

## The Foot of the Cross

### A Sight of Sin and a Sight of Jesus

By Octavius Winslow

"They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." -Zech. 12:10

We can only properly deal with sin as, at the same moment, we personally and closely deal with Jesus. A spiritual sight of the one object, apart from a believing sight of the other, will plunge the soul into the deepest despair. A sight of atoning blood must accompany the sight of our guilt. Seen and dealt with alone, dissociated from the Savior, it is the darkest and most appalling object that can engage human study. But God has graciously and marvelously met the case. The instrument that exhibits sin in its greatest blackness at the same moment exhibits it in its fullest pardon. A sight of sin and a sight of Jesus, as presented in the cross, is found in no other spot in the universe. Nowhere not upon earth, where its ravages are vividly and fearfully traced- not in hell, where its punishment is fully and eternally endured- is sin seen as in the light of Christ's cross. God's hatred of its nature and infliction of its penalty, as exhibited in the soul-sorrow, and bodily suffering of His beloved Son, is a demonstration unsurpassed, yes, unparalleled. Oh, how great the love of God to provide such a mirror in which to see at the same moment the enormity of sin and the completeness of its forgiveness- the Ethiopian blackness of its guilt- and the snow-white purity of its cleansing. There was but one Being in the universe who concentrated upon Himself so much sin- yet, "He knew no sin" -and in whom met so much punishment of sin, as Jesus, the Sinbearer of His Church. What defective views and realizations have we of this truth! How shallow our sounding of its infinite depths, how faint our experience of its preciousness and power! And yet it is all and everything to us in the momentous matter of our comfort, holiness, and hope. If Jesus did not bear my transgression and curse; He did nothing for me, and I am yet in my sins. If He did, then the load is gone, the burden is annihilated, all transferred to Him, and by Him borne into eternal oblivion. I am no longer my own sin and burden bearer; my sins were all laid on Jesus, not by my hand, but by the hand of God. Since, then, Jesus has cared for my sins, my only care should be first to realize their full pardon, and then to walk so holily as not to recommit those sins which Christ bore, and for which He sorrowed in Gethsemane, bled and expired on the tree, and so crucify the Son of God afresh. Deeply interesting to the believing, spiritual mind is the theme of our present chapter. To have a sight of sin and a sight of Jesus at the same moment constitutes one of the holiest and richest pages in the history of a child of God.

There are many of the Lord's people who see sin, but who do not see Jesus at the same moment- who do not look at their sins through the medium of the cross. To look at sin through the divine holiness, as reflected in the divine law, is to look and despair, to look and die! But to look at sin through Christ- to see it in the blood that cleanses it, in the righteousness that covers it, in the love that pardons it fully, freely, and forever; oh, this is to look and hope, to look and live! One eye upon sin, and one eye upon sin's atonement, will enable the soul to walk humbly and filially with God. One eye looking at self and one eye looking at Christ will so regulate the experience of the soul, so accurately adjust its moral compass, as to preserve the balance between presumption and despair; leading to a humble, holy, watchful walk as it regards sin on the one hand, and to an assured, happy, hopeful sense of pardon, acceptance, and glory on the other. No fact in Christian experience is more certain than this, that sin is never properly seen until Christ is known; and that Christ is never fully known, until sin is seen in its existence, guilt, and power. It is a sense of our vileness, guiltiness, and condemnation that takes us to Christ; and when we see Christ, and accept Christ, and enter into believing rest in Christ, we then have the deepest conviction of the greatness, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and at the same moment the most assured conviction of our full and eternal deliverance from its guilt, tyranny, and condemnation. This harmony of tint- the blending of light and shade- sin and Christ- forms one of the loveliest and most impressive pictures of the many which illustrate the history of the Christian's life.

