

THE CROSS:

A Treatise

ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST.



DUBLIN:

DUBLIN TRACT REPOSITORY,
D'OLIER STREET.

LONDON:

WERTHEIM AND MACINTOSH, PATERNOSTER ROW.
J. NISBET AND CO., BERNERS STREET.

Price Three-pence.

THE CROSS.

I AM conscious that the subject, which, in the following pages, I bring under the reader's consideration, is one of the most sacred which can engage the pen of mortal—THE DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. God grant, therefore, that *I* may write, and that *those*, who peruse these lines, may read, with deep reverence. May our souls be in the attitude of worship, while contemplating this wondrous theme, remembering that our salvation is immediately connected with it, and also that God alone can truly enlighten the understanding, or bring home the truth with power to the heart.

I need scarcely say, that in unfolding the cardinal doctrine of the CROSS OF CHRIST, the only standard of truth to which I can refer, is the Word of God. That doctrine is purely a matter of revelation. The death of Christ is an historical fact, admitted by all; but the great truths involved in it, and connected with it, are derived solely from the Scriptures; and they are conveyed to us in words indited by the Spirit of God. Whatever, therefore, we shall find to be the statements of Scripture upon the subject, on them our souls may rest in certainty and peace.

The revelation which God has given us, first introduces us into a world of beauty, in which God could look down upon every thing and pronounce it "very good." Man, made in the image of God, was placed in a garden of delights, and invested with dominion over all creatures, as the representative of his Maker. All yielded him willing homage, and every thing ministered to his happiness. One single restriction was imposed upon him—the witness and the test of his subjection to God. It reminded him of his place as a creature. It told him, that though lord of all below, there was ONE above him, to whom he owed a grateful fealty. We know the result. Alas! man aspired to be as God. He doubted the goodness of his divine Benefactor. He allowed hard thoughts of Him to enter. He yielded to the temptation of the enemy. He disobeyed, and fell.

By this primal sin, man's relationship to God suffered a total disruption. He was now separated from Him by an infinite moral distance; and sin, which had destroyed the harmonies of creation, must be visited with God's displeasure. Trivial as the act of disobedience may appear *in itself*, it was an act of rebellion—an offence against the infinite majesty of God.

As far as man was concerned, all was lost; but man's ruin only furnished to God an occasion of manifesting the resources which He had in Himself; so that, according to the counsels of His will, the malice of Satan and the sin of man have been overruled for the fuller display of the divine goodness.

As soon as sin entered, a Redeemer was announced. Redemption was no after-thought of God. The

ruin had been foreknown, and the mighty plan of redemption had been pre-arranged, according to which a far richer and eternal revenue of glory shall redound to God, and an unspeakably greater amount of happiness accrue to man, than if man had never fallen from his primitive condition. “*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*”

There is no subject more fraught with delight and profit to the Christian, than the development of these eternal counsels of God, unfolding as they do, in their accomplishment, the divine character and glory. God must act consistently with Himself. Holiness, righteousness, truthfulness, and love, are attributes essential to Him who is perfection itself. “*Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of Hosts.*” “*The Lord is righteous in all his ways.*” “*God is love,*” and He is the eternal fountain of *truth*. The divine perfections can suffer no eclipse to meet any emergency. God must be God irrespective of all the accidents (if we may so call them) of created things. And, therefore, if man is to be rescued from his ruin, it must be in a way consistent with the glory of God, and without the sacrifice of any one of His perfections. So in the scheme of redemption, we behold all these attributes combined, displayed, and magnified in a way so wondrous, so perfect, that with all worshipping intelligences, it will constitute the theme of the praises of eternity.

THE LOVE OF GOD is the source whence all blessing springs. Redemption is the outflowing of that love to ruined man. Christ was the gift of the love of God. “*God so loved the world that He*

gave His only-begotten Son." We greatly mistake the Gospel—we overlook what God is—if we do not bear this foundation-truth in mind. *The love of God is the origin of all blessing.* It is deeply to be regretted that the Gospel is sometimes stated in a way which obscures this love. The holiness of God is almost exclusively dwelt on, and Christ is represented as having died in order to regain for us the forfeited love of God. The blessed truth is overlooked, that it was in tender, compassionate, infinite love to man, that God sent His Son to accomplish the work of salvation. Christ died, not to render God favourable towards man, but to make the expiation for sin, which the holy majesty of God required. He was the "propitiation for sin," and thus opened the way through which the love of God could confer the richest blessings upon man, consistently with righteousness. This is what is commonly meant when people speak of Christ as reconciling God to man, using language which, if strictly understood, implies that the heart of God was alienated and estranged from man, and needed to be turned towards him, as if He loved him not. Christ did not, by his work, turn the mind of God in compassion towards us. It was God, as we have said, who gave Christ, and "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.*" God Himself is the great Reconciler.

But, while the love of God is displayed in the death of Christ, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, is there equally manifested. In formally and didactically unfolding the Gospel, the first statement which the Apostle establishes is, that "therein the righteousness of God is revealed."—(Rom. i.) God,

as a righteous Judge, must punish sin. Now in the Cross, righteousness has had its course. *There* has sin been punished. *There* the sentence of the broken law had its full accomplishment. *There* the curse was inflicted upon the divine Substitute. The Cross is thus the eternal witness of the righteousness of the God of grace.

This attribute of God is, especially of later times, not only overlooked by some, but formally denied. God is represented as all love. Blessed truth! God is love, but He is *God*, and therefore cannot slur over evil. God is also righteous. He is the moral Governor of the universe. "Just and true are all His ways." "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." Were God not to punish sin, it would thereby appear that good and evil were alike to Him. Were He not to repress iniquity, it would be a positive encouragement of it; for if God were indifferent to sin, why should not we be indifferent to it? Infidel reasoning is misled by the idea, that the righteousness of God, which visits sin with just retribution, conflicts with the existence of supreme love in Him. On the contrary, the love of God is thereby exalted. If sin is such a terrible infraction of the divine law, that it could be expiated only by death—if God is so holy that He could not receive man unless his sins were visited with righteous judgment—how great is that love towards sinners, which gave His Son to die for them! How great also that love of the Son, which led him willingly to undertake their salvation, saying, "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God." These truths, which infidelity rejects, form the very glory of the Gospel. According to divine counsels, the

