

# **The Glorious Sufficiency of Christ!**

Cornelius Tyree, 1879

[Table Of Contents](#)

## Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

## INTRODUCTION

It is affirmed by the best physicians that there is not a disease to which the human body is liable for which the God of nature has not, either in the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom—provided a beneficial remedy. Whether this is true or not we do not profess to know. We affirm, however, that *there is not an evil that sin has induced in man's body or soul for which a complete remedy has not been provided in the gospel of Jesus Christ*. “In him we are complete.” “It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” He is an all-adequate Savior. He not only completely delivers his people from the ruin of the fall, but secures to them far greater blessings than they lost in Adam. He not only fully saves them from sin, but secures to them ineffably greater glory, honor, and immortality than they would have inherited had they not fallen.

Before knowing how Christ designed to save sinners, no man or angel would have conjectured that he would elevate the sinner higher than he was before his fall. It appeared much more likely that his standing in the universe would be lowered, even should redeeming mercy pardon and regenerate him. But *the wonder of wonders is that Jesus Christ not only fully delivers those who believe in him from all the effects and consequences of sin—but elevates them to the dignity of being in a sense joint-heirs with himself*.

In thus saving man, Christ's greatest glory was displayed.

In what, then, does the glory of Christ, as displayed in human redemption, consist? We answer, *glory is the manifestation of excellency*. Christ is possessed of excellencies of three kinds. He has excellencies which belong to him as God; others which belong to him as man; and others which are peculiar to him as God and man united in one person.

He has, then, a threefold glory. His glory as **absolute God** consists in the display of the infinite attributes and excellencies of the Divine nature. This is the glory he possessed with the Father before the world was.

His glory as **man** consisted in the perfect holiness of his heart and life.

His glory as **God and man** united in one person, the Mediator between God and man, consists in his perfect fitness to perform all the works which this office requires of him. This is a new, special, and peculiar glory. This is the glory of which the apostle John speaks when he says, “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

This glory consists in his possessing and displaying every excellency and perfection necessary to qualify him for the new and great work of mediating between God and man. He has every qualification necessary to satisfy the claims of God's justice, honor, and law; for the Father declared, by a voice from Heaven, that in him he was well pleased. He possesses also everything necessary to excite, encourage, and justify the highest love, gratitude, and confidence of sinful men.

In these two respects, far more of the divine glory is seen than in all God's works of creation and providence. All other objects derive much of their glory from the person and work of Christ. Separate the glories of creation and providence from their relations to Bethlehem and Calvary, and they pale into insignificance. It is the glory of the *luminaries* of Heaven, that in their light the stupendous spectacle of the cross was beheld. It is the glory of our *earth* that it is merely the stage on which is acted out the great drama of redemption. It is the meaning, clue, and honor of all history, secular and religious, that before the coming of Christ it looked *forward* to his cross, and will continue to look *backward* to it until the volume of history is finished and unrolled before the great judgment throne. It is the glory of *providence* that however mysterious its sweep, all of its dispensations center in Christ.

It is the glory of our *earth* that he who formed it dwelt on it.

It is the glory of the *air*, that he breathed it.

It is the glory of the *sun*, that it shone on him.

It is the glory of the *elements*, that they nourished him.

It is the glory of the *sea*, that he walked on it.

It is the glory of the *waters*, that they refreshed him.

It is the glory of us *men*, that he assumed our nature, died for us in it, was buried, arose and ascended to Heaven in it, and that in it he intercedes for us before the Divine throne, and rules the universe.

His greatest glory and the greatest glory of the Godhead known to us consists in his being a *complete Savior*. Sin produces different evils, and the soul has multiform religious needs. Let us study the respects in which Christ displays his attributes and excellencies in the removal of these evils and in supplying these needs, and thereby we shall behold his glory in our present and eternal salvation.

## Chapter 1.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in ENLIGHTENING us.

#### In Jesus Christ there is a sufficiency of light to dispel our spiritual ignorance.

In one important sense, faith precedes knowledge. In this sense Peter said in the name of all the apostles, “We believe and know that you are Christ.” But there is another important sense, in religion, in which knowledge must precede faith. “How shall we believe in him of whom we have not heard?”

Who would commit a jewel to a stranger? Who would walk over a deep abyss, without inquiring whether the plank was sound or rotten? To be savingly religious, there are certain things in advance, about *God, Christ, ourselves, sin, and immortality*—that we must know. There are many important things we would be neither the better for knowing, nor the worse for not knowing. But there are some primary and vital matters, pertaining to us as sinful accountable beings, about which we must be informed, or we are undone spiritually for both worlds.

On these vital points Jesus Christ is the light of the world, objectively and subjectively. He is to the world both external illumination, and internal vision. He is both sight, and light. By being revealed unto us and into us, he becomes unto us the light of life. He is not a star, shining amid surrounding darkness—but a sun, throwing rays of revealed glory on the whole moral scene.

Said a great thinker, “Since I have known Christ, I have known everything.”

He reveals **GOD** unto us. Said he, “He who has seen me has seen the Father.”

In *nature*, God is above us.

In *providence*, God is beyond us.

In *law*, God is against us.

But in *Christ*, God is with us, near us, and set forth to us.

In the person and character of Christ, the infinite God is so manifested and incarnated, as to be brought within the reach of human senses and apprehensions.

All the other revelations we have of God are piecemeal, partial, fragmentary, and often contradictory; but the revelation of God in the person and work of Jesus Christ is full, harmonious, and complete.

Elsewhere we see displayed his attributes. In Christ we see displayed his moral character and his plans, purposes, and feelings towards us as sinners; how he thinks, loves, pities, and consoles; how he dislikes pretense, hypocrisy, and self-sufficiency; and how he delights in penitence, humility, sincerity and trustfulness.

Nor are these all the soul-enlightening disclosures the Son of God makes to us. He not only reveals God to man, but he reveals **MAN** to himself. Apart from what Christ was, has said, and has done—who by searching can find out man? The secret of man is the secret of the Messiah. He solves the mystery of man’s origin, character, condition, and destiny. Man’s immortality, his capabilities, his danger, and accountability, would not have been fully known but for the mission and work of the Son of God.

He not only reveals God’s moral character, but makes known, with sunbeam clearness, how sinful man may recover the lost favor and image of his Creator! He makes known how paradise was lost, and how it may be regained! He makes known how man became a sinner, and how he may become a saint. *He marks out, as on a map, the way to Heaven.* In language of living light he discloses the means by which our sins may be forgiven, our depraved natures renewed, and the bliss of Heaven secured.

He is not only the central light of the world’s history and the central light of man’s soul and being in this life—but he is the only light of man’s being and destiny beyond the grave. There are some questions pertaining to the future world we must answer, or our spiritual well-being is impossible.

What am I?

Where am I going?

Does man cease to be when he ceases to breathe?

Does man’s soul survive the death of his body, and exist apart from it?

Where are the friends whom we have buried?

Do they consciously exist?

Shall we ever meet and know them again?

Why are the righteous afflicted—and why do the wicked flourish?

Is there a Hell to punish the latter—and a Heaven to reward the former?

And if so, is there any connection between our manner of living in this world, and the rewards and punishments of the world to come?

On these thrilling subjects ancient and modern philosophers, and the scientists and discoverers of our day, do not shed one ray of light. In vain do we linger in the observatory of the *astronomer*, in the laboratory of the *chemist*, in the dissecting-room of the *anatomist*, or in the lecture-hall of the *moral philosopher*—in hope of obtaining any satisfactory information on these profoundly sacred matters.

The *astronomer* with his telescope penetrates the deep blue ether, and reveals worlds and systems of worlds—but he cannot look in on the throne of God and tell whether he will forgive sin, or whether he will provide any plan to save sinful man.

The *chemist* cannot with his blowpipe, crucible, and chemicals, torture nature into a revelation of the great secret whether, when a man dies, he will live again.

Philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, and science, carry us not one step beyond the grave.

The profoundest argument that reason has ever produced for the immortality of the soul is that of Plato, in his *Phaedo*—yet who is convinced by that now? Who does not rise from its perusal with the sad conviction that if that argument is all the light we have—then indeed do shadows, doubts, and darkness rest on the whole subject? Said Cicero, in regard to Plato's argument, "I know not why it is, but when I read, I assent, but when I lay down the book and begin myself to reflect on the immortality of the soul, all my assent glides away."

Now when we ignore the teachings and doings of the Divine Word, we are in midnight darkness in regard to the soul's immortality and the existence of a Hell or Heaven. Reject the divinity of Christ's mission, and you blot the sun from the moral heavens, restore to death its sting, consign all who have died to an eternal sleep, and leave the living nothing but the miserable alternative of choosing between the cheerless glooms of infidelity, or the monstrous shadows of paganism.

If Christ was not what he claimed to be, then no man can certainly know whether he has a soul, much less what will become of that soul after he dies; we behold nothing in the *past* but the black gulf of non-existence; the *future* becomes an unknown, dreadful hereafter; and fallen man, of all beings, becomes the most hopeless and miserable.

But in Christ's light we see light on our eternal future.

The ancient Greeks had one sentence which they believed descended from Heaven; and to evince their gratitude and veneration for this gift, they had it engraved in letters of gold on the fronts of their magnificent temples.

We, more favored, not merely have a *message*, but a *Savior*, who came from Heaven, dwelt among us, and returned to Heaven. He did not reason about *immortality*. He knew it; he had it; he was it; he had come from the midst of it, and was going back to it again.

The great hereafter, which had been concealed from all lands and ages by the sable horizon of sense and death, he clearly, authoritatively, and commendably revealed.

In the light of what he was, said, and did—the eternal hereafter, with its momentous alternatives, became so conspicuous, that it is only *willful blindness* that can fail to see it, and *guilty carelessness* which can utterly forget it. On some features of our future being, he made no disclosures; but all that is essential to our present and eternal salvation he made known with unmistakable clearness.

By telling so many things about the Heaven from which he came; by bringing back to their bodies the spirits of three persons who had lately died—Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, and the widow's son at Nain; by himself dying, and then taking up the life he laid down; by entering paradise between his death and resurrection, he has "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," rolled away the stone from the tomb of human hopelessness, painted on the black cloud of death with the rainbow of immortality, and opened a pathway from this dark world, to the paradise of God!

## Chapter 2.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in ATONING for our sins.

But ignorance of spiritual things is not the only evil of sin, nor the bringing us light the only blessing Christ secures to us. We are as *guilty* as we are benighted; hence in Jesus Christ there is a fullness of merit to atone for our demerit.

By the demerit of sin we mean its criminality and its heinousness. If this is in proportion to the greatness and goodness of the God against whom it is committed, the perfection of the law it violates, the strength of the obligations it defies, and the amount of mischief it produces and tends to produce—then how infinitely criminal are our sins!

Man's sins being infinitely heinous, and consequently justly obnoxious to God's holiness, and meriting His eternal wrath—then of course nothing that any finite being, however spotless and exalted, can *do* or *be* or *suffer* for sin, can atone for it. Were all men perfect, and were they to love God with all their heart and serve him with all their powers—all this would be but their duty to God. The very laws of their *creatureship* oblige them to do this.

Nor can the angels or the archangels any more merit from God than the lowest creature. They cannot love with an ardor or serve God with a zeal one jot more than duty prescribes. But Jesus Christ, being above the law, being equal with God, and being under no obligation to fallen man—by voluntarily putting on the vestments of humanity and putting himself under the law, and then by his obedience, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension, performed a perfect service to the law and government of God which no finite beings could render, and which is infinitely more than an equivalent for all the rewards that God bestows on the redeemed, and which infinitely more than compensates for all the evils their sins have done to the universe. Do enter into and realize this great gospel truth!

The great difference between Christianity and the false religions of the world is just at this point. One reason why the sinner cannot be saved on the ground of his own merits, is that there would be an infinite disproportion between the value of any service he could render unto God, and the glories of an eternal Heaven as its reward.

Nor would the obedience and sufferings of the Lord Jesus have been sufficiently meritorious to have secured to sinners this reward, had he not been very God as well as man. But our Mediator being *both divine and human*, and having perfectly kept and exemplified the precepts of the law, and fully exhausted its penalty; having as our Substitute fully satisfied the claims of justice and adequately magnified the broken law, and thereby performed a service so infinitely advantageous to God and the universe—a service that so much more glorifies God than would the eternal damnation of the race; a service that hinders so many evils and originates and promotes so many great interests in the kingdom of God—that it becomes a matter of the strictest justice and propriety in God the Father not only to exempt those from guilt to whom this merit is imputed, but to bestow on them the happiness and glories of Heaven!

This is what the Scriptures mean by the atonement of Christ. This atonement is perfect and absolutely measureless. It is not only for the Jewish, or the Gentile, or the learned, or civilized, or moral world—but for the entire race of all ages, lands, characters, classes, and conditions. There has not lived, nor will there ever live, on this earth a sinner, no matter how vile, for whom Christ did not provisionally purchase pardon and merit Heaven. No matter how great the guilt of each and of all, Jesus Christ has completely removed every barrier on the part of God in the way of their present and eternal salvation.

