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*The Repentance of Believers.*

1578/7565

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A

S E R M O N

On MARK i. 15.

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By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

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S E R M O N, &c.

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M A R K i. 15.

*Repent, and believe the gospel.*

1. **I**T is generally supposed, That Repentance and Faith are only the Gate of Religion; that they are necessary only at the beginning of our Christian course, when we are setting out in the way of the kingdom. And this may be confirmed by the great Apostle, where exhorting the *Hebrew* Christians to *go on to perfection*, he teaches them to *leave these first principles of the doctrine of Christ; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith toward God: which must at least mean, that they should comparatively leave these, that at first took up all their thoughts, in order to press forward toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

2. And this is undoubtedly true, that there is a Repentance and a Faith, which are more especially necessary at the beginning. A Repentance which is a conviction of our utter sinfulness, and guiltiness and helplessness: and which precedes our receiving that kingdom of  
A 2 God,

God, which our Lord observes is *within us*; and a Faith, whereby we receive that kingdom, even *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*.

3. But notwithstanding this, there is also a Repentance and a Faith, (taking the words in another sense, a sense not quite the same, nor yet entirely different,) which are requisite after we have *believed the gospel*: yea, and every subsequent stage of our Christian course, or we cannot *run the race which is set before us*. And this Repentance and Faith are full as necessary in order to our continuance and growth in grace, as the former Faith and Repentance were, in order to our entering into the kingdom of God.

But in what sense are we to repent and believe, after we are justified?—This is an important question, and worthy of being considered with the utmost attention.

I. And First, In what sense are we to repent?

1. Repentance frequently means, an inward change, a change of mind from sin to holiness. But we now speak of it in a quite different sense, as it is one kind of Self-knowledge, the knowing ourselves sinners, yea guilty, helpless sinners, even though we know we are children of God.

2. Indeed when we first know this, when we first find redemption in the blood of Jesus, when the Love of God is first shed abroad in our hearts and his kingdom set up therein, it is natural to suppose that we are no longer sinners, that

that all our sins are not only covered but destroyed. As we do not then feel any evil in our hearts, we readily imagine, none is there. Nay some well-meaning men have imagined this, not only at that time, but ever after: having persuaded themselves, that when they were justified, they were entirely sanctified. Yea, they have laid it down as a general rule, in spite of Scripture, Reason and Experience. These sincerely believe and earnestly maintain, that all sin is destroyed when we are justified, and that there is no sin in the heart of a believer, but that it is altogether clear from that moment. But though we readily acknowledge, *he that believeth is born of God, and he that is born of God doth not commit sin*: yet we cannot allow that he does not *feel* it within: it does not *reign*, but it does remain. And a conviction of the sin which *remains* in our heart, is one great branch of the repentance we are now speaking of.

3. For it is seldom long, before he who imagined all sin was gone, feels there is still *Pride* in his heart. He is convinced both that in many respects he has thought of himself more highly than he ought to think, and that he has taken to himself the praise of something he had received, and gloried in it as though he had not received it. And yet he knows, he is in the favour of God. He cannot and ought not to *cast away his confidence*. *The Spirit still witnesses with his spirit, that he is a child of God.*

4. Nor is it long before he feels *Self-will* in his heart, even a Will contrary to the Will of God. A Will every man must inevitably have, as long as he has an Understanding. This is an essential part of human Nature, indeed of the

nature of every intelligent Being. Our blessed Lord himself had a Will as a man: otherwise he had not been a man. But his human Will was invariably subject to the Will of his Father. At all times, and on all occasions, even in the deepest affliction, he could say, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.* But this is not the case at all times, even with a true believer in Christ. He frequently finds his will more or less exalting itself against the Will of God. He wills something because it is pleasing to nature, which is not pleasing to God. And he wills (is averse from) something because it is painful to nature, which is the will of God concerning him. Indeed (suppose he continues in the faith) he fights against it with all his might. But this very thing implies, that it really exists, and that he is conscious of it.

