



Reprints for
The Armchair Theologian
By The Armchair Theological Society
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Honey out of the rock

Honey out of the Rock. Psalm 81:16.

A word of advice to my own heart and yours. - You are a religious person, and partake of all the ordinances. You do well: they are glorious privileges: but if you have not the blood of Christ at the root of your religion, it will wither, and prove but painted pageantry to go to hell in.

If you retain guilt and self-righteousness under it, those vipers will eat out all the vitals of it at length. Try and examine with greatest strictness every day, what ground your religion and hope of glory is built upon, whether it was laid by the hand of Christ. If not, it will never be able to endure the storm that must come against it; Satan will throw it all down, and great will be the fall thereof, Matt. 7:27.

You that glory in being a Christian, you shall be winnowed. Every vein of your profession will be tried to purpose. It is terrible to have it all come tumbling down, and to find nothing but itself to stand upon.

You who pride yourself on being a Christian, see to your waxen wings, which now will melt with the heat of temptation. What a misery is it to trade much, and be bankrupt at length, and have no stock, on foundation laid for eternity in your soul!

You who pride yourself on the gifts you have, look to see there is not a worm at the root that will spoil all your fine gourd, and make it die about you in a day of scorplings. Look over your soul daily, and ask, Where is the blood of Christ to be seen upon my soul? Many eminent religious people have come at length to cry out, in the sight of the ruin of all their duties, "Undone, undone, to all eternity!"

Consider, the greatest sins may be hid under the greatest duties, and the greatest terrors. See that the wound that sin has made in your soul be perfectly cured by the blood of Christ! not skinned over with duties, humblings and enlargements. Apply what you will besides the blood of Christ, it will poison the sore. You will find that sin was never mortified truly, if you have not seen Christ bleeding for you upon the cross. Nothing can kill it, but beholding Christ's righteousness.

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Nature can afford no balsam fit for soul cure. Healing from duty, and not from Christ, is the most desperate disease. Poor, ragged nature, with all its highest improvements, can never spin a garment fine enough (without spot) to cover the soul's nakedness. Nothing can fit the soul for that use but Christ's perfect righteousness.

Whatsoever is of nature's spinning must be all unraveled before the righteousness of Christ can be put on. Whatever is of nature's putting on, Satan will come and plunder every rag away, and leave the soul naked and open to the wrath of God. All that nature can do, will never make up the least gram of grace, that can mortify sin, or look Christ in the face one day.

You are known as a Christian person, and go on hearing, praying and receiving, yet miserable you may be. Look about you: did you ever yet see Christ to this day, in distinction from all other excellencies and righteousness in the world, and all of them falling before the majesty of His love and grace? Isa. 2:17.

If you have seen Christ truly, you have seen pure grace, pure righteousness in Him every way infinite, far exceeding all sin and misery. If you have seen Christ, you can trample upon all the righteousness of men and angels, so as to bring you into acceptance with God. If you have seen Christ, you would not do a duty without Him for ten thousand worlds, 1 Cor. 2:2. If ever you saw Christ, you saw Him a Rock, higher than self-righteousness, Satan, and sin, Ps. 61:2 and this Rock follows you, 1 Cor 10:4; and there will be continual dropping of honey and grace out of that Rock to satisfy you, Ps. 81:16. Examine if ever you have beheld Christ as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, Jn. 1:14. Be sure you have come to Christ, that you stand upon the Rock of Ages, and have answered to His call to your soul, and have closed with Him for justification.

Men talk bravely of believing, whilst whole and sound; few know it. Christ is the mystery of the scripture; grace the mystery of Christ. Believing is the most wonderful thing in the world. Put any thing of your own to it, and you spoil it. Christ will not so much as look at it for believing. When you believe and come to Christ, you must leave behind you your own righteousness, and bring nothing but your sin: (Oh, that is hard!) leave behind all your holiness, sanctification, duties, humblings, and so on; and bring nothing but your wants and miseries, or else Christ is not fit for you, nor you for Christ. Christ will be a pure Redeemer and Mediator, and you must be an undone sinner, or Christ and you will never agree. It is the hardest thing in the world to take Christ alone for righteousness: that is to acknowledge Him Christ. Join anything to Him of your own, and you un-Christ Him.