Were every sinner of the five continents of the globe to come in one numberless mass to the cross of Christ, they would find sufficient merit to pardon and justify each and all! Not one would be left unsaved. The world's guilt is great, beyond conception; it sinks deep, soars high, and spreads wide; but it is not so great, does not descend so low, rise as high and spread as wide as the atoning merits of Christ. *Sin has abounded, but the meritorious grace of Christ has much more abounded.* Even the guilt of the sin against the Holy Spirit, we may well believe, would not transcend the efficacy of Christ's merits—were it not that the sin against the Holy Spirit involves a malignant and determined rejection of Christ.

The merits of Christ are as *exhaustless* as they are full. No earthly munificence could stand ceaseless applications. Constant demands diminish and exhaust earthly supplies. Earthly fountains will dry up, and the sun that has melted the snows of so many winters and renewed the verdure of so many springs, will grow dim with age; but the efficacy of Christ's atonement not only cannot be exhausted, but is incapable of diminution. The untold millions who have been saved by Christ's blood before us, have rendered that blood none the less efficacious, and we shall make it no less so to the unborn millions who will come after us. *The well of his merits will be ever full and flowing.* We may apply to it too seldom and ask of it too little; we cannot apply too often and ask too much.

How gloriously full and valuable is the merit of Christ! It is the world's indispensable need. With this merit imputed to him, the vilest sinner that ever descended from Adam becomes as guiltless before the law as the holy angels! Let me possess the treasure of Jesus' infinite merits, and I can pay to the law and justice of God every farthing of the enormous debt I owed them, and in the high court of Heaven look on conscience, on the law, on death, and the devil, and challenge them, saying, "Who dare lay anything to my charge?" *Arrayed in Christ's merit, I have on a robe in which omniscient*

*purity sees no blemish.* Heaven's portals will joyfully open to all who appear before them clad in this imputed robe, and in it we shall excite the delight of all Heaven.

Hear the estimate that Paul put on the meritorious righteousness of Christ: "Yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, . . . and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law—but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Hear also the estimate of a saint who is now in Heaven: "In the merits of Christ place all your trust; confide in nothing else besides; to his death commit yourself altogether. With his merits, shelter your whole self; with them array yourself from head to foot. If the Lord your God would judge you, say, 'Lord, between your judgments and me, I cast the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ—not otherwise can I contend with you.'

If he says that you are a sinner—say, 'I stretch forth the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and you.'

If he says that you are worthy of condemnation—say, 'Lord, I set the merits of our Lord Jesus between my evil deserts and you, which I offer for the merits which I ought to have, but have not of my own.'

If he says that he is angry with you—say, 'I lift the merits of Christ between your wrath and me.'"

In life, in death, and in the judgment, let the all-sufficient, all-abounding merit of Christ be your ever fresh plea, and your present and eternal salvation will be as certain as the purpose, promise, oath, and power of God can make it!

### Chapter 3.

#### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in REMOVING OUR UNBELIEF.

In Jesus Christ we have a fullness of truth and evidence to remove our unbelief and induce us to exercise the strongest faith in him.

By disbelief we lost the favor and image of God, and it is only by believing in the Son of God that the Divine favor and image can be regained. But faith must have an approachable, divine, and adequate object. Such is Jesus Christ. He is not only all that God the Father can require in a Mediator, but he meets all that unbelief can demand in the way of objection. *Of all beings he is the most accessible, reliable, and trustworthy.*

Nor is this all the truth in regard to him. In the highest sense he is the truth itself. *The Bible is the truth written in sixty-six independent volumes.* But Jesus Christ is the truth concentrated and incarnated. He is the living center, in which all the lines of Old and New Testament truth meet and are embodied; and as a living local exemplification of the truth, he is the mightiest of all arguments for the divinity and importance of his religion.

The great question of this age is, "What do you think of Christ?" and we thank the infidel biographers of Jesus for urging it on the attention of the world. The question at issue between them and the friends of Christ, is whether the Christ of the four gospels is both divine and human. We accept the outcome, and on it rest the divinity and success of our holy religion. If he was both God and man, then Christianity cannot be false; if he was not, then it cannot be true. *If the historical Jesus of the New Testament is not divine, then the world's history has no meaning, aim, or purpose, the church no adequate foundation to rest on, Christianity becomes a fable and our hope of Heaven is a dream.*

But if the character and work of the Redeemer are divine, and the sum and substance of the Bible; if he is the center around which all the great events of the world, secular and religious, have revolved in constant subserviency; if he is the life-blood of our civilization and literature, the very foundation and sanction of our laws and institutions; if all around us he is transforming lives and characters, and we hear him breathed from the lips and behold him exemplified in the lives of our nearest friends—then how can we honestly doubt and disbelieve him?

The argument, from the history and person of Christ, for the divinity and importance of his gospel, is masterful because it is not an abstraction, or a myth, but a matter of fact.

His birth in Bethlehem, his residence in Nazareth, his baptism in the Jordan, his sermon on the mount, his agony in Gethsemane, his death on Calvary, his resurrection from Joseph's new tomb, and his ascension from Mount Olivet—are well-known, well-attested historical facts. The time and place of their occurrence are well-known.

The saying of Christ's advent and life is worthy of all acceptance, because they are literally and historically true. Ponder these facts with attention, and you must, can, and will believe.

Read his beautiful life; witness his miracles; follow him in his journeys; behold him die on Calvary; see him arise and ascend to Heaven.

In fine, study, not Christianity, but Christ; ponder, not redemption, but the Redeemer; not salvation, but the living, moving Savior, who was, and is, and ever will be, and the mind will be convinced, and the heart savingly won to him.

*In the person, character, and work of Christ is included and offered all that God can give, and all that man can need.* Every trait and work, essential to constitute him in every respect trustworthy, centers in him. What excellency, what qualification can you desire or imagine that is not found in Christ? In what respect would you have a Savior otherwise than our Christ, in order to believe in him?

Are you afraid he is not *strong* enough to save you? But can you desire a deliverer stronger than the "mighty God"? Do your problems demand greater than infinite strength?

Do you hesitate to venture your soul on him, from a fear that he is not now the same *compassionate* Savior he was while on earth? But though he is on the throne of the universe, he is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

Do you have misgivings from an apprehension that he is not now as literally present and as accessible as he was in the days of his flesh? But he is really more essentially present now than he was then. Hear him. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He is all around you, and can be approached more quickly and intimately than you can approach the nearest earthly friend.

Are you faithless from a fear that his *mediation* is not sufficiently prevalent with God the Father? But is he not "the only begotten Son" of the Father? And has not the Father proclaimed to the world that he is willing to accept and save any sinner who will come unto him through his Son?

Do you demand before committing your soul to him that he shall have furnished some extraordinary evidence of his willingness to save sinners? But what more effective proofs can he give than the humiliations of Bethlehem and the agonies of Calvary?

Do you still say, "I cannot go to him self-invited. Before I can venture my all into his hands, he must give me an undoubted assurance of his willingness to save me"? Then, doubting soul, hear him inviting you to his cross and bosom,



“and be not faithless but believing.” To you he says, “Him that comes to me, I will never cast out.” “Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;” and in this connection the words “comes” and “come” ought to be more melodious to your ear than the tones of an angel’s harp, and more soothing to your spirit than the fanning of an angel’s wings.

What is there that can encourage you to believe, that is not found in the person, work, and words of Christ? *All that is great, and powerful, and wise, and faithful, and patient, and endearing; all that is trustworthy in divinity, and attractive in humanity, is embodied in Jesus Christ;* and if so is not unbelief a crime against reason; against your soul, and against your God?

## Chapter 4.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in PARDONING OUR SINS.

In Jesus Christ there is a fullness of mercy to pardon our sins.

There are *two common snares* in which the great enemy ruins souls.

1. One is the snare of self-righteous presumption. Such as are captivated in this snare, being righteous in their own estimation, have no appreciation of Christ.

2. The other is the snare of despair; and more are destroyed by despair than by presumption, not because there are more who despair than there are who presume, but because it is so much more difficult to get out of the snare of despair. When once a man says, "There is no hope for me," he becomes utterly discouraged and abandoned; and the despondence he feels is the strongest link in the chain that binds him to an unconverted state. Now the only remedy for such is to keep before them the compassionate, amiable, inviting character of Christ.

Go stand at the base of yon high mountain, and as you behold its huge top kissing the clouds, you will conclude that there is not enough water on this globe to submerge that mountain. But sail out to mid ocean and measure its depths, and you will find enough water to submerge, not only the peaks of the Alps and the Himalayas.

In like manner, so long as the sinner remains amid the dark mountains of his sins, and continues only to look on them—he will despairingly conclude there is no forgiveness for him. But let him acquaint himself with the dying love of Christ, let him go to the cross of Calvary, and he will find an *ocean of forgiving mercy broad enough and deep enough to cover all his sins, however numerous and criminal.*

If you will read carefully the Scriptures you will find that such is the compassion of Christ for the chief of sinners, that he is infinitely more anxious to save them than they are to be saved. In the provisions of his atonement, and in the invitations of his Gospel, he excepts none. While on earth he welcomed to his bosom of mercy the vilest and the guiltiest. He pitied those whom others spurned. He received those whom others rejected. He loved those whom others loathed. It was his glory and delight then, as it is his glory and delight now, to save sinners, even the chief of sinners.

Never from the day of his death until now has he refused to forgive a sinner, however vile, who sincerely desired forgiveness. Never has he thrust away from his cross one who sincerely asked to be saved by its blood. Not one, since the dying thief, has applied to him for pardon and been rejected. Never in the world of woe has it been said,

"Here's a soul that perished suing  
For the precious Savior's aid."

Have any of the great crowd that have gone down to death anywhere left it on record, that they applied to the Redeemer for salvation and were repulsed? Not one such can be found either on earth or in Hell. When two persons are at variance, the presumption always is that the inferior, offending, necessitous party will be the more anxious for reconciliation. But what is a reasonable presumption in other cases, is not the fact in regard to Christ and the sinner. Here, all the deep concern, all the sacrifices and efforts for amity, are on Christ's side. If the irreligious were one thousandth part as much concerned about their own salvation as Christ is, then the way to Hell would become a dreary waste, and the way to Heaven be crowded with converts as numerous as the stars of the midnight heavens.

When human governments issue proclamations of amnesty, they make exceptions. In the time of the American Revolution, Samuel Adams and John Hancock were excepted by name in the royal proclamation of amnesty. But Jesus Christ, in his amnesty proclamation to this rebellious world, makes no such exceptions.

Let us read it: "Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Or read it as given by another evangelist: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." And what is the preaching of the Gospel to every creature, but the wide and universal offer, a full and free pardon to every sinner on the ground of Christ's sufferings and resurrection?

But the compassion of Christ towards the chief of sinners is most encouragingly illustrated and attested in the example of those whom he has saved.

Look at *the thief on the cross*. Who that heard that hardened ruffian robber join his fellow and the base crowd in insulting the dying Savior, could have believed it possible that that very day he would be a trophy of the pardoning love of the very Jesus whom he blasphemed? While he was ripe for Hell, just as he was going over the edge of the pit, he was awakened and his dry lips quivered forth the prayer, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Did Christ respond, "I cannot remember you now; I am in too much pain; besides it is too late for you"? Oh no, but he turned upon him a look of love and said, "Today you shall be with me in paradise." So that before the sun of that day had

set behind Judah's hills the soul of this thief, pardoned and sanctified, had taken its flight to Heaven, and told to listening angels what redeeming mercy had done for him.

Thus the Redeemer erected, close by his cross, a monument of his ability and willingness to save the greatest sinners, in the greatest extremity—that no sinner to the end of time might despair.

*He saved his own murderers!* One, while he was dying, and many soon after. The centurion who commanded that brutal band that crucified him, who presided over that whole scene of horrid mockery, who ordered every nail to be driven through his quivering flesh, and some of his blood-stained crew, being convinced by the darkness and the earthquake, appear to have been transfixed with fear, remorse, and penitence, and before they left the spot may have been *washed in the blood they had just shed*, for they glorified God, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Nor did sin-atonement in the least diminish his compassion for those who had crucified him. Hear the terms of his last great commission. It was to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name, among all nations, "beginning at Jerusalem." While the cross on which he died was still crimsoned with his blood, while the eyes of his enemies were still gleaming with the fire of triumphant revenge, he commissions his apostles to go first and offer his murderers the gift of his great salvation.

All human religions seek first the least depraved. But it was the command of Jesus that *his gospel should first be offered to his murderers*. As if he had said, "Go tell those who imprecated the awful curse, 'His blood be upon us and our children,' that that blood, if they will, shall be upon them first as a pardoning immortal blessing.

"Go tell cowardly Pilate that the blood with which he bought his peace with the mob, if he will, shall buy his peace with God.

"Go tell the poor heartless jesters who jeered at My agonies, saying, 'If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross,' that I have not only come down but ascended to My throne, and that, if they will, my first of act of clemency shall be *their* pardon.

