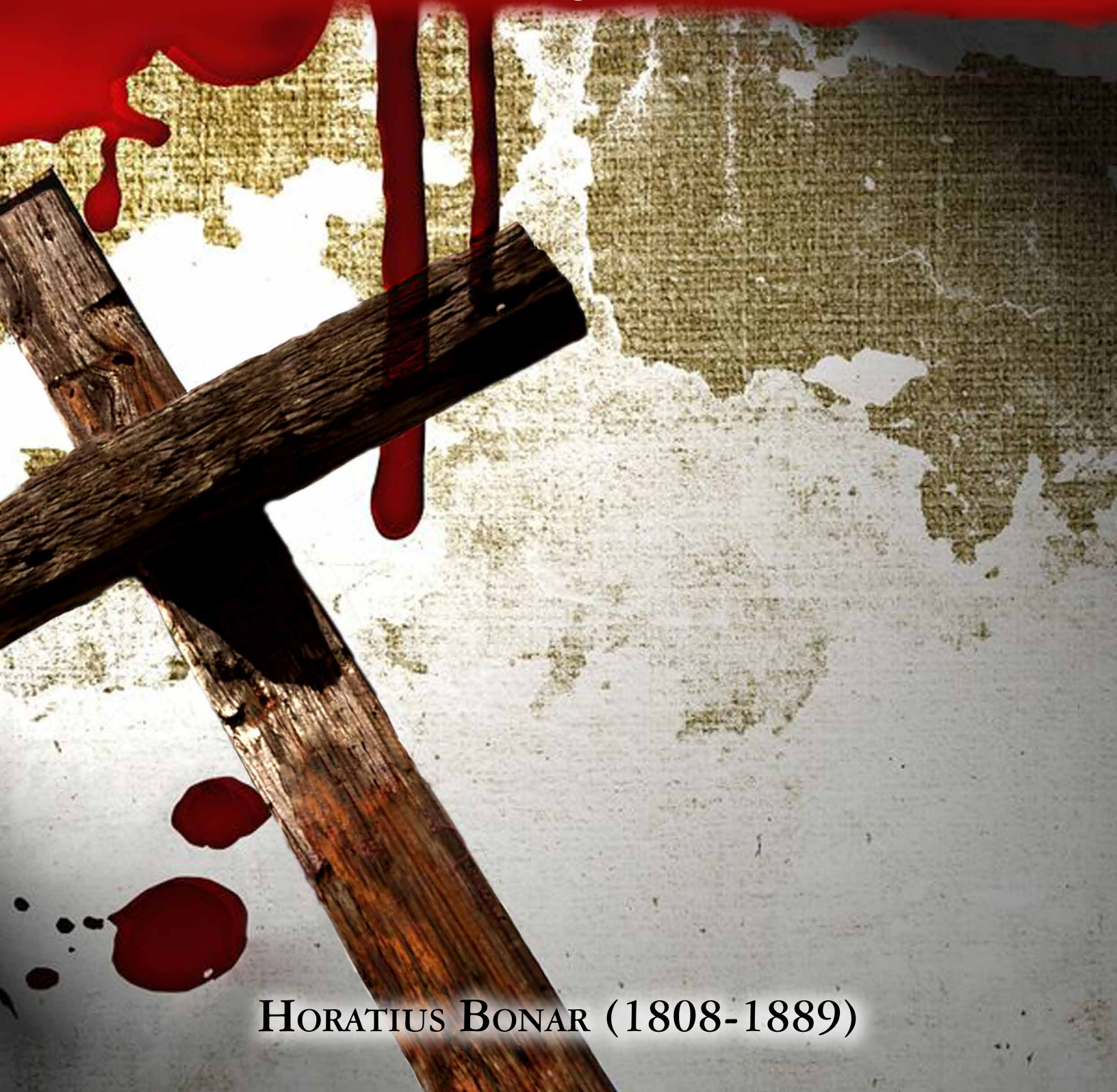


The Cross of the LORD JESUS



HORATIUS BONAR (1808-1889)

THE CROSS OF THE LORD JESUS

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THE CROSS OF THE LORD JESUS

“Where also our Lord was crucified.”

—Revelation 11:8

*“The cross of Christ...
the preaching of the cross.”*

—1 Corinthians 1:17-18

The first of these passages strikingly identifies the Master and the servants—our Lord and His witnesses. They were to suffer *as* He suffered and *where* He suffered: one with Him on the Cross, in the grave, in resurrection, in ascension, and on the throne. The words, “Where also our Lord was crucified,” come with a strangely solemn power. It is the last reference to the Cross of Christ in the Bible, and corresponds well with that frequent expression in the Revelation, “the Lamb slain”; carrying us back to “the seed of the woman” and “the bruised heel.”