5. Now Self-will, as well as Pride, is a species of Idolatry: and both are directly contrary to the love of God. The same observation may be made, concerning *the Love of the world.* But this likewise even true believers are liable to feel in themselves; and every one of them does feel it, more or less, sooner or later, in one branch or another. It is true, when he first passes from death unto life, he desires nothing more but God. He can truly say, *All my desire is unto thee, and unto the remembrance of thy name. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee!* But it is not so always. In process of time he will feel again, (though perhaps only for a few moments) either *the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life.* Nay, if he does not continually watch and pray, he may find *Lust* reviving, yea, and thrusting fore at him that

that he may fall, till he has scarce any strength left in him. He may feel the assaults of *inordinate Affection*, yea a strong propensity to *love the creature more than the Creator*: whether it be a child, a parent, a husband or wife, or *the Friend that is as his own soul*. He may feel in a thousand various ways, a desire of earthly things or pleasures. In the same proportion he will forget God, not seeking his happiness in him, and consequently being a *lover of pleasure more than a lover of God*.

6. If he does not keep himself every moment, he will again feel *the Desire of the Eye*, the desire of gratifying his imagination, with something great, or beautiful, or uncommon. In how many ways does this desire assault the soul? Perhaps with regard to the poorest trifles such as dress, or furniture: things never designed to satisfy the appetite of an immortal Spirit. Yet how natural is it for us, even after we *have tasted of the powers of the world to come*, to sink again into these foolish, low desires of things, that perish in the using? How hard is it, even for those who know in whom they have believed, to conquer but one branch of the desire of the eye, Curiosity? Constantly to trample it under their feet? To desire nothing, merely because it is new?

7. And how hard is it even for the children of God wholly to conquer *the pride of life*? St. *John* seems to mean by this nearly the same with what the world terms the sense of honour. This is no other than a desire of and delight in *the honour that cometh of men*. A desire and love of praise, and (which is always joined with it) a proportionable *fear of dispraise*. Nearly allied to this is *evil shame*: the being ashamed of



of that wherein we ought to glory. And this is seldom divided from the *fear of man*, which brings a thousand snares upon the soul. Now where is he even among those that seem strong in faith, who does not find in himself a degree of all these evil tempers? So that even these are but in part *crucified to the world*: for the evil root still remains in their heart.

8. And do we not feel other tempers, which are as contrary to the love of our neighbour, as these are to the love of God? The love of our neighbour, *thinketh no evil*: do not we find any thing of the kind? Do we never find any *jealousies* any *evil surmisings*, any groundless or unreasonable suspicions? He that is clear in these respects, let him cast the first stone at his neighbour. Who does not sometimes feel other tempers or inward motions, which he knows are contrary to brotherly love? If nothing of *malice, hatred* or *bitterness*, is there no touch of *envy*? Particularly toward those who enjoy some (real or supposed) good, which we desire but cannot attain? Do we never find any degree of *resentment*, when we are injured or affronted? Especially by those whom we peculiarly loved, and whom we had most laboured to help or oblige. Does injustice or ingratitude never excite us to any desire of *revenge*? Any desire of returning evil for evil, instead of *overcoming evil with good*? This also shews, how much is still in our heart, which is contrary to the love of our neighbour.

9. *Covetousness* in every kind and degree is certainly as contrary to this as to the love of God. Whether *φιλαργυρία*, the love of money, which is too frequently the root of all evils, or *πλεονεξία*, literally, A desire of having more, or  
increasing

increasing in substance. And how few even of the real children of God, are entirely free from both? Indeed one great man, *Martin Luther* used to say, He "never had any covetousness in him, (not only in his converted state, but) ever since he was born." But if so, I would not scruple to say, He was the only man born of a woman, (except him that was God as well as man) who had not, who was born without it. Nay, I believe, never was any born of God, that lived any considerable time after, who did not feel more or less of it many times, especially in the latter sense. We may therefore set it down as an undoubted truth, that *covetousness*, together with pride, and self-will and anger *remain* in the hearts even of them that are justified.

10. It is their experiencing this which has inclined so many serious persons, to understand the latter part of the seventh chapter to the *Romans*, not of them that *are under the law*, that are convinced of sin, which is undoubtedly the meaning of the Apostle, but of them that *are under grace*, that are *justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ*. And it is most certain, they are thus far right: there does still *remain* even in them that are justified, a *mind* which is in some measure *carnal*; (so the Apostle tells even the believers at *Corinth*, *Ye are carnal*;) an *heart bent to backsliding*, still ever ready to *depart from the living God*: a propensity to pride, self-will, anger, revenge, love of the world, yea and all evil; a root of bitterness, which if the restraint were taken off for a moment, would instantly spring up: yea, such a depth of corruption, as without clear light from God we cannot possibly conceive. And a conviction

conviction of all this sin *remaining* in their hearts, is the repentance which belongs to them that are justified.

