the time of our conversion. “Looking unto Jesus” (Heb 12:2) is the most refreshing exercise in which we can engage, and the shortest road to genuine spiritual revival is by the cross of Calvary.

When the Reverend W. H. Hewitson was on his deathbed, and had several texts illustrative of the faithfulness of God quoted to him by a friend, he remarked after his friend had withdrawn,

“Texts like these do not give me so much comfort as ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ (Joh 3:16); or, ‘He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?’ (Rom 8:32). Plain doctrinal statements, exhibiting the heart of God, are more sustaining to me than mere promises. I like to get into contact with the living Person.”

This experience is very common in such circumstances. When the most intelligent<sup>39</sup> Christian draws near to death, he feels that he can rest with confidence on nothing except the great elementary truths of God’s glorious gospel, and the living Person of His risen Son. And when we are in a state of spiritual decay; when our “soul is full of troubles, and our life draweth nigh unto the grave” (Psa 88:3); when our “spirit is overwhelmed, and our heart within us is desolate” (Psa 113:4)—there is nothing so reviving and invigorating as the leading fundamental truths of the gospel of Christ. The faithful saying, “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1Ti 1:15), is at once the means of reviving the Christian and of giving life to the self-

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<sup>39</sup> **intelligent** – insightful; spiritually mature.

despairing sinner, for the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom 1:16). “None but Jesus” can avail us either for peace of conscience with reference to past transgressions, peace of heart with reference to present circumstances, or for peace of mind with reference to future prospects. This is not theory, but experience, as every child of God knows.

“I feel,” writes another, “that nothing can do me good but personal contact with the living Person of the Lord Jesus. Looking at systems and creeds, doctrines and duties, may be all very well in its own place, but if I am to be a healthy, fruit-bearing Christian, I must look steadily and confidently to the great High Priest Who assumed our nature, to bear our sins and win our confidence. When, by faith, we are enabled to fix a steady gaze on Jesus, how little do we care for the smile or frown of the world! ‘Looking unto Jesus’ enables the ‘worm Jacob’ to ‘thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff’ (Isa 41:15). But I often feel that it is a very difficult matter to look away from myself, though I am sure I never get anything there to make me feel happy. No, all is in my Redeemer, and it is only when I am looking to Him as all my salvation that I feel satisfied, and think I could face death with composure.”

The late Lady Colquhoun was one who knew the preciousness and power of resting on Christ Jesus alone for peace, comfort, and salvation; and from personal experience she was “able to teach others also” (2Ti 2:2). Writing to a young friend, she gave this excellent counsel:

“As well in our winters as our summers, the foundation standeth sure: ‘Christ is all.’ With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (Jam 1:17). Precious truth! Let us rest upon it, and cease from the vain endeavor to find anything in us that can give the shadow of hope. Abiding hope must be fixed on the object that changeth not. We change daily, hourly; He remains glorious in holiness eternally. And this Perfection is in the court of heaven our representative. Can we want more? Shall we say, I will add a few of my virtues and graces to the account? When we are guilty of this folly, we weary ourselves seeking for them, for they cannot be found, and our harp hangs upon the willows. But we resume the songs of Zion when we look entirely from ourselves to ‘THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS’ (Jer 23:6). How is it with you? Can you rejoice in the Lord always? If not, experience will teach you that living on frames and feelings will not do, that comfort ebbs and flows with them, and that you equally delude yourself when you take comfort from the feeling of nearness to God, or when you lose it because you lack that joy in devotional exercises—which is, nevertheless, extremely desirable and much to be prized. This, however, is distinct from joy in Christ crucified and in Christ our righteousness; and it is very possible to feel little heart for prayer and to mourn an absent God, and yet to stand firm on the sure foundation, rejoicing in Christ, and never doubting that we are complete in Him.”