The second passage is one of the many (nineteen in all) in which Paul refers to the Cross and its meaning, the Cross and its connection with the good news, the Cross and the way of preaching it. In his estimation that Cross stood out pre-eminently as the great centre round which his faith revolved. It was the basis of his hope towards God; it was the main article in his creed, from which all others shot forth like rays from the sun. It stood alone and unapproachable in the matter of salvation: as the altar of the burnt-offering, as the place without the gate where the sin-offering was consumed—as the point where all the offerings meet. It was not to him the mere place of the great *self-surrender*, the example or model of self-sacrifice; it was the place of propitiation,¹ the substitution of life for life—the Just One there suffering for the unjust, the Blessed One bearing our curse, the Holy One bearing our sin. In preaching this Cross, the apostle dreaded and shunned the wisdom of words—human eloquence—lest thus the naked Cross should be disguised and disfigured. It must stand out bare and unadorned, “majestic in its own simplicity,” as the brazen serpent on the pole. That serpent and that pole needed no ornament of man. There they stood, with the divine medicine for Israel. To cover them, to deck them, to paint them, would be to destroy their power to heal—to make them of none effect. So is it the naked Cross that does the work of healing; “No meretricious² graces to beguile.” To deck it with flowers, and rites, and pomp, and eloquence is to destroy its power—to grieve that Spirit Whose office is to turn the sinner’s eye to it as the health of the world. Look, and be healed! Look, and be saved! The virtue

¹ **propitiation** – an appeasement; a sacrifice that turns away wrath.

² **meretricious** – alluring by false, showy charms.

of the Cross is drawn out by simply looking. Know, and be blest! For “by his knowledge (the knowledge of Himself) shall my righteous Servant justify many” (Isa 53:11).

“The cross of Christ!” O world, this is thy one hope. That Cross contains all that thou needest of love, and healing, and peace. Under its shadow the chief of sinners may sit down and rejoice.

1. The Place of Many Evils

“Where also our Lord was crucified.” O Israel, O Jerusalem, here is thy condemnation! O world, here too will be thy condemnation, if thou lookest not, and believest not! That Cross will utterly condemn all its rejecters and despisers. That Cross overthrew Jerusalem, city and temple, for her rejection of the Crucified One. It scattered Israel: what will it not do to each son of man that has slighted it? Round it the world’s history revolves; on it the world’s destiny hangs.

One. *It was the place of guilt and condemnation* (Mat 27:22, 26, 28). The condemned of men were there. The thieves were there; it was their “own place.” Connection with the cross inferred crime worthy of death.

Two. *It was the place of shame* (Heb 12:2).—It was *shame* that was there; and each one who was sent there was treated as a shameful thing—one of whom his fellow-men were ashamed, and who might well be ashamed of himself. It was the type of the shame and everlasting contempt in reserve for the unbelievers. Hence it was a “reproach” and “offence” (Gal 5:11).

Three. *It was the place of weakness* (2Co 13:4). Christ was “crucified through weakness.” It was the exhibition of man reduced to the extremity of helplessness. In order to save us who were “without strength” (Rom 5:6), our Surety took our helplessness upon Him, and became “without strength” for us.

Four. *It was the place of pain* (Heb 13:12). Anguish of body was there to the uttermost; and thirst was there; wounds and bruises were there. There is no pain like that of crucifixion. Here is the fulfillment of the *roasted* lamb of the Passover; here is the passing through the fire of wrath.

Five. *The place of the curse* (Gal 3:13). “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” The *Blessed* One was made a *curse* for us. He went to the accursed place, and there bore our curse, that we might receive His blessing.

Six. *The place of rejection* (Joh 19:6). “Away with him!” was the cry; “not this man, but Barabbas” (Joh 19:15; 18:40). They who were nailed to the cross were the outcasts of men. Christ was “despised and rejected of men” (Isa 53:3).

Seven. *The place of hatred* (Mat 27:23, 25). “Let him be crucified”; “His blood be on us.” Here was human hatred speaking out. “His citizens hated him”; “This is the heir; come, let us kill him”; “They have rewarded me...hatred for my love” (Luk 19:14; Mar 12:7; Psa 109:5).

Eight. *The place of death* (Mat 20:18-19). It was *death* that was there. Here we read, “The soul that sinneth it shall *die*” (Eze 18:4). Death, the death of the Cross, was our

Surety's doom. The place of death became the place of life to us: "With his stripes we are healed" (Isa 53:5).

Such were the *evil* things connected with the Cross, which by the work done by the Son of God have all been turned into *good*. All our evils He took upon Him, that He might secure for us all the good belonging to Himself. For condemnation, He gives us pardon; for shame, honor and glory; for weakness, strength; for pain, ease and comfort; for the curse, the blessing; for rejection, acceptance; for hatred, love; for death, life everlasting. He that *believeth* hath all these things. All the evil passes to Him, and all the good to us, on our crediting the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the Cross and the things done there.