Whatever comes in when you go to God for acceptance, besides Christ, call it anti-Christ; bid it begone; make only Christ's righteousness triumphant. All besides that is Babylon, which must fall if Christ stand, and you shall rejoice in the day of the fall thereof, Isa. 14:4. Christ alone did tread the winepress, and there was none with Him, Isa. 63:3. If you join anything to Christ, Christ will trample upon it in fury and anger, and stain His raiment with the blood of it. You think it easy to believe. Was ever your faith tried with an hour of temptation, and a thorough sight of sin? Was it ever put to grapple with Satan, and the wrath of God lying upon the conscience, when you were

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in the mouth of hell and the grave? then did God show you Christ a ransom and a righteousness; then you could say, "Oh! I see grace enough in Christ." You may say that which is the greatest word in the world, believe. Untried faith is uncertain faith.

To believing, there must go a clear conviction of sin, and the merits of the blood of Christ, and of Christ's willingness to save upon this consideration, merely, that you are a sinner; things all harder than to make a world. All the power in nature cannot get up so high in a storm of sin and guilt as really to believe there is any grace, any willingness in Christ to save. When Satan charges sin upon the conscience, then for the soul to charge it upon Christ, that is gospel-like: that is to make Him Christ. He serves for that use, to accept Christ's righteousness alone, His blood alone for salvation, that is the sum of the gospel. When the soul, in all duties and distress, can say, "Nothing but Christ, Christ alone, for righteousness, justification, sanctification, redemption," 1 Cor. 1:30; not humblings, not duty, not graces: that soul has got above the reach of the billows.

All temptations, Satan's advantages, and our complainings, are laid in self-righteousness, and self-excellency. God pursues these, by setting Satan upon you, as Laban did Jacob for his images. These must be torn from you, be as unwilling as you will. These hinder Christ from coming in; and till Christ comes in, guilt will not go out; and where guilt is, there is hardness of heart: and therefore much guilt argues very little if anything of Christ.

When guilt is raised up, take heed of getting it allayed in any way but by Christ's blood: that will tend to hardening. Make Christ your peace; "for he is our peace." Eph. 2:14; not your duties and your tears. Christ your righteousness, not your graces. You may destroy Christ by duties, as well as by sins. Look at Christ, and do as much as you will. Stand with all your weight upon Christ's righteousness. Take heed of having one foot on your righteousness, another on Christ's. Till Christ come and sit on high upon a throne of grace in the conscience, there is nothing but guilt, terrors, secret suspicions; the soul hanging between hope and fear, which is an ungospel-like state.

He that fears to see sin's utmost vileness, the utmost hell of his own heart, he suspects the merits of Christ. Be you never such a great sinner, 1 John 2:1; try Christ to make Him your Advocate, and you shall find Him Jesus Christ the righteous. In all doubtings, fears, storms of conscience, look at Christ continually; do not argue with Satan, he desires nothing better; bid him go to Christ, and He will answer him. It is His office to be our Advocate, 1 John 2:1. His office to answer law, as our Surety, Hebrews 7:22. His office to answer justice as our Mediator, Galatians 3:20, 1 Timothy 2:5. And He is sworn to that office, Hebrews 7:20, 21. Put Christ upon it. If you will do anything yourself, as to satisfaction for sin, you renounce Christ the righteous, who was made sin for you, 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Satan may bring forward and corrupt scripture, but he cannot answer scripture. It is Christ's word of mighty authority. Christ foiled Satan with it, Matthew 4:7. In all the scripture there is not an ill word against a poor sinner stripped of self-righteousness. No! it plainly points out this man to be the subject of the grace of the gospel, and none else. Believe but Christ's willingness, and that will make you willing. If you find you cannot believe, remember it is Christ's work to make you believe. Put Him upon it; He works to will and to do of His good pleasure, Philippians 2:13.

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Mourn for your unbelief, which is a setting up of guilt in the conscience above Christ, and undervaluing the merits of Christ, accounting His blood an unholy, a common, and unsatisfying thing.