Son of God took upon Himself the nature of man. In the sinless perfection of his manhood, Jesus identified himself with those he came to redeem. Forasmuch as they were partakers of flesh and blood, he also, himself, in like manner, took part of flesh and blood. (Heb. ii. 24.) God became man. This is the great truth revealed to faith. "In him (Jesus) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," or, in a body; (Col. ii. 9;) and, therefore, all that he did and suffered, possesses the infinite value of deity, and his death, under the judgment of God, as the substitute of sinners, renders to the divine righteousness a fuller reparation than if the whole race of transgressors had perished. Thus *the righteousness and truth* of God have been maintained, and a way has been made for the outflowing of *the love* of God to the sinner, whereby God is justified in pardoning him who believeth in Jesus.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD is marked by His abhorrence of evil. God cannot bear evil in His presence: and when He deals with it, He must visit it with the strongest expressions of His aversion. Therefore we find, in the Word of God, such awful denunciations as the following:—"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Psalm ix. 17.) "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." (2 Thess. i. 9.) "Our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 29.) And how, otherwise, could the holiness of God be manifested as it is in the Cross of Christ? Where besides have we such a demonstration of God's hatred of sin, as when He "cast off, and abhorred, and was wroth with His anointed?"

If Christ, when he took sin upon himself, could not escape the visitation of God's wrath, how utterly impossible it is that we, sinners as we are, should escape, unless our sins are put away !

The facts of redemption alone enable us to answer the solemn enquiries, " Who is able to stand before this *holy* Lord God?" (1 Sam. vii. 20.) How can the sinner be saved without compromising the divine character? How can God be just, and yet justify the ungodly? Man, as a sinner, cannot stand in God's presence; and God, as a holy and righteous Judge, cannot receive him as a sinner. Without an intervention which meets the exigencies of the case, eternally separated they must remain. Now these exigencies are met—perfectly met—by the death of Christ. The love and wisdom of God devised the wondrous plan. The death of Christ has met all God's claims on the sinner, and given to the sinner, who believes in Christ, an indefeasible title to acceptance with God, so that God's character does not suffer the slightest shade or cloud upon it, by His receiving those who believe in Jesus, and placing them upon the throne with him. In doing so, every perfection of God is maintained inviolate. His faithfulness is established. His righteous majesty is vindicated. His perfect love is made manifest in a way which human thought could never have conceived. Every attribute is so gloriously displayed, that the Cross of Christ will be, throughout eternity, the grand manifestation of the character of God. His perfections would never have been so known, as far as we can judge, if sin had not entered, and Calvary repaired the breach.

Having made these preliminary observations upon the attributes of God, let us proceed to trace the doctrines of Scripture on the subject immediately before us. The eye of faith delights to survey the varied glories that cluster around the person of Jesus. Faith acknowledges and receives him as Prophet, Priest, and King—as the Prophet whom the Lord God was to raise up, and who was to be heard in all things—as the Antitype of all priesthood—as the promised King of Israel—as Jehovah's obedient servant—as man's perfect model—as vindicator of God's glory in an apostate world. But in no character do the affections of his people cling to him with such intense delight, as in that of SAVIOUR. They know and feel that they were the bond-slaves of Satan, lying under the curse of sin, exposed to the righteous judgment of God, the heirs of death; and from this state of ruin he has redeemed them!

The sufferings of Christ are to be viewed in a two-fold character. He suffered from man; and from man he suffered contradiction, reproach, persecution, death. From *man* he suffered *for righteousness*. But he suffered also under the hand of *God*; and under the hand of God he suffered *for sin*.

We shall never rightly or truly value the work of Christ, unless we view it specially in connexion with God. The mission of Christ, as we have already said, was the outflowing of God's love to the world. (John iii. 16.) “The Father sent the Son.” (1 John iv. 14.) It was by the will of God he came. (Heb. x. 9.) The voice from heaven proclaimed the Father's delight in his ministry of grace. (Matt. iii. 17) It was God who laid on him the iniquities of His

people. (Isa. liii.) It was by the determinate counsel of God that he was delivered to death. (Acts ii.) It was under the hand of God he was bruised. It was Jehovah that made his soul an offering for sin. (Isa. liii.) It was the wrath of God he endured. (Psalm cii. 10.) It was under the curse of God's violated law that he bowed his head and died. (Deut. xxi. 23.)

What a strong foundation for the certainty and repose of faith is thus laid in the fact, that it was God who willed and predetermined the work of Christ, as He has also acknowledged and accepted it! With what peace can I stand before God, when I know that my sins have been put away by an act of His own righteousness! In the work of atonement I took no part, nor am I called to take any part. God dealt *not with me*, but with *my substitute*. The righteous judgment of God fell upon him *in my stead*. All was planned and effected according to God's own mind. Believing this, I cannot but rejoice before God, all fear of imperfection or insufficiency being completely removed.

In tracing the doctrines of Scripture, as to the death of Christ, I would look, first, at that well-known passage in the Old Testament, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. What do we learn there? Let us listen to its plain statements. The sufferings of Christ are its burden throughout. First,—It speaks of punishment, of stripes, of chastisement, of wounds, of griefs, of sorrows. It speaks of Christ as being bruised, being oppressed, being afflicted, being stricken, being smitten, being brought as a lamb

to the slaughter. Secondly,—It tells us that these sufferings were for sin, for transgressions, for iniquities. Thirdly,—It tells us that the transgressions and iniquities for which he suffered, were not his own; but that he was stricken for the transgressions of others; that he suffered for the iniquities of God's people; that he bare the sin of many. Fourthly,—It tells us that he suffered under the hand of God; that it was none other than Jehovah that laid on him the iniquity of others; that it was Jehovah Himself who bruised him, and made his soul an offering for sin. And fifthly,—It tells us that it was by his sufferings that our peace is made; that our diseases are healed. It tells us of the many being justified, because "he shall bear their iniquities." On statements so explicit, so direct as these, it would seem almost needless to add a word of comment.

In the last verse of the chapter which we have been analyzing, it is said, "He bare the sin of many." Now, if we look to other Scriptures, we shall find that the connection between the bearing of sin, and the bearing of the punishment due to sin, is clearly set forth. It is said again and again of the transgressor, "He shall bear his iniquity;" "He shall bear his sin;"* which evidently signifies, exposure to all the consequences of the sin committed: it means, being answerable for it before God. And what are the consequences of sin? What is the penalty attached to it? We are not left in doubt as to the answer. God, the Creator and

* See Lev. v. 1-17 xvii. 16; xx. 19; xxiv. 15; Numb. v. 31; ix. 13; xiv. 34; xxx. 15.