2. The Place of All Good

This Cross, where so many evil things meet, is the place where all good things are to be found. God gathered all the evil to that spot, that He might utterly make away with it, through Him Who took all the evil on Himself, that He might bring out of it only good. At the Cross it was consumed by fire; it was buried out of sight. The crucifixion transformed the evil into good.

One. *It is the place of propitiation* (Lev 16:15; Rom 3:25). The altar was there for the burnt-offering. The place without the gate for the sin-offering was there. He "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1Pe 2:24). The *sin-bearing* work was completed there when the cry went up, "It is finished" (Joh 19:30). The *expiating*³ blood was shed upon the Cross. The *atoning*⁴ work—the work that justifies—was consummated on Golgotha. Nor can justification be separated from the Cross, or transferred to resurrection. "The chastisement of our peace was on him; and by his stripes we are healed;" "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isa 53:5). The ending of His vicarious course on earth was the giving of life for life. *His* death, instead of *ours*, satisfied the Law. A divine death was the substitute for a human death. All the sacrificial virtue of the transaction, and all the value of the substitute, were transferred to us. Jesus died that we might not die. He was the propitiation for our sins. He was the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. The Cross is the place of exhausted penalty and magnified Law. That which covers the sinner entirely and shields him from wrath was finished there. That *covering*, that *propitiatory covering*, whose power and virtue are unchangeable throughout all ages, and underneath which we are secure from wrath, was wrought out there. The propitiation of the Cross is the substance of the glad tidings which we bring. It originated in the love of God; it contained and embodied the love of God; it gave effect to and carried out the love of God; it brought home the love of God to us as sinners.

Two. *It is the meeting-place* (Exo 29:42). It is the place where we meet with God, and God meets with us in friendship, and love, and joy. It is the place where the Father meets

³ **expiating** – making satisfaction for an offense by which guilt is done away.

⁴ **atoning** – making reconciliation with God by removing or covering the guilt of sin.

the prodigal and embraces him. On this spot alone, and underneath this tree alone, can God and the sinner look each other in the face, without fear on the one side or displeasure on the other. There God speaks with us, and there we speak with Him. We take the Lamb, lay our hands upon it, present it as ours, confess our sins over it, that so all the evil in us which stood between us and God may pass from us to it, may be carried by it to the altar, and there consumed, so as no longer to hinder the meeting. With sin thus transferred from us to the divine victim, thus carried away and consumed by fire, we are no longer afraid to look up to God, and no longer stand in doubt of His favor towards us, and His willingness to bless us. Ten thousand times a day we sin; but as often as we sin, that sin passes immediately away from us to the sacrifice, which, *once* offered and accepted eighteen hundred years ago, is better than ten thousand other sacrifices, to keep up the reconciliation, to secure perpetual forgiveness, and to maintain unchanged the security of the meeting-place—the place of intercourse and fellowship between us and God.

Three. *It is the place of love.* God's love is there, shining in its full brightness, unhindered and undimmed. "God so loved the world" (Joh 3:16) gets its interpretation at the Cross. On the one hand, we see how much man hated God, and on the other, how much God loved man. Herein is love! It is love that has found for itself a channel whereby to flow down to us; love that has opened a well of blessing gushing forth from the foot of the Cross.

Four. *It is the place of acceptance.* Here we become "accepted in the beloved" (Eph 1:6). Here the exchange takes place between the perfect and the imperfect. Believing in the perfect One, we become "complete in him" (Col 2:10). Conscious only of evil, we take refuge in Him in Whom there is no evil, that we may be represented by Him before God, and so treated by God as being without evil, even in the eye of His holy Law. Feeling our utter want of goodness, we flee out of ourselves to One in Whom there is all goodness, Who is absolutely perfect; so perfect, so infinitely perfect, that He has enough and to spare of His perfection for us. The fulness of evil that is in us is thus not only covered over by the atonement of the atoning Son of God, so as to become invisible, as if it were non-existent, but is supplanted by the fulness of all goodness, is exchanged for the perfection of another, even of the perfect One—so that God, looking at us, sees only our Representative, and deals with us according to His excellency and preciousness. What we should have got in the shape of punishment, He gets for us; what He claims and deserves in the shape of reward, and glory, and favour, we get, as represented by Him, and treated by God as entitled to all that to which He is entitled.