You complain much of yourself. Does your sin make you look more at Christ, less at yourself? That is right, or else complaining is but hypocrisy. To be looking at duties, graces, enlargements, when you should be looking at Christ, that is pitiful. Looking at them will make you proud; looking at Christ's grace will only make you humble. By grace you are saved, Ephesians 2:5. In all your temptations be not discouraged, James 1:2. Those surges may be not to break you, but to heave you off yourself upon the Rock Christ.

You may be brought low, even to the brink of hell, ready to tumble in; you cannot be brought lower than the belly of hell. Many saints have been there, even dowsed in hell; yet even then you may cry, even there you may look toward the holy temple, Jonah 2:4. Into that temple none might enter but purified ones, and with an offering too, Acts 21:26. But now Christ is our temple, sacrifice, altar, high priest, to whom none must come but sinners, and that without any offering, but His own blood once offered, Hebrews 7:27.

Remember all the patterns of grace that are in heaven. You think, oh, what a monument of grace you would be! there are many thousands as rich moments as you can be. The greatest sinner did never pass the grace of Christ. Do not despair. Hope still. When the clouds are blackest, even then look towards Christ, the standing pillar of the Father's love and grace, set up in heaven for all sinners to gaze upon continually. Whatever Satan or conscience say, do not conclude against yourself, Christ shall have the last word. He is judge of quick and dead, and must pronounce the final sentence. His blood speaks reconciliation, Col. 1:20; cleansing, 1 John 1:7; purchase, Acts 20: 28; redemption, 1 Pet. 1:19; purging, Heb. 9:13, 14; remission, verse 22; liberty, Heb. 10:19; justification, Rom. 5:9; nighness to God, Eph. 2:13. Not a drop of this blood shall be lost. Stand and hear what God will say, for He will speak peace to His people, that they return no more to folly. Psalm 85:8. He speaks grace, mercy and peace, 2 Tim. 1:2. That is the language of the Father and of Christ. Wait for Christ's appearing, as the morning star, Rev. 22:16. He shall come as certainly as the morning, as refreshing as the rain. Hosea 6:3

The sun may as well be hindered from rising as Christ the Sun of Righteousness, Mal. 4:2. Look not a moment off Christ. Look not upon sin, but look upon Christ first. When you mourn for sin, if you see Christ then, away with it, Zech. 12:10. In every duty look at Christ; before duty to pardon; in duty to assist; after duty to accept. Without this it is but carnal, careless duty. Do not legalize the gospel, as if part remained for you to do and suffer, and Christ were but half a Mediator and you must bear part of your own sin, and make part satisfaction. Let sin break your heart, but not your hope in the gospel.

Look more at justification than sanctification. In the highest commands consider Christ, not as an exactor to require, but a debtor, committed to work according to His promise. If you have looked at work, duties and qualifications, more than at the merits of Christ, it will cost you dear. No wonder you go about complaining: graces may be evidences, the merits of Christ alone

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(without them) must be the foundation of your hope to stand on. Christ only can be the hope of glory, Col. 1:27.

When we come to God, we must bring nothing but Christ with us. Any ingredients, or any previous qualifications of our own, will poison and corrupt faith. He that builds upon duties, etc., knows not the merits of Christ. This makes believing so hard, so far above nature. If you believe, you must every day renounce, as dung and dross, Phil. 3:7,8, your privileges, your obedience, your baptism, your sanctification, your duties, your graces, your tears, your meltings, your humblings, and nothing but Christ must be held up. Every day your workings, your self-sufficiency must be destroyed. You must take all out of God's hand. Christ is the gift of God, John 4:10. Faith is the gift of God, Eph. 2:8. Pardon, a free gift, Isa. 45:22. Ah, how nature storms, frets, rages at this, that all is of gift and it can purchase nothing with its actings and tears and duties, that all workings are excluded, and of no value in heaven.

If nature had been left to contrive the way of salvation, it would have rather put it into the hands of saints or angels to sell it, than of Christ who gives it freely, whom therefore it suspects. It would have set up a way to purchase by doing; therefore it abominates the merits of Christ, as the most destructive thing to it. Nature would do anything to be saved rather than go to Christ, or close with Christ. Christ will have nothing, the soul would force something of its own upon Christ. Here is that great controversy. Consider, did you ever yet see the merits of Christ, and the infinite satisfaction made by His death? Did you see this when the burden of sin and the wrath of God lay heavy on your conscience? That is grace. The greatness of Christ's merit is not known but to a poor soul in the greatest distress. Slight convictions will but have slight low prizings of Christ's blood and merits.