Supreme Ruler, has pronounced the irreversible doom of sin, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

The universality of the rite of sacrifice throughout all ages and countries, proves the existence of a universal conscience of sin, and is an admission that life is forfeited to God. It shows how even man's natural conscience bears witness to the great truth established by revelation, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." Wherever sin is, *there* life is forfeited. Wherever sin is, *there* death follows in its train, as its natural and inevitable result. Sin is expiated only by the sacrifice of life. And as the death, which is the due reward of sin, consists not only in the separation of the soul from the body, but in eternal separation from God, it is evident that the endurance of it by the sinner himself, could never expiate it. It is *eternal* death. But Christ being God as well as man, there was in his sacrifice for sin, an infinite efficacy which could, and did completely expiate it.

He "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." This truth—that sin can only be expiated by death, and that the death which alone can expiate it, is the death of our Lord Jesus Christ—is established in Scripture by the plainest statements that human language can express. It is a fundamental and vital doctrine, conveyed, not in a few isolated texts, but taught in various ways—in innumerable passages from the beginning to the end of the Word of God. Atonement for sin by sacrifice, was ordained in the eternal counsels of the God of grace; and, accordingly, God has, from the beginning, been foreshadowing it, and pointing to it. It

was implied in the earliest promise to Adam. It was acknowledged in the offering of Abel—in the sacrifices of the patriarchs. With every part of the Jewish system, it is elaborately interwoven. The Prophets proclaim it. Jesus announces it.* In the New Testament, it is stated as a positive truth, needful alike to the peace of our souls, and to the glory of God; and in the divine institute of the Supper—sweet and solemn memorial of the Redeemer himself—we have an enduring commemoration of the same great truth, that the cup—the cup of suffering to him, but of infinite joy to us—was the new covenant *in his blood*, shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matt. xxvi. ; Luke xxii.)

In the third chapter of Romans, where the Apostle is speaking of “the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,” we read the following words: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.” Observe these last words, “in his blood.” Why is it said specifically, “*in his blood*”? Because, in the Word of God, the blood is expressly said to be *the life*. I claim attention to this truth, and to a few brief statements of Scripture on the subject. It is a vital point. In the seventeenth chapter of Leviticus it is written, “He shall even pour out the blood thereof, . . . for *it is the life* of all flesh.” And again, “the life of the flesh is in *the blood*.” Again, “the blood of it is for the life thereof.” The shedding of blood is the rendering up of life. They are equivalent expressions; and therefore it is said in the same chapter, “*It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*” Thus,

* “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Matt. xx. 18.

when the Scripture speaks of the blood of Christ, it means, his atoning death—his death, as having made an expiation or atonement for sin.

The Jewish sacrifices were some of the most striking types foreshadowing the great sacrifice of Calvary. Of these, none was more strongly expressive of its saving power, than that instituted on the memorable night when Israel came forth from Egypt. God was acting in judgment. The sword of the destroying angel was about to pass through the land, smiting the guilty. Why should not Israel be smitten? They were guilty. They had fallen, as Ezekiel tells us, into the abominations of Egypt, and had defiled themselves with idols. (chap. xx.) The Lord, in His distinguishing grace, for His own name's sake, chose to redeem them from this terrible judgment. How was it done? The paschal lamb was slain, and the blood sprinkled on the door-posts. Under its protection they were safe; for the Lord had said, "When I see *the blood*, I will pass over you." The blood of the slain victim—figure of the true Lamb of God—infallibly secured them from judgment. So, through faith we can say, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;" and under the shelter of his redeeming blood we are perfectly secure. To doubt our safety under its protection, is not only to put indignity upon the blood of Christ, but to doubt the truthfulness of God.

I would next direct attention to the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, where the ceremonial of the day of atonement is described. To unfold at large, the wondrous truths contained in that chapter, would

require more space and time than we can now devote to it. The ordinance of that day was two-fold in its bearing. The requirements of Divine holiness were first met; then followed the formal remission of the sins of the people, consequent upon the atonement which had been made. The sacrificial blood of the victim, which had been slain for a sin-offering, was borne by the High Priest within the veil of the sanctuary, and was presented before the throne of God. The High Priest thereby, as it is written, “made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for the whole congregation of Israel.” The holy majesty of God being thus vindicated, the other part of the ordinance, which typifies the transference, and bearing away of the people’s sins, immediately succeeded. It so fully and simply illustrates the doctrine of the substitution of Christ, that I need not do more than cite the passage:—“And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, *putting them upon the head of the goat*, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness; and *the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited.*” (Verses 21, 22.) Thus the sins of the people were transferred from themselves to the divinely-appointed substitute, and were borne away into a region where there was no memorial—where they could never again be found. They were eternally banished from remembrance before God.

There is one feature attaching to the typical representations of the great sacrifice for sin, which

specially demands attention. *The blood was always first presented to God*: subsequently it was applied according to the occasion. On the great day of atonement, the blood was first sprinkled within the veil, on the mercy-seat, and seven times before the mercy-seat, indicating the completeness of the work; that is, it was presented to an offended God, to show that expiation had been made—that sin had been punished by death; so that God could now bless His people consistently with righteousness—that He could bless them whilst thus marking His abhorrence of their sin. The efficacy of the atonement did not depend upon the blood being seen *by the people*, but upon its being seen *by God*; and judgment was averted, not according to *their estimate of it*, but according to *God's estimate*.

We may observe here, that the great truths respecting the vicarious character of the death of Christ, which it has pleased God to present to our dull minds in these vivid and living pictures of the Old Testament, are taught doctrinally in the New, in plain and unequivocal language. The statements may be brief, but they are so explicit, that he who does not receive them, rejects them—not because of their being uncertain and ambiguous in their meaning, but *because he will not believe the testimony of God*. The death of our Lord is there spoken of as effected by the hands of wicked men; but it is also declared to be “a ransom,” “a sacrifice,” “an offering for sin.” He is described as a willing victim, laden with the sins of others, bearing their judgment, and suffering in their stead. Thus it is written, “He gave himself *a ransom* for all.” (1 Tim. ii. 6.) “Christ

hath once suffered *for sins*, the just for the unjust." (1 Pet. iii. 18.) He hath "put away sin by *the sacrifice* of himself." (Heb. ix. 26.) "Through the eternal Spirit *he offered himself* without spot to God." (Heb. ix. 14.) "We are sanctified through *the offering* of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." (Heb. x. 10.)

