

The Preciousness of Christ

by Octavius Winslow

Christ's preciousness is revealed through His personal dignity and worth, His essential Deity, and His perfect humanity, making Him the Savior of His people.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:3, John 14:6, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 3:8, Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 2:7

Topics: "The Preciousness of Christ", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes the preciousness of Christ, asserting that a true understanding of His worth is a vital sign of spiritual life. He explains that as believers recognize their sinfulness, they also appreciate the value and sufficiency of Jesus as their Savior. Winslow highlights that Christ's personal dignity and humanity make Him uniquely precious, and that this preciousness is felt deeply by those who believe. He encourages believers to cultivate a personal relationship with Christ, which grows in depth and intimacy over time, especially during trials and adversities. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a heartfelt acknowledgment of Christ's unparalleled worth in the life of every believer.

Transcript

"Unto you therefore who believe He is precious." 1 Peter 2: 7.

A felt conviction of the preciousness of the Savior has ever been regarded by enlightened ministers of the gospel as constituting a scriptural and unmistakable evidence of the existence of divine life in the soul; and in moments when neither time nor circumstance would admit of the close scrutiny of a theological creed, or a nice analysis of spiritual feelings and emotions, the one and simple inquiry upon which the whole matter is made to hinge has been- "What is your experience of the worth of the Savior?"

Is Christ precious to your heart?" And the answer to this question has been to the examiner, the test and the measure of the soul's spiritual and vital change. And how proper that it should be so. In proportion as the Holy Spirit imparts a real, intelligent sense of personal sinfulness, there will be the heart's appreciation of the value, sufficiency, and preciousness of the Lord Jesus. An enlightened and thorough conviction of the nature and aggravation of the disease, will enable a physician to form a just conception of the remedial process by which it may be arrested and cured.

We estimate the force of a motive power by the strength of the body it propels. Thus, as the conviction of our lost and undone condition deepens, as sin's "exceeding sinfulness " unveils, as the purity and extent of God's law opens, as the utter helplessness and impotence of self is forced upon the mind, the glory, the

worth, the suitableness, and the preciousness of Jesus will, through the teaching of the Spirit, present itself vividly to the mind and heart, as constituting the one only foundation and hope of the soul!

The Bible recognizes but two specific and distinctive characters- the SINNER- the SAVIOR; and all others are but modifications of these. The saint is but the sinner converted, justified, pardoned, adopted, sanctified, saved, glorified. And all the official relations sustained by Christ in the economy of salvation are but so many varied and beautiful forms of the one Savior, of whom it is said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

Thus, then, as you feel your sinfulness, you will estimate the fitness and suitableness of the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. There will be a perfect agreement between your consciousness of guilt and your believing apprehension of the excellence of the Atonement to meet your case. Your sinfulness and Christ's Saviorship will harmonize and dovetail in exact and beautiful fitness and proportion. Oh, what a divine and blessed arrangement is this! With what grandeur, yet with what simplicity, does it invest the scheme of salvation!

What solemnity, yet what hope, does it throw around the present and the future of the soul! It seems to fathom the lowest depth of my sinfulness, while it lifts me to the loftiest height of God's grace. In a volume designed to place before its readers a few of the precious things of God's revealed word, we commence, as is most proper, with the foundation and source of them all- the dignity, worth, suitability, and preciousness of Christ. The great truth upon which we are about to expatiate is announced in the words placed at the head of this chapter- "Unto you therefore who believe He is precious."

In the unfolding of this subject may there rest upon the writer and the reader the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit, even Him of whom Jesus said, "He will bring me glory by revealing to you whatever he receives from me" -that, while we treat of a precious Savior, His preciousness may be FELT in our hearts, filling the whole soul with penitence, faith, and love. We propose, in the present chapter, to group our thoughts around two specific views of the subject- the Preciousness of Christ - and the Character of those to whom He is precious.

We commence with a consideration of CHRIST'S PERSONAL PRECIOUSNESS- His preciousness in Himself. It is the conviction of Christ's personal dignity and worth that gives to faith such a substantial realization of the greatness and preciousness of His work. We have need, beloved, to be cautioned against an error into which some have fallen- of exalting the work of Christ above the person of Christ- in other words, not tracing the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice to the essential dignity of Christ's person.

The Godhead of the Savior admitted- His atoning death becomes a fact of easy belief. Once concede that He who died upon the cross was "GOD manifest in the flesh," and the mind will experience no difficulty in admitting that that death was sacrificial and expiatory. The sufferings and death of a Being so illustrious must be in harmony with an object, and in connection with a result of equal dignity and momentousness; and where will there be found such an object and such a result as the SALVATION of man?