Despairing sinner! You look on your right hand and on your left, saying, "who will show us any good?" You are tumbling over all your duties and professions to patch up a righteousness to save you. Look at Christ now; look to Him and be saved all the ends of the earth, Isa. 45:22. There is none else. He is a Savior, and there is none beside Him. ver. 21. Look anywhere else and you are undone. God will look at nothing but Christ and you must look at nothing else. Christ is lifted up on high, as the brazen serpent in the wilderness, that sinners at the ends of the earth, at the greatest distance, may see Him and look towards Him. The least sight of Him will be saving, the least touch healing to you.

And God intends that you should look on Him, for He has set Him on a high throne of glory, in the open view of all poor sinners who desire Him. You have infinite reason to look on Him, no reason at all to look away from Him: for He is meek and lowly of heart, Matt. 11:29. He will do that Himself which He requires of His creature, namely bear with infirmities, Rom. 15:1. Not pleasing Himself, not standing upon points of law, ver. 2. He will restore with the spirit of meekness, Gal. 6:1. and bear your burdens, ver. 2. He will forgive, not only till seven times, but seventy times seven, Matt. 18:21, 22. It put the faith of the apostle to it to believe this, Luke 17:4, 5. Because we are hard to forgive, we think Christ is hard.

We see sin great; we think Christ does so, and measure infinite love with our own line, infinite merits with our sins, which is the greatest pride and blasphemy, Psalm 103:11,12, Isaiah 40:15.

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Hear what He says, "I have found a ransom," Job. 33:24. "In him I am well pleased," Matt. 3:17. God will have nothing else. Nothing else will do you good, or satisfy conscience, but Christ who satisfied the Father. God does all on account of Christ. You deserve hell, wrath, rejection: Christ's deservings are life, pardon and acceptance. He will not only show you the one, but He will give the other. It is Christ's own glory and happiness to pardon.

Consider, whilst Christ was upon the earth, He was more among Scribes and Pharisees, His professed adversaries; for they were self-righteous ones. It is not as you imagine, that His state in glory makes Him neglectful, scornful to poor sinners: no; He has the same heart now in heaven. He is God, and changes not. He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world," John 1:29. He went through all your temptations, dejections, sorrows, desertions, rejections, Matt. 4:3-12, Mark 15:24, Luke 22:44, Matt. 26:38, and has drunk the bitterest of the cup and left the sweet; the condemnation is out. Christ drunk up all the Father's wrath at one draught; and nothing but salvation is left for you.

You say you cannot believe, you cannot repent. Fitter for Christ if you have nothing but sin and misery. Go to Christ with all your impenitence and unbelief, to get faith and repentance from Him; that is glorious. Tell Christ, "Lord, I have brought no righteousness, no grace to be accepted in, or justified by: I am come for Thine, and must have it." We would be bringing to Christ, and that must not be. Not a penny of nature's highest improvements will pass in heaven. Grace will not stand with works. Tit. 3:5, Rom. 11:6. That is a terrible point to nature, which cannot think of being stripped of all, not having a rag of duty or righteousness left to look at.

Self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, are the darlings of nature, which she preserves as her life. That makes Christ seem ugly to nature. Nature cannot desire Him. He is just directly opposite to all nature's glorious interests. Let nature but make a gospel, and it would make it quite contrary to Christ: it would be to the just, the innocent and the holy; Christ made the gospel for you; that is, for needy sinners, the ungodly, the unrighteous, the accursed. Nature cannot endure to think the gospel is only for sinners: it will rather choose to despair than to go to Christ upon such terrible terms. When nature is but put to it by guilt or wrath, it will go to its old haunts of self-righteousness and self-goodness. An infinite power must cast down those strongholds. None but the self-justified stands excluded from the gospel; Christ will look at the most abominable sinner before Him; because to such an one Christ cannot be made justification: he is no sinner.