11. But we should likewise be convinced, that as sin remains in our hearts, so it *cleaves* to all our words and actions. Indeed it is to be feared, that many of our words are more than mixt with sin? that they are all sinful altogether; for such undoubtedly is all *uncharitable conversation*: all which does not spring from brotherly love, all which does not agree with that golden rule, *What ye would that others should do to you, even so to do unto them.* Of this kind is all back-biting, all tale-bearing, all whispering, all evil-speaking; that is, repeating the faults of absent persons: for none would have others repeat his faults when he is absent. Now how few are there, even among believers, who are in no degree guilty of this? Who steadily observe the good old rule. "Of the dead and the absent speak nothing but good." And suppose they do, do they likewise abstain from *unprofitable conversation*? Yet all this is unquestionably sinful, and *grieves the holy Spirit of God*: yea, and *for every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account in the day of judgment.*

12. But let it be supposed, that they continually *watch and pray*, and so do not enter into *this temptation*; and they constantly set a watch before their mouth, and keep the door of their lips: suppose they exercise themselves herein, that *all their conversation may be in grace seasoned with salt, and meet to minister grace to the hearers*: yet do they not daily slide into useless discourse, notwithstanding all their caution? And even when they endeavour to speak for God, are their words pure, free from unholy mixtures?

mixtures? Do they find nothing wrong in their very *Intention*? Do they speak merely to please God, and not partly to please themselves? Is it wholly to do the will of God, and not their own will also?—Or, if they begin with a single eye, do they go on *looking unto Jesus*, and talking with him all the time they are with their neighbour?—When they are reproving sin, do they feel no anger or unkind temper to the sinner? When they are instructing the ignorant, do they not find any pride, any self-preference?—When they are comforting the afflicted, or provoking one another to love and to good works, do they never perceive any inward self-commendation. “Now you have spoke well?” Or any vanity, a desire that others should think so, and esteem them on the account? In some or all these respects, how much sin *cleaves* to the best conversation even of believers? The conviction of which is another branch of repentance which belongs to them that are justified.

13. And how much sin if their conscience is thoroughly awake, may they find *cleaving to their actions* also? Nay are there not many of these, which though they are such as the world would not condemn, yet cannot be commended, no nor excused, if we judge by the word of God? Are there not many of their actions, which they themselves know, are not *to the glory of God*? Many, wherein they did not even aim at this, which were not undertaken with an eye to God? And those that were, are there not many, wherein their eye is not singly fixt on God? Wherein they are doing their own will, at least as much as his, and seeking to please themselves as much, if not more than to please

—please God?—And while they are endeavouring to do good to their neighbour, do they not feel wrong tempers of various kinds? Hence their good actions, so called are far from being strictly such, being polluted with such a mixture of evil! Such are their works of *mercy*! And is there not the same mixture in their works of *piety*? While they are hearing the word which is able to save their souls, do they not frequently find such thoughts, as make them afraid, lest it should turn their condemnation, rather than their salvation? Is it not often the same case, while they are endeavouring to offer up their prayers to God, whether in public, or private? Nay, while they are engaged in the most solemn service: even while they are at the table of the Lord, what manner of thoughts arise in them? Are not their hearts sometimes wandering to the ends of the earth, sometimes filled with such imaginations, as make them fear, lest all their sacrifice should be an abomination to the Lord. So that they are more ashamed of their best duties, than they were once of their worst sins.

14. Again. How many *sins of omission* are they chargeable with? We know the words of the apostle, *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.* But do they not know a thousand instances, wherein they might have done good, to enemies, to strangers, to their brethren, either with regard to their bodies or their souls, and they did it not? How many omissions have they been guilty of, in their duty towards God? How many opportunities of communicating, of hearing his word, of public or private prayer have they neglected?

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So great reason had even that holy man Archbishop *Usher*, after all his labours for God, to cry out, almost with his dying breath, "Lord, forgive me my sins of omission."