Our *consent* to be treated on the footing of this foreign merit, this perfection of Another, is what God asks of us. Such is the proposal which the Gospel makes to us. This is substantially the meaning of our believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Receiving the divine testimony to the Sin-bearer as true, we give our consent to be represented by Him before God. Thus we exchange places and persons with Him. He was made sin; we are made righteousness. He takes the curse; we take the blessing. We hear the cry upon the Cross, "*It is finished*" (Joh 19:30), and we know that *the work which justifies is done*. All that

follows—resurrection and ascension—is the *result* of the completed work; not the completing of it, but the fruits of its completion. He was delivered, because we had sinned; He was raised, because we were justified (Rom 4:25). As it was “through the blood of the everlasting covenant” that He was brought from the dead (Heb 13:20), so was it because our justification was finished on the Cross that He rose from the dead. The knowledge of this brings to him who knows it forgiveness, acceptance, justification; we become “accepted in the beloved.”

3. Accomplishments of the Cross

The Cross accomplished such things as the following:

One. *It removed the wall of partition* (Col 2:14). Between Jew and Gentile it threw down the middle wall of partition. It rent the veil in twain from top to bottom. It swept away all that hindered a sinner’s access, and said, “Come boldly unto the throne of grace” (Heb 4:16). “Come unto *me*” (Mat 11:28).

Two. *It made peace* (Col 1:20). The great quarrel between heaven and earth, between God and the sinner, it made up; for it removed the ground of that variance, and provided a righteous basis for reconciliation and peace. The peace is made. It is paid for. It is finished. It is a true and righteous peace.

Three. *It has secured oneness* (Eph 2:15-16). Thus oneness is not simply between Jew and Gentile, but between both of these and God; between them both, *because* between both and God. At one with God, they are at one with each other. Both are reconciled in one body by the Cross, the enmity being thereby slain. He was “numbered with the transgressors” (Mar 15:28), that we might be numbered with the righteous.

Four. *It has brought life* (2Co 13:4). “He was crucified through weakness, yet *he liveth*”; we are weak in Him (as He was on the Cross), but we shall *live*. His weakening and emptying on the Cross gave opportunity for the whole *life-giving power* of God to flow in. We, thus weakened and emptied when, in believing, [are] made one with Him, are filled with the same life-giving power. The Cross, the place of weakness and death, thus becomes to us the place and fountain of life. From a crucified Lord life flows to the dead.

Five. *It contains power* (1Co 1:18, 23). It is “the *power* of God unto salvation” (Rom 1:16). Power for us, for the weak, for the sinful—“the power of God,”—is there. Omnipotence has made its dwelling there. The Cross is its storehouse or treasure-house. There is the hiding of divine power. There is the arm of the Lord revealed.

Six. *It is the focus or centre of all wisdom* (1Co 1:24). The wisdom of God is there. It is the fullest and most glorious exhibition of Jehovah’s wisdom. Here is the perfection of wisdom; and all that the sciences (astronomy, or the like) exhibit of wisdom is not to be compared with this. The world thinks it foolishness; God thinks it wisdom; and every soul that has come to know its own wants and sins thinks the same.

Seven. *It crucifies the world* (Gal 6:14). To the believing man, the world is a crucified thing; to the world, the believing man is a crucified thing. There is now *enmity*, not

friendship—hatred, not *love*—between the woman’s seed and the serpent’s seed. The Cross has produced the enmity. It has slain the world, and made it altogether unlovable. One sight of the Cross strips the world of its false beauty and attractiveness.

Eight. *It furnishes a theme for glorying* (Gal 6:14). Paul gloried in it, counting it the only thing worth boasting of, worth admiring, worth caring for. It is the scorn of the world; it is the glory of the saint. It is the theme of the Church’s song, the burden of her praise. She glories in the Cross.

Nine. *It is the model and test of service* (Mar 8:34; Luk 9:23). It calls us to *liberty*, yet to *service* also, the service of liberty. Thus it both liberates and binds. It takes off one yoke to give another (Mat 11:29). It gives us the perfect example and pattern of obedience and service in Him Who was obedient unto death, the death of the Cross. It tests our service by giving us a cross to carry; not Christ’s Cross—that no man can carry—but a cross of our own. Each man must take up his own cross and follow the great Cross-bearer. Self-denial, self-surrender, self-sacrifice are all exhibited there. There especially “Christ pleased not himself” (Rom 15:3). Not my will but Thine be done, is to be our motto, as it was His. “Looking unto Jesus” (Heb 12:2) and His Cross fits and nerves us for this. “Follow me” is the voice of the Cross (Mat 16:24).

Ten. *It is the badge of discipleship* (Luk 14:27). The disciple is not above his Master. He is a cross-bearer, a “crusader,” in the true sense of the word. No cross, no discipleship. He who is ashamed of the Cross is ashamed of Christ. The daily life of a disciple is to be a carrying of the cross. He who does so will find a few admirers and sympathizers. He will know the *loneliness* of his Lord and Master.