To say in compliment, "I am a sinner," is easy; but to pray with the publican indeed, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner", is the hardest prayer in the world. It is easy to say, "I believe in Christ"; but to see Christ full of grace and truth, of whose fulness you may receive grace for grace; that is faith indeed. It is easy to profess Christ with the mouth; but to confess Him with the heart, as Peter, to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, the alone Mediator, that is above flesh and blood. Many call Christ, Saviour; a few know Him so. To see grace and salvation in Christ, is the greatest sight in the world. None can do that, but at the same time they shall see that glory and salvation to be theirs. Sights will cause applications. I may be ashamed to think in the midst of so much profession, that I have known so little of the blood of Christ, which is the main thing of the gospel. A Christless, formal religion, will be the blackest sight next to hell, that can be. You may have many good things, and yet one thing may be wanting, that may make you go away

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sorrowful from Christ. You have never sold all: you have never parted with all your own righteousness, and so on. You may be high in duty, and yet a perfect enemy and adversary to Christ, in every prayer, in every ordinance. Labor after sanctification to your utmost: but make not a Christ of it to save yourself; if so, it must come down one way or other. Christ's infinite satisfaction, not your sanctification, must be your justification before God. When the Lord shall appear terrible out of His holy place, fire shall consume that as hay and stubble.

This will be found religion: "Only rest all upon the everlasting mountains of God's love and grace in Christ, to live continually in the sight of Christ's infinite righteousness and merits, they are sanctifying. Without them the heart is carnal, and in those sights to see the full vileness, yet littleness of sin, and to see all pardoned; in those sights to pray, hear, and so forth, seeing your polluted self, and all your weak performances, accepted continually; in those sights to trample upon all your self- glories, righteousness, privileges, as abominable, and be found continually in the righteousness of Christ only, rejoicing in the ruins of your own righteousness, the spoiling of all your own excellencies, that Christ alone, as Mediator, may be exalted in His throne. Mourn over all your duties however glorious, that you have not performed in the sight and sense of Christ's love." Without the blood of Christ on your conscience, all is dead service, Heb. 9:14.

That opinion of free-will, (so cried up), will be easily confuted, as it is by scripture, in the heart, which has had any spiritual dealing with Jesus Christ as to the application of His merits, and subjection to His righteousness. Christ is every way too magnificent a person for poor nature to close with or to apprehend. Christ is so infinitely holy, nature never dare look at Him; so infinitely good, nature can never believe Him to be such, when it lies under a full sight of sin. Christ is too high and glorious for nature so much as to touch. There must be a divine nature first put into the soul, to make it lay hold on Him, He lies so infinitely beyond the sight or reach of nature.

That Christ which natural free-will can apprehend, is but a natural Christ of a man's own making, not the Father's Christ, nor Jesus the Son of the living God, to whom none can come without the Father's drawing, John 6:44.

Finally, search the scriptures daily as mines of gold in which the heart of Christ is laid open. Watch against sins to which you are prone, see them in their vileness, and they shall never break out into act. Keep always an humble, empty, broken frame of heart, sensitive to any spiritual misconduct, observing all inward workings, fit for the highest communications. Keep not guilt in the conscience, but apply the blood of Christ immediately. God charges sin and guilt upon you to make you look to Christ, the brazen serpent.

Judge not Christ's love by providences, but by promises. Bless God for shaking off false foundations, for any way whereby He keeps the soul awakened and looking after Christ; better sickness and temptations, than security and superficiality.

A slighting spirit will turn a profane spirit, and will sin and pray too. Slightness is the bane of real religion, if it be not rooted out of the heart, by constant and serious dealings with, and beholdings of Christ in duties; it will grow more strong, and more deadly, by being under church-ordinances. Measure not your graces by others' attainments, but by scripture trials. Be

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serious, exact in duty, having the weight of it upon your heart; but be as much afraid of taking comfort from duties as from sins. Comfort from any hand but Christ is deadly. Be much in prayer, or you will never keep up much communion with God. As you are in private prayer, so you will be in all other ordinances.