At Calvary God was dealing with sin in a judicial manner. Christ was treated as the great sin-bearer. It is expressly declared, he bare the sins of his people "in his own body on the tree;" and God dealt with him as if the sins which he bare were his own. In his person, sin—our sin—was judged. No part of the penalty, therefore, remains for us to bear. If any portion of it remained, Christ's work would not have been complete. If it were not so, he could not have said, "It is finished." But, blessed be God! the work by which sin is put away, "is finished" according to divine appointment. Sin has been put away *according to God's own mind*—we may say, *by Himself*. There cannot, therefore, be any imperfection—any incompleteness. It is God who has ordered and effected the whole work. The words, "It is finished," leave no room for a single doubt. Faith receives God's words, and enjoys perfect peace.

But let us consider what it cost the Son of God to procure that salvation, which is now freely bestowed on "every one that believeth."

As Jesus approached the awful hour of Calvary, varied sufferings gathered thickly upon him. These sufferings, as we have said, were two-fold. He suffered from *men* instigated by the malice of Satan.

He was given, as it were, into the hands of the powers of darkness. (Luke xxii. 53.) But he suffered also from *God*. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him;" and this was an incomparably deeper trial. The garden of Gethsemane is specially the witness of what the Cross was to Jesus. The horrors of the three hours of darkness were here foreshadowed in the most affecting manner. "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.*" It was not the thought of his betrayal by his "own familiar friend," nor of his desertion by his loved and cherished disciples in the hour of his trial—it was not the anticipation of the cruel mockings and revilings—the stripes and the nails; it was not any nor all the sufferings inflicted by man, that overwhelmed his soul. No; all that, anguish as it must have been, was as nothing compared with what he had to endure as "the Lamb of God"—the substitute for sinners. Accordingly, as we follow Jesus in this intensely affecting scene, we find his soul riven with agony unutterable and unparalleled—agony known only to God and to himself. For a moment it would seem as if the willing servant and obedient Son shuddered and recoiled at the bitter cup which he had to drink—a cup mingled, we may say, by the sin of man and the wrath of God. Drops of bloody sweat fell from him, and the cry was uttered, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But he had come, in accordance with eternal counsels, to manifest the glory of the Father, to accomplish His will, and to effect the salvation of His people. On that one object, his soul had been steadily set—to that one purpose he had consecrated himself; and, therefore, the words are immediately added, "Nevertheless

not as I will, but as thou wilt." But in the accomplishment of it, must the light of that countenance, to him more than life, be forfeited? Must sin's odious and intolerable load be borne by him? and must He—the guiltless and the Holy One—instead of enjoying the inshinings and communings of love, be visited with unmitigated wrath?

No words in the whole volume of Scripture disclose to us more fully the terribleness of sin, than those then uttered by the Saviour:—" *If it be possible.*" If it had been "possible" that salvation should be otherwise secured, that momentary utterance would have been heard—that cup would have been allowed to pass. But no; none but He who created, could redeem. Man brought in the mighty ruin; but no mere man could repair it. No creature can supererogate. If man is to have a Saviour, he must be *divine*: and even *he* must suffer death—death under God's righteous, holy wrath—to accomplish our redemption.

There are two features which distinguish the death of Christ, from that of every other righteous person, and which exclusively characterize the expiatory sufferings of the Son of God; *he was forsaken of God, and he endured sin's terrific judgment.* What the three hours of darkness were to the Son of God, no human mind can conceive. The Holy One—He whose abhorrence of sin was infinite—had the accumulated load of sin laid upon him. He, who was purity itself, "was made sin." His soul was "made an offering for sin;" and, accordingly, the judicial fire descended and consumed the sin-offering. The visitations of righteous retribution for sin,

which, had we to bear them, would be spread over endless ages, were concentrated in those three hours, on the divine sufferer's head. Then indeed was the holiness of God manifested—then indeed did the righteousness of God appear in full force. Eternity will never present such a display of these attributes as then appeared on Calvary. Not all the vials of judgment that shall be poured out upon a wicked world—not all the wailings and gnashings of teeth of self-convicted sinners—not all the undying groans of the damned, nor the irreversible sentence pronounced upon rebellious spirits, will ever give such a demonstration of God's righteousness and hatred of sin, as did the wrath of God poured out upon the Son of His love. Never did the divine holiness appear more transcendently glorious, than when that visage, in which the beauty of God was reflected in loveliest lineaments, "was so marred, more than any man's," by the infliction of righteous judgment. The sword of the Lord of Hosts smote the man that was Jehovah's fellow. (Zech. xiii. 7.) Holiness ordered the stroke, and justice inflicted it.

But how was the suffering aggravated by the hiding of God's face! The light of His countenance was withdrawn. Many a witness for the truth has been so sustained by the presence of God, that he has been enabled to rejoice—yes, to sing triumphantly in the midst of the flames. Over the first martyr for Jesus, the heavens were opened, and the very glory of God shone upon him; but with God's beloved Son it was not so. The blackness of darkness rested upon *him*. The smile of God beamed upon others—His comforts sustained their souls:

but *Jesus* had to endure His frown. His soul was left desolate, and that utterance of intensest mental agony that ever dropped from human lips, was drawn forth—“*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” Instead of being upheld by the blissful communications of his Father’s love, in all its plenitude, he drank to the dregs the cup of unutterable woe.

Because Jesus was the Redeemer, atoning efficacy is sometimes in a vague way attributed to the whole of his life, as well as to his death. This view does not appear to be warranted by Scripture. The divine ordinance of atonement for the sins of the people of Israel, was immediately connected with the shedding of the blood of the victim, and the transference of their sins to the substitute. So the great atonement, which that ordinance prefigured, did not, strictly speaking, commence, until, on the cross, sin was imputed to the substitute. If Christ was always a substitute, bearing his people’s sins, why was he not always forsaken of God, instead of being able to say, as in John viii. 29, “He that sent me is *with me.*” From the manger to the cross, Jesus was the object of God’s infinite delight, as a man who manifested divine perfectness in all his thoughts, and affections, and words, and ways. He alone could say, in reference to God, “I do always those things that please Him.” In him, fulness of grace to man, was combined with perfect obedience and devotedness to God. In a world of sin, and amidst scenes of suffering, the holiness of his Divine nature, and the tenderness of his human sympathies, necessarily rendered him “a man of

sorrows and acquainted with grief." Still, God was with him in the full joy and communion of perfect complacency. But the moment his people's sins were transferred to him upon the cross, all was changed. God turned away His face from His beloved Son; and those cries of desertion and suffering which we find throughout the Psalms,* and which in the New Testament are expressly attributed to Christ, were the utterances of his afflicted soul.