15. But besides these outward omissions, may they not find in themselves *inward defects* without number? Defects of every kind: they have not the love, the fear, the confidence they ought to have toward God. They have not the love which is due to their neighbour, to every child of man: no, nor even that which is due to their brethren, to every child of God; whether those that are at a distance from them, or those with whom they are immediately connected. They have no holy temper in the degree they ought: they are defective in every thing: in a deep consciousness of which they are ready to cry out with Mr. *De Renty*, "I am a ground all over-run with thorns:" or with *Job*, "*I am vile: I abhor myself, and repent as in dust and ashes.*"

16. A conviction of their *guiltiness* is another branch of that repentance which belongs to the children of God. But this is cautiously to be understood, and in a peculiar sense. For it is certain, *there is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus*, that believe in him, and in the power of the faith, *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. Yet can they no more bear the *strict justice* of God now than before they believed. This pronounces them to be still *worthy of death*, on all the preceding accounts. And it would absolutely condemn them thereto, were it not for the atoning blood. Therefore they are thoroughly convinced, that they still *deserve* punishment, although it is hereby turned aside from them. But here there are extremes

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on one hand and on the other, and few steer clear of them. Most men strike on one or the other, either thinking themselves condemned, when they are not, or thinking they *deserve* to be acquitted. Nay, the truth lies between: they still *deserve*, strictly speaking, only the damnation of hell. But what they deserve does not come upon them, because they *have an advocate with the Father*. His life, and death and intercession still interpose between them and condemnation.

17. A conviction of their *utter helplessness*, is yet another branch of this repentance. I mean hereby two things: 1. That they are no more able now *of themselves* to think one good thought, to form one good desire, to speak one good word, or do one good work, than before they were justified: that they have still no kind or degree of strength *of their own*, no power either to do good or resist evil: no ability to conquer or even withstand the world, the devil, or their own evil nature. They *can*, it is certain, *do all these things*; but it is not by *their own strength*. They have power to overcome all these enemies; for *sin hath no more dominion over them*. But it is not from nature, either in whole or in part: *it is the mere gift of God*; nor is it given all at once, as if they had a stock laid up for many years; but from moment to moment.

18. By this helplessness I mean, secondly, An absolute inability to deliver ourselves, from that guiltiness or desert of punishment whereof we are still conscious: Yea, and an inability to remove, by all the grace we have, (to say nothing of our natural powers) either the pride, self-will, love of the world, anger, and general  
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proneness to *depart from God*, which we experimentally know to *remain* in the heart, even of them that are regenerate; or the evil which in spite of all our endeavours, *cleaves* to all our words and actions. Add to this, an utter inability wholly to avoid *uncharitable*, and much more, *unprofitable conversation*: and an inability to avoid *Sins of Omission*, or to supply the numberless *defects* we are convinced of, especially the want of Love and other right tempers, both to God and man.

19. If any man is not satisfied of this, if any believes that whoever is justified, is able to remove these sins out of his heart and life, let him make the experiment. Let him try, whether by the grace he has already received, he can expel Pride, Self-will, or inbred Sin in general. Let him try, whether he can cleanse his words and actions from all mixture of evil: whether he can avoid all uncharitable and unprofitable conversation, with all the sins of Omission; and lastly, whether he can supply the numberless defects which he still finds in himself. Let him not be discouraged by one or two experiments, but repeat the trial again and again. And the longer he tries, the more deeply will he be convinced of his utter helplessness in all these respects.

20. Indeed this is so evident a truth, that well nigh all the children of God scattered abroad, however they differ in other points yet generally agree in this, that although we may, *by the spirit mortify the deeds of the body*, resist and conquer both outward and inward sin, although we may *weaken* our enemies day by day, yet we cannot *drive them out*. By all the grace which is given at justification, we cannot

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extirpate



extirpate them. Though we watch and pray ever so much, we cannot wholly cleanse either our hearts or hands. Most sure we cannot, till it shall please our Lord, to speak to our hearts again, to "speak the second time, *Be clean.*" And then only *the leprosy is cleansed*. Then only the evil root, the carnal mind is destroyed, and inbred sin subsists no more. But if there be no such Second change, if there be no instantaneous Deliverance after Justification, if there be *none but* a gradual work of God (that there is a gradual work none denies,) then we must be content as well as we can, to remain full of sin till death. And if so, we must remain *guilty* till death, continually *deserving* punishment. For it is impossible, the guilt or desert of punishment should be removed from us, as long as all this sin remains in our heart, and cleaves to our words and actions. Nay, in rigorous Justice, all we think, and speak, and act, continually increases it.