The reason why many real Christians are harassed with doubts, fears, and darkness, is that they leave off leaning entirely upon their beloved Saviour, and rest part of the weight of their souls' eternal well-being on their own experience. The fruits of righteousness wrought in us by the grace of the Holy Spirit are precious as evidences, but they cannot be trusted as grounds of salvation, unless with much spiritual detriment to our souls. Legh Richmond,<sup>40</sup> writing to his mother, says,

“Your occasional doubts and fears arise from too much considering faith and repentance as the *grounds*, rather than the *evidences*, of salvation. Our salvation is not because we do well, but because ‘He in whom we trust hath done all things well’ (Mar 7:37). The believing sinner is never more happy and secure, than when at the same moment he beholds and feels his own vileness and also his Saviour’s excellence. You look at yourself too much, and at the infinite price paid for you too little. For conviction you must look at yourself, but for comfort to your Saviour. Thus the wounded Israelites were to look only at the brazen serpent for recovery. The graces of the Spirit are good things for others to judge us by, but it is Christ Himself received, believed in, rested upon, loved, and followed, that will speak *peace* to ourselves. By looking unto Him, we shall grow holy; and the more holy we grow, the more we shall mourn over sin and be sensible how very far short we come of what we yet desire to be. While our sanctification is a gradual and still imperfect work, our justification is perfect and complete; the former is wrought *in* us, the latter *for* us. Rely simply as a worthless sinner on the Saviour, and the latter is all your own—with its accompanying blessings of pardon, acceptance, adoption, and the non-imputation of sin to your charge. Hence will flow thankful obedience, devotedness of heart, etc. This salvation is by faith alone, and thus saving faith works by love. Embrace these principles freely, fully, and impartially, and you will enjoy a truly scriptural peace, assurance, and comfort.”

*“For if Christ be born within, Soon that likeness shall appear  
Which the heart had lost through sin, God’s own image fair and clear,  
And the soul serene and bright, Mirrors back His heavenly light.”*

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<sup>40</sup> **Legh Richmond** (1772-1827) – English divine, educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and rector of Turvey, Bedfordshire. The best known of his writings is “The Dairyman’s Daughter”, of which as many as four million in nineteen languages were circulated before 1849 (booklet available from Chapel Library).



## 10. Faith in the Blood of Jesus, the Spring of Holiness

It is noteworthy that the Apostle Paul, who most strenuously upholds justification by faith in Jesus, always connects it with holy living, and frequently shows that it is the firm belief of the truth of the doctrine that leads to new obedience in the life. In his *Epistle to Titus*, after speaking of “Jesus Christ our Saviour,” “being justified by his grace,” and “made heirs according to the hope of eternal life,” he directs that the doctrine of salvation by free grace alone should be affirmed constantly *in order that* believers might maintain good works (Ti 3:4-8). And there can never be “good” works but on the principle of being “justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law” (Gal 2:16). We never do good works until we do them *because we are saved, not in order to be so*. A lively sense of many sins forgiven will make us love much and show it practically (Luk 7:47). And we should have such a vital connection with Christ and such intimate fellowship with Him, as will exclude all surmisings as to our acceptance.

If we are to render Paul-like service, we must exercise Paul-like experience. And this is a record of how he believed and lived: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20). We must be well assured of the love of God in Christ Jesus, to our own souls in particular, before we will be able to say, “This one thing I do: I strive to be holy as God is holy.”

“Saving faith,” says one of the best of the old writers, “has always a sanctifying and comforting influence. The true believer does not divide *righteousness* from *sanctification*, nor pardon from purity. Yea, he comes to Christ for the remission of sins for the right end; and that is, that being freed from the guilt of sin, we may be freed from the dominion of it. Knowing that there is forgiveness with Him that He might be feared, he does not believe in *remission* of sin that he may indulge himself in the *commission* of sin. No, no; the blood of Christ, which purges the conscience from the guilt of sin, does also purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. They that come to Christ in a scriptural way come to Him for righteousness, that they may have Him also for sanctification—otherwise the man does not really desire the favour and enjoyment of God, or to be in friendship with Him Who is a holy God.

The true believer employs Christ for making him holy as well as happy, and hence draws virtue from Him *for killing sin*, and quickening him in the way of duty. The faith that can never keep you from sin will never keep you out of hell; and the faith that cannot carry you to your duty will not carry you to heaven. Justifying faith is a sanctifying grace. It is true, as it sanctifies it does not justify; but that faith that justifies *does also* sanctify. As the sun that enlighteneth hath heat with it, but it is not the heat of the sun

that enlightens but the light thereof; so that faith that justifies hath love and sanctity with it, but it is not the love and sanctity that justify, but faith as closing with Christ.