Another observation I would make here, which is fraught with much comfort to us. In the ministry and mediation of Jesus, the Persons of the Godhead are seen united in the great work of man's blessing and redemption. As soon as the ministry of *the Son* commenced, the heavens were opened, and *the Spirit* descended like a dove, and lighted upon him; and the words of *the Father* were heard, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;"—words expressive not merely of delight in him as the Son, but as the Son *commencing the ministry of grace and salvation*. How full of joy is this thought! The Father was delighting in *the work* of the Son. The Son was carrying out the will of the Father, and manifesting His love to us, poor, worthless, ruined sinners. All had been planned and settled between the Persons of the Godhead for our blessing, as we find it again declared, respecting the great work of atonement, "CHRST," . . . "through THE ETERNAL SPIRIT, offered himself without spot to GOD." (Heb. ix. 14.)

* In some of these, the sufferings of the Cross are evidently anticipated; that last hour thus casting back its shadow upon the whole path that led thereto.

I desire to bring this sacred theme before my readers, as matter for devout meditation; for, as I have observed, it is deeply comforting to the soul, to know that the work of atonement was a work transacted between the Father and the Son, through the Eternal Spirit. Man had, and could have no part in this august and divine solemnity. In the day of atonement, to which we would again refer, this important truth is expressly taught in the striking words, "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation, when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." (Lev. xvi. 17.) None durst enter the sacred precincts but the High Priest, who was the typical representative of Christ. The work of atonement was a work transacted between him alone, and Israel's God.

This ordinance of atonement was the foundation of the people's relationship with God. All communion between them and God was based on it. The blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat—the throne of grace as well as of righteousness; and *there it was ever before the eye of God*. God's estimate of its cleansing power is thus simply but authoritatively declared:—"On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord*. (Lev. xvi. 30.) Thus sanctified by blood, God saw no sin in them.

This sanctification of Israel was a type of the sanctification of God's people now; for in the Epistle

to the Hebrews, the sacrificial ordinances of the Jews are expressly declared to foreshadow the great sacrifice of Christ: "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burned without the camp; wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. xiii. 11, 12.) Here is an explicit statement as to the object of Christ's death. He suffered death without the gate of Jerusalem, *that he might sanctify his people with his own blood.*

I pause here, that our minds may rest on these words of the Holy Ghost. Christ's people are sanctified "*by his blood*;" and, as thus sanctified, God sees no sin in them. They are cleansed, as it is said, "*from all their sins before the Lord.*" As the prophet said of Israel, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." (Numb. xxiv. 21.) So, now, where the blood of Christ is applied by faith, *there* God beholds not a stain of sin. Were it not so, the cleansing power of the blood of Christ would be incomplete.

According to the Jewish ritual, the atoning sacrifice was repeated once every year. Here, as in all other respects, the type falls short of the great reality. Repetition argues imperfection and insufficiency. Such features apply to the Jewish ordinances, but they could not attach to the work of Christ. The atoning blood of the divine victim is of infinite value, and of ever-during power. Nothing, therefore, can be wanting, as nothing can be added to it. No limit can be put to its efficacy, and no bound

to the power of its application. Accordingly it is said, "Nor yet that he should offer himself *often*," but "ONCE FOR ALL." "By his own blood he entered in ONCE into the holy place, having obtained ETERNAL redemption* for us." (Heb. ix. 12.) Such is God's estimate of the value of that one offering. It has obtained for his people an absolute quittance—an eternal release from all the consequences of sin. It is only as we know this power of the blood of Christ in cancelling guilt, that we can have peace, or joy, or liberty; and it is only on the ground of this release, that we are invited, as worshippers, to draw nigh to God.

How feebly our faith apprehends these precious truths! Our unbelieving minds are prone to judge according to our own thoughts and estimate of *our deservings*, instead of rejoicing in the power of that blood which, by blotting out sin, takes away all conscience of it. "The worshippers, once purged, should have no more conscience of sin." (Heb. x. 2.) Darkness cannot have existence amidst a blaze of light, neither can sin have existence in that sphere which is pervaded by the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. Even in Old Testament times, the Lord used the strongest and most striking figures to convince his slow-hearted people how thoroughly and completely their sins were put away. If they have been "cast into the depths of the sea," (Micah vii. 9,) who can bring them up? If "as far

* The word rendered "redemption" (λυτρωσιν) signifies a *release* (from the punishment or consequences of sin) on the ground of a ransom (λυτρον) having been paid. In the fifteenth verse the death of Christ is expressly referred to as the ransom.

as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us," (Psalm ciii. 12,) who can recall them? If God "has cast all our sins behind His back," (Isa. xxxviii. 17,) so that *He* cannot see them, who shall replace them before His face? And if God has thus banished our sins from His presence, and from His very remembrance, are we still to charge them upon ourselves, as though still registered against us?

In the sacred narrative of the circumstances attendant upon the death of Christ, there is one profoundly interesting fact which we must not omit to look at. It is recorded that when the Son of God yielded up his life, "Behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened." (Matt. xxvii. 51.) On the cross, God was visiting sin with judgment. The foundations of the new and redeemed creation were being laid. The three hours of darkness witnessed the most stupendous event which shall take place throughout eternity. The deliverance of creation from the curse, man's redemption and blessedness, and the manifestation of the glory of God's grace—all waited on the issue of that great transaction. Accordingly, the moment Jesus gave up his life—the moment the atoning blood was shed, earth's foundations were shaken, the graves were opened—proclaiming that Satan's power was broken, and the veil of the temple, which hid the dwelling-place of Jehovah, was rent in twain, and no longer forbade an entrance into the divine presence. This was a significant and glorious proclamation of the

victory of Christ. It told out, in language symbolical but strikingly expressive, that heaven, which was represented by the sanctuary, was henceforward thrown open to all who would enter in the name of Jesus. And observe, for this is a delightful theme to contemplate, the veil was not rent partially but thoroughly: it was not rent from the bottom upwards, as if by the hand of man, but *from the top to the bottom*, as if by the hand of God Himself. Thus, the veil being completely displaced, the throne of God is revealed. There is no longer an obstacle of approach to Him. And the greater the child-like confidence and happy liberty with which the worshipper treads His sacred courts, the more does he honour that blood, which has at once opened to him the way of access, and invested him with a righteousness, in which the eye of Divine Omniscience can detect no flaw.