II. 1. In this sense we are to *repent*, after we are justified. And till we do so, we can go no farther. For till we are sensible of our disease, it admits of no cure. But supposing we do thus repent, then are we called to *believe the gospel*.

2. And this also is to be understood in a peculiar sense, different from that, wherein we believed in order to Justification. Believe the *glad tidings of great Salvation*, which God hath prepared for all people. Believe that he who is *the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person, is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God through him*. He is able to save you from all the sin that still remains

remains in your heart. He is able to save you from all the sin that cleaves to all your words and actions. He is able to save you from Sins of Omission, and to supply whatever is wanting in you. It is true, *this is impossible with man; but with God-Man all things are possible.* For what can be too hard for Him, who hath *all power in heaven and in earth?* Indeed his bare power, to do this, is not a sufficient foundation for our faith, that he will do it, that he will thus exert his power, unless he hath promised it. But this he has done: he has promised it over and over, in the strongest terms. He has given us these *exceeding great and precious promises,* both in the Old and the New Testament. So we read in the Law, in the most antient part of the oracles of God, *The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul,* Deut xxx. 6. So in the Psalms, *He shall redeem Israel* (the Israel of God) *from all his sins.* So in the Prophet: *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you—And I will put my Spirit within you and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.* Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c. So likewise in the New Testament. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he hath visited and redeemed his people. And hath raised up an horn of Salvation for us—to perform the oath which he swore to our father Abraham. That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life;* Luke i. 68. &c.

3. You have therefore good reason to believe,

he is not only able, but *willing* to do this; to *cleanse you from all your filthiness of flesh and spirit, to save you from all your uncleanness.*

This is the thing which you now long for; this is the faith which you particularly need, namely, that the great physician, the lover of my soul, is willing to *make me clean.* But is he willing to do this to-morrow or to-day? Let him answer for himself: *To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts:* if you put it off till to-morrow, you harden your hearts; you refuse to *hear his voice.* Believe therefore that he is willing to save you *to-day.* He is willing to save you *now.* *Behold, now is the accepted time.* He now saith, *Be thou clean!* Only believe; and you also will immediately find, *All things are possible to him that believeth.*

4. Continue to believe in him *that loved thee, and gave himself for thee, that bore all thy sins in his own body on the tree,* and he saveth thee from all condemnation, by his blood continually applied. Thus it is that we continue in a justified state. And when we go on *from faith to faith,* when we have faith to be cleansed from indwelling sin, to be saved from all our uncleanness, we are likewise saved from all that *guilt, that desert of punishment,* which we felt before. So that then we may say not only,

Every moment, Lord, I want  
The merit of thy Death:—

but likewise, in the full assurance of faith,

Every moment, Lord, I have  
The merit of thy Death!

For by that faith in his Life, Death and Intercession for us, renewed from moment to moment,

ment, we are every whit clean, and there is not only now no condemnation for us, but no such desert of punishment as was before, the Lord cleansing both our hearts and lives.

5. By the same Faith, we feel the power of Christ every moment resting upon us, whereby alone we are what we are, whereby we are enabled to continue in spiritual life, and without which, notwithstanding all our present holiness, we should be devils the next moment. But as long as we retain our Faith in him, we *draw water out of the wells of Salvation*. Leaning on our Beloved, even Christ in us the hope of glory, who dwelleth in our hearts by faith, who likewise is ever interceding for us at the right-hand of God, we receive help from him to think, and speak and act what is acceptable in his sight. Thus does he "prevent them that believe in all their doings, and further them with his continual help," so that all their designs, conversations and actions are "begun, continued and ended in him." Thus doth he cleanse the thoughts of their hearts, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that they may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name."

6. Thus it is, that in the children of God; Repentance and Faith exactly answer each other. By Repentance we feel the sin remaining in our hearts, and cleaving to our words and actions. By Faith we receive the power of God in Christ, purifying our hearts and cleansing our hands. By Repentance we are still sensible that we deserve punishment for all our tempers and words and actions. By faith we are conscious, that our Advocate with the Father is continually pleading for us, and thereby continually turning aside all condemnation and punishment from us.  
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By Repentance we have an abiding conviction; that there is no help in us. By Faith we receive not only mercy, but *grace to help* in every *time of need*. Repentance disclaims the very possibility of any other help. Faith accepts all the help we stand in need of, from Him that hath all power in heaven and earth. Repentance says, without him I can do nothing: Faith says, *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me*. Through him I can not only overcome, but expel all the enemies of my soul. Through him I can *love the Lord my God, with all my heart, mind, soul and strength: yea and walk in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of my life*.