We have remarked in the preceding pages that it is only beneath the influence of Christ's cross that the graces of the Spirit in the soul of the believer find their truest and richest culture. We purpose to confirm and illustrate this truth by citing, as examples, two or three of the more distinctive graces commencing with the grace of CONTRITION. We admit that true repentance, essential to true conversion, may exist in its incipient and early stage apart from any clear, evangelical view of the cross, from any clear acceptance of Christ. Yet, as it advances and matures- for it is that divine grace that attends the child of God to his latest moment- it grows less legal and more evangelical, flows less from the harshness of the law and more from the tenderness of the gospel, less from dealing with Moses and more from looking to Christ, is less associated with the dread of hell and more entwined with the hope of heaven. Oh, there is no contrition for sin so real, so soothing, so tender, or so holy as that which is produced by a sight of the Crucified- looking at Him whom those sins once so deeply pierced. Such is the subject which will now engage the reader's devout meditation. The incident which we cite as sustaining this theory, and as illustrating this truth, doubtless, in its more remote and prophetic interpretation, refers to the final restoration of the Jews, their acceptance of Christ, their Messiah, with weeping and mourning and confession. "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn." But the fact is precisely the same, and the truth strictly analogous, that a believing sight of the crucified Redeemer- the faith of God's elect being identical in its effects, whether it be in a Jew or a Gentile- breaks the heart for sin, produces tender, holy contrition of spirit. That

we are fully justified in pressing this striking prophecy into our argument, and quoting it as receiving a present and spiritual fulfilment, the words of the evangelist conclusively show. Alluding to the crucifixion of our Lord, John says, "These things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And, again, another scripture says, They shall look on Him whom they pierced." Thus clear is it that this splendid prediction, destined to receive in the conversion of the Jews a glorious accomplishment, possesses a present and a gospel application. Blessed are they who are its witnesses.

We have observed that repentance in its earliest form is, for the most part, legal in its origin and slavish in its nature- springing mainly from a view of the divine law, its spirituality, extent, and threatening. A clear apprehension of the divine holiness, the solemn thought of hell, the dread of condemnation- the law thus doing its own office in the soul- often reproduces the memorable inquiry of the convicted and alarmed jailer, "What must I do to be saved?" Observe, "What Must I Do? " But if repentance begins with the law, it invariably ends with the gospel. If its first and most imperfect impulse is derived from Sinai, its latest, sweetest, deepest throb is inspired by Calvary. If the poor sinner enters the sacred portal of salvation by the north gate, he emerges from the south, and finds himself wandering through the sylvan bowers of a new creation, himself a new creature in Christ Jesus. If, in a word, his first acquaintance is with Moses- the type of the law- it is but to introduce him to the acquaintance of Christ, (of whom Moses spoke,) the substance, the sweetness, the fulness of the gospel. Thus in the first dawn of repentance in the soul there may be but little, if any, of a clear apprehension of the cross of Jesus.

There is a looking at self, and at sin, and at death, and at hell, but no looking to the Crucified One, who has delivered us from it all. We repeat this statement for the encouragement of those whose sorrow for sin has not reached a more advanced and gospel stage. Although there may be much legality, slavish fear, and dread of condemnation mixed with your present feelings, yet it is not for all that the less real, nor is it less the work of the Holy Spirit. If you are truly convinced of sin, led to see the plague of your own heart, and to lay your mouth in the dust before God, a supernatural power has wrought this supernatural work in your soul, and saints and angels have beheld your repentance with acclaim. Would that every eye that traces these pages were moistened with a like sorrow for sin! How many a faithful yet discouraged minister would rejoice, how many a Christian and long-praying parent would retire to his chamber, his heart thrilling with gladness and his lips eloquent with praise! "Who is this that engages his heart to approach unto me? says the Lord." "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word."

Here, then, let me pause and inquire, Have you been brought to true and deep repentance for sin? It is the first stage of that true conversion, that spiritual change of heart, without which you cannot be saved. Every glorified saint in heaven was once a mourning sinner on earth. Each happy spirit before the

throne was once a penitent suppliant beneath the cross. Are you preparing to take your place among this happy, this countless throng? We reiterate the truth, that, without true and godly repentance for sin before God, you have no scriptural, valid evidence that you are saved! I ask not whether Sinai or Calvary, the law or the gospel, has awakened it- whether it flows from a terrifying sight of hell, or a loving view of Jesus. All I ask is- Has your heart been broken and your spirit become contrite before God? Examine yourself, prove your own self by God's word, for it is your life! Repentance towards God precedes faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and while both are separate and distinct graces of the Spirit, both are indispensable to, and are blended with, the salvation of the soul.

But our object is to present the great work of contrition in a higher form, in its more evangelical character, as experienced beneath the cross, as flowing from a believing, realizing view of Jesus the Crucified. And oh, how eminently calculated is the spectacle of Christ on the cross to produce this holy emotion!