"Go seek out the Pharisees, scribes, and elders, and tell them they never thirsted for my blood as intensely as I desire their salvation.

"Go and tell my murderers that they inflicted a deep wound on matchless innocence when they crucified Me, but they will inflict one far deeper wound by refusing the pardon I offer them."

Accordingly, forty-nine days after, on the day of Pentecost, he verified this offer and saved his crucifiers. Peter charged home on them the atrocious deed. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." And while he yet spoke the risen Savior sent down the Holy Spirit, and brought to repentance and mercy three thousand of these enemies of Christ at once.

Hear how *Bunyan* discourses of their repentance and forgiveness. Peter, in his Master's name, said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in his name, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Objection. "But I was one of those who plotted to take away his life. May I be saved by him?"

Peter. "Every one of you!"

Objection. "But I was one of those who bore false witness against him. Is there forgiveness for me?"

Peter. "Every one of you!"

Objection. "But I was one of those who cried out, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' and desired that Barabbas the murderer might live, rather than take him. What will become of me?"

"I am to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name to every one of you!" says Peter.

Objection. "But I was one of those who spit in his face when he stood before his accusers; I was also one that mocked him when in anguish he hanged bleeding on the tree. Is there room for me?"

"Every one of you!" says Peter.

Objection. "But I was one of those who in his extremity said, 'Give him gall and vinegar to drink.' Why may I not expect the same treatment, when anguish and guilt are upon me?"

Peter. "Repent of these your wickednesses, and here is remission of sins for every one of you!"

Objection. "But I railed on him; I reviled him; I hated him; I rejoiced to see him mocked by others. Can there be hopes for me?"

Peter. "There is remission of sins for every one of you."

They did repent, were forgiven, and were baptized. Thus three thousand, of a people who had committed the most atrocious deed ever perpetrated, were *admitted to the bosom they had pierced*, and received from the face they had smitten and marred—nothing but smiles and love. *Who, then, this side of Hell, need despair?*

Look at *Saul of Tarsus*. Never before nor since was there a more unlikely subject of conversion to Christ than this fierce and audacious Jew. His education, his religion, his zeal, his prospects, his learning, his pride, and his powerful intellect—were all so much under the influence of wrong impressions, that his conversion to Christianity seemed almost as hopeless as that of Satan himself. He was the vanguard leader of Apollyon's host against the cause of Christ. But while he was going on his mission of blood to Damascus, while urging his journey with anxious speed, foaming with rage and feasting

his heart with the anticipation of Christian tears and blood, the Lord Jesus descended from Heaven in his glory and meets him. Has He met him because His patience is exhausted? Has His right hand taken hold on vengeance to smite this arch enemy dead at His feet? Oh no; it is the compassionate Jesus still. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

The trembling rebel cries, "Who are you, Lord?"

The Lord tenderly replies, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."

And then and there his sins were forgiven and his heart was changed! *Surely a hotter brand was never quenched in the Savior's atoning blood!* Surely a more noble trophy of redeeming grace was never recorded in the annals of redemption. In Saul's conversion, Satan's kingdom sustained its greatest loss—and Christianity won her greatest proponent. Never before nor since, was there such a display redeeming power manifested in the conversion of one sinner!

Jesus Christ had many high purposes in his conversion. One was that he might be an example of his compassion to great sinners in all after ages. Hence said Paul of himself, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to those who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

When men bestow favors, they sometimes enjoin secrecy on those they relieve, lest they should be burdened with new applications; but when Jesus Christ forgives sinners, he wishes them to proclaim it to the world, that they may be patterns of mercy to encourage others to trust in him.

Who were *the Corinthians* before their conversion? "Do you not know that *the wicked* will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. *And that is what some of you were!* But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

*It is a wonder that God did not incinerate such vile persons from the face of the earth!* Can the worst descend any lower in the scale of dark depravity, than did these Corinthians? And yet the pardoning, sanctifying compassion of Christ did not except them—and will he except you, my reader?

And what more shall we say! The time would fail to tell of an *Augustine*, who after an early life of dissipation; of the *Earl of Rochester*, who after a life of abandoned and gross sensuality; of *Colonel Gardner*, who after being steeped in profligacy; of *John Newton*, who after being a slave-dealer; of *John Bunyan*, who after having been notoriously profane; of *Ko-Thah-Byee*, the Burman general, who after his soul was encrusted with the guilt of thirty cold-blooded murders—all of whom went in the dark hour of their conscious guilt to the Lord Jesus, and were abundantly pardoned!

*Many millions of others, not less guilty than these, have been pardoned, purified, and admitted to Heaven.* Millions of others are now on their way to the bright land, who, after they had been *sunk in sensuality* or hardened in infidelity, after they had been notorious for the sins of impiety, injustice, intemperance, and inhumanity—sought and found the forgiving love of the Redeemer. Oceans have their bounds, the far-traveling sun has its orbit, but *the pardoning mercy of Christ is confined to no limit of time or age or guilt or class or character.* It is bound by no conditions but that you accept it.

## Chapter 5.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in BEARING WITH OUR PROVOCATIONS.

In Jesus Christ there is a fullness of patience and forbearance to bear with our incessant provocations.

No other being in the universe would be able to bear with our imperfections and provocations as Christ does. If the meekest man on earth, or the most merciful angel in Heaven, were entrusted with the best of us, as Christ is—he would soon abandon his charge! The most patient mother was never one-thousandth part as tender and patient towards her sick, fretful child—as Christ is towards his erring disciples.

Some are afraid to become the decided followers of Christ, lest by their remaining sins they should provoke the Redeemer to abandon them, and thereby they bring dishonor upon both themselves and his cause. Let such consider the faithfulness and patience of the Lord Jesus, and be afraid no more.

*Christ does not cast off his believing people because of their shortcomings and infirmities.* It is his glory to pass over the faults of his people, make the most of their weak graces, heal their perpetual backslidings, and pardon their many sins.

“He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.” As a father pities his own children, so he pities those who fear him. As one whom his mother comforts, so will he comfort his people.

He will ever correct them in love, and gently reprove them at times; but he will never, never give them up. The devil shall never be able to pluck them out of his hand.

If they fall into sin’s mire, he will raise them up.

If they wander from the right way, he will gently bring them back.

If they faint, he will revive them.

If they err, he will teach them.

In a word, notwithstanding their stupidity, unbelief, and cowardice—he carries them all the way to Heaven in his loving arms! “He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young!” Isaiah 40:11

See how patiently he bore with his people while he was on earth. Once two of his disciples wished to call down fire from Heaven and consume a village because it did not receive them kindly. He meekly rebuked them, saying, “You know not what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”

On the very night of his betrayal, when he was preparing his disciples for the coming events, they interrupted and grieved him by an altercation as to who would be greatest in his approaching reign; for which he did not denounce them, but gently taught them that the greatest in his kingdom would be he who served him most zealously.

He selected three of his most spiritual and faithful apostles to watch and pray with him during his agony in Gethsemane; and three times during the awful struggle he came to them seeking sympathy, and three times found them asleep. Did he upbraid them? No; he kindly apologized for their unbelieving stupidity, saying, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Witness his dealings with *fallen Peter*. How many flagrant sins did Peter’s denial of his Lord involve! What church would have restored him immediately after such a fall? Behold him in the hall of the high priest. Self-condemned, with the oath of denial yet quivering on the lips, bending under the weight of his remorse, overwhelmed at his own atrocity, he turns towards the judgment-seat, and his eye meets the eye of his Savior. Did the face of Christ lower with vengeance towards his fallen apostle? Did Jesus reproach him for deserting him at that trying time? Oh, no; Peter beheld in the face of his Lord nothing but the expressions of undying love. His features were not darkened by a single cloud of reproach. They were as unclouded as when he stood in the glory of the holy Mount of Transfiguration. There beamed forth from that saddened countenance nothing but a patient, forbearing, forgiving love.

“And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter;” and that look of undiminished love broke the power of the tempter, smoothed the knitted brow, quelled the wrathful eye, opened the fountains of grief, and restored the fallen apostle.

Witness his kindness to *doubting Thomas*. When told that the Lord was risen, he most unreasonably assails the very foundation of Christianity by affirming that he would not believe that Christ had arisen, unless he could see in his hands the prints of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side. Behold the condescension and kindness of Christ in dealing with this disbelieving man. Instead of abandoning him, he pities his errors and infirmities. He seeks to bring back this poor strayed sheep with unspeakable tenderness and patience. He allows Thomas to prescribe, and complies with his unreasonable standard of faith. “Reach here your finger, and behold my hands; and reach here your hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.”

Was this the character of Christ eighteen hundred years ago? He is still the same. *Though he is on the throne of the universe, he cherishes the same unconquerable love and patience towards his people.* There he sits above these visible heavens with the very same forbearing love towards all his erring disciples of earth, that he exhibited to fallen Peter in the

hall of the high priest. There, with infinite tenderness and patience, he pleads with the Father for the pardon of his people's sins as they arise, and for the acceptance of their persons and services.

His government of the universe is exercised for the good of his disciples. He occupies the throne, not merely to manage worlds and empires, but to govern, teach, sanctify, lead, and finally save his church. In training his people for Heaven, they may raise temporary walls of separation between him and themselves, but nothing they can do can exhaust his love and patience. *He feels for and nurses each one as a mother feels for and nurses her sick and froward infant; and he will not rise from his throne of mediation until he has brought the last one of them home to glory.*

It is greatly essential to the Christian's growth in grace and usefulness that he have adequate views of the boundless extent of the tenderness and pardoning mercy of his Savior. Many believe it is great, but are far from seeing how great it really is. They believe he can forgive them once, twice, thrice, and they find that he does so. But when they have been betrayed into repeated sins, after having been repeatedly forgiven, they suppose he has become weary of forgiving them, and thus they remain oppressed, gloomy, and useless.

But let such remember that it is the glory of Christ not only to pardon many sinners and many sins, but the same sinners and the same sins many times.

Peter once came to our Lord with this question, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?" He thought he proposed a large number of times. But Christ replied, "I say not unto you until seven times, but until seventy times seven." That is, he requires us to forgive each other four hundred and ninety times. And do you think that he directs his people to outdo him in patience and in pardoning?

*It is a glorious gospel truth, that however repeatedly and heinously Christ's disciples may sin against him, they will invariably find him more ready to forgive than they are to repent.* Let no one say, I have already been forgiven so often that I dare not and cannot ask forgiveness again. It is almost as though there were a contest between Christ and his people which shall exceed, they in trespassing or he in forgiving.

See them by their ingratitude, cowardice, indolence, unbelief, neglect, and in a thousand other ways—wounding him in the house of his friends. And see him in return forgiving them and bestowing on them the rich blessings of his grace.

Christian, can you contemplate such a Savior without shame and sorrow for your sins, without again and again going to him for forgiveness, and without devoting *your all* to his service?

## Chapter 6.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in SANCTIFYING His redeemed people.

In Jesus Christ there is a fullness of grace to sanctify us.

If civil law had any device by which, when she *pardons* criminals, she could *renovate* them, make them hate their crimes, and be law-abiding, virtuous citizens—then our worldly rulers might make a proclamation of amnesty to all its convicts. But worldly governments have no such transforming device, and hence may not pardon burglars, counterfeiters, thieves, and murderers without deep injury to society.

But no such injury results to the divine government as to human society from the pardon of great sinners, because in every case those whom the King of Zion forgives, he renews; all whom Christ justifies, he sanctifies; all from whom, by his atoning cross, he takes away the guilt and curse of sin, he, by his renewing Spirit, takes also its dominion and defilement. By the one he changes our state, by the other our nature. By the one he entitles us to Heaven, by the other he makes us fit for it.

What is the gospel? It consists in a vicarious Calvary to take away man's guilt, and a Holy Spirit to subdue his depravity. But as all the means of our sanctification derive their existence and efficacy from Christ—he is both the Atoner and Purifier of His people. And as no degree of guilt transcends the merit of his cross—so no instance of depravity is beyond the converting and sanctifying power of his Spirit. His *renewing grace* is as limitless as his *pardoning mercy*. He is just as able and as willing to deliver his people from the *defilement* of sin, as he is from the *guilt* of their sins. The latter he does completely and at once; the former he does gradually and partly on earth, and completes in Heaven.

The effects of sin in the mind, heart, passions, and conduct of the sinner are great beyond conception, and beyond the reach of all human helps—but in no case are they beyond the reach of the *invincible grace* of our risen, reigning Redeemer. By his enlightening, sanctifying Spirit, he can trace the stream of human corruption to its source, and purify the *fountain* itself. The curative influence of his blood follows the moral disease through every vein it has envenomed, neutralizes the poison, and restores vigor and purity to the whole moral constitution.

It is the glory of our Savior that he never turns away from any sinner on account of his defilement. He has already regenerated and purified some of the most impure of our race, and made them fit temples for his own abode.