“If a man hath no faith in the Lord’s goodness, no hope of His favour in Christ, where is his purity and holiness? Nay, it is he that hath this hope that purifies himself as God is pure. I know not what experience you have, but some of us know that, when our souls are most comforted and enlarged with the faith of God’s favour through Christ and with the hope of His goodness, then we have most heart to our duties. And when, through unbelief, we have harsh thoughts of God as an angry judge, then we have no heart to duties and religious exercises—and I persuade myself this is the experience of the saints in all ages.” There is thus an inseparable connection among a) our believing the love of God to us in Christ Jesus, b) holiness, and c) spiritual comfort. Unless we “draw near with a true heart in *full assurance of faith*,” we cannot expect to have “our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb 10:22).

And as the blood of Jesus is a) our ground of confidence in coming to God at the first for forgiveness of our sins, b) our mainstay in trouble, and c) the spring of all worthy obedience, so must it be our only plea in approaching our heavenly Father for all needed spiritual blessings. If we wish to have our own souls quickened and revived, or a great work of the Spirit achieved throughout the land, and millions of souls converted, the name of Jesus must be our only plea as we come to plead for these blessings at the throne of grace.

“In all true prayer,” says another, “great stress should be laid on the blood of Jesus: perhaps no evidence distinguishes a declension in the power and spirituality of prayer more strongly than an overlooking of this. Where the atoning blood is kept out of view, not recognized, not pleaded, not made the *grand plea*, there is a deficiency of power in prayer. Words are nothing, fluency of expression nothing, niceties of language and brilliancy of thought nothing, where the blood of Christ—the new and living way of access to God, the grand plea that moves Omnipotence, that gives admission within the holy of holies—is slighted, undervalued, and not made the groundwork of every petition. Oh, how much is this overlooked in our prayers—how is the atoning blood of Immanuel slighted! How little mention we hear of it in the sanctuary, in the pulpit, in the social circle! Whereas, it is this that makes prayer what it is with God. All prayer is acceptable with God, and only so, as it comes up perfumed with the blood of Christ; all prayer is answered as it urges the blood of Christ as its plea. It is the blood of Christ that satisfies justice, and meets all the demands of the Law against us. It is the blood of Christ that purchases and brings down every blessing into the soul. It is the blood of Christ that sues for the fulfillment of His last will and testament, every precious legacy of which comes to us solely on account of His death; this it is too that gives us boldness at the throne of grace. How can a poor sinner approach without this? How can he look up, how can he ask, how can he present himself before a holy God, but as he brings in the hand of faith the precious blood of Jesus? Out of Christ, God can hold no communication with

us; all intercourse is suspended, every avenue of approach is closed, all blessing is withheld. God has crowned His dearly-beloved Son, and He will have us crown Him too. And never do we place a brighter crown upon His blessed head than when we plead His finished righteousness as the ground of our acceptance, and His atoning blood as our great argument for the bestowment of all blessing with God.

“If then, dear reader, you feel yourself to be a poor, vile, unholy sinner—if a backslider whose feet have wandered from the Lord, in whose soul the spirit of prayer has declined—and yet still feel some secret longing to return and dare not because so vile, so unholy, so backsliding; yet you may return, ‘having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus’ (Heb 10:19). Come, for the blood of Jesus pleads; return, for the blood of Jesus gives you welcome.”

“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1Jo 2:1). And if you are stirred in spirit for the souls of the perishing around you that they may be saved, and for the work of God that it may be revived, make mention of the *blood of Jesus*, and you may rest satisfied that you “have the petitions” that you “desired of him” (1Jo 5:15). Jesus has passed His Word, that on doing this you shall obtain the desires of your heart; for He says, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Joh 15:7). “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you...Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Joh 16:23-24).

If, then, there be no great revival of God’s work, no great awakening and conversion of perishing souls, may it not be because this sin lieth at our door, that we have not used the blood of Jesus as our all-prevailing plea in prayer? Oh! let us no longer employ that “precious blood” so sparingly in our pleadings for revival, but let us urge it as our only and our constant plea, and prove God herewith, whether He will not pour us out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it (Mal 3:10).