The brilliant achievements of a general rushing to the rescue of a beleaguered garrison may so exalt his personal genius and valor as to invest his name with a glory peerless and immortal; but the reverse of this holds good with Christ. There had been no glory in His achievements, no significance in His work, no efficacy in His blood, had there been no divine dignity and worth in His person. And, had He not taken a single step in working out the salvation of man- had He repaired no breach, wept no tear, endured no agony, shed no blood in the redemption of His Church,- had He, in a word, conferred not a solitary

blessing upon our race- He still had been the ETERNAL SON OF GOD, divine, peerless, glorious- the object of supreme love, adoration, and worship by all celestial beings and through all eternal ages.

While, then, His sacrificial work illustrates His marvellous grace and love to sinners, that work owes all its acceptance and efficacy to the value imparted to it by the essential Deity of His person. Thus, it is the personal preciousness of Christ that imparts an official preciousness to His work. Who, then, is the Lord Jesus Christ? In common parlance, men term Him, "our Savior." But do the great body pause and reflect who Christ really is? Do they regard Him as the CREATOR Of this world- of all worlds? of their being- of all beings?

Do they consider that "all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made?" If so, would they not give Him divine homage, since that Who creates must be antecedent to and above the thing created, and therefore must be pre-existent and divine? But what a grand and glorious truth is this to the believing soul- the absolute Deity of the Savior- the essential Godhead of Christ! How it endears Him to the heart as the Rock of ages upon which its hope is built!

How precious must be every evidence of the divine strength, stability, and durability of that basis upon which the believing sinner reposes his whole salvation. Precious, then, is Christ as God. Precious in His Deity- precious as a distinct person in the adorable Godhead- precious as "God over all, blessed for evermore." But pause, Christian reader, for a moment, in wonder and praise before this august truth. If there is a spot where we should put off the shoes from our feet, surely it is this.

With what profound reverence, with what silent awe, yet with what adoring love should we contemplate the GODHEAD of our Redeemer! But for that Godhead we had been forever lost! His obedience to the law, His satisfaction to the justice of Jehovah, had been of no efficacy or avail, except only as it partook of the authority, dignity, and virtue of His higher nature. Do not question the existence of the fact because of the mystery of its mode. How Jehovah could become incarnate is a wonder we shall never, in this state of limited knowledge, fully understand; enough that it is so.

Let reason reverently adore, and faith implicitly trust. Hesitate not, then, to give full credence to all the glorious truths of the gospel, and to place the entire weight of your soul upon the Atonement of Jesus, and to believe that, sinner though you are, be it the very chief, such is the divine worth and sovereign efficacy of His sacrifice, you will, you must, you shall be saved to the uttermost, because your Creator is your Savior, and your Judge is your Justifier. But this personal representation of the Lord Jesus involves also the preciousness of His manhood.

His personal alliance with our nature, His condescending stoop to our humanity, is not the least endearing feature to the heart of His believing saints. We have claimed for the Son of God absolute Deity; we now claim for Him perfect humanity. "Flesh," real and substantial, yet, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," was He "made." A humanity identical with His people in all but its original and actual sinfulness. "He knew no sin." And yet, what a sin-bearer was He!

All the transgressions of His elect met upon Him! But He could only bear sin, as He himself was essentially free from its taint. Had there been the remotest breath of pollution adhering to Him- had one drop of the moral virus circulated through His veins, it had rendered Him utterly and forever incapable of presenting to the justice of God, an atonement for sin. He then would have needed, like the high priest of old, to have offered for sins "first for Himself, then for the people."

How precious, then, beloved, is our Lord Jesus as "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh." Think of His perfect humanity- a humanity free from sin, and therefore capable of dying for the ungodly, -a humanity laden with sorrow, and therefore capable of sympathizing with the afflicted. Precious to our hearts as God- precious as Man- precious as both united in one- inconceivably and eternally precious is He, whose name is "Wonderful," to His believing saints. Tell, oh tell, how precious is that humanity of the Son of God that partook, by actual participation, and still bears, by the most perfect sympathy, all the sinless weaknesses, infirmities, temptations, and sorrows of His people.

Precious humanity! to which, when other human friendships are changed, and other human love is chilled, and other human sympathy is exhausted, you may repair, and find it an evergreen, a perennial stream, a gushing fountain of unchanged affection, tenderness, and sympathy, meeting and satisfying, to their utmost capacity, your hearts' deep pantings! Precious humanity! that dries each tear, that bears each burden, that is touched with each infirmity, that soothes each sorrow, and that succours each temptation of His people.