The object of sight is JESUS. "They shall look upon ME." It is the most lovely, winning, wondrous object upon which the intelligent eye ever rested. There is nothing in it terrifying or repelling, nothing to raise a thought or impart an emotion anything other than the most tender, holy and subdued. Trace the points of attraction which meet in Jesus, and marvel not that when the eye roams over them, the heart is irresistibly won, the soul is instantly dissolved, and the believer prostrates himself at the foot of the cross in the profoundest sense of his vileness before God. All loveliness, all excellence, all glory meet and center in Jesus the Crucified. He is the most wonderful, as He is the most beautiful and attractive being in the universe. All the infinite perfection of absolute Deity, all the finite excellence of impeccable humanity, concentrate in Christ. God has created beauty for man, and in man a taste for the beautiful. Every object, as it originally emanated from God, was molded and tinted with some resemblance to His own infinite perfection. "How great is His beauty!" must have been the exclamation which chimed through the bowers and glens of paradise, from the adoring lips of the unsinned and sinless creature man. There is no sin in a love of the beautiful. The sin is in not seeing and loving God in it. The taste to appreciate it, the capacity to enjoy it, the heart to love and adore God in it, belonged to our original creation. The perfection of beauty himself, man was born into a world stored and studded with the beautiful. There was a fitness between the house and the tenant- harmony between creation and its lord; and the most exquisite music, in strains angels might imitate, ascended to Him who "made everything beautiful in his season." But the destroyer came, the disturber entered, and the beauty and the joy were marred. And yet creation still is lovely- lovely in its varied seasons, in its countless forms, in its moral teaching. The spring, when earth throws off its frosted incrustations, and bursts into new-born life, bloom, and perfume, is beautiful- telling us of the resurrection of the just, when the saints, gently awakened from their sleep, shall spring into rejuvenescent glory, and shall walk the earth in eternal youth, light, and love. Summer, when the glowing sun dresses the fields and the gardens with variegated splendor, and the valleys are

covered over with corn, and the pastures are clothed with flocks, and the little hills rejoice on every side, is beautiful- reminding us of a fruitful, maturing Christianity beneath the rich, warm influence of the Sun of Righteousness. Autumn, clad in mellowed radiance, uprearing its horns of plenty, and garnering its golden sheaves amid the joyous song of "harvest home," is beautiful- reminding us of the saints of God ripening in grace, and grace preparing for glory. Winter, with its winding-sheet of snow and its ice-bound streams, as though earth were enshrouded for the tomb, is beautiful- reminding us that down to hoary hairs, God will be with His people, and that the head covered with the frosts of time, yet encircled with the crown of righteousness, will soon cease its weariness and its aching in the silent grave. The flowers, earth's stars, are beautiful- telling us in language all their own that God created them for no practical purpose other than to please and charm us. The sky, dyed in the purest azure- the image of heaven's purity; the ocean, illimitable and sublime- the emblem of God's eternity and power; the sun, traveling in the greatness of its strength on wings of light- the glorious symbol of Jesus; the moon, walking in her silver attire- the expressive figure of the Christ of God; the planets, revolving round the sun in their harmony- reminding the believer of his divine and glorious Center- the nearness, power, and attraction of Jesus- all these things He has made beautiful. But seen with the Christian eye, all is beautiful, and all testifies of God. The clouds floating in endless forms of loveliness and tint- the snowy alps that pierce them- the lakes that mirror them from their glassy bosom- the sylvan glen, the shady grove, the pensive dale, the meandering river, the purling stream, the birds of gorgeous plumage and of heavenly song- all, all is beautiful, "and only man is vile." And yet for man this beautiful earth was made, and for his sustenance and enjoyment she pours forth from her bosom her hidden and inexhaustible stores of health and loveliness.

For me kind Nature wakes her genial power,  
Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower!  
Annual for me, the grape, the rose, renew  
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;  
For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;  
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs. (Pope)

But higher forms of beauty engage our thoughts- the beauty of holiness as embodied in Jesus. The gospel dispensation introduces us to a new world of loveliness, and a new Being of love, wonder, and admiration, surpassing in His perfection all that earth in its pristine glory ever beheld- the Incarnate Son of God. Does love inspire, does loveliness win, do we stand in speechless awe before the image of the great, the good, the beautiful? Behold the Lamb of God- "fairer than the children of men, the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely one."