Let it be also observed, that *as soon as the victim died*, the veil was rent. There was not a conceivable interval between the two events. *The immediateness* of the rending of the veil is strikingly expressive of God's delight in the completion of the work of redemption. God waited but for the moment when the atoning blood was shed, and the portals of heaven were immediately flung open.

The resurrection of Christ is a further and more public attestation of God's acceptance of his work. Jesus was the sin-bearer. He went down "into the dust of death" laden with sins; and unless the debt which he had voluntarily incurred had been paid—unless the sins that he bare had been put away—he *could not have risen from the dead*. Satan,

as the executioner of judgment, gained over "the Prince of Life" an apparent victory ; but his triumph was only momentary. God having accepted Christ's death as a satisfaction for sin—as a complete expiation of guilt—raised him from the dead. *The victim*, therefore, became *the victor* ; and his resurrection from the tomb is a triumphant witness of Satan's defeat. (Col. ii. 15.) Every question as to the sins which Jesus bare, being eternally settled, the Church knows her sins are buried as in his grave, and that therefore God remembers them no more. It is her confidence, and it will be her eternal joy, that God sees—not her sins, but the blood which has put them away ; and viewing her Representative and Head raised, exalted, and glorified at the right hand of God, she sees in *his* resurrection the type and sure presage of *her own*.

" *What think ye of Christ?*" was the great question put by our Lord at the close of his ministry. Every thing is to be judged in relationship to him. By THE CROSS of Christ every heart will be tested, and by *it* every principle is to be tried. Examined by their relation to it, we are enabled to judge of the pretensions of the great systems of error and corruption which are working in the bosom of Christendom. Rationalism, Superstition, Legalism and Mysticism, all alike reject the sufficiency of the death of Christ for the putting away of sin ; for they either formally deny its efficacy, or, by adding to it, they virtually do so.

Rationalism measures every thing by the standard of finite reason. Man takes the place of God. Rejecting the authority of His Word, the rationalist

subjects divine truths to the capricious decisions of his own unaided powers. God's estimate of sin, and His way of dealing with it, are set aside, and Christianity is reduced to a system of philosophical speculations, and conventional morality.

Superstition professes to receive all the facts of revelation, and even to admit the authority of the Word; but it adds both to the one and to the other an amount of fiction and error, which neutralizes the power of the truth. Our fallen nature, always opposed to the simple and humbling Gospel of God's grace, cherishes the inventions of superstition. Ever ready to lean on an arm of flesh, which pretends to wield the power of the Almighty, the natural heart finds in these inventions a convenient provision for its lusts and its worldliness, while, at the same time, they furnish the deluded votary with a passport to the heavenly city. But where the grossness of superstition does not prevail, and "the mystery of iniquity" has not ripened into such maturity, ordinances, commemorative of Christ, are used to displace *himself*. Imputing to the sign the efficacy of the thing signified, *sacramental* piety views them as means of procuring the forgiveness of sins, instead of regarding them as telling of sins forgiven. Thus Satan uses them, as he used Judas, to betray Christ with a kiss.

Legalism proudly takes its stand on its own merits. Faith in what another has done, as the ground of confidence before God, has no place in its creed. The legalist virtually aspires to be *his own saviour*. With him practical benevolence is better than notional

faith, which, whatever it may be, he maintains cannot be wrong, if the "life is in the right." Imperfection and weakness he will acknowledge; but that "God is merciful" is his plea. God's righteousness he overlooks. He thinks well of his own good deeds, and has low thoughts of the holiness of God. As to past transgressions, he hopes, if he thinks of them at all, that the payment of to-day's debts, will blot out years of broken responsibilities. That "there is none righteous," he does not understand. The Scriptural sentence, "guilty before God," gives him no trouble. Alms, and prayers, and good deeds, and Christian graces, form the sum and substance of his religion. He utterly rejects the great evangelical principle, that good works, however essential in their proper place, have no more to do with our justification before God as a procuring cause, than they have to do with the creation of the world. The graces of the Spirit, and the services of love, are but the fruits of faith in one who is justified. God is now bestowing salvation entirely through the worthiness of Christ. It is a free gift to us, as it is debt to him.

Mysticism is a more subtle form of corruption. It assumes to be profoundly spiritual. Viewing sin as the source of moral disorder rather than of actual personal guilt and condemnation, it spiritualizes the facts of redemption, and lives on a few favourite abstractions derived from perversions of Scripture. Faith and hope resting on the finished work of Christ on the cross as its sole basis of confidence, are treated merely as the occupants of the outer court. To believe one's sins forgiven through the atonement of Calvary, is, according to it, dangerous

presumption. Unscriptural views as to the work of the Spirit, are doctrinally put in the place of the work of Christ; and, accordingly, preservation is substituted for conversion; purification for pardon; and faithfulness for faith. Peace, settled and abiding, is unknown. It cannot be enjoyed; because, even in the mystical Christian, it is not based on a stable and divine foundation, but on the ever-fluctuating movements of the soul. The mystic ~~has~~ never learned that true spiritual-mindedness is *to have the mind of the Spirit*, and that that mind, as to the things of salvation, is revealed only in the Scriptures. To grow, therefore, in spiritual-mindedness, is to grow in the knowledge of the Word under the teaching of the Spirit, whose special office it is to glorify the person and work of Jesus. All spirituality which does not tend to this end, is mere fanaticism, however specious may be its guise.

I have thus sketched a few of the principal characteristics of the great systems of error, against which we have to watch and contend. They are widely different in character; but no matter what the form of evil may be, if it virtually displaces Christ, and puts dishonour upon the dignity of his person by refusing to acknowledge the efficacy of his work, it robs him of his glory, and it will be visited by God's heaviest condemnation. Bad as may be the grossest breach of morals, the wickedness of corrupting the truth is infinitely worse. This language may appear strong, but I dare not say less. It is, in essence, the language of the Spirit of God; for in the Word of God, where the Apostle of the Gentiles is formally contending against mingling any thing

with the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, he says, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 8.)