"In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of His people. For in that He himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor those who are tempted." Oh, love the Lord, then, all you His saints; laud Him, all you His people; and, in all your deep griefs, your lonely sorrows, your sore trials, your fiery temptations, your pressing needs, your daily infirmities, repair to the succourings, and the sympathies, and the intercessions of His humanity, and learn how precious Jesus can be to the hearts of His suffering and sorrowing ones.

Upon this rock of Christ's complex person God has built His Church, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. Precious is the Lord Jesus in His work. That must be a costly and substantial superstructure that reposes upon a basis so divine and perfect. No wise or experienced architect would, at a vast expenditure, lay a deep, broad foundation for the purpose of rearing upon it a small and fragile fabric. Look at the ground work of our salvation. "Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation."

Upon such a foundation we look for a superstructure in all respects worthy of its costliness and capability. We find it in the work of Jesus. Oh, what a superstructure is it--nothing less than the salvation of His Church! Such a work was worthy of God, and of all the glory, wisdom, and power embarked in its accomplishment. Nowhere have we such a perfect view of the Divine glory as through the medium of the cross! That magnificent sky that spreads above us, studded and glowing with countless myriads of worlds, pales before the subdued glory, the softened splendor of the cross of Christ!

Nowhere does Jehovah-Jesus appear to the spiritual, believing mind so exalted as when He stoops! so glorious as when in eclipse! so holy as when bearing sin! so loving as when enduring its punishment! so triumphant as when vanquished upon the cross! Oh, do not study God in the jeweled heavens- in the sublimity of the mountain- in the beauty of the valley- in the grandeur of the ocean- in the murmurs of the stream- in the music of the winds. God made all this, but all this is not God.

Study Him in the cross of Jesus! Look at Him through this wondrous telescope, and although, as through a glass darkly, you behold His glory- the Godhead in awful eclipse, the Sun of His Deity setting in blood- yet that rude and crimsoned cross more fully reveals the mind of God, more harmoniously discloses the perfections of God, and more perfectly unveils the heart of God, and more fully exhibits the glory of God,

than the combined power of ten thousand worlds like this, even though sin had never marred, and the curse had never blighted it.

Study God in Christ, and Christ on the cross! Oh, the marvels that meet in it- the glory that gathers round it- the streams of blessing that flow from it- the deep refreshing shadow it casts, in the happy experience of all who look to Jesus and live- who look to Jesus and love- who look to Jesus and obey-who look to Jesus and embrace that blessed "hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began." A worthy structure this of a foundation so divine!

What could be more worthy of God, whose essence is "love," than the salvation of His people? In nothing could He appear more like Himself. Upon no platform could He so honorably and completely withdraw the veil from His perfections, and stand forth in His full-orbed majesty, "mighty to save," as this! Humble believer in Christ, you are saved! Happy saint of God, you shall be in heaven! Christ has paid your debt, opened your prison, broken your chains, and set you free from the law's curse, from sin's condemnation, and from death's penalty, and you will be forever with the Lord!

Is not this enough to make your whole life, clouded and chequered though it be, a sweet psalm of praise- thus learning the first notes of the song that will employ your tongue through eternity? How precious is the righteousness of Christ- a righteousness that fully justifies our person, completely covering all our deformity, and presenting us to God, "lovely through His loveliness put upon us;" wherefore the renown of the clothed and adorned Church goes forth through all the earth, and men inquire, "Who is she that looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

And look at the preciousness of His sacrifice, which is as a "sweet-smelling savor unto God," ascending ever from off the golden altar before the throne, in one continuous cloud of incense, wreathing the people, perfuming the prayers, accompanying the offerings, and presenting with acceptance every breath of devotion, every accent of praise, and every token of love which His people here below lay at His feet. "By one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified."

That "one offering," offered once for all, was so divine, so holy, so complete, so satisfactory, it has forever perfected the pardon, perfected the justification, perfected the adoption, and will perfect the sanctification when it perfects the glory of all the elect of Jehovah. Beloved, is not this enough to check every sigh, to quell every fear; to annihilate every doubt, and to fill you with peace and joy in believing? What shouts of praise to Jesus should burst from every lip as each believer contemplates the sacrifice that has secured his eternal salvation!

When Titus liberated the imprisoned Greeks, they clustered around his tent, chanting his praises and exclaiming, with impassioned fervor, "A savior! a savior! a savior!" Oh, with what deeper emphasis may every child of God, freed from the chains of sin and of death by the "liberty with which Christ has made him free," extol the person and chant the praises of that glorious Savior, and exclaim, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! He has saved His people from their sins!" Believer, demonstrate your sense of the preciousness of this great sacrifice by bringing to it daily sins, by drawing from it hourly comfort, and by laying yourself upon it, body, soul, and spirit, a "living sacrifice unto God."