Reckon not duties by high expressions, but by low frames, and the beholdings of Christ. Tremble at duties and gifts. It was the saying of a great saint. 'He was more afraid of his duties than of his sins'; they often made him proud, the other always made him humble. Treasure up manifestations of Christ's love, they make the heart low for Christ, too high for sin. Despise not the lowest, meanest evidence of grace; God may put you to make use of the lowest as you think: even that may be worth a thousand worlds to thee, 1 John 3:14.

Be true to truth, but not turbulent and scornful. Restore such as are fallen; help them up again with all the bowels of Christ. Set the broken disjointed bones with the grace of the gospel. Confident Christian! despise not weak saints; you may come to wish to be in the condition of the most despised of them. Be faithful to others' infirmities, but realising especially your own. Visit sick beds and deserted souls much; they are excellent scholars in experience.

Abide in your calling. Be dutiful to all relations as to the Lord. Be content with little of the world; little will serve. Think little of the earth, not much, because unworthy of the least. Think much of heaven, not little, because Christ is so rich and free. Think every one better than yourself, and always carry self-loathing about you, as one fit to be trampled upon by all saints. See the vanity of the world, and the doom of all earthly things; and love nothing but Christ. Mourn to see so little of Christ in the world; so few wanting Him; trifles please them better. To a self-secure soul Christ is but a fable, the scriptures but a story. Mourn to think how many are under baptism and church-order, who are not under grace, looking much after duty, obedience, little after Christ, little versed in grace. Prepare for the cross; welcome it; bear it triumphantly like Christ's cross, whether scoffs, mockings, jeers, contempt, imprisonments, and so on, but see it be Christ's cross not your own.

Sin will hinder from glorying in the cross of Christ. Omitting little truths against light may breed hell in the conscience, as well as committing the greatest sins against light. If you have been taken out of the belly of hell into Christ's bosom, and made to sit among princes in the household of God, oh, how you should live a pattern of mercy!

Redeemed, restored soul! what infinite sums you owe Christ! With what singular feelings should you walk and do every duty! On sabbaths, what praising days, singing of hallelujahs, should they be to you. Church fellowship, what a heaven, a being with Christ, and angels' and saints' communion! What a drowning the soul in eternal love as a burial with Christ, dying to all things beside Him; every time you think of Christ, be astonished and wonder; and when you see sin, look at Christ's grace that did pardon it; and when you are proud, look at Christ's grace, that shall humble and strike you down in the dust.

Remember Christ's time of love when you were naked, Ezek. 16:8, 9, and then He chose you. Can you ever have a proud thought? Remember whose arms supported you from sinking and

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delivered you from the lowest hell, Ps. 86:13, and shout in the ears of angels and men, Ps. 148, and for ever sing praise, praise; grace, grace. Daily repent and pray, and walk in the sight of grace, as one that has the anointings of grace upon you. Remember your sin, Christ's pardonings; your deservings, Christ's merits; your weakness, Christ's strength; your pride, Christ's humility; your many infirmities, Christ's restorings; your guilts, Christ's new applications of His blood; your failings, Christ's raisings up; your wants, Christ's fulness; your temptations, Christ's tenderness; your vileness, Christ's righteousness.

Blessed soul! whom Christ shall find not having on his own righteousness, Phil. 3:9, but having his robes washed and made white in the blood of the lamb, Rev. 7:14.

Trifle not with ordinances. Be much in meditation and prayer. Wait diligently upon all hearing opportunities. We have need of doctrine, reproof, exhortation, consolation, as the tender herbs and the grass have of the rain, the dew, the small rain, and the showers, Deut. 32:2. Do all you do as soul-work, as unto Christ, Zech. 7:5, 6, as immediately dealing with Christ Jesus, as if He were looking on you and you on Him, and fetch all your strength from Him.

Observe what holy motions you find in your souls to duties. Prize the least good thought you have of Christ, the least good word you speak of Him sincerely from the heart. Rich mercy! Oh, bless God for it! Observe, if every day you have the dayspring from on high, with His morning dews of mourning for sin constantly visiting you, Luke 1:77. Have you the bright morning star, with fresh influences of grace and peace constantly arising, Rev. 22:16, and Christ sweetly greeting the soul in all duties! What duty makes not more spiritual, will make more carnal; what does not quicken and humble, will deaden and harden.