He can take the most bigoted Pharisee and implacable Jew—and transform him into a model Christian and an earnest preacher of the faith he once tried to destroy. He did this with *Saul of Tarsus*.

He can change the most superstitious, blinded devotee of Romanism into the clearest, mightiest upholder of the great doctrine of justification by faith alone the church has ever had. He did this in the case of *Martin Luther*.

He can take a man proverbial for his vulgarity and profanity, and so renovate, enlarge, sanctify, and ennoble him, as to make him not only a bright exemplification of his purifying grace, but cause him to write a religious book which stands unequalled since the apostolic day. He did this in the person of *John Bunyan*.

He can take the profane, licentious, infidel captain of a slave-ship, and so mightily transform him as to make him not only an eminent Christian minister, but the writer of letters and hymns which will be read and sung as long as the English language is spoken! He did this in the case of *John Newton*.

It has been said that, after all, Christians are no better than others. If this is true, then Christianity is a failure in one essential respect; then Christ is not a complete Savior. But there are untold millions of examples that abundantly refute this charge. All around us are living attestations that the saving grace of Christ makes the intemperate, sober; the impure, chaste; the proud, humble; the revengeful, forgiving; the covetous, liberal; the repining, submissive; and the profane devout.

The grace of our Redeemer rectifies the core of our being. By his regenerating Spirit, he extirpates rebellion from the human will, sensuality from the memory, error from the judgment, carnality from the affections, and folly from the imagination.

*He can so transform and reverse the desires, tastes, and principles of the soul—as to make a man love what he once hated, and hate what he once loved.* He can expel from the soul its sinful loves and proclivities, by begetting a new spiritual love. He extinguishes in the soul the love of sin by awakening in it the superior pleasures and hopes of his religion.

Herein is the difference between the *evangelical conversion* that Jesus by his Spirit effects in the life and character of man, and a mere *moral reformation*. In the one case sin is merely avoided from worldly motives, while it is still loved; in the other it is abandoned and shunned because it is abhorred. The *sins* which the moral man merely avoids out of regard to his character, or from the fear of consequences—Jesus inclines his people to hate and willingly renounce. The *evils* which the moral man only restrains and abates—the world's Redeemer eradicates.

Hence the mere *moral* man appears far better than he really is; and the subject of saving grace is far better than he appears to be. The mere *moral* man is only apparently improved in some respects. The true Christian, in principle, desire,

and aim, is in reality and appearance improved in every respect. It is in this way that Jesus gradually, yet effectually and thoroughly, saves his people from the *love, bondage, pollution, and practice* of sin.

Every Christian is the subject of a *radical transformation*, not only in his actions, but in his disposition and desires. In this world Jesus saves every one of his true disciples from the love and dominion of every sin. There is no unknown sin that such a man does not wish to discover, and no sin discovered which he does not loathe and resolve to abandon, and no sin which he hates and resolves to forsake that he does not strive and labor to destroy—denying themselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

But why are not Christians more completely delivered from sin than they are? Why are not the best of the friends of Christ, better and holier than they are? Why is our *faith* so weak? Why are our *hopes* so dull, our *desires* so feeble, our *love* so cold, and our religious characters so indistinct, unremarkable, and uninfluential? Why are there so many who seem to aim at and to possess no more than just enough religion to keep them out of Hell? Are we straitened in Christ? Is he not as able and as willing to *sanctify* us—as he is to *justify* us? Do not all our needs find in him a corresponding supply? And is it not as essential to his glory that his people be delivered from the *pollution* of sin, as it is that they be saved from the *curse* of sin?

Why, in fine, with such an infinitude of sanctifying resources in our Redeemer, are we no more like him in temper and conduct than we are?

Because we too much rely upon ourselves and the subordinate means of grace, and do not with sufficient frequency and strength of faith apply to the Lord Jesus Christ. If all the *light* in the universe dwells in the sun, how can we obtain light except from the sun? Were all the *water* in the world in one reservoir, how could any obtain water without applying to that reservoir? Equally evident it is that if all the *grace* that purifies the heart dwells only in Jesus Christ, then none can grow in religious purity without a believing application to Christ.

Here is the source of our meager piety. We look to other means of religious growth, than the fullness of Christ. But we can no more be *sanctified* without the grace of Christ, than we can be *pardoned* without his mercy. Christian, make the experiment, and you will find that one believing prayer to Christ for the impartation of his light and strength and love, will do more to extinguish the fire of lust and passion, overcome temptation, and exalt, ennoble, and refine the soul—than the most earnest and systematic use of all the subordinate means of grace. *You will never grow in holiness in any other way.* Aim daily to receive “grace upon grace” from his fullness. As your temptations, needs, and sins arise, cultivate the habit of going to him who “is full of grace and truth.” Appropriate to your necessities “the fullness of him that fills all in all,” and you will find that you cannot and dare not willfully sin.

Whether, then, you want victory over temptations, or stronger *faith*, or a brighter *hope*, or intenser *love*, or greater *courage*, or a tenderer conscience, or more *humility*, or more meekness, or more strength of spiritual principles, or more light, or peace of mind—go to your Savior, and you will be freely and abundantly supplied. He will not work in you unmixed purity this side the grave, but at death he will perfect that which concerns you, and present your soul faultless before his Father’s throne with exceeding joy! Glorious Savior, who thus sanctifies those whom he justifies!



## Chapter 7.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in TRANSFORMING His redeemed people into His image.

In Jesus there is a fullness of moral and spiritual excellence for our imitation and transformation.

The sanctification of which we have spoken consists in deliverance from sin. This, though unspeakably great, is only a negative blessing. When man is saved from sin he only stands equal to Adam before his fall. But the Christian is not only redeemed from sin, but is raised to a positive resemblance of Christ—and is actually conformed to the image of the Son of God. *In Jesus Christ the Christian has an approachable, imitable, perfect, and attractive model.* He is the bright contrast of everything we should shun, and the embodiment of everything we should aim at. In the brightness of his example our every sin, whether of defect or excess, is made to appear infinitely detestable; and in His example is harmoniously displayed every virtue essential, when imitated, to exalt us in spiritual excellence above the angels. *How it enhances the glory of our Redeemer's character to be both an Atoning sacrifice for sins and a perfect Pattern for our lives!*

When Napoleon Bonaparte retreated from Russia he saved a fragment of his army from utter destruction by the force of his own example. Foregoing the privilege of his rank, he dismounted from his horse, and put himself not only at the head of his men, but on a level with them. He shared their hard beds, lived on their scanty rations; every foot they walked he walked, every foe they faced he faced, and every hardship they endured he bore. The result was, that teaching and encouraging them by his own example, saying to them, not Forward, but *Follow*—he could lead them even up to the cannon's mouth.

Just so, Jesus Christ is the Captain, not of a small retreating, but of a large invading army, which will finally be victorious over Satan, the world, and the flesh, because, amid other reasons, he inspires his redeemed people by the force of his own example. One of the unspeakable advantages of his religion is, that *he not only, by precept and doctrine, tells us in what his service consists—but by his own example he has shown us how to perform it.* He goes before us. He sets us an example that we may follow his steps. When we hesitate, or go astray, or stumble, we not only hear his voice behind us saying, "This is the way; walk in it," but we see his incarnate lovely form before us, sometimes nearer and sometimes farther, sometimes more and sometimes less distinct, according to the keenness of our vision and the clearness of our spiritual atmosphere. But even when our eyes are dimmest and our heavens are haziest, if we are believers, we can still see him. Notwithstanding the mist and smoke and dust of unbelief, we can still discern a form like that of the Son of man, not merely pointing out the path, but often clearing away the obstructions in it, opening unexpected passages, transforming difficulties into helps, leveling mountains, filling up valleys, and bridging streams that seem impassable. Oh, what a blessed thing to have Christ for our Exemplar!

How can our hopes sink or our fears prevail, while our Forerunner embodies his religion in our sight? Often some of us fall exhausted and faint on the way; but when we see the way marked with the tears and blood of our Master, we recover new strength and resume the journey.

Study the example of Christ aright, and you can hardly find a phase of Christian experience that does not find something in the life of the Man of Nazareth answering to it. We serve a Master who trod every *step* that he would have us tread, bore every *burden* he would have us bear, met every *temptation* he would have us meet, shared every *grief* that he would have us share, and performed every *duty* he would have us do.

Many defeat the influence of Christ's example by exalting it so high that it is beyond the reach of their sympathy and imitation. But *the chief glory of our Lord's example is that it is singularly accessible and imitable.* Of all lives, his was the most communicable and practical, most within the reach of the sympathy and resemblance of the true believer. Read his life carefully, and you will see him exemplarily teaching you how to do the very things it is most important you should do in order to be thoroughly godly.

Would you know how to meet and overcome temptations; how to regard and treat your enemies; how to be a good son, a good friend, a good neighbor, and a good citizen; how to sympathize with and treat the guilty, down-trodden, and off-cast; how to meet and bear the afflictions of life; how to appreciate and use the means of grace; how to evangelize the ungodly; in a word, how to meet your obligations to God, to yourself, to the world, and to the church?

*Prayerfully study the example of Christ!*

And again, would you supply your Christian character with every missing temper and trait—then compare your character with his, and strive to conform your life to his in all respects in which you are unlike him.

How infinitely great is the contrast!

Do you mourn over your remaining *pride*? In prayerful dependence on the helps of his Spirit, study the character of him who was meek and lowly in mind, and you will find yourself growing humble, even as he was.

Do you find it hard to *forgive* those who have wronged you? Behold him when dying praying that his murderers might be forgiven.

Is *indolence* your besetting sin? Behold him not fixing himself in Jerusalem, and requiring those who needed his aid to seek him—but leading an itinerant, migratory life, going about doing good; here teaching the ignorant; there reclaiming the depraved; today healing the diseased and soothing the sorrowful; tomorrow casting out devils, pardoning the guilty, and raising the dead.

Are your *prayers* cold, brief, and infrequent? Behold him retiring to solitary mountains, and spending whole nights in secret communion with his Father.

In summary, our Redeemer was an attractive pattern of all that is pure and lovely and of good report—of all that is kind and benevolent and merciful. He was a model of self-denial, of forgiveness of injuries, of patience amid the greatest wrongs, of active usefulness in the face of the greatest discouragements.

Now let his disciples habitually study his character in these regards, and habitually rely on his strength to enable them to imbibe his spirit and copy his traits—and they will grow in likeness to his image, and in preparation for usefulness, and for the enjoyment of his immediate presence.

The best men of earth have their defects; hence if we take them for our models, the time will come when we shall equal them. But *Christ's excellencies are limitless*, and hence through all time and eternity, as the redeemed shall continue to grow in moral worth and loveliness—the character of Christ will continue to unfold new excellencies, as they shall be capable of appreciating and imitating them, in endless progression; and in thus becoming the accessible, attractive, perfect model of his saints, and in transforming them into his own image, in those who once displayed the very image of Satan himself—he is far more glorified than he is in the shining of a thousand worlds!

Oh, it is a great thing to have a divine imitable model after which to shape our lives! Do not rely on Christ as a Mediator less, but copy him more closely as a model. That you may be justified before God without works, know nothing among men but Jesus crucified; and that you may illustrate and prove your faith by your works, know nothing save Christ exemplified. Knowing Christ in these two respects is the religion that honors God and saves the soul.

## Chapter 8.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in ATTRACTING OUR LOVE.

The glory of Christ is seen also in his fullness of moral beauty and attractiveness for us to love.

*Man is so made that he must love some object supremely, and whatever he loves most is his God.* He can no more live morally without loving something supremely, than he can live physically without breathing. But in whom can he find a being worthy of supreme love? Where in the universe is there one within the reach of his affections whom he may safely and savingly love with all his heart, mind, and strength?

The first and chief of all commandments, yes, the sum of all is, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. But who can love or think of an impersonal, absolute God? He eludes our thoughts and affections. Nor are we sufficiently acquainted with the *angels* to fasten on them the affections of our souls—they are but creatures; and the best of *mankind* are finite and stained with imperfections. To love the greatest and best of earth supremely, is to deify them and degrade ourselves.

But the historical Jesus of the four Gospels meets this deep want of our souls. Amid all other persons and characters of the universe, He who was born in Bethlehem, brought up at Nazareth, was baptized in the Jordan, opened his lips on the mount, walked by the Sea of Galilee, who healed and fed and comforted, and died on the cross—he, he is just the person and character whom we may and can and ought to love with all our mind, heart, and strength!

*Love is a powerfully transforming principle.* Everyone tends to resemble the object of his supreme attachment. If he loves an object sordid and base, he will become sordid and base himself. On the other hand, if he loves an object grand and pure, he will become refined and elevated. It is so in loving Jesus Christ. He being the greatest among the pure, and the purest among the great, the perfection of all beauty and the center of all excellency—it follows that in proportion to the intensity of our love for him will we be renewed, purified, and ennobled. In him is an infinitude of moral beauty. He is gloriously and infinitely lovely and loving.

Earth has never yet produced a man as great and as good as he might have been. Hence when we would form an ideally perfect character, we have to bring together and combine traits from many originals.