How precious is Christ in all the offices and relations which He sustains to His people. Precious as the Head, the 'covenant surety' Head, of His people, the source of life, the seat of power, the fountain of all blessing. Reader, hold fast the Headship of Christ. Acknowledge no legislative head, no administrative head, no authoritative head, no reigning head of the Church, but the Lord Jesus Christ. There are

under-currents of priestly domination in the Church of God in the present day, subversive of this cardinal truth, against which it behooves us to be on our guard.

Acknowledge no spiritual Head and King in Zion but the Lord Jesus; and demonstrate your recognition of, reverence for, and love to, His government, by vindicating His Headship, bowing to His authority, and obeying His laws! Oh, how blessed to be under the holy, benevolent, and gentle government of Christ, whose scepter is a scepter of righteousness, so mild and loving in its sway, that "He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." Precious is He as the Husband of His Church, to whom He is united by the closest and most indissoluble ties, pledged to discharge all her obligations, to supply all her need, to soothe, by sympathy, her every sorrow, and to increase, by participation, her every joy.

Precious is He as a Friend -the Friend whose love is infinite and boundless, changing not with circumstances, chilling not with indifference, nor wearying with lapse of years- a Friend who shows himself friendly, who loves at all times, and who sticks closer than a brother. Precious as a Brother, our kinsman-redeemer, our next of kin, claiming and exercising, as such, the right of redemption, and proving Himself, by His help and succor in all the calamities of His brethren, to be a "Brother born for adversity."

Thus might we travel over all the offices and relations which the Lord Jesus sustains to His saints, and find in each that which endears Him to their souls, enthroning Him upon their hearts as the "chief among ten thousand," and exhibiting Him as "the altogether lovely one." But to whom is Christ precious? This is a most important question. He is not precious to all. It is a privileged class, a peculiar people, a little flock, few and scattered, hidden and unknown, who feel the Savior's preciousness.

Only to the believer is Christ precious; the declaration of the Holy Spirit is, "Unto you therefore who BELIEVE He is precious." This is philosophically as well as scripturally true. There cannot possibly be a felt conviction of the worth of an object of which we have no intelligent and clear perception. There must be something to create interest, to awaken admiration, to inspire love; the object must be seen, known, and tried. Now, the only spiritual faculty that discerns Christ, and in discerning Christ realizes His preciousness, is faith.

Faith is the optical faculty of the regenerate, it is the spiritual eye of the soul! Faith sees Christ, and as Christ is seen His excellence is recognized; and as His excellence unfolds, so He becomes an object of endearment to the heart! Oh, how lovely and how glorious is Jesus to the clear, far-seeing eye of faith! Faith beholds Him the matchless, peerless One; His beauty eclipsing, His glory outshining, all other beings! Faith sees majesty in His lowliness, dignity in His condescension, honor in His humiliation, beauty in His tears, transcendent, surpassing glory in His cross!

In natural things, as the beauty of an object unveils to the eye, it awakens in the mind a corresponding interest. The grey mist of morning slowly rising from off the face of nature, revealing a landscape of rich and varied beauty- the blending of mountain and valley, the green meadows and winding streams, presents an object which, in every mind susceptible of the sublime and the beautiful, inspires the feeling of admiration and delight. Beloved, in proportion as the personal dignity, beauty, and excellence of the Lord Jesus unfolds to the believing eye, He becomes more sensibly and deeply enshrined in the heart's warmest love!

We must know the Lord Jesus to admire Him, and must admire Him to love Him, and must love Him to serve Him. The believer, too, beholds a suitability in Christ, sees Him to be just the Savior adapted to the necessities of his soul; and this renders Him peculiarly precious. "I see Him," exclaims the believer, "to be

exactly the Christ I need- His fulness meets my emptiness- His blood cleanses my guilt- His grace subdues my sin- His patience bears with my infirmities- His gentleness succours my weakness- His love quickens my obedience- His sympathy soothes my sorrows- His beauty charms my eye.

He is just the Savior, just the Christ I need, and no words can describe His preciousness to my soul!" There is thus an appropriation of Christ in the personal experience of every believer which endears Him to the heart. A Christ unappropriated is a Christ whose worth is undervalued, and whose preciousness is unfelt. The believer can say, "Christ is mine, and I have all things in one, even in Christ, who is my all and in all." This simple, trembling faith, sublime in its simplicity, mighty in its tremblings, sweeps all the treasures of the everlasting covenant of grace and all the fulness of the Surety of the covenant into its lap, and exclaims, "All is mine, because Christ is mine, and I am Christ's."