## **11. The Blood of Jesus, the Essence of the Gospel**

Our matured conviction is that the great thing needed at present is not so much revival sermons or revival prayer-meetings, as *revival truth*. As the very essence of that truth is “the gospel of God...concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 1:1, 3)—or, in other words, the testimony of the Holy Ghost (*externally* in the preaching of the Word, and *internally* in its spiritual application) to the all-sufficiency and infallible efficacy of “the precious blood of Christ” (1Pe 1:19)—that which is pre-eminently required in order to the general revival of religion is a full, clear, intelligent, and earnest utter-

ance of the grand leading doctrines of “the gospel of the grace of God” (Act 20:24). True revival is not obtainable by merely preaching *about* revival, but by the constant proclamation of that all-important truth which is employed by the Holy Ghost to produce it: that “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1Pe 3:18). He will prove the most effective preacher in bringing about a holy, deep, spiritual revival, who gives the greatest prominence to these three great facts: “That *Christ died* for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he *was buried*; and that *he arose again* the third day according to the Scriptures” (1Co 15:3-4).

I am convinced that the reason why so many ministers exhaust nearly all their converting power (I mean *instrumentally*) during the first few years of their ministry, while some continue to possess it and finish their course with joy, is greatly owing to the former leaving the simplicity that is in Christ and betaking themselves to *sermon-writing* about secondary matters, while the latter make *Christ crucified* their “Alpha and Omega.” Oh, that all the ministers of Jesus Christ would return, for a few months at least every year, to all the common texts from which they preached discourses that seemed to be so much blessed to awaken and save souls in the early days of their ministry! Were they to take a series of such texts as Matthew 11:28, John 3:16, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 2:2, 1 Timothy 1:12-17, 1 John 1:7—and, after restudying them and bringing all the light of their reading, spiritual insight, and experience to bear upon the exposition and enforcement of them, to preach from them with the Holy Ghost and with a lively faith. [To preach from them] that—by the grace of the Holy Spirit accompanying their preaching—the unconverted among their people would be immediately converted, [then] there might be a great and general awakening, and tens of thousands might be added to the Lord.

It is also of vast importance to present “the truth of the gospel” as the Holy Ghost Himself has presented it to us in “the word of Christ” (Col 3:16). It has been well said,

“The derangement of *God’s order* of truth is quite as dangerous and far more subtle than the denial of the truth itself. In fact, to reverse the order is to deny the truth. We are not merely to maintain both Christ’s work and the Spirit’s work in their individual integrity, but in their exact scriptural order.”

We believe that the refreshing truth, that “the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin” (1Jo 1:7), is the great central sun that sheds a flood of light on the whole system of divine revelation. Atonement by the blood-shedding of Christ is the substratum of Christianity, for the sole ground of a sinner’s peace with God is “the blood of Jesus.” We who were at one time “far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace” (Eph 2:13-14), “in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Eph 1:7); and so, “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” (Rom 3:24-25), “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom 5:1-2).

In the Westminster Assembly's "Shorter Catechism,"<sup>41</sup> which is considered by all orthodox people to be an excellent summary of Christian doctrine, you will find the very same truth stated that we have advanced and confirmed by the above quotations, and that we have been writing for publication almost daily for the last ten years.

The answer to the question in that catechism, "What doth God require of us that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us for sin?," commences with, "God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life," etc. Now, this shows that the framers of that symbol of sound doctrine were accurate in their conceptions, and precise in their statement of the *order* and *position* of this great scriptural truth. They suppose an anxious inquirer desirous of knowing how he is to escape the wrath and curse of God due to him for sin; and do they say that the first thing he is to do is to pray for the Holy Spirit, and get his mind changed, and his unholy heart sanctified, previously to his believing in Jesus? No. The very first thing they teach the awakened sinner to do is, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved (Act 16:31). Now this is all the more remarkable, considering that, when laying down the system of divine truth *theologically*, they had placed *effectual calling* by the divine Spirit before *justification by faith*. *There* they speak to the intellect of the converted man and instructed Christian; but *here* the matter is reversed, when an anxious sinner is to be guided as to what he is to do to be saved, and we have *faith in Jesus Christ* placed before *repentance* unto life—showing us that they held that, while we must ever acknowledge the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work in order to the creation and exercise of saving faith, we should never direct an anxious sinner to look to the Spirit as his Saviour, but to Christ alone. Never direct an inquirer to seek first an *inward* change, but an *outward* one: a justified state in order to enjoying a sanctified heart, the former being the necessary precursor of the latter.