Eleven. *It is God’s way of salvation* (Act 10:39-43). Pardon is written on the Cross; salvation; life eternal. The saved thief, who went from his cross to paradise, is the great illustration of the saving power of the Cross. For salvation we know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1Co 2:2). The glad tidings are written on the Cross; good news of a free salvation to the unsaved; salvation through Him Who came to seek and save the lost; Who upon the tree of death bore their guilt in His own body, and now sends out the glorious message—the tidings from the saving Cross. The love of God is written on it; nay, “God is love” is the true inscription for it. “God is love” beams out from every part of it; and to know this is to be saved.

Twelve. *It is the measure of Christ’s endurance and obedience* (Phi 2:8). He descended from the highest heaven that He might take flesh, and in our flesh endure and obey as man. It was a vicarious endurance and obedience all His life long; He stood in our stead from Bethlehem to Golgotha. The Cross, with its agony, and shame, and death, was the extremity of His service for us. In it we have the *measure* of His obedient suffering, the measure of His willingness to do the Father’s will, to bear our burdens, to drink our bitter cup of wrath and woe. Thus the perfection of our Substitute not only covers our imperfection, but is legally and judicially ascribed to us by God Himself. The Law lets go its hold of us, and deals with our Substitute.

Thirteen. *It is the pledge and standard of divine love* (Rom 5:8). The Father’s love is here; for God so loved the world that He gave His Son. Christ’s love is here—the love

that passeth knowledge; the love which many waters could not quench, nor the floods drown; love to the uttermost; love grudging no toil, nor pain, nor weariness, nor reproach for us. If you want to know how much you have been loved, look to the Cross of Jesus. That meets and answers all our doubts.

Fourteen. *It is the revelation of God's character* (1Jo 4:10). In the *Person* of the God-man, "the Word made flesh" (Joh 1:14), God's character is contained; all that is in God is there. In the *life* of the God-man there is the unfolding of that character as the gracious God. In the *death* of the God-man upon the Cross there is a yet further revelation of the character of the "God of all grace" (1Pe 5:10). Here the divine perfections came out in full harmony—all that seemed discordant being here reconciled: truth and mercy meeting, righteousness and peace kissing; God just and the justifier of the ungodly, infinitely holy, yet pardoning the unholy. In the Cross God has given us His true Name, and the true interpretation of that Name. His whole character and actings are here announced, explained, and harmonized. Let us listen to the testimony which the Cross gives respecting God's gracious nature, His loving heart, His compassionate purposes to sinners; in accepting that testimony all blessing will flow in. Let us accept God's interpretation of His own character in the Cross. Let us beware of misconstruing Him. Let us acquaint ourselves with Him.

Fifteen. *It is God's lamp of light* (2Co 4:6). The world is dark: here is light. The Cross shines with the very light of heaven. He Who is the God of light hung there. That which the Cross makes known concerning God and His love is the light of a dark world. Only from the Cross can the sinner derive his light. "They looked and were lightened"; for He Who hangs there says, "I am the light of the world" (Psa 34:5; Joh 8:12). And never was He more its light than when He was nailed to the Cross in helplessness. From the Cross that light still shines out to a dark world. Let us walk in the light of the Cross. God says to us, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come"; "The true light now shineth"; "The day break[s], and the shadows flee away" (Isa 61:1; 1Jo 2:8; Song 2:17). The ever-burning lamp of the Cross is sufficient for the darkest child of a dark world, in his darkest day and hour.

Sixteen. *It is the universal magnet* (Joh 12:32). "I, if I be lifted up...will draw all men unto me" (Joh 12:32). Here is the true centre of gravitation. Here is the great attraction or attractive force. The Christ of Bethlehem attracts; the Christ of Nazareth attracts; the Christ of Bethany and Nain attracts; the Christ of Sychar and Jericho attracts; but most of all the Christ of Golgotha. There is that in the Cross which *wins* the sinner's heart. The Cross *beckons* him; it *draws* him. A crucified Christ, the uplifted Son of man, is the one universal lodestone. Its magnetic power is irresistible; yet it is the irresistibility of love and not of Law. Law compels; love attracts. Law crushes; love lifts up. And all love is in that Cross—the fulness of God's forgiving love.

Seventeen. *It is the universal balm and medicine* (Isa 53:5). The Cross is the balm of Gilead, and the crucified Christ is the Physician there. From that there distils the healing for the sons of men. The leaves of it are for the healing of the nations. Its medicinal properties have been tested by time, and have been found divine. There is no disease that

is able to resist their power; they flow out on all sides, and flow down everywhere. He who approaches, he who touches, nay, he who looks is healed. Eternal health is yonder. Let it flow in. The world is sick—sick unto death. Here is healing for it. Wilt thou be made whole, O man? Go to the healing Cross; go to the divine Healer, and become whole.