"The loveliest, sweetest, dearest One  
That eyes have seen, or angels known."

What marvellous power does the spiritual beholding of Christ in His moral beauty possess to produce in the believing heart the tender, holy sentiment of contrition! In what spiritual light can we contemplate ourselves, our righteousness and our unrighteousness? What view can we take of sin- the sin of our holy and of our unholy things, when seen in contrast with the holiness, the beauty, and the perfection of Christ- what but the most humiliating, heart-subduing, and self-abasing? Could we for a moment regard sin with indifference, could we in any one act look upon ourselves with complacency, were we more conversant with the purity, and more enamored with the loveliness, and more deeply imbued with the love of Jesus? Would not our experience be that of the evangelical Isaiah, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Let us study more closely the Lord Jesus! It is only as by faith we see His spiritual beauty that our own pales; it is only as discoveries of His holiness are made to us by the Spirit that we cry, "Unclean! unclean!" and lay our mouth in the dust. Oh, there is nothing like a clear apprehension of the Lord Jesus to empty, humble, and prostrate us at His feet! The region of the cross is too bright not to see our sinfulness, too pure not to loathe it, and too divine not to be assured of its pardon. One beam from that focus of light, oh how excellent, nourishing, and sanctifying! One glimpse of that cross, oh how replete with life, bliss, and hope inconceivable, inexpressible! Who that has felt its magnetic power, its magic influence beneath the corrodings of guilt, the shadings of sorrow, the assaults of Satan, the

weariness of the world, the accusations of self, will not testify that nearness to the cross of Jesus is nearness to the source of perfect confidence, assured peace, and unruffled quietness? This, then; is the light in which we must view sin- every sin- all sin- even the light of the Savior's glory as it gathers round His cross. And contemplating it in this light, we shall see sin as it really is- divested of its disguise, disentangled from its sophistry, dissevered from its causes; and thus seeing it in its own native and naked deformity, the heart will dissolve into deep, holy, tender contrition beneath the cross of Jesus.

But not only does a sight of Christ's beauty, but the spectacle of His sufferings contributes essentially to promote holy contrition for sin. We see suffering in the cross of Jesus in its unparalleled form. As a sufferer, Christ stood alone; like the light in which Jehovah dwells, His sufferings were unapproached and unapproachable. "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," as no man ever was. What He endured when He exclaimed, "Now is my soul sorrowful, even unto death;" -what was the bitterness of that cup of which the cry of His humanity went up to heaven, that it should pass His lips untouched, but which yet He drank and drained- what was involved in that exclamation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" -we shall never fully know. Enough that He traveled

the whole compass of sorrow, and touched each point. "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, with which the Lord has afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger."

Can we, then, approach the cross, stand before this marvellous, unequalled spectacle of suffering love, and remember that all this was on our behalf? -for us, the sin bearing; for us, the soul sorrow; for us, the bodily anguish; for us, the thorn-crown, the bloody sweat, the cross, the death- and not feel a holy contrition for those sins which crucified the Lord of life and glory? We feel a sense of pity for the individual who can behold human suffering with unmoved sensibility. Can we view the sickly pallor; the tremulous lip, the care-shaded brow, the tear-bedewed eye, the manly form which sorrow has bowed, or the gentle one which bereavement has mantled with its symbol of woe, unmoved? Turn to the cross of our suffering Lord. With what emotion other than the profoundest grief, with what feeling other than the deepest shame, with what thoughts other than the most self-abasing, can we sit down and watch Him there! What! no penitence, no self-humiliation, no sin-loathing, no sorrow for having wounded Jesus! The universe, as if conscious of its curse for man's sin, is in sympathy with the suffering Savior dying for man's sin. The sun is veiling, the heavens are mourning, the earth is trembling, the rocks are rending, the graves are opening, all in sympathy with a spectacle such as earth never saw and such as the universe is convulsed in seeing. And yet, how marvelously, how criminally insensible, impenitent, and cold we are! -we whose sins He was then bearing, whose curse He was then exhausting, whose death-penalty He was then suffering, who in that hour of atonement was covering our hell that He might unveil to us His heaven. Surely if sin is ever seen in its true light, if it is loathed, crucified, and forsaken, it is at the foot of Christ's cross. It is here alone it can be truly studied. We must know Christ crucified before we shall know sin crucified. To gauge in any degree the depth of our iniquities, we must in some measure gauge the depths of Christ's suffering.