Judas may have the sop, the outward privilege of baptism, supper, church fellowship, etc., but John leaned on Christ's bosom, John 13:23, that is the gospel ordinance posture in which we should pray, and hear, and perform all duties. Nothing but lying on that bosom will dissolve hardness of heart, and make you mourn kindly for sin, and cure superficiality and ordinariness of spirit, that gangrene of religious profession. That will humble indeed, and make the soul cordial to Christ, and sin vile to the soul; yes, transform the ugliest piece of hell into the glory of Christ.

Never think you are right, as you should be, a Christian of any attainment, until you come to this, always to see and feel yourself living in the bosom of Christ, who is in the bosom of the Father, John 1:18. Come and move the Father for sights of Christ, and you will be sure of speed! you can come with no request that pleases Him better. He gave Him out of His own bosom for that very end, to be held up before the eyes of all sinners as the everlasting monument of His Father's love.

Looking at the natural sun weakens the eye. The more you look at Christ, the Sun of righteousness, the stronger and clearer will the eye of faith be. Look but at Christ, you will love Him and live on Him. Think on Him continually. Keep the eye constantly upon Christ's blood, or every blast of temptation will shake you. If you will see sin's sinfulness, to loathe it and mourn, do not stand looking upon sin, but look upon Christ first, as suffering and satisfying. If you would see your graces, your sanctification, do not stand gazing upon them; but look at Christ's

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righteousness in the first place (see the Son and you see all), look at your graces in the second place.

When you exercise faith, what you first look at, that you expect settlement from, and make it the ground of your hope. Go to Christ in sight of your sin and misery, not of your grace and holiness. Have nothing to do with your graces and sanctification, they will but veil Christ, till you have seen Christ first. He that looks upon Christ through his graces, is like one that sees the sun in water, which wavers and moves like the water does. Look upon Christ only as shining in the firmament of the Father's love and grace; you will not see Him but in His own glory, which is unspeakable. Pride and unbelief will put you upon seeing somewhat in yourself first; but faith will have to do with none but Christ, who is inexpressibly glorious, and must swallow up your sanctification as well as your sin; for God made Him both for us, and we must make Him both. 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21. He that sets up his sanctification to look at, to comfort him, he sets up the greatest idol which will strengthen his doubts and fears. Do only look away from Christ, and straightaway, like Peter, you sink in doubts.

A Christian never lacks comfort, but by breaking the order and method of the gospel, looking on his own, and looking off Christ's perfect righteousness, which is to choose rather to live by candlelight, than by the light of the sun. The honey that you suck from your own righteousness will turn into perfect gall, and the light that you take from it to walk in, will turn into black night upon the soul. Satan is tempting you by putting you to plod on in your own grace, to get comfort from that; then the Father comes and points you to Christ's grace, as rich, glorious, infinitely pleasing Him, and bids you study Christ's righteousness. And His biddings are enablings; that is a blessed motion, a sweet whispering, checking your unbelief. Follow the least hint close with much prayer; prize it as an invaluable jewel, it is an earnest of more to come.

Again, if you would pray, and cannot, and so are discouraged, see Christ praying for you; using His interest with the Father for you; what can you lack? John 14:16. If you are troubled, see Christ your peace. Eph. 2:14, leaving you peace when He went up to heaven, again and again, charging you not to be troubled, no, not in the least sinfully troubled, so as to obstruct your comfort or your believing, John 14:1-27. He is now upon the throne, having spoiled upon His cross in the lowest state of humiliation, all whatever that can hurt or annoy you. He has borne all your sins, sorrows, troubles, temptations, and is gone to prepare mansions for you. You who have seen Christ all, and yourself absolutely nothing, who make Christ all your life, and are dead to all righteousness besides; you are a true Christian, one highly beloved, and who has found favor with God, a favorite of heaven. Do Christ this one favor for all His love to you - love all His poor saints and churches, the most despised, the smallest, the weakest, notwithstanding any difference of judgment, they are engraved on His heart as the names of the children of Israel on Aaron's breastplate, Exod. 28:29. Let them be so on yours. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee," Psalm 122:6.