Eighteen. *It is man's estimate of sin* (Mat 20:25). Not only was the deed of crucifixion a denial of sin and a defiance of God, but it was the setting up of a new standard of sin. It was man saying, We do not need a Sin-bearer; we are no such sinners as to need a Substitute; sin is not such an evil as to require expiation. This was “the way of Cain” (Jude 1:11); it was Cain's ancient rejection of the burnt-offering, his refusal to acknowledge the evil of sin, or to own himself worthy of death. God's intention in the Cross was to declare the evil of sin; man's intention was to make light of it, and to defy its consequences. For man, in making light of sin, despises God's threatenings against it, and braves the divine penalties.

Nineteen. *It is God's verdict against sin, and His estimate of it* (Rom 8:3). Here is God's condemnation of sin, of the flesh, of the world. Look at that Cross, and learn how God hates sin; how He sets aside the flesh with all its lusts; how He strips off the world's mask, and exposes its deformity. When disposed to make light of sin, or to indulge the flesh, or to admire the world, let us hear God's voice bidding us look to the Cross, and to Him Who was nailed to it by that sin, that flesh, that world. The Cross says, Oh, do not the abominable thing which I hate! If God thought as lightly of sin as man does, would that Cross have been needed? Would that Christ have been required to suffer? Would any expiation have been called for, beyond a few tears or sighs? God points to Christ's Cross as the proof of His hatred of sin; and when man would treat it lightly, He bids him listen to the expiring agonies of the Sin-bearer. Or when man would excuse himself, or palliate⁵ his guilt, God answers, Did ye not crucify my Son? What does *that* sin deserve, though other sins might be light!

Twenty. *It is man's estimate of the Son of God* (Mar 15:13). Already He had been valued at thirty pieces of silver. But here we have a still lower estimate. “Not this man, but Barabbas.” Here is the value man sets on His person, His life, His teaching, His blood. God asks us, What think ye of Christ? Our answer is the Cross—“Crucify Him.” Here is a man erecting the Cross, and nailing the Son of God to it. Such is the heart of man. Such is man's rejection of the Christ. The Cross is the standing proof and witness of man's rejection of God's beloved Son and His salvation. To this day the Cross is foolishness and a stumbling-block to man. He both hates and despises it.

Twenty-one. *It is God's interpretation of Law and its penalties*. Not merely *grace*, but righteousness is unfolded here—the righteousness of *law*, of *the Law*. God here shows us what Law is, what Law requires, what Law can do, how Law can avenge itself, how Law can vindicate God, as well as how God can vindicate Law. In this aspect it is truly Law that planned and erected the Cross; Law that demanded the victim's death; Law that

⁵ **palliate** – to make appear less serious or offensive; excuse.

cried Crucify; Law that nailed Him to the tree. In the Cross we see how holy, and just, and good is that Law, and that God's commandments are "very pure" and "exceeding broad" (Psa 119:140, 96), applying to everything and everybody—so that, when even the Son of God was "made under the Law" (Gal 4:4), and had undertaken to answer its demands for us, He was seized by it and led out to the place of execution as the worst of evil-doers. If the Law were not holy, and broad, and pure, why did the Son of God, the Giver of the Law, hang on the Cross? Why was He forsaken by God? Why did He there die? Thus interpreted by the Cross, how perfect does the Law appear! God has given us many interpretations of it, but this is the most explicit, and clear, and complete. In the Cross, God protests against all attempts to undervalue or dilute the Law. Man may think it too strict: God does not; and in proof of this points to the Cross, and His Son there, bearing our penalty. Would the Father have laid these burdens and pains upon the Son unless the Law had absolutely required them? Would He Who most honored the Law have been punished by the Law, unless He had been bearing sin? Let those who speak of the Gospel being a *modified law*, by obedience to which we are saved, look at the Cross. Is there any appearance of a modified law there? No; we see the Law in all its undiluted perfection exhibited in the *life*, and in all its unmitigated strength and penalty in the *death* of the Son of God. The Gospel is founded on a *fulfilled and unmodified* Law—a Law unchangeable and inexorable. Our pardon and salvation are all legal and righteous, springing from *Law* as truly as from *love*. Our life comes from the substituted death of another.

4. An Epitome of the Bible

Thus we see in the Cross an epitome⁶ of the Bible. The whole revelation of God is there. From the Cross we hear the truth, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound [hath superabounded]" (Rom 5:20). All the love of God is there. The sinner's condemnation and the sinner's pardon are there. God's invitation issues forth from it to the chief of sinners. "Come"; "Look unto me and be ye saved" (Isa 55:3; 45:22). God's eternal purpose is here unfolded: "the good pleasure of his will" (Eph 1:5). The fountain opened for sin is there. The rest for the weary is there. The relief for the conscience is here. The refuge for the guilty is there. The balm of Gilead is there. Peace to the troubled is there. There God meets with man, and man meets with God; heaven and earth embrace each other.