Repentance is, properly speaking, a change of *mind*, or a new mind *about* God; regeneration is a change of *heart*, or a new heart *towards* God; conversion is a change of *life*, or a new life *for* God; adoption is a change of *family*, or a new relationship *to* God; sanctification is a change of *employment*, or a consecration of all *to* God; glorification is a change of *place*, or a new condition *with* God. But justification, which is a change of *state*, or a new standing *before* God, must be presented to the anxious inquirer as going before all—for being "accepted in the Beloved" is the foundation and cause of all, or more properly speaking, the "precious seed" from which all the rest spring, blossom, and bear fruit. Consequently, the first and great duty of those who have to deal with awakened souls is to make this very clear, and to keep them incessantly in contact with the blessed evangelical truth: "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal 2:16).

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<sup>41</sup> **Westminster Assembly of Divines** (1643-1647) – assembly of 121 theologians appointed by the "Puritan" Long Parliament with making proposals for reforming the Church of England; it produced the Westminster Confession (1647), the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Directory for Public Worship, and the Form of Church Government. The "Shorter Catechism" was developed specifically for fathers to use in their own homes for family worship.

From all this you will observe, dear reader, that I am not settling the position that a doctrine in theology ought to hold, but simply dealing with the *practical necessities* of an anxious inquirer. Were I called upon to state my views theoretically, I would say they are described by what another has termed *Jehovahism*, “for *of* him, and *through* him, and *to* him, are all things; to whom be glory forever” (Rom 11:36)—but I am not contemplating the sinner as standing before the throne of *glory*, but before the throne of *grace*, and I am not endeavoring to settle a subtle question in *theology*, but to give the practical solution of an urgent question of *salvation*. I am not attempting to lay down a system of divinity, but to discover the kind and order of truth divinely appointed and fitted to bring immediate peace to awakened and inquiring souls. And hoping to accomplish this most important end, I present “Jesus only,” “for he is our peace” Who, “having made peace through the blood of his cross” (Col 1:20), has come “and preached peace” by His “everlasting gospel” to them “who were afar off, and to them that were nigh” (Eph 2:17).

The first practical step towards realising and acknowledging the sovereignty of God, is to “let the peace of God rule in your hearts” (Col 3:15). You may hold a sound creed with a proud, unbroken heart—and be more deeply damned on that very account. But if you wish to know God in all the glory of His being and attributes, you must grasp the manifestation of that glory as it is embodied and manifested in the Person of Jesus Christ. You can know the glory of God as a Sovereign only by realising His grace as a Saviour, for “God was manifest in the flesh” (1Ti 3:16). “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth” (Joh 1:14). “Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (Mat 11:27).

*“A mind at ‘perfect peace’ with God; Oh, what a word is this!  
A sinner reconciled through blood; This, this, indeed, is peace!*

*“By nature and by practice far— How very far!—from God;  
Yet now by grace brought nigh to Him, Through faith in Jesus’ blood.*

*“So nigh, so very nigh to God, I cannot nearer be;  
For in the Person of His Son, I am as near as He.*

*“So dear, so very dear to God, More dear I cannot be;  
The love wherewith He loves the Son, Such is His love to me.*

*“Why should I ever careful be, Since such a God is mine?  
He watches o’er me night and day, And tells me, ‘mine is thine.’”*

## 12. The Holy Spirit's Testimony to the Blood of Jesus

The great work that the Holy Spirit is now occupied in performing, is that of *directing sinners to Jesus*, and inclining and enabling them to come to Him that they may be saved. Since this is the case, I am a fellow-worker with God the Holy Spirit only in so far as I tell anxious sinners to look to Jesus only, and have “redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” as their first and great business—and “this one thing I do” (Eph 1:7; Phi 3:13).

The question is not whether we think it scriptural for an awakened sinner to desire the secret and power-giving presence of the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of his understanding and show him the all-sufficiency of Christ—that is what neither we nor any other true Christian would for a moment think of forbidding. Nor is it the question whether the work of the Holy Spirit is necessary in order to salvation. The very fact of writing as we have done on regeneration in a previous chapter, as well as writing<sup>42</sup> to encourage our brethren to meet together—and also meeting ourselves, to pray for the Holy Spirit to put forth His reviving, sanctifying, convincing, and converting power—will satisfy all ingenuous minds that we hold the absolute necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in order to the regeneration and conversion of perishing souls.