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

I have now, dear reader, though feebly and imperfectly, presented the leading features of the great truths unfolded in God's Word on the supremely important subject of the death of Christ. I say supremely important, because the cross of Calvary is God's moral centre of eternity, as well as of the universe. It is *there* that God has manifested what He is, and *there* hangs your salvation and mine, if ever we be saved.

Every thing on God's part being done, and the tidings of salvation through a finished work proclaimed, how solemn, how fearful the responsibility of those who reject the message of His mercy! Let me, then, press this consideration upon you with affectionate earnestness. If you are still a stranger to peace with God, I should be sadly wanting in the sympathies of a Christian, if I did not entreat you to give this subject your chief attention, and beseech you not to rest in uncertainty about your state before God. Were you a professed infidel, there would be no incongruity in your neglect and indifference as to eternal interests; *then* you might with consistency say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But to profess, dear reader, as I presume you do, to believe in the Bible as the Word of God, and

remain unconcerned about its contents—its glorious promises, and its solemn denunciations—to remain unconcerned whether, while you read these lines, you are under the wrath of God or not—whether, if the thread of life were unexpectedly cut short, you would or would not be condemned to eternal banishment from His presence, and consigned to unutterable misery—such recklessness is moral madness. If unhappily this be your case, by your present course—by your contempt of the things of God, your eternity of anguish will be more intolerable than if the Gospel message had never reached your ears. Conscience, whose voice you may succeed in stifling now, will then unceasingly remind you, that you are justly condemned, and are the author of your own perdition. What bitter and fruitless tears of remorse and of despair will then be shed by all who neglect the “great salvation,” and whose principal concern is now about the things of this world—who live as if the prime object of existence was to add to their possessions, to rise in distinction, or to catch a few feverish moments of what is miscalled pleasure !

The truths here brought before you are not questions for the mere exercise of your reasoning powers. They are not revealed for the entertainment of the intellect. No ; they claim, on God’s behalf, the subjection of your whole soul. The Gospel is not addressed to man as an unfallen being, whose natural mental powers fit him to sit in judgment on the ways of God ; it is addressed to man as a sinner, whose reason is not only finite, but clouded, and whose will is depraved. That pride, which subjects divine truths to its arbitrary decisions,

rejecting or adopting them according to its fitfulness and pleasure, will never enter the kingdom of God. To "the natural man" the Gospel is foolishness; but by that which man regards as foolishness, it pleases God to "save them that believe." To an unbelieving Israelite it was a foolish thing to look to a brazen serpent as the instrument for the healing of his wounds. He saw no connexion between them. "What good," he exclaimed, "can there be in looking at a serpent of brass?" But, absurd as it was in *his* eyes, it was *God's* appointed remedy for the fatal maladies of His people; and they who looked, lived; they who disbelieved, despised it and died. God is sovereign in His appointments. He takes no counsel with man, nor does He give account of His matters. He reveals His mind and will, and He calls for subjection of soul. He demands *the obedience of faith*. Thus, now, as in the days of the wilderness, the believer is saved: the unbeliever, rejecting God's remedy, perishes in his pride.

Ask yourself, then, dear reader, do you, or do you not, receive the testimony of God? It declares that you are a sinner—defiled with sin, and "guilty before God;" and that God, with whom you have, and must have to do, and who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil" with acceptance, will not admit sin into His presence. God, in dealing with sin, must punish it with righteous judgment. If, when sin was upon Jesus, the object of God's ineffable delight, he could not escape, how can you escape who have nothing to commend you? Take with you, then, this great primary truth:—if ever you are to dwell in God's presence, your sin must be positively and actually put away.

This is the unambiguous testimony of the Word

of God : and serious it is. Consider it, I beseech you. "Every one must give an account of himself to God." If you should have to appear before God this very day, (and for aught you know this day may be the last of your earthly existence,) would you like to hazard your salvation upon the judgment which you know God must form of you? I press this question. Knowing that a holy God cannot and will not allow uncleanness into His presence, your conscience is witness against you, that you would be righteously shut out of heaven. Will you, then, go on in practical contempt of God's words? If you despise them to-day, to-morrow may not be yours. If you continue to while away moments more precious than worlds, you will only be awakened from your slumbers when it shall be for ever too late. "This is the day of salvation." The next stage in your history will be the solemnities of judgment.

God has revealed to us His holiness, in order to act upon our consciences. He tells us that He is light, and that darkness can have no communion with Him. He tells us that nothing defiled can enter into the heavenly Jerusalem. He warns us that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;" and this warning will, in His own appointed time, be executed; for He is a righteous Judge as well as the God of grace. He takes notice of good and evil, and hence He necessarily judges. He knows that you are a sinner much better than you do, and if He deal with you as a sinner, what must your portion be?

But "God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" and

thus, instead of putting us away, He hath put away the sin, and received the sinner. How could love be more conspicuously displayed? When man shewed his hatred to God in slaying His Son, God shewed His love to man in constituting his death such a complete atonement for sin, that even the very guilt of crucifying him, might, through it, be put away.

What is now the consequence to the believer? He can say of Jesus, as his substitute, "All that *I* have done was set down to *his* account; and all the benefit of *his* sufferings is set down to *mine*."* The believer knows that all that was against him is thus for ever removed. His sins, that he feared would have crushed him under the weight of eternal judgment, are all gone. They are blotted out. Christ has borne his judgment, and delivered him from the curse. So that as to judgment for sin, and righteous wrath, and the curse of the law, there is none for *him*. Death has lost all its terrors, and to *him* is only the entrance into unmingled joy. But he is not merely delivered from sin and its consequences. Redemption is not reparation only: it is infinitely more. The Church's glory and

* It may be interesting to the English scholar to learn, that the two kindred words which are used by Paul when speaking of *imputation* in reference to sin and to righteousness, and translated indiscriminately by the varied expressions, to "count unto"—to "reckon unto"—and to "impute," are the same words as he uses when addressing Philemon—"If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, *put that to my account*." *τοῦτο ἐμὸν ἐλλογεί*, verse 18;) and when writing to Timothy,—"*I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge*,"—(*μὴ αὐτοῖς λογισθεῖν* 2 Tim. iv. 16.) The terms are borrowed from pecuniary transactions, as to which the principles of suretyship are well understood. When a surety who has taken upon himself the obligations of another, which are thereby set down to his account, fulfils the same, the original debtor is discharged. His surety's acts are "imputed" or "counted unto him," and "reckoned" as his own.

blessedness is a much richer portion than Adam's. To be a member of Christ's body, is more than to be an angel. Adam was clothed with *creature*-innocence; but the believer will shine in *God's* righteousness for ever and ever. He can say, "I know God now as *my Father*, and I shall thus know Him in the unhindered intimacy of sonship throughout eternal ages." *Angels* know Him not thus. *They* know Him as a servant knows his lord. In "bringing many sons unto glory," Christ has washed them from their sins in his own blood, and brought them into the same relative position to God as himself: and as thus constituted "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ," there is not a mansion in the realms of glory that will not be open to receive them.