Herein is love. It is love that takes in the worst; love that took in the dying thief; love that knows no bounds; love that looks for no qualifications in him who comes, but that he *needs* it; love which is yearning over the lost, and stretching out its hands to the most rebellious and unholy—love which offers not merely pardon, but the perfection of the Son of God to the sinner, with all which that perfection can claim.

Yet here also is the doom of the unbeliever. He who takes the Cross for what God tells him that it is, is saved, and no amount of sin can hinder its virtue from flowing out

⁶ **epitome** – a summary of the main points.

to him perpetually. He who refuses or neglects the Cross must not only bear his own sin, but the sin of rejecting God's salvation. That Cross will be the millstone tied round his neck to sink him to the lowest hell. When He Who hung upon the Cross ascends the throne, where will the rejecter of the Cross appear, and what will he say for his rejection?

The right knowledge of the Cross is everything to a sinner; and error respecting it must be fatal. It is by the knowledge of Himself and of His Cross that the Father's righteous Servant justifies many; and to be ignorant of the Cross is to be ignorant of that which justifies. To be in error as to that Cross is to be in error as to that in virtue of which God forgiveth sin and receives the sinner into favor.

To add anything to that Cross is to destroy its efficacy as well as to deny its completeness; to take anything from it is to rob it of its saving virtue. It can only save as it stands—the perfection of God's wisdom and the revelation of His righteous grace. To alter it in any way is to take salvation out of it, and to make it no more than a useless piece of wood on which a Jew was nailed.

From the Cross the words of grace came forth, "It is finished." They reveal its meaning and proclaim the forgiveness which the death of the Substitute has secured. Then He suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God! *Here* all was done that is needful for bringing nigh the farthest off of the sons of men, and for cleansing the soul of the guiltiest. With the work there finished God was *satisfied*—so satisfied that He brought again from the dead Him Who did that work; so satisfied that He set this Crucified One at His own right hand upon the throne of the majesty in the heavens.

In this satisfaction of His with the completed substitution God invites us to acquiesce, that in so doing we may enter into possession of all the fulness which the sacrificial work has brought to the sinner. For what is faith but entering into the satisfaction of God with the work of the Sin-bearer upon the Cross—consenting to be treated by God on the ground of that work, to be dealt with not according to what He sees in us, but according to what He sees in His all-perfect Son? Our sympathy with God's well-pleasedness is faith—faith that brings to us at once all the benefits of the Cross of Christ.

5. Appendix: Christ In Us—Christ For Us

To disconnect the satisfaction of Christ from His death, and to transfer it to something beyond that death, such as His entrance into heaven, was the object of the old Socinians,⁷ Crellius (1590-1633) and Biddle (1615-1662), against whom Owen wrote his elaborate *Vindiciae Evangelicae*, in which occurs the following sentence: "Christ entered by His own blood into the holy place, inasmuch as, having shed and offered His blood a sacrifice to God, with the efficacy of it He entered into His presence to carry on the work of His priesthood in His intercession for us; as the high priest, having offered without (in the outer court) a sacrifice to God, entered with the blood of it into the most holy place, there to perfect and complete the duties of His office in interceding for the people"

⁷ Socinians – rejecters of the deity of Christ, the Trinity, and original sin.

(*Works*, Vol. xii. p. 497). To substitute *inherent* for *imputed* righteousness was Edward Irving's (1792-1834) aim in the writings of his last six years. Thus he writes: "I wish instead of the word *imputed* were continually substituted *inherent* but derived" (*Pref. to Conf.* p. cxxxviii). "The Church never meant to assert that because it was of Christ's working out for us, and of God's serving out to us, it was not therefore true righteousness, heart righteousness, righteousness in the inward parts and in the outward also; holiness of body, and holiness of soul...She never meant to convey by the word imputed that the righteousness was only *skin-deep*, or, if we may so speak, *cloak-deep*...Faith embodies Christ in the believer, and *Christ in the believer is a body of holiness*, a complete man of holiness, an inward and an outward man, as well as a garment" (*On the Rev.* Vol. 11, p. 889). To withdraw justification from the Cross, and deposit it in the sacraments, has always been the object of Romanists and High Churchmen. Only, in addition to this, [John Henry] Newman (1801-1890) would connect it with resurrection: "We are declared, pronounced, dealt with as righteous, *through our resurrection unto holiness in the Spirit*" (*Parochial Sermons*, vol. v. p. 159); and in his *Lectures on Justification*, published in 1838, he has a whole lecture on Romans 4:25, entitled, "Christ's Resurrection the Source of Justification" (p. 233).