The only question, then, that falls to be considered is, What am I to *say* to an awakened and anxious sinner? Am I to say simply, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” as said the apostle of the Gentiles to the trembling jailor of Philippi (Act 16:31)? Or am I, as the first thing I do, to exhort him to pray for the Holy Spirit to convince him more deeply of his sin, enlighten his darkened understanding, renew his perverse will, and enable him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of his soul? Am I to direct him, as the grand thing he has to do, to believe in Jesus and accept His blood-shedding as the only foundation of his peace with God; or to seek the work of the Spirit as an addition to Christ's work, in order that he may be justified? The former leads to justification *by faith alone*, the true Apostolic doctrine of the churches of the first age. The latter leads to “justification by sanctification,” the pernicious doctrine of a later era, by embracing which a man can never reach any satisfactory assurance that his sins are pardoned, even after a lifetime's religious experience and devout and sincere performance of religious duties—whereas, by teaching salvation by the blood of Christ alone, a man may, like the Philippian jailor, “rejoice, believing in God with all his house” (Act 16:34), “in the same hour” in which Christ is presented as the alone object of personal faith and consequent reconciliation.

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<sup>42</sup> The author refers to his book *The Spirit of Jesus*, which is entirely devoted to the elucidation of the work of the Holy Ghost in the conversion of souls.

There is, we regret to think, a large class of professing Christians who seem to have the unfounded notion engrained in their minds, that Christ came as a Saviour in the fulness of time, and on being rejected and received up into glory, the Holy Spirit came down to be the Saviour of sinners in His stead; and that whether men are now to be saved or lost depends entirely on the work of the Holy Spirit in them, and not on the work of Christ done for them—whereas the Holy Spirit was given as the crowning evidence that Jesus is still the Saviour, even now that He is in heaven. The great work of the Spirit is not to assume the place of Jesus as our Saviour, but to bear witness to Christ Jesus as *the only Saviour*; and by His quickening grace bring lost sinners to Him, that they may become “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26). This He did on the blessed day of Pentecost, when thousands of divinely quickened souls received His testimony, believed “in the name of Jesus,” and obtained “remission of sins” (Act 2:38).

The Holy Ghost is *not* the Saviour, and He never professed to be so, but His great work, in so far as the unconverted are concerned, is to direct sinners *to* the Saviour, and to get them persuaded to embrace Him and rely upon Him. When speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said distinctly to His disciples, “He shall not speak of himself...*he shall glorify me*” (Joh 16:13-14). If to glorify Christ is the grand aim and peculiar work of the Holy Spirit, should it not also be the grand aim and constant work of those who believe in Him, and more especially of the ministers of His gospel?

The whole drift of the Holy Spirit’s inspired oracles, as we have them in the Bible, is *to glorify Christ*. The gospel ministry has been granted by Him (Eph 4:11-12) to keep the purport of those Scriptures incessantly before the minds of men, and in so doing to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God. Now, Holy Scripture throughout clearly teaches that, simply on account of the one finished, all-sufficient, and eternally efficacious work of Christ, sinners who believe in Him are “justified from all things”; that we are “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” (Rom 3:24-25). We are justified as “sinners” as “ungodly” (Rom 5:6, 8), and not as having an incipient personal righteousness wrought in us by the Holy Ghost.

Few men, with the Word of God in their hands, would subscribe to such a doctrine, and yet it is the latent<sup>43</sup> creed of the great majority of professing Christians. It is, in fact, the universal creed of the natural heart. Fallen human nature, when under terror, says, Get into a better state by all means; *feel* better, *pray* better, *do* better; become holier and reform your life and conduct—and God will have mercy upon you! But grace says, “Behold, *God is my salvation!*” (Isa 12:2). To give God some equivalent for His mercy, either in the shape of an inward work of sanctification, or of an outward work of reformation, the natural man can comprehend and approve of—but to be justified by faith alone on the ground of the finished work of Christ, irrespective of both, is quite beyond his com-

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<sup>43</sup> **latent** – not visible; hidden; dormant.



prehension. But “the foolishness of God is wiser than men” (1Co 1:25). Instead of preaching holiness as a ground of peace with God, “we preach Christ crucified” (1Co 1:23), “for other foundation can no man lay”—either for justification or sanctification—“than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1Co 3:11). Whatever others may do, I am “determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1Co 2:2).

*“O my Redeemer, Who for me wast slain,  
Who bringest me forgiveness and release,  
Whose death has ransomed me to God again,  
And now my heart can rest in perfect peace!”*

*“Still more and more do Thou my soul redeem,  
From every bondage set me wholly free;  
Though evil oft the mightiest power may seem,  
Still make me more than conqueror, Lord, in Thee!”*