There must be close, personal dealings with the cross. This may reveal the secret of the crude, imperfect views of sin which you so mournfully deplore, and the consequent absence of all spiritual vitality, joy, and hope in the soul. You have been studying sin and your own sinfulness in the light of the present feverish uneasiness and restlessness which it produces, and of the alarming consequences which it entails; and all the while you have found your feelings grow more callous, your conscience more seared, and your future painted in deeper, darker hues, and sin still maintaining its undisputed, unimpaired supremacy. But, approach the cross! Turn from the power, the tyranny, and the corrodings of sin, and view the wondrous provision the God of love has made for its pardon and its conquest. Concentrate your believing gaze upon Jesus suffering, Jesus dying for sin. Go and stand by the cross of Christ. One uplifted glance, one believing look, one dim sight of the pierced Savior- wounded, bleeding, dying for your iniquities- will revolutionize all your views and feelings respecting sin. It will appear to you as a new created thing. Its blackness, its turpitude, its results will stand out in such magnitude and color, and, at the same

time, its atonement will appear so suitable, its redemption so costly, its pardon so complete, the purple flood which tides over all, and drowns all and every transgression so effectual, and He who provided it all and accomplished it all, so divine, glorious, and precious as to prostrate your soul before the cross, dissolved in penitence and love. Oh, there are no affections like those which spring from a view of Jesus crucified! No tears so precious, no feelings so true, no contrition so intense and tender as gushes from the hidden springs of the soul, touched and unsealed by the heart's believing communion with the suffering Savior!

"Law and judgment do but harden,  
All the time they work alone;  
But a sense of blood-bought pardon  
Soon dissolves the heart of stone."

Yes! if there is anything that can dissolve that heart of stone it is Christ's atoning blood. You have been around the mount that burns with fire, draped with blackness and darkness and tempest, but your heart has felt no softening. You have traversed the round of legal duty, have been strict in every religious engagement, have been conscientious in the fulfilment of every relative obligation, and yet your soul has felt no peace. In all this you have not found Jesus. You have sought Him in splendid temples, in gorgeous worship, in costly sacrifices, in excited crowds, in the pious circles of rank and wealth and influence, and still you have not found Jesus. But at length, by some power, invisible and inexplicable, gently and persuasively moving upon your mind, you have been led into another, more shaded and sequestered path- you have sought Jesus at the cross, in poverty and desertion, in humiliation and sorrow, in suffering, blood, and death, and lo! you have found just the Savior that you needed, the peace you craved, the joy for which you longed, the hope for which you sighed; and now, beneath the cross of Jesus, you are prostrate, a rebel won, a soul penitent, a sinner saved! Oh, one moment's believing, close contact with the cross will do more to break the heart for sin, deepen the conviction of its exceeding sinfulness, and disenthral the soul from all its bondage and its fears, bringing it into a sense of pardon and acceptance and assured hope, than a lifetime of the most rigid legal duties that ever riveted their iron chain upon the soul.

But it is the spectacle, not so much of Christ's personal beauty and suffering, as of His suffering love, that most deeply moves the heart! The picture of love sacrificing itself, courting death itself in its most terrific form, for an object unworthy of its affection, would seem sufficient to melt the marble to sensibility. The sight of mere suffering has a tendency in some minds rather to petrify than to soften the feelings, so entirely has sin impaired the finest and noblest parts of our nature. But when in faith we look upon Him whom by our sins we have pierced, we behold, not suffering only, but suffering love- love the divinest and most ancient, love the most tender and strong, love the most self-sacrificing the



dying love of Jesus! Nothing provides a clue to the marvels of Christ's history but love. Love was the inciting cause of all, the moving spring of all, the rational solution of all the wondrous events that traced the life of our blessed Lord. Oh, how He loved! The love of Christ! -it passes knowledge. Lying at the cross where Incarnate Love was transfixed, where it sorrowed, bled, and died, the soul dissolves into tenderness and contrition. He who writes the history of the cross, writes the history of love- the only record of love that shall be preserved in the archives of eternity. This is the love upon which the pierced Savior invites us to look. To look at the Incarnate God is to look upon Incarnate Love.