It is God's delight thus to glorify Jesus, by exalting those who believe in him. And they who believe in Jesus, do not refuse the honour thus put upon them; for nothing less is worthy of "the exceeding riches of God's grace," or of the perfect love and work of Christ. Thoughts of worthiness in themselves they abhor. They are conscious they never did a single thing fit for the eye of God; and therefore, when enthroned as "kings and priests unto God," it is their delight to proclaim their entire and infinite debtorship to His boundless grace. *Their* exaltation is *His* glory. The higher they are exalted, the more God is glorified; for every honour put upon them is used only to exalt Him by laying it at His feet.

The Christian, taught of the Spirit of God rightly to appreciate the person and work of Christ, can exultingly exclaim with the apostle, when he sums up his great argument for the complete justifi-

cation of the believer in Jesus—"Who shall condemn him for whom *Christ* hath died? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of him whom *God* hath justified?" Like the apostle, he thinks not so much of the amount of sin that he has committed, as of the supreme dignity of the victim who has borne it away; and so, he can defy any single accuser in earth or hell to come forward, and lay the charge of a jot or tittle of guilt against him, *whom GOD has declared righteous*. Amazingly bold language this! Yet it is language which it is not only permitted to every believer to use, but it is the language which the Spirit of God would lead him to adopt; for the Spirit is the witness of the perfection of the work of Christ, and of the believer's oneness with Him.

And can sin be viewed as a light thing by one who enjoys this perfect peace with the God of his salvation? No; sin becomes thus only more odious to him. It was sin caused agony and death to *Him*, who loved him so intensely that he "gave himself" for him. It is when the believer knows that he is forgiven, and that he has received eternal life, and is made an heir of glory, that it becomes his delight to please God. Sin *then* has a new character in his eyes. To grieve One who has shewn such love to him, while he had no claim upon Him for any thing but judgment, is felt to be painful indeed!

Some persons talk of cultivating *holiness* before the joy of forgiveness is known. Others contend that the doctrine of the free forgiveness of sins through faith, militates against it. Alas! such observations prove that those who make them are

strangers to *the power* of the Gospel. Holiness of walk is the orbit in which the consciously redeemed soul moves. The walk of the Christian will be pure and elevated in proportion as, through realizing faith, he lives in the enjoyment of his privileges in Christ. Faith works by love, (Gal. v. 6,) and purifies the heart. (Acts xv. 9.) Consequently, where there is no holiness, there is no faith; but, on the other hand, where faith and love are absent, holiness has no place.

Personal holiness flows from the joy of love known in communion with God. It is not by looking at *ourselves* that we become changed into the image of Christ; but by beholding the glory of God, as it is presented to us *in his person*. (2 Cor. iii.) It is as we behold *him* believingly, adoringly, lovingly, that we are changed into his likeness. And those whose admiring and worshipping gaze is most steadfast—whose souls are most wrapt into delight and love in the contemplation of him who is “altogether lovely,” are they, who, by this sweet communion, become, in personal characteristics, most like the blessed One himself.

The Cross of Christ, let me in conclusion repeat, is God’s moral centre, where the true character of every thing is seen. Where has the terrible power of death been shown as in the Cross?—where the character and effects of sin? Where do we see such a picture of man’s hatred of goodness itself as there? Where was righteousness so magnified? Where such a manifestation of divine wrath against evil? Where have we such an exhibition of love stronger than death? *There* we see the world,

under Satan's power, rising to get rid of a God of love, and God, by this very act, providing deliverance for the world, by the blood of His own Son. Good and evil meet there in all their extent and forms. Man is arrayed in desperate hostility to God, and God is presented in boundless grace to man.

The Cross, dear reader, will be to you eternal joy or eternal condemnation. It is the foundation-stone—the basis of the whole fabric of Christianity. Faith, and faith alone, estimates it aright. It is not Christian faith to believe merely that Jesus died. His murderers believed that. They knew the fact. But the admission of the fact does not constitute saving faith. Saving faith worships Jesus as the Son of God, and believes that his death put away sin. He who believes that Christ was condemned *for him*, knows that he himself shall never be condemned. If I believe that Christ bare *my sins* in his own body on the tree, I know that *I* shall never have to bear them myself. If I believe that Christ endured God's righteous judgment upon sin *for me*, and that God has accepted him *in my stead*, then the whole question between me and God *as my Judge* is completely and eternally settled.* Christ has become my righteousness. I have none other. My righteousness, therefore, is perfect as Christ is perfect. I stand before God in *divine*, not in *human* righteousness. I do not mingle with it a shred of my own "filthy rags." I stand, not upon the ground

* The accountability of a believer to Christ, as of a servant to a master, is a totally different question. I do not refer to it here. *This* is not a question of salvation, for believers are saved, but of rewards and suffering loss.

of what *I* have done, but of what *Christ* has done; and therefore, whatever the value of his work in God's sight, *THAT is mine*. I stand, not upon the ground of what I am, but of what Christ is; and therefore what he is to God, *THAT*, in God's sight, *I am*. (1 Jno. iv. 17.) One with Christ, God can delight in *me* as in *him*, and my soul can enter, even now, into the enjoyment of the unclouded sunshine of God's own presence.

How is it, then, dear reader, with *you*? Have you this peace with God? Is your conscience at ease through the knowledge of the remission of sins? If this be not your portion, you undervalue the blood of Christ. If you viewed that blood as God views it, you would be rejoicing and not doubting. Believing in the love of God as manifested in the Cross of Calvary, your soul would rest in Him, as in a Father's arms; and His righteousness, instead of being an obstacle to your salvation, would be your plea before Him as your eternal security.

THE END.