From one we borrow his magnanimity, from another his sweetness and affability, from another his tender sympathy, from another his unselfishness, from another his meekness, from another his courage, from another his patience, from another his self-mastery, and from another his deep devotion. But let us bring forward all the excellencies of the most excellent of earth, all that was *pure* in Joseph, all that was *meek* in Moses, all that was *patient* in Job, the *tenderness* of a John, the *heroism* of a Paul, the *friendship* of a Jonathan, the *wisdom* of a Solomon, and the *benevolence* of a Howard.

To these attractions of humanity add all the excellencies of the *angels*. Clothe these with all the charms which your imagination can supply, render them complete, combine them, and yet this imaginary character would be no more compared to the character of Christ in point of loveliness, than one ray is to the sun!

“He is fairer than the children of men,” and infinitely more lovely than all the holy angels, comprising in Himself all the graces of time and all the perfections of eternity.

“He is the chief among ten thousand! Yes, He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!” As every ray of light in the natural world may be traced up in converging rays to the sun—so every trait of moral loveliness found in good men and angels is but a feeble ray from Him, the sun of the moral universe.

Nay more, creation draws all her beauties from him; and can we suppose that he has imparted to nature more beauty than he possesses? When our eyes rove over the charming scenes of creation, when we look at the beauties of the heavenly orbs, when we look at the rainbow and the lovely sunset, we may well exclaim with Milton, “How wondrous fair! Yourself how lovely then!”

“Nor earth, nor suns, nor seas, nor stars,  
Nor Heaven, his full resemblance bears;  
His beauties we can never trace  
Until we behold him face to face.”

In the royal gallery at Dresden there is a painting of the Divine Child by Raphael, that is more admired for its beauty than any other like production. Said one, “I could spend an hour of every day in the year in gazing on that assemblage of human, angelic, and divine ideals.” There was a tourist, who was so charmed by this picture, that day by day, for two months, he stood before the wonderful painting, spell-bound, occasionally weeping with delight as some new beauty would appear; and when his last day had arrived, and his luggage was packed, and his horses were ready for the road, he ran back and took a parting gaze.

Just so, four inspired men have sketched from life the original of that picture. In that case it is *Jesus on canvas*. In the four Gospels the living, acting, loving Jesus appears. Read his divinely-written history. Study his likeness as sketched by a divine hand. Survey his features. The very best saints that have lived on earth had their defects.

“Defects through nature’s best productions run;  
The saints have spots, and spots are in the sun.”

But he was altogether lovely!

All lights and no shades;

all excellencies and no defects;

all beauties and no blemishes.

He never spoke an unkind word.

He never did an injury.

He never uttered an untruth.

He never practiced a deception.

He never lost an opportunity of doing good.

He was never selfish, never repulsive.

Jesus of Nazareth, who can portray his charms!

What snow-white purity, amid deep corruptions surrounding Him!

What calmness, while the storms of furious passions raged in those around him!

What meekness amid the most provoking wrongs!

What persevering benevolence against the greatest hostility from earth and Hell!

What undying friendship for his fickle, half-hearted disciples!

What compassion for the guilty and wretched!

What condescension and humility, while he was King of kings and Lord of lords!

What naturalness and simplicity!

What affecting ease and gracefulness!

Oh, he was enough to charm all the angels!

The more we love Him, the more lovely He will become to us.

We soon exhaust the most excellent characters of earth. But in the character of our blessed Redeemer there are **depths, heights, lengths and breadths of loveliness** that we can never exhaust through time or eternity. After, in Heaven, we shall have seen the King in His beauty as many millions of years as there are grains of dust in our globe—there will still be in Him an infinitude of unrevealed beauties to transport our ever expanding souls.

But our Redeemer is as *loving* as he is lovely. There is in him not only a fullness of loveliness to win our love of *delight*, but a fullness of lovingness to win our love of *gratitude*. Such is his personal perfection and attractiveness, that had he never cherished a kind thought nor done a kind deed for us, we would be under the strongest obligation to love him; but how is that obligation enhanced in view of what he *has* done for us, is *now* doing for us, and *will* do for us!

“Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.” Observe the proof of his love. He gave not his exertions, not his influence, not his time and perfections—but himself, his whole divine self, without reserve.

To *what* did he deliver up and give himself?

To be born in a stable and cradled in a manger.

To obscurity and indigence.

To infamy and scorn.

To pain and anguish.

To be betrayed by Judas.

To denied by Peter.

To be forsaken by all his disciples.

To what did he give himself?

To Caiaphas, who insulted him.

To Herod, who set him at naught.

To Pilate, who condemned him.

To the Romans, who crucified him.

In sum, *he gave himself to die the shameful, painful death of the cross*. Were there ever such proofs of love in any other cause by any other being, as these? Let all the archives of antiquity be explored, let the historic page be searched, bring all the generous sacrifices of Greece and Rome—and what are they compared to the amazing love of Calvary?

The love he then and there displayed for us guilty, graceless, hell-deserving sinners surpasses the love of women, surpasses the love of angels, surpasses tongue to tell, surpasses figures to illustrate, surpasses fancy to imagine, surpasses thought to measure, surpasses eternity itself to praise!

His incarnation was the embodiment of his love.

His sermons were the precepts of his love.

His miracles were the deeds of his love.

His tears were the dewdrops of his love.

His death was the agony of his love.

His resurrection was the triumph of his love.

His intercession in Heaven is the pleading of his love.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of his love.

The Bible is the record of his love.

The Gospel is the offer of his love.

The church is the depository of his love.

Our conversion is the conquest and realization of his love.

Glorious Savior! In being thus lovely and loving, in being thus attractive in his person and self-denyingly loving to lost sinners—more of his glory is seen than in all his works and words besides.

What must we think of the taste and temper of those who can disesteem such a Savior? *What a compound of stupidity and depravity is the wretched soul that can be indifferent to such personal charms and to such sin-atoning kindness!*

## Chapter 9.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in RENDERING His redeemed people HAPPY.

The glory of Christ appears in his fullness of joy to render us happy.

It was the opinion of Robert Hall that when the Scriptures call Jehovah the *blessed* God, they mean he is the *happy* God. He is clearly revealed as *the only great fountain of blessedness*.

Said Ezra to the afflicted Jews, "Do not grieve; for the *joy* of the Lord is your strength."

Said David, "In your presence is fullness of joy; and at your right hand there are pleasures for evermore!"

Jesus said, "My peace I give unto you." And as the final Judge he will say at the last day, "Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the *joy* of your Lord!"

One of the expressive titles which the ancient Hebrews gave to God was *Shadah*, which signified "the pourer or shedder forth of blessings." It seemed to represent him as *the great Reservoir on the top of the universe, pouring out streams of blessedness to all worlds*. Angels are not happy, and men are not happy—unless they share in the happiness of Him who is God over all, blessed forever. *With him is the fountain of life, and there is not a rill, not a drop of bliss in the universe, which does not flow from that fountain*. They who go elsewhere for happiness wander into boundless deserts, where all is drought and burning winds and vast desolation. *As well may an angel expect to find happiness in children's toys, or a philosopher in blowing bubbles—as for man's great soul to expect to find an adequate bliss anywhere out of God*. But in God there is everything to satisfy and transport the immortal mind. The joy of the soul, the same that fills the eternal mind, is the only joy that meets the desires and exigencies of the immortal soul.

The blessedness that Jesus Christ has and imparts to his disciples is permanent, strengthening, ennobling, and satisfying. It makes the soul steadfast, resolute, persevering, cheerful, and strong. The peace that Jesus has and gives, is independent of the changes of time, unaffected by the diseases of the body, uninjured by death, and untouched by the fires of the last day.

See how he glorifies himself, and renders greatly happy his people by giving them his joy as they need and can receive it.

What adorns the face of the young convert with such radiant smiles? Why is all within him peace, and all before him transport? Because, when he was forgiven, Christ let into his soul a rill of his joy.

What makes that bedridden, suffering saint, when all creature-comforts are dried up, so serene, calm, and bright? It is the joy of the Lord.

What is it that lifts the dying saint above the fear of death, softens the dying-bed, and strews it all over with the roses of paradise? It is the joy of Christ.

And what is it that rolls a tide of rapture all over the world of glory, that makes Heaven, Heaven? It is because the saints above have entered more fully into the joy of the Lord, and the joy of the Lord has entered more fully into them, than their capacities would permit them to receive while on earth.

Indeed, there is not a man on earth or in Heaven who does not derive all his true joys from Christ. Millions of His saints in all parts of the earth are constantly asking and receiving from Him joys that cheer and strengthen them in the house of their pilgrimage.

Some of them are poor, some of them are sick, some of them are tempted, some of them are dying; yet to each and to all he imparts a joy that impels to duty, sustains in affliction, and cheers in toil. And while he is thus imparting true happiness to the millions of his redeemed on earth, he is pouring a *flood of glory and felicity* into the untold millions of his servants in Heaven, filling them to overflowing with the fullness of his joy!

If there is such an inexhaustible fullness of joy in Christ, and he is delighted and glorified in imparting his joy to his people—then it follows that it is not only our privilege, but our duty to be happy in Christ. Christianity, rightly understood, not only authorizes and allows, but commands us to be happy. And it is greatly important that we more clearly understand and fully verify this feature of our Savior's character.

*A great many professed Christians have practically declared their religion to be a gloomy thing, by going to the world itself for pleasure*. All men seek happiness, and when they behold the followers of Christ appearing less happy in serving the Lord than they did in sin, they are confirmed in the prejudice that religion is a mopish, melancholy thing, and thereby many are kept from embracing it. The glory of Christ, then, in the triumph of his gospel, demands that every friend of Christ should be not only a conscientious, devout, and liberal—but a *happy* Christian. He owes it to the cause of Christ, to himself, to his family, his brethren, and the world of mankind, to live a serene, cheerful, happy life. Perhaps the greatest desideratum, in order to the more rapid conversion of the world to Christ, is that every Christian should be a specimen of the happiness Christianity is adapted to impart. When all who name the name of Christ shall be examples and reflectors of the joy of Christ, then Christianity will spread with primitive speed.

But is it practical to be always joyful? Says one, "I would, but cannot be happy." But if God makes it your duty to be joyful always, under all circumstances, then the requirement is reasonable and the fulfillment practical. It is admitted that

the Christian cannot be happy without good cause for being so. But he has good cause to be joyful. *God does not require his people to rejoice without affording them an adequate object to render them supremely and perpetually joyful.* What is it he requires us to rejoice in? In the world, its profits, its honors, its pleasures, its friendships? Not in these!

His command is, "Rejoice in the Lord Jesus." And is he not an adequate object to rejoice in? Is he not enough in himself? Has he not done enough for you and said enough to you to induce you, as your most reasonable, every-day practice, to be joyful? *All Christians have some causes for sadness, but they have in Christ far greater causes for gladness.* This is the reason why they should rejoice even in their sorrows; for however great and multiplied their causes for sorrow, their causes for joy far transcend those for sorrow. The poorest and most afflicted saint that Christ has on earth has in his Savior ten thousand stronger grounds for being happy, than he has to be unhappy.

It is not so with the rejecter of Christ. He, amid the best surroundings of earth, has far more reasons for being unhappy than he has to be happy. But when the Christian is most afflicted, he has in his Savior far more and better blessings than he has lost.

The point of our reasoning is this. If we have a Savior who has in himself such resources of blessedness, and if he is infinitely able and willing to impart all needed supplies of that blessedness to us, and if by our lack of this joy we become gloomy, and thereby misrepresent his religion, repel from it the ungodly, and dishonor his name—then is not unhappiness in us a sin, and is not joyfulness in Christ our bounden duty?

Do, then, Christian brother, live up to your duty, and appreciate your precious privilege in this regard. Take down your harp from the willows and begin the raptured song. As you walk on to the grave, let all the country around be charmed and won by your sacred melody; and let your songs of gladness die away from mortal ears only to burst in new and louder tones on the ear of Heaven! In this way Christ will be glorified in you more than he is by all that shines above and blooms beneath. In your joyfulness Christ's joy will be more fully realized and his glory more fully displayed.

## Chapter 10.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in CONSOLING His redeemed people IN AFFLICTION.

The glory of Christ is seen in his fullness of consolation to support his people in their afflictions.

No *strength* however great, no *plans* however wise, no *talents* however brilliant, no *wealth* however unbounded, no schemes of *pleasure* however skillfully planned—can turn away from us losses, crosses, disappointments, and death.

Make the very best of life, it is a weary pilgrimage, burdened with many woes. How many, how complicated, and how crushing—are the afflictions of the righteous. And hence one of our great wants is some balm of life, some alleviation of care, something that shall bind up the broken-hearted and pour consolation into heavy hearts. Men everywhere seek a comforter and alleviator of care and sorrow, and if there are none, then is life a wretched, weary, gloomy journey indeed.