Bring your soul, my reader, beneath the focus of the cross, and you have concentrated upon it the burning rays of incarnate love- and self-abasement, holy penitence, and sweet affection will be the blessed result. Who can stand unmoved before the sight and look and words of love- that love sacrificing itself for us? Such is the love of Jesus! Often as its history has been traced, its story told, its pains and sorrows and death portrayed, yet, when shed abroad afresh in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, when we approach the cross and attain a clearer view of its reality, a deeper sense of its depth and tenderness, a more vivid realization of its marvellous sacrifice, a more spiritual apprehension of the wondrous redemption it has wrought, the full salvation it has finished, the free pardon, the perfect peace, and the unspeakable joy it inspires, the hell it has sealed and the heaven it has opened, oh, can we look upon Him whom our sins, past, present and future so deeply pierced, and not mourn?

We thus reach an important part of our subject- the LOOKING upon Him whom we have pierced. "They shall look upon Me." There must be a believing, spiritual apprehension of Christ, or sin cannot properly be seen, or seen only to plunge the observer into the depths of despair. The mere presentation of the cross to the natural eye will awaken no emotion, other than natural ones. That which is natural can only produce what is natural. Nature can never rise above itself- it invariably finds its own level. Thus, in a contemplation of the sufferings of Christ, there may in minds of deep natural sensibility, be emotion, the spectacle may affect the observer to tears- but it is nature only. Those who are accustomed to foreign travel may often have stood amid the deep religious gloom of the gorgeous cathedral, and have observed the ghostly form of the pious devotee of papal superstition slowly and solemnly gliding along its shaded cloisters, and then falling prostrate before the picture of a dead Christ, in apparently the profoundest emotion. Beyond this the 'religion of feeling' cannot go.

My reader, beware of mistaking nature for grace; the emotions of a stirred sensibility, for the tears of a broken and a contrite heart. The eye that looks upon Christ, and upon sin through Christ, is the eye of faith, that marvellous telescope of the renewed soul which beholds the invisible, sees the unseen, peers into eternity, and makes future things present realities. This it is that dissolves the heart into holy, tender contrition. Such a sight of Him whom we have pierced will smite the rock, and the streams of godly grief will flow. One simple, believing,

close look at the cross will more quickly and effectually subdue the heart for sin, give a deeper sight of its sinfulness, and inspire the soul with a stronger confidence in the forgiving love of God, than all the thunders that rolled and the lightnings that flashed around the brow of Sinai.

You who have some legal apprehension of sin, who see your depravity, feel your condemnation, dread the judgment- you who have been laboring for acceptance with God, oh receive the message of the gospel! -look believingly to the cross, gaze upon Him whom your sins pierced, and you shall realize the marvellous effects in your soul of one believing look of faith, one drop of atoning blood, one beam of forgiving love, transforming the sepulchral darkness of your soul into the meridian light of God's salvation. Oh most significant words- "They shall look upon ME!" They shall turn from Moses, and from the law, and from their sacrifices, and from all their sins and transgressions, and one object shall attract and fix their believing gaze- "ME whom they have pierced."

The EFFECT of this believing look at sin through Christ, and at Christ as putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, we are yet to consider. Our remarks must be brief. We read, "And they shall mourn for Him, as one that mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." The following are some of the distinctive features of that deep contrition for sin which springs from a view of this glorious sacrifice. It is evangelical in its nature, as opposed to the legal. It is an emotion in alliance with the gospel and not the law. It is from Christ- it is produced by Christ- it is full of Christ. It is a flower that blooms beneath the cross. A sight of atoning blood- a sense of pardoned sin- the streams of dying love as they flow from the cross gliding into the soul; in a word, a full, clear, simple sight of Jesus as saving sinners, sinners the vilest, sinners the oldest, sinners the chief, sinners who have not one plea springing from themselves but the greatness and the number and the turpitude of their transgressions- will fill the soul with gospel mourning.