III. 1. From what as been said we may easily learn the mischievousness of that opinion, that we are *wholly sanctified* when we are justified: that our hearts are then cleansed from all sin. It is true, we are then delivered (as was observed before) from the dominion of outward sin: and at the same time the power of inward sin is so broken, that we need no longer follow or be led by it. But it is by no means true, that inward sin is then totally destroyed, that the root of pride, self will, anger, love of the world is then taken out of the heart, or that the carnal mind and the heart bent to backsliding are entirely extirpated. And to suppose the contrary, is not, as some may think, an innocent, harmless mistake. No: It does immense harm: it entirely blocks up the way to any farther change. For it is manifest, *They that are whole do not need a physician, but they that are sick*. If therefore we think we are quite made whole already, there is no room to seek any farther healing.

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On this supposition it is absurd to expect a farther deliverance from sin, whether gradual or instantaneous.

2. On the contrary, a deep conviction that we are not yet whole, that our hearts are not fully purified, that there is yet in us a *carnal mind*, which is still in its nature *enmity against God*; that a whole body of sin remains in our heart, weakened indeed, but not destroyed, shews beyond all possibility of doubt, the absolute necessity of a farther change. We allow, that at the very moment of justification, we are *born again*: in that instant we experience that inward change, from *darkness into marvellous light*; from the image of the brute and the devil, into the image of God, from the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, to the mind which was in Christ Jesus. But are we then *entirely* changed? Are we *wholly* transformed into the image of him that created us? Far from it: we still retain a depth of sin: and it is the consciousness of this, which constrains us to groan for a full deliverance, to him that is mighty to save. Hence it is, that those believers who are not convinced of the deep corruption of their hearts, or but slightly and as it were notionally convinced, have little concern about *entire Sanctification*. They may possibly hold the opinion, that such a thing is to be, either at death, or some time, they know not when, before hand. But they have no great uneasiness for the want of it, and no great hunger or thirst after it. They cannot, until they know themselves better, until they repent in the sense above described, until God unveils the inbred monster's face, and shews them the real state of their souls. Then only, when they feel the burden, will they  
groan

groan for deliverance from it. Then and not till then will they cry out, in the agony of their soul,

Break off the yoke of inbred sin  
 And fully set my spirit free !  
 I cannot rest, till pure within,  
 Till I am wholly lost in thee !

3. We may learn from hence, secondly, that a deep conviction of our *Demerit* after we are accepted, (which in one sense may be termed *guilt*) is absolutely necessary, in order to our seeing the true value of the atoning Blood; in order to our feeling that we need this as much, after we are justified, as ever we did before. Without this conviction we cannot but account the blood of the Covenant *as a common thing*, something of which we have not now any great need, seeing all our past sins are blotted out. Yea, but if both our hearts and lives are thus unclean, there is a kind of guilt which we are contracting every moment, and which of consequence would every moment expose us to fresh condemnation, but that

He ever lives above,  
 For us to intercede,  
 His all-atoning love,  
 His precious blood to plead.

It is this repentance and the faith intimately connected with it, which are expressed in those strong lines,

“ I sin in every breath I draw,  
 Nor do thy will nor keep thy law,

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On earth as angels do above:  
 But still the fountain open stands,  
 Washes my feet, my heart, my hands,  
 Till I am perfected in love."

4. We may observe, thirdly, a deep conviction of our utter *helplessness*, of our total inability to retain any thing we have received, much more to deliver ourselves from the world of iniquity remaining both in our hearts and lives, teaches us truly to live upon Christ by faith, not only as our Priest, but as our King. Hereby we are brought to "magnify him," indeed to "give him all the glory of his grace," to "make him a whole Christ, an entire Saviour," and truly to "set the crown upon his head." These excellent words, as they have been frequently used, have little or no meaning. But they are fulfilled in a strong and deep sense, when we thus as it were go out of ourselves, in order to be swallowed up in him; when we sink into nothing, that he may be all in all. Then his almighty grace having abolished *every high thing which exalted itself against him*, every temper, and thought, and word, and work is brought to the obedience of Christ.

LONDONDERRY,  
 April 24, 1767.

F I N I S.







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