But there are ample resources in the Lord Jesus to meet this emergency. He is “the God of all comfort.” He says to the tried and sorrowing, “I, even I, am he who comforts you.” Hear other of his consoling words to the afflicted: “Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.” “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Now does our Redeemer fulfill and verify these consoling promises in the experience of his afflicted saints? The experience of the saints in all ages bears testimony to the unfailing faithfulness with which the omnipotent, omniscient Jehovah fulfills his promises to all who put their trust in him. Not one afflicted believer in any land or age has ever, in the dark hour of sorrow and calamity, gone to his Savior for supporting grace and been disappointed.

It is true, many through unbelief have at times been ready to call his faithfulness and sustaining grace in question, “The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.” Yet in no instance have these gloomy apprehensions ever been ultimately realized, but in every case the all-faithful Redeemer has timely appeared for their relief, and convinced them that their gloomy fears were as groundless as they were unkind to him.

*Ask the great army of the tried and suffering who are now on their way to Heaven, if Christ ever failed to grant them sustaining grace in time of need—and they will all tell you that their apprehensions were groundless—that in every case their Redeemer is a very present help in times of trouble.*

Ask the great host who have gone up to Heaven through great tribulation if the Redeemer ever refused to aid them to endure sufferings with patience and losses with resignation—and No, no, no! would resound from all their shining ranks.

As no case of guilt or depravity has ever transcended the pardoning and regenerating power of our Savior—so no instance of affliction has ever occurred among his saints beyond his comforting power. See how the consolations of Christ are imparted to his people while under the extreme calamities of life.

When were the three Hebrew children visited by the heavenly guest, but when they were walking in the furnace for their adherence to the truth?

When did Paul and Silas ever sing so rapturously, as when they lay bound and mangled in the inner prison of Philippi? The impartation of Christ’s consolations is always proportional to the exigencies of our condition. He does not impart solace today, for tomorrow’s trials. He always deals with us according to our present necessities.

When he sees we need *strength*, he gives it.

When he sees we need *wisdom*, he gives it.

When he sees we need *pardon*, he gives it.

When he sees we need *affliction*, he sends it.

Just so, when we need *solace*, he grants it.

There is no promise more clearly verified by the experience of the Christian than, “*As your days, so shall your strength be.*” The martyrs greatly needed the comforts of Christ, and his *sustaining grace* was so signally imparted to them, that the violence of the fiercest flames was quenched, and the very fires were to them beds of roses.

When we are well and active, we do not so much need the consolations of the gospel. But when we are bedridden and racked with bodily pains, we need Christ’s solacing grace; and how wonderfully does he grant it to such!

And how such glorify Christ in the fires! What a testimony do they bear to the sustaining power of his grace, when they show by their patience and cheerfulness that Christ can sustain them when all earthly supports give way. When we turn away from such we are constrained to say, “We have *heard* of the religion of Christ, but we have now *seen* it manifested, to his own glory.”

But above all other emergencies of this life, *death* is the one in which we most need the supporting presence of our Redeemer. Of all the calamities of earth, *death* is the strongest and most terrible. How utterly inadequate are all human supports in this new, inevitable, mysterious affliction!

A grateful family may minister around us with affectionate tenderness. Well-provided attendants may anticipate every bodily want. Wealth in abundance may be present to alleviate pain and dignify the condition of the dying. Sweet sympathy may fan the fainting spirit. But these reach not the wants of the dying. But just here, how gloriously Christ



cheers and sustains his dying disciples. When earthly foundations crack, tremble, and give way by the inrush of the black waters of death, *the believer finds beneath his feet the Rock of Ages*. While his hand is warm from the last earthly pressure, Jesus takes it and leads him forward with certain and inspiring confidence. Just when the accents of human affection die away upon his ear, he hears the voice of his great Redeemer saying, "Fear not, I am with you!"

When his soul is unclothed from its mortal covering, he finds the beautiful garment of Christ's righteousness, which covers his nakedness and deformities, and clad in which he can mount up from his bed of death to the shining path to glory and to God. None but the recording angel can tell how many saints Christ has enabled to die radiantly, victoriously, and usefully.

Said one to whom he had given *living grace* and then *dying grace*, "Is this dying? Is this the enemy that has so long dismayed me, now appearing so harmless and even pleasant?"

If, then, our Redeemer can lighten our heaviest burdens, irradiate our darkest scenes, soothe our most corroding anxieties, dry our most sorrowful tears, and hush our bitterest griefs; if he can by his presence cheer the broken-hearted and bring tears of gladness into eyes swollen with grief; if his consolations can produce and maintain serenity under evils which drive worldlings to madness; if Christ can, by his love and grace, so reconcile his sufferers to their crosses as to send songs of praises from lips quivering with agony—then is he not infinitely worthy of the strongest confidence, the supremest love, and the most devoted service of every son and daughter of Adam?

## Chapter 11.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in PROTECTING His redeemed people.

The glory of Christ is seen in his fullness of power, to deliver and protect us.

In the way of our being finally saved, there are very great and, to the eye of human reason, insurmountable difficulties. To reach the heavenly world we must not only overcome the *world* with its frowns and blandishments, and the *flesh* with its appetites and lusts—but legions of *devils* whose perseverance, skill, and power to tempt and ruin are greater than we can tell.

So that unless our Redeemer is literally omnipotent, he cannot meet all the emergencies of our case. The mightiest angel is inadequate to vanquish our foes. But one of the glories of our Savior, is that he has all power given unto him, in Heaven and earth. Not only has he omniscience for the glance of his eye, omnipresence for the coextension of his existence, eternity for the term of his being, immensity for his empire, but omnipotence for the energy of his will. And this he has not merely as absolute God, but as the Mediator.

The once poor, obscure, Galilean carpenter is exalted to the throne of the universe, and is invested with complete and sovereign power, over all matter, minds, and events. Though he was once crucified in weakness—he is the mighty God, with an empire extending upwards as *high* as the flight of the highest angel, *downwards* as deep as the bottomless abyss, and *outwards* as far as the outskirts of creation, where no created being ever sent a solitary thought. There is nothing “too hard” for our Savior. He can do all his pleasure, in Heaven, earth, and Hell. He rules and renders subservient to his purposes towards his people, all material, animal, human, and angelic agents.

Beings rational and irrational, animate and inanimate; the heavens above, and the earth below; the obedience of the good, and the disobedience of the bad; fallen and unfallen angels; all the saved and all the damned spirits; in a word, every agent from the archangel down to the atom, are the ministers of his will. How astonishing are his possessions, dominion, and power! He is Lord both of the dead and living. The great empire of the grave, as well as all that lives and acts—is completely subject to his sovereign will.

A world seems a great thing to us; but what is our earth compared to the millions of stars, around which roll unnumbered worlds? By him, all these worlds were created and are upheld. At his bidding, stars lighted up their fires, and systems rolled to fulfill his pleasure.

All the dispensations of Providence, however mysterious and desolating in their sweep, carry out his designs. The mighty host of angels obey him. To carry into effect his mandates is their highest honor. He has complete empire over devils. From his throne high and lifted up he can descry and frustrate all their wiles, and say to them, “Hitherto shall you come and no farther!” And in the realm of *mind*, over the *will*, *thoughts*, and *affections*—his power is as complete as it is over matter and events.

There is then no difficulty or enemy in the way of our salvation, that he cannot, with infinite ease, remove and overcome.

Are you dead in trespasses and sins? He who called Lazarus from the sepulcher can quicken you into life.

Are you fast bound in the snares of Satan? He who could expel seven devils from one and a legion from another, can deliver you.

Are you blind to spiritual glories? He who gave sight to the blind men of Jericho can make you see.

Have furious storms of trouble overtaken you? He who by a word hushed into a calm the Galilean sea, can give you repose; namely, he will enable you to bear your afflictions, or he will remove them.

Do you complain of a heart of stone? He, who by a look melted and restored a fallen Peter and subdued a Saul of Tarsus, can soften you.

Were all spiritual enemies at once to assail you, you can take courage in the fact that greater is He who is for you, than are they that are against you. True, your great enemy is *mighty*, but your Savior is *Almighty*. True, you are nothing to your enemies, but it is also true that your enemies are nothing to your divine Friend and Keeper.

Not only is our Savior infinitely greater in *strength* than all our enemies combined, but he is greater in resources, greater in his agency, greater in his residence, greater in his subjects, and greater in his principles.

When we remember who our Redeemer is, and what he has done for us, when we call to mind that his nature is love, his will is power, his thoughts are wisdom, his resources are all-sufficiency, his empire is the universe, and his duration is eternity—and recollect that he has bound himself by a promise and covenant never to leave nor forsake us; and that all things shall work together for our good—may we not triumphantly say, “If Christ is for us who can be against us? With such a Savior whom or what need we fear?”

The best Christian on earth might never overcome another sin, never gain another triumph over the world, never demolish another idol, never escape another snare of Satan.

But with Christ strengthening us, we can meet the combined assaults of earth and Hell, and be more than conquerors.

In a word, with such an almighty Savior for our atoner, regenerator, sanctifier, leader, and intercessor—we can perform all of life's duties, bear all of life's trials, resist all of life's temptations, overcome all of life's enemies; triumphantly meet life's close, and have ministered unto us an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom!

Glorious is this Savior, and ineffably safe and happy are all those who love and obey him!

## Chapter 12.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in MANAGING OUR SOULS' AFFAIRS.

In Jesus Christ there is a fullness of wisdom to manage the affairs of our souls in the best way.

Though our Savior was an obscure Jew, a young man, and a working carpenter, yet he was the *greatest* among the great, and the *wisest* among the wise. During the last eighteen hundred years the world has made great advances in science, arts, and civilization, but nothing has been added to the information that the Man of Nazareth revealed concerning God, the soul, immortality, and man's duty to God, himself, and others. All that we certainly know on these great moral and religious questions, the son of Mary has told us.

But to say of him, as Goethe and Renan said, that Jesus was the greatest of earth's reformers and philosophers, is only to say an infinitesimal part of the truth concerning him. His knowledge is as limitless as his power: his understanding is infinite; he knows the end from the beginning; he knows all things in their origin, connections, tendencies, and consequences.

Everything that *has* occurred in the universe, everything that is *now* taking place, and everything that *will* take place—is mapped out before his omniscient eye in perfect transparency.

At a single glance, he looks through immensity and eternity, and takes in at one view all beings and events. He knows what will take place and what his people will need a thousand years to come. Nothing can surprise, or baffle, or disappoint him. He knows how to make the most malicious wiles of Hell, redound to his people's greatest good and his greatest glory.

No part of our salvation can fail from any mistake on the part of our Redeemer. *Never from eternity has he altered or amended any of his plans. He has never done anything for his people that could have been better done.* Often, while he is training us for usefulness and for Heaven, we are perplexed and gloomily conclude in our haste that all these things are against our own good and our Master's honor. But this is our infirmity. We forget that providences that are trying and contradictory to us, are really most for our good and his glory.

We ask him for bright lights. He in his wisdom and love sees it best for us to read our prayers backward and give us dark shadows.

We desire to be put upward and forward, both temporally and spiritually. But he in his wisdom sees we can only be put forward and upward spiritually, by being put backward and downward temporally; hence the afflictions he sends on his people.

Let us then always *trust his heart, even when we cannot trace his hand*; remembering that, were it consistent with his glory and our holiness—he would give us all light and no shadows, all sweets and no bitters. No doubt at the last day, when the schemes of his redemption and providence shall be finished, we shall adoringly see that the very things in this life that we most sought, would have been our ruin, had we been permitted to obtain them. We shall also see that the very things we most tried to shun, were the very things most essential and beneficial to us as disciples of Christ.

What abundant reasons have we to rejoice in the government of such a God and Savior! *What could we do without such an infinitely kind, powerful, and wise Savior—who knows infinitely better how to plan for us than we do for ourselves.* Better that we had never been born than not to have him reign over us, both in providence and in grace.

Let us then gather up everything dear to us for both worlds, and commit them all into the hands that bled for us on Calvary! We cannot place too much confidence in him.

By his atoning death, by his converting and sustaining grace, by his intercession for us before his Father's throne, and by his many providential interpositions on our behalf—he has attested and supported his claim to our unwavering faith and supreme love.

## Chapter 13.

### Jesus manifests His glory as a complete Savior, in JUDGING THE WORLD.

The glory of Christ will appear in his being invested with the authority, power, and wisdom to judge the world—in the final salvation of his friends, and in the eternal destruction of his enemies.

He must be the world's Judge, as well as its Atoner, Sanctifier, Model, Leader, and Intercessor—or he would not be a complete and infinitely glorious Savior. *The great end of human redemption is the glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.* And its history has already revealed much of that glory. In the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Prophetic dispensations—there were symbolic, sacrificial, and typical displays of Christ's glory. His glory was more remarkably displayed in his incarnation and death. Never before had Divine glory shone so brightly, as on Mount Calvary.

There was a glory that preceded his incarnation and death; there was a glory that accompanied his sufferings, and there was a greater glory that followed his sufferings. In the darkening of the sun, the rending of the rocks, the opening of the graves, and in the salvation of the dying thief—we behold the yet unequalled display of that glory which accompanied the sufferings of Christ.