It is holy in its nature, in opposition to the sorrow of the world. It is emphatically and preeminently godly sorrow. The most holy posture of the soul is at the foot of the cross. There all the feelings and thoughts which possess it, are produced by, and are in sympathy with, the most extraordinary display of holiness the intelligent creation ever beheld- the Son of God dying for our sins! Holy, then, is the nature and holy the fruits of that contrition for sin which dissolves the heart before the spectacle of Jesus crucified. Never is sin more vividly seen, or so deeply felt, never is self so profoundly loathed, or so entirely forsaken, as when the believing soul is enshrined within the pierced side of Christ.

"Then beneath the cross adoring,  
Sin does like itself appear;  
When the wounds of Christ exploring,  
I can read my pardon there."

It is intense. The deepest feeling of which the human soul is capable is experienced beneath the cross of Christ. Our Lord has selected from the world of imagery the most expressive and touching simile to illustrate this- a parent's grief for his first-born! To behold the heir of the family and the inheritor of the estate, the tall cedar, the strong and beautiful staff, smitten to the earth, borne to an early tomb, is sorrow intense indeed! Is there a sorrow that surpasses it in intensity? There is! Deep and keener far that sorrow which overwhelms the soul prostrate in view of Jesus upon the cross. The one sorrow touches but the natural, the other stirs to the lowest depth the spiritual affections of the soul. In the one, the religious element has no place, in the other, there is the deepest sense of sin against the holy Lord God. How conclusive of this the Scripture specimens of godly sorrow for sin. "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." "Pardon my iniquity, O Lord, for it is great." Trace the remarkable workings of this intense godly sorrow in the repentant Corinthians. "Behold this self-same thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yes, what cleansing of yourselves, yes, what indignation, yes, what fear, yes, what vehement desire, yes, what zeal, yes, what revenge!" Truly, "they shall mourn and be in bitterness, as one that mourns for his first-born."

It is the harbinger of joy. The sight of sin and the sight of Christ at the same moment constitutes an element of the deepest, purest joy. The tears of godly sorrow are the seeds of holy joy. He that goes forth weeping, bearing this precious seed, shall doubtless return again with joy. Weeping beneath the cross may endure for a night, but the joy of the Lord will assuredly dawn with the dawn of morning. The gloom that drapes the soul, weeping at the cross, shall dissolve into light, unclouded and serene. The joy of knowing that God is reconciled in Christ Jesus, that sin is pardoned, that peace is possessed, that heaven is secure, oh, it is a "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Henceforth, O believer, the cross shall, like the glorious sun, illumine your path through this region of sin and sorrow with its growing luster, until it lead you up to the realms of perfect day.

O God! to life's last and latest hour let me be a weeper at the cross! Precious Savior! in view of my sins and my sinfulness- in view of the awful solemnities of eternity, what can I do but cling to Your cross? And when death, of whom You, O Christ, are the plague, dissolves the silver cord and sets my spirit free, take me to the place where Your own soft hand shall wipe my tears, and turn my present and momentary sorrow for sin into the future and eternal joy of perfect holiness! Lord, for that blissful hour my longing spirit pants!

When shall I be at rest? my trembling heart  
Grows weary of its burden, sickening still  
With hope deferred. Oh! that it were Your will

To loose my bonds, and take me where You are.

When shall I be at rest? my eyes grow dim  
With straining through the gloom, I scarce can see  
The way-marks that my Savior made for me;  
Oh, that it were morn, and I were safe with Him.

When shall I be at rest? Hand over hand  
I grasp, and climb an ever steeper hill,  
A rougher path. Oh! that it were Your will  
My tired feet might tread the Promised Land.

Oh that I were at rest! a thousand fears  
Come thronging over me lest I fail at last.  
Oh that I were safe, all toil and danger past,  
And Your own hand might wipe away my tears.

Oh that I were at rest, like some I love,  
Whose last fond looks drew half my life away;  
Seeming to plead that either they might stay  
With me on earth, or I with them above.

But why these murmurs? You did never shrink  
From any toil or weariness for me,  
Not even from that last deep agony;  
Shall I beneath my little trials sink?

No, Lord, for whom I am indeed at rest.  
One taste of that deep bliss will quite efface  
The sternest memories of my earthly race,  
Save but to swell the sense of being blest.

Then lay on me whatever cross I need  
To bring me there. I know You can not be  
Unkind, unfaithful, or untrue to me!  
Shall I not toil for You, when You for me did bleed.

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