In all these ways the *Cross* of Christ has been made of none effect, and the *blood* of Christ trodden under foot, and the *life* of Christ rejected as non-vicarious. Under the pretext of magnifying *Christ in us*, men have altogether denied *Christ for us*. Under the plea of not approaching God under false colors, men have in various ways refused substitution, and supplanted *imputation* by *infusion* or communication of righteousness, either from the Holy Spirit or from the resurrection of Christ.

It was reserved for recent years to combine (in a mystical formula of spiritual sentimentalism) all these subversions of the Cross into one theory of "justification in a risen Christ," and instead of the glorious doctrine of God "justifying the ungodly," to give us the worse than Socinian heresy of God justifying us, not as ungodly, but *as new creatures*, thus making *regeneration* our title to acceptance, and not the *righteousness of Him* Who was made sin for us. This new form of perfectionism supersedes all necessity for our *judicial acceptance*; for the holiness poured into us out of a risen Christ renders us independent of the blood, and places us, as partakers of this derived and infused sinlessness, in a position where confession of sin is no longer needed; where the conscience is kept pacified by *the consciousness of internal perfection*, or the sinlessness of the "new man"; and where the glorying in the Cross is exchanged for glorying in resurrection. If this be true, the "it is finished" of Calvary was *premature*: it ought to have been deferred till after resurrection.

The seventh chapter of the Romans is a stumbling-block to the inventors of this theory; and rather than adopt the experience of that passage, they condemn the apostle, in uttering it, as a backslider. They apologize for him by showing that he got out of the seventh into the eighth chapter, though how he got out of the sixth into the seventh they do not explain. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Ti 3:13). The process by which men slide from The Rock, and lay for them-

selves another foundation, is very subtle, and often almost imperceptible; but it is not the less perilous and evil. When the conscience shall awake from its dream of resurrection-perfectionism, how terrible will be its remorse for the slighted Cross! And how eagerly (if not too late) will it betake itself to the undervalued sacrifice! In the searching light of the Throne, the deluded perfectionist will be but too glad to appear in what he now calls fictitious colors, and to take his place under the shadow of the Cross, “dressed in beauty not his own.”

*“Had I an angel’s holiness,
I’d lay aside that beauteous dress,
And wrap me up in Christ.”*

Jehovah-Zidkenu, the Lord our righteousness, is our refuge here; and it is according to His excellency that God deals with us and will deal with us for ever. That excellency cannot fail. Its efficacy is everlasting, knowing neither change nor decay. Blessed is he who, believing the divine testimony concerning it, goes to God, in the assured consciousness that all that excellency has become judicially and righteously his own.

The Cross-Wearer

*I am crucified with Christ,
With Him nailed upon the tree:
Not the Cross, then, do I bear,
But the Cross it beareth me—
Solemn Cross on which I died,
One with Him, the Crucified.*

*Shall I take that blood-stained Cross,
Cross of agony and shame,
Cross of Him Who fought my fight,
Cross of Him Who overcame—
Shall I deck myself with thee,
Awful Cross of Calvary?*

*Shall I drag thee through the crowd,
’Mid the laughter that is there?
Whirl thee through the giddy waltz,
Bound upon my neck or hair?
Awful Cross of Calvary,
Shall I deck myself with thee?*

*Shall I make that lowly Cross
Minister of woman’s pride,
Drawing eyes to me that should
Fix upon the Crucified?
Awful Cross of Calvary,
Shall I deck myself with thee?*

*Shall I call this glittering gem,
Made for show and vanity,
Shall I call this gaud a Cross—
Cross of Him Who died for me?
Shall I deck myself with thee,
Awful Cross of Calvary?*

*Cross of man's device, I turn
From thee to Himself, my Lord;
What can this symbolic gem
Do for me—what peace afford?
Shall I deck myself with thee,
Awful Cross of Calvary?*

*I am crucified with Christ,
Yet I live through Him Who died:
Shall that Cross of blood and woe
Minister to human pride?
Shall I deck myself with thee,
Awful Cross of Calvary?*

The True Cross

*We glory only in the Cross,
On which the Son of God
Finished the mighty sacrifice,
Purging our sins with blood.*

*There peace for ever made by God,
Himself our peace, we see—
Himself the bearer of our guilt
On the great altar-tree.*

*The reconciling work was done,
The work that ends the strife,
When He, the Word made flesh, for us
Laid down His human life.*

*The debt was paid, the peace was made,
The veil was rent in twain,
And access to the Father given,
By Him the victim slain.*

*We come, then, boldly to the Throne:
With a true heart we come,
Emboldened only by the blood
Which speaks the "Welcome home!"*