But in his resurrection and ascension; in his Spirit's descending and converting three thousand prejudiced Jews on the day of Pentecost; in the triumphant diffusion of his gospel over the whole Roman empire within a few years after his death; and in the untold millions that that gospel has saved from sin and Satan since—we behold greater and more convincing displays of his glory than at first issued from the cross.

But neither Calvary nor the progress of the gospel since, adequately display the honor of Christ. Very much of our Redeemer's glory is yet concealed from men and angels.

Millions of our race do not know that such a being as Christ exists. And even in those countries where he is professedly known, what multitudes oppose and dishonor him! And more wonderful still, among those who wear his name, how many are there who tarnish his glory by denying his divinity! Others cast him down from his excellency by renouncing his atonement and ridiculing the operations of his Spirit. And among his real friends, how many are there who, by their *inconsistencies* of temper and conduct, hinder his glory by lowering him in the esteem of his enemies!

Now that the honor of the Redeemer should thus be concealed and lessened and cast into the dust, is a matter of humiliation and distress to every true believer. It is the deepest desire of every true Christian that his Savior may be more fully and universally honored; and all such are cheered by the thought that on the day of his second coming he will be completely and universally glorified.

He will then come in power and great glory. He will then be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe. His grandeur will then be seen and acknowledged by all the inhabitants of Heaven, earth, and Hell.

Far unlike his first coming, will be his second. At his first coming, he was humbled, suffering, persecuted, dying, nailed to the cross, and buried in the grave; much of his glory was veiled. At his second coming, he will descend from Heaven with the glory of his Father and in the full brilliancy of that glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

No more the babe of Bethlehem; no more a prisoner before a human judge; no more an expiring victim on the cross; no more a lifeless corpse in the sepulcher; no more disbelieved, opposed, and dishonored; no more unknown, vilified, and misrepresented.

“Behold! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.” Revelation 1:7

Fix your eye on that point in the ethereal heavens where the gradually lessening form of our Savior disappeared from the gaze of his disciples when he ascended to Heaven. At that point, see an uncommon and undefined brightness just beginning to appear. It catches the eye of the careless. All over the earth groups are formed, wondering what that strange light means. While they gaze, conjecture gives place to appalling certainty. The light begins to enlarge and approach the earth. The sun begins to pale before a brightness superior to its own. Meanwhile the light becomes a great dazzling cloud, which comes rushing down as on the wings of a whirlwind. It pauses and suddenly discloses a great white throne, on which sits, in all the glories of the Godhead, the man Christ Jesus! Before his judgment-seat all the inhabitants of Heaven, earth, and Hell shall be gathered. The universe elsewhere will be deserted, and all its inhabitants will stand before the great white throne. The books will be opened. Every eye will be intently fixed on the Judge! Upon what a large scale will Christ then be glorified!

1. In that supreme day he will glorify his **justice** in the conviction, overthrow, and punishment of his enemies. Already he has given displays of his wrath in the punishment of his foes in sending on the antediluvians a baptism of vengeance; in burning up the degenerate cities of the plain, and leaving in their place a sea of death; in earthquakes, famines, wars, and pestilences!

Yet all these are but warnings of the displays of his justice that will be witnessed on that day. There have been other days of his wrath—but that will be the great day of his wrath. All the other inflictions of his wrath have been partial in their degree and in the number punished. But on that day his wrath will fall to the uttermost on all his enemies. *There will not be a foe of his among fallen men or fallen angels that will not be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.* Never after that day will he have in any world an unconvinced, unchained, unpunished enemy! He will show his enemies that their ruin was derived from themselves, and that their sins are just as evil and odious as he had declared them to be in the Scriptures, and that they are equitably punished everlastingly in perdition.

When the crimson aggravation of the sinner's guilt shall be laid open in the clear light of eternity, so just and necessary will it appear to all, that he ought to go away into everlasting punishment, that the universe will say *Amen* to his doom; and never after the disclosures of that occasion will any doomed soul whisper a complaint that he has been punished more severely than his sins deserved.

**2.** On that day Christ will glorify his **omniscience**. To make no mistake in fixing the destinies of men and angels, he must bring every work into judgment and every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. According to the long-published principles on which the last great assize is to be conducted, *not a single lost sinner can be absent nor a single sin overlooked.* Every saint, of all lands and ages, with every wish, desire, purpose, word, and deed of every saint, on the one hand; and every lost sinner of Adam's race, with every omitted kindness, evil thought, unchaste desire, idle and profane word and deed of darkness of every sinner, on the other hand—must be brought into the open court!

But how can Jesus bring every sinner and every sin into trial, unless from the beginning he has searched the hearts and tried the motives of the children of men? However interlocked and confederated sinners and sins may be with each other, he will so know each and all in their isolated responsibility, that he will as accurately and adequately judge and punish each, as if he and each were the only two in the universe. Though amid an assembled universe, each one will have the guilt and number of his sins so clearly and appallingly revealed to him, that he will be engrossingly insulated from all others. In anticipation of the disclosures of the great audit, the Judge has said, "These things have you done, and I kept silence. You thought that I was altogether such a one as yourself; but I will reprove you, and set them in order before your eyes!" How literally will he verify this prediction at his judgment-seat!

Elsewhere he says, "I will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart," when I come. Here he says he will set our sins in order before our eyes. When the books are opened, and the great crowd shall be hushed into deepest silence, and every being shall be bending forward to hear his impending doom—then the Judge will, by a new miracle of his omniscience and power, cause all the sins of each to rise up and come trooping around him! Each one will behold the vast picture of his sins, drawn in blackness, with no luminous strokes to relieve his distressed eye.

Were the Judge to lay open *now* the secret sins of the wicked, as he will at that day—they would be banished from society; nay, they would fly from it themselves, overwhelmed with shame and confusion.

When the sins of each are disclosed amid assembled worlds, all holy beings will be aghast, and exclaim, "Away with such to their kindred spirits in the abyss!" To the omniscient Judge alone, the disclosure will not be amazing. Oh, never before will there have been such a glorious display of the omniscience of Christ.

**3.** On that day he will glorify his **power** in bringing his friends and enemies to judgment, and in the final accomplishment of his purposes in regard to them. Already we have had glorious displays of the power of our Redeemer in curing diseases, opening blind eyes, casting out devils, calming the seas, raising the dead; and in raising himself from death he appeared in a splendor and majesty in which as Mediator he had never been seen before.

But these are inconspicuous exhibitions of power, in comparison with those he will display at the last judgment. When that day comes, an overwhelming majority of our race will be among the dead. The bodies of hundreds of generations will have commingled with their mother earth, been scattered by the winds, burned by the fires, washed by the waters, and transmuted into the trees and into the flesh of other animals. Can Omnipotence, guided by infinite wisdom itself, reconstruct and reproduce alive, the bodies of the buried generations that have been thus scattered to the four winds?

This will be the sublimest wonder of the infinite God! There is no other marvel in his dealings with our race that equals it; and yet this is the work with which the man Christ Jesus will begin the last great assize! He greatly amazed the Jews once by telling them that the spiritually dead would hear his voice and be raised up to spiritual life. They could not understand how the word of Christ could possess such regenerating power. Christ said to them, "Marvel not at this," as though he had said, "You are staggered and deem it incredible that I can speak into mortal life souls that are dead in sin. But I have a yet more wonderful thing to tell you, which I shall hereafter do, which requires far greater power. Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear my voice, and shall come forth."

Grasp, if you can, the great fact! While the myriads upon myriads shall be sleeping in death, the trumpet of God shall sound, and the voice of the Son of God shall pierce, with irresistible life-begetting, life-compelling force, every grave—and in an instant every member and dust of every body will seek its kindred member and dust, and every dead member of Adam's countless family will stand up, an innumerable living throng, ready to press forward to the judgment-seat.

And what will add to this marvel of divine marvels, it will be effected *instantaneously*. Says Paul, "In a *moment*." And that term not sufficiently expressing the quickness of the work, he adds, "We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, *in the twinkling of an eye*, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed!" 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

At one instant the bodies of the buried generations are dispersed to the four quarters of the earth, floating in waters, waving in the trees, and forming parts of other bodies of men and animals; and *their resurrection is, to human reason, the greatest of all impossibilities*. The next instant they have heard the voice of the Son of God, have been disentangled, dust has found its kindred dust, bone its fellow-bone, and every body is raised, and all are reconstructed and gathered into an innumerable host, ready for the last great judgment!

All this is effected by the same voice that said, "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest;" and who on the cross said, "It is finished!"

Wonderful Savior, who need fear to commit his all into your hands until that day?

Nor will this be the only display of his power. The saints who are alive, on the morning of the judgment, will, in an instant, by the same power, have their bodies of flesh and blood made incorruptible, immortal, spiritual, and fashioned like unto his own body after he arose! At his bidding, all these saints and sinners, as an immense cloud, will rise up through the air—as they approach the dread tribunal—his friends, with hallelujahs, going to the right hand, and his enemies, with groans, to the left.

His power will also be signally displayed and glorified in the arraignment and doom of the *devils*. When they fell, he prepared a Hell for them, and has kept them partially chained in that world of darkness. To the judgment of the great day these devils are looking with dread as the time of their complete punishment and overthrow. Hence when Jesus was about casting a legion of them out of a Gadarene, they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with you, Jesus, you Son of God? Have you come hither to torment us before the time?" The same power that has been reserving them in chains under darkness, will on that great day tear off the covering of Hell and cause them to ascend, to meet before assembled worlds the rebuke and doom they have so long merited!

The most awful and convincing evidence will then be furnished, that Christ has supreme control over men, angels, death, and Hell! Men and devils resist him now—but none will then be able to stay his hand, or dare to say unto him, "What are you doing?"

Heaven, at his command, will open all its infinite enjoyments to his disciples!

The doors of Hell, at his bidding, will close in on all his enemies!

To all who love him, his smile will be Heaven.

To all who hate him, his frown will be Hell.

From his face the heavens and the earth will flee away. At his word a new Heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness, will arise in their stead.

**4.** At the judgment day he will glorify his **holiness**. By his word and by his judgment, and especially by his atoning cross and renewing Spirit, he has done much to arrest the ravages of sin, and to extirpate it from man and from the earth.

Now Satan and sin, to a great extent, have the world for their empire and mankind for their prey.

But at the judgment, he glory of God will demand that the great rebellion that commenced in Heaven, when the angels kept not their first estate, and on earth, when our first parents fell—should be entirely put down; that all who have taken sides with Satan against him, should be vanquished, either by his grace or by his judicial power. In one of these ways Jesus will conquer all his enemies.

He has declared that every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And as certainly as he is God, his every enemy must thus bow and confess—voluntarily and believingly, or involuntarily and penally. *The only option wicked men have is in which way they will submit*. All whom the judgment-day finds unsubdued in the former, will be vanquished in the latter way. All on the right hand of the Judge will be those who were subdued by grace; all on the left will be those who remained Christ's enemies; and they will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power!

All classes of sinners and all grades of sins will on that day be so exposed, abashed, condemned, and punished, as forever to have their God-dishonoring career ended. Man will then in wrath be transferred from his place of sinning to the abode of eternal penal suffering; and the earth which he had polluted will be purified by the judgment fires.

After the great judgment, the entire universe, Hell excepted, will be freed from sin. *Earth*, where the great rebellion occurred, having been purified by a deluge of fire, will give place to new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells

righteousness. In *Hell*, all unredeemed men and fallen angels will be confined forever—a *fearful monument of the evil of sinning against God*.

One class of sinners will meet, from the Judge, a more intolerable doom than any others. It will be the *gospel-rejecters*. Whoever may hope for a favorable verdict on the day of visitation, they cannot expect it. Were any allowed to be absent, certainly they would not be. Were a day of judgment appointed for no other class, the judgment-throne would be erected and the books opened *for them*. Whoever may hope to come off with a lighter doom—rejecters of Christ cannot expect it. Their sin will throw all others into the shade.

The most ordinary proceedings of that day will be invested with a greater solemnity than the universe has ever before beheld. But when the rejecter of Christ shall be arraigned, the attention of the universe will become breathless and intense; and when his doom is pronounced the voice of the Judge will take a deeper tone, and speak with a more awful emphasis, as he utters the malediction, “*Depart from me, you evildoers!*”

Rejecters of Christ will meet a deeper perdition than the heathen or the devils. Christ did not die for the devils, and was never rejected by the heathen. And in this deepest perdition of the ungodly, Christ’s holiness and justice will be glorified. In the very misery of the second death, the universe will see *the hatefulness of sin and God’s aversion to it*.

**5.** At the last day Jesus will be glorified in the consummation of his **kindness** to his genuine disciples. His redeeming favors will be bestowed in distinct and successive stages—each stage better than the preceding—by which his people are carried from blessing to blessing, until they reach the very summit of salvation!

The beginning of the series of Christ’s benefits is the forgiveness of sin. That removes the law’s penalty, the sting of death, the wrath of God, the damnation of Hell!

Forgiveness of sin changes our state and nature, and puts in our possession a right and title to Heaven.

Then our relations to the universe are changed, we draw the first breath of a new life, and aim at Heaven.

Death comes and our Redeemer pledges to us a far greater measure of his redeeming goodness. If we are Christ’s then death is ours—ours not to escape, but ours to vanquish, and to usher us into the ever-blooming paradise of God.

*None but believers who have died, can tell how much we gain by dying!* It is one low moan—and then eternal song! It is one brief, sharp conflict—and then we have forever vanquished sin, Satan, self, death, and Hell; and with the quickness of thought we are with Christ, where our every pain is eased, our every desire is fulfilled, and our every hope is realized.

*The Christian’s death brings glory to Christ, and Heaven to himself.* But the introduction of the soul into Paradise completes neither the salvation of the believer nor the glory of Christ. So long as the *bodies* of the saints are under the dominion of death, Christ’s work is incomplete, and his honor in our salvation not fully displayed.

Accordingly on the morning of the last judgment “The Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trumpet of God—and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

This Scripture has been supposed to allude to the trumpet of Jubilee, which proclaimed the liberation of all prisoners in Israel, at the end of every fifty years. What joyful hopes would be raised in the captives, as the forty-ninth year approached its close! How bright their countenances when the sun of the last day set! When just as the sun of the first day of the fiftieth year arose, ten thousand trumpets blew through every quarter of the land, and every prison door was opened and every captive was freed from debt, and set at liberty.

In some such way, on the morning of the last day, the Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, when all Heaven, the souls of the redeemed, an innumerable company of angels, each of all the holy intelligences in God’s universe, shall unite in one general shout that shall rend the earth, and proclaim the deliverance of all the dead in Christ; when every saint of every land and age will spring from the dust of death, radiant with immortality.

How will their eyes sparkle with joy and echo back the shouts from Heaven, when they behold themselves delivered from the dominion of death, and possessed of immortal, spiritual, and glorious bodies. This will be the third stage of that glorious salvation that Jesus effects in his people. All of Christ’s other redeeming achievements are small compared with this. This eclipses, in glory, his other exploits.

But this is subservient to another and higher stage of redemption; which will be their acquittal at the bar of Heaven, amid assembled worlds. When the Judge vanquishes and dooms his enemies—he will do it in the presence of all his friends. And when he absolves, acquits, and rewards his friends—he will do it in the presence of all his enemies. “Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.” Not one of his enemies will be on his right hand—and not one of his friends will be on the left. “Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand: Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” What gracious, heaven-revealing, heaven-bestowing words!

Then, when the assembled universe shall be hushed into silence and the Judge shall be distributing endless life and endless death, the same voice that on earth said, “Come unto me,” will say “Come!” and the same hands that were pierced on Calvary, will place on their heads the crown of life.



What a bright contrast between those on the right and those on the left hand. To those on the right, it is “Come.” To those on the left, “Depart.” To his friends, “You who are blessed of my Father.” To his enemies he will utter the awful malediction, “Depart from Me, you who are cursed.”

One will be the *blessed* by the Father; and if God blesses them—then how full, efficacious, and irreversible is the blessing! The hatred and imprecations of the universe, cannot injure those whom God blesses.

Those on the left hand will be *cursed* of his Father. No language can tell, nor imagination can conceive the terrors of being cursed, at the last day, by the incarnate Judge! When that tremendous sentence falls from the lips of the blessed Jesus, the last drop of the soul’s bliss will be dried up, and the last star of hope blotted out.

Those on the right hand will be welcomed to *the bosom of infinite love*, and into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world! And when Jesus says to them, *Come!* every inhabitant of Heaven will echo the invitation, *Come!*

But acquitting, applauding, and crowning his redeemed in the presence of all worlds, does not complete the glory, honor, and blessedness, to which Christ will finally exalt them. The final judgment being ended, wicked men and angels being doomed to their eternal penal abode; the righteous being acquitted, and God’s government vindicated before all worlds—the Judge with all his followers will ascend to the Heaven of heavens, where, with all his redeemed, of all ages and nations, fully delivered from the ruins of the fall, soul and body and both reflecting his own image—he will present them before his Father’s throne, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, as the crown and reward of his mediatorial work!

Behold the mediatorial work of Christ finished in the complete deliverance of his people from the ruins of the grave, and the deeper ruins of the fall. *See a multitude that no man can number in the fullness of perfect joy before the throne of God.* Oh how do their knowledge, their purity, their dignity, their bliss, their undying friendship for each other, and their perpetual and eternal safety—glorify, in the estimation of all worlds, Him who loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood!

The discussion of this subject suggests some most important inquiries:

1. When we first look at Christ, and see in him an infinite inexhaustible fullness of *spiritual blessings*; of *light* sufficient to scatter the world’s darkness; of *merit* to atone for the world’s guilt; of *mercy* to pardon all sins; of *grace* to sanctify all hearts; of *beauty* to win our supreme love; of *excellency* for our imitation and transformation; of *joy* to make all human beings blessed forever; of consolation to support man under all trials and afflictions; of *power* to protect from all enemies, and deliver from all difficulties; of *wisdom* to manage all man’s interests in the best way; and of *authority* and *power* to judge the world—and then turn to mankind and see them utterly devoid of all these blessings that so redundantly dwell in Christ; behold them ignorant, guilty, vile, depraved, loving the hateful, and hating the lovely, miserable, sorrowful, unable to overcome their foes, and incompetent to take care of themselves—when we thus see the infinite, saving, available fullness of the Redeemer; and the appalling, hopeless emptiness of man—the question arises: How may there be formed between the unsaved and the Savior a channel of communication, up which may go our application, and down which may come supplies from Christ’s fullness? Between the all-sufficient Savior and the all-needy sinner, there is a wide gulf fixed. From the one to the other, there must be formed a conduit, or no sinner can be saved through Christ. In order to our being saved through Christ’s sufficiency, it is just as essential that there should exist between him and us a channel of communication, as it is that there should be a Christ. Nor are we the passive recipients of his fullness.

His rule is to save through a well-understood *means* on our part. What is it?

It is not the *sacraments*. They are commemorative and sanctifying, but not regenerative.

Nor is the channel *prayer*. That is an application through the previously-formed channel.

It is not *natural goodness*. Thousands possess that, who are utterly without God and Christ in the world.

It is not strictly *penitence*. That is the change of the soul’s view of sacred things, after it has commenced receiving of Christ’s sufficiency.

It is not the *church*. We are received into the church through Christ, and do not receive Christ by becoming members of his church.

It is not the ministry. No pope, priest, prelate or pastor, can come in between Christ and the sinner, and be the medium of grace to his soul.

What then is the heaven-appointed channel?

*It is a personal, living, confiding, loving faith.*

It is not feeling *and* faith, or works, or reformation and faith, but faith only. This is God’s plainly revealed appointment. He has ordained and proclaimed that whenever any sinner begins to exercise faith in Christ, he begins that moment to partake of the fullness in Christ; and the degree in which he partakes of this fullness will be just in proportion to the strength of his faith.

Hence the singular prominence the Bible gives to faith. It is called by the apostle Peter “*precious* faith,” for what can be more precious than that which forms an indissoluble union and free communication between a lost, needy, guilty sinner

and the Savior, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. He who exercises this faith is saved, and is incalculably rich, though he should possess nothing else. He who exercises not this faith is miserably poor, though he should possess all the world can give.

No matter what a man is and does in other respects that God demands, if he has never made a believing application to Christ, then he has no share in this fullness.

His mind is unenlightened, his sins are unpardoned, his heart is unsanctified, and the wrath of God abides on him!

According to the repeated and clear teachings of the Scriptures, faith in Christ is the pivot and turning point of one's present and eternal salvation. None are qualified to enter either his earthly or heavenly kingdom, but those to whom he imparts his fullness; and none receive his fullness but those who *believe* in him.

If then faith in Christ is the very origin of salvation, and the hinge of salvation; if in the Scriptures the same blessings are ascribed to faith in Christ—then how vitally important that we know what it is to believe in Christ. The Scriptures, to make this vital exercise plain, employ a variety of plain figures.

The Scriptures represent faith as *coming to Jesus*. He himself said, "Come unto me." "Him that comes unto me I will never cast out." Go to him, approach him in desire and determination, and that will be faith in Christ. *Though you creep to him as the poor lame man, or grope your way to him as the poor blind man*—that will constitute a saving channel between you and Christ.

But do you say that you are so utterly impotent as to be unable to move to him, in any way? Then Jesus in the Gospel is offered to you as the free and unspeakable gift of God. Stretch forth your hand and receive that gift, and that will constitute between your soul and Christ the channel of communication.

But do you say that *your arm is so paralyzed by sin* that it hangs powerless at your side, and that you cannot stretch it forth? Then the Gospel represents Jesus as the most attractive, charming object in the universe. *Look* unto him—and that will answer for saving faith.

But do you say, Alas! sin has so filmed and weakened your eyes that you cannot see him? Then poor sinner, if you can do nothing else lie still just as you are, and "submit to the righteousness of God," allowing Jesus to throw over you the robe of his righteousness, and that will answer for faith in Christ, for "whoever will" may take him for a Savior.

What is it to believe in Christ? It is to *hear* him when he calls; *obey* him when he commands; *tremble* when he threatens; *trust* him when he promises; *build* on him as our foundation; *enter* him as our refuge; *appropriate* him as our atoning sacrifice; *confide* in him as our guide; *apply* to him as the balm of Gilead; and *feed* on him as the bread of life.

In a word it is to accept Jesus as God's greatest gift for all the purposes which he is appointed to accomplish.

2. Having seen how awakened sinners are made partakers of Christ's pardoning and regenerating fullness, a second question is: *how are Christians to make the most of his fullness in their religious growth*. Having seen how Christ is of God made unto the sinner wisdom and righteousness—the question arises how is he to be made unto the justified believer, sanctification?

It cannot be denied that the standard of personal religion with the mass of professors, is distressingly low. Before Christianity achieves the general triumphs that await her, there must be a general and great improvement in Christian character; and what is the best way to effect this improvement, is an inquiry inferior in importance to no other. Many plans are proposed, such as fasting, prayer, self-examination, and exertions to do good. But of all *means* for the thorough and speedy improvement of our Christian character, *habitual application to the fullness of Christ is the most efficacious*. The best means of growth in grace, is the continuance of the same faith that secures to the soul pardon and regeneration.

Our meager attainments in religion arise from our practically regarding the faith that saves, as an isolated act, at the commencement of our religious life—instead of a lifelong habit. *Genuine faith is not a single application to Christ, but a continued exercise*. The growing Christian is not one that came and transacted an affair with Christ, and then has nothing more to do with him—but one who is ever coming to Christ. The apostle Peter seems to exclude those from genuine religion whose faith is a single action, instead of a course of action. "To whom *coming* as unto a living stone."

We sin constantly; and as we contract fresh guilt, are called on to perform new duties, bear new trials, and resist new temptations—we need continually to apply to him. We should not, as is the custom of some, reserve the atonement as a high mystery to be contemplated on special occasion, but we should turn it to daily practical account.

*We will go just so far in religion, as we believe in Christ, and no farther*. Our eminence in religion—our zeal, humility, courage, prayerfulness, patience, and joy—will be just in proportion to the frequency and confidence of our applications to the fullness of Christ. No effect can exceed its cause. *There are no other resources adequate to secure and prompt to holiness of heart and character, but the sufficiency of Christ*. Dissevered from this, we will sink to the level of those around us.

Hear the experience of Richard Baxter. Referring to a certain temptation he says, "From this I was forced to take notice that our *faith in Christ is the spring of all grace*; and with it rises or falls, flourishes or decays, is actuated or stands still; and that there is more of this secret unbelief than most of us are aware of; and that our love of the world, our boldness in sin, our neglect of duty—are caused hence. I easily observe in myself that if at any time Satan more than at other times

weakened my belief in Christ my zeal in every religious duty abated with it, and I grew more indifferent in religion than before. But when faith revived, then none of the parts or concerns of religion seemed small; and then man seemed nothing, the world a shadow, and God was all.”

An abiding faith in Christ makes a strong *will*—and this will induce perseverance, energy, and holy achievement.

Of all ways, habitual faith in Christ is the quickest and most efficient to make the spirit erect, resolute, bold, pure, and indefatigable.

In simple daily confidence in the Redeemer, are all the elements of perfect holiness and Christ-like perfection.

The greatest act of the soul is to rely on its all-sufficient Savior. Do this, and all else in religion will follow.

Christians! Would you be enabled to walk in the way of obedience, imitate in your measure the character of your Savior; make the greatest possible attainments in purity, do the greatest amount of good, live the firmest, happiest life attainable in this world, make the best preparation to die triumphantly, and in all glorify your Savior upon the largest scale?

Then see to it that the life you live in the flesh, you live by faith in the Son of God who loved you and gave himself for you.