Do not shrink, beloved reader, from what the quaint divines of other days, and, perhaps, of a deeper experience and of a sounder creed than ours, were wont to term a "Christ-appropriating faith." If you have fled to Jesus as a poor, empty, believing sinner, there is not a throb of love in His loving heart, nor a drop of blood in His flowing veins, nor a particle of grace in His mediatorial fulness, nor a thought of peace in His divine mind, which is not yours, all yours, inalienably yours, as much yours as if you were its sole possessor!

And in proportion as you thus deal with Christ, individually traveling to Him, living upon Him, living out of Him, dealing as personally with Him as He deals personally with you, He will involve Himself in your concerns, and will become growingly precious to your soul. There are peculiar circumstances in the believer's experience when Christ becomes especially precious to the soul. For example: in the deeper ploughings of the heart's hidden sinfulness- when the Holy Spirit reveals more of the innate corruption of our nature, and gives a more spiritual perception of sin's exceeding sinfulness, oh, how precious does the finished work of Christ then become! how precious the blood that cleanses from all sin!

If God is leading you through this stage of Christian experience, beloved, be not alarmed; it is but to build up His dear Son upon the wreck and ruin of your own merit, strength, and sufficiency. He will have us love His Son with a love like His own- a love of divine, supreme, ineffable affection- and this can only be felt in the region of our own nothingness! In circumstances of spiritual relapse, how precious does Christ become, as the Restorer of His saints, as the Shepherd that goes in quest, of His stray sheep, and brings it back to the fold with rejoicing!

How unspeakably dear is the Savior to the wandering yet restored heart! Our backslidings are perpetual and aggravated, our affections fickle and truant, our faith fluctuating, our love waning, our zeal flagging, our walk often feeble and unsteady; but Jesus does not withdraw His eye from His own work in the soul, and never for a moment loses sight of His stray-going sheep. Ah, there are few aspects of the work of Jesus more precious in the experience of the saints of God than His divine and gracious restorings.

"He restores my soul," is a declaration of David which finds its response in every believer. Precious, then, is that Savior who breaks the heart, checks its waywardness, restores its wanderings, heals its backslidings, rekindles its love, and once more wakes its languid, silent chords to sweetest harmony. How precious is Christ in the season of fiery temptation! When the arch-foe comes, robed as an angel of light, with gentle tread, and oily tongue, and soft persuasiveness, seeking to ensnare and beguile the unsuspecting and unwary -leveling his darts at the very foundations of our faith- insinuating his doubts of the truth of the Bible, of the being of God, of the sufficiency of the Savior, of the reality of a future world-

thus seeking to shake the confidence, obscure the hope, and destroy the comfort of the Lord's people- oh, how precious then is Christ as the Conqueror and Spoiler of Satan; as He who enables the trembling believer to quench the fiery dart in His own blood, and to take refuge beneath His outspread, all-sheltering wing!

How doubly precious must the Savior have been to the tempted Peter, when Christ assured him that, by an anticipated intercession, He had blunted the keen edge of the sword by which the subtle enemy sought the downfall of his disciple. Tempted believer, the Tempted One, He who, alone and unaided, battled with Satan those forty days and nights in the solitary wilderness- is He who was "in all points tempted like as we are," and "knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation," and will shortly bruise Satan, crushed and conquered, under your feet.

In the hour of adversity, of trial, of sorrow, oh, how precious is Christ in the experience of the believer! It would seem, beloved, as though we had never really known Him until then. Certainly, we never knew from experience that there was so much that was human, tender, and compassionate in His heart until sorrow touched our own. We had no conception what a fount of sympathy was there. A new bend in your path, a new epoch in your history, or a new stage in your journey, has frosted with the snowflake and swept with the storm-blast of winter, the entire landscape of life; fortune gone, friends removed, health failing, poverty threatening, need pressing.

Oh, how dreary and lonely seems the path you tread! But pause- it is not all winter! Jesus approaches! He unveils a bosom once pierced, shows a heart once sad, and drawing you within its blest pavilion, hides you from the wind and covers you from the tempest. You never thought Jesus had a heart of such exquisite tenderness until now. I do but give utterance to the experience of many a timid believer, many an afflicted Christian, when I say that, looking back upon all the way the Lord our God has led us, we can thank Him for the swelling surge, can bless Him for the wintry blast, can praise Him for the falling blow that veiled the sky, and draped the landscape, and smote the idol, since that was the suitable occasion of making the Savior better known to you, and of endearing him unutterably to your heart!

"You have known my soul in adversities." And that adversity was the time in which you were more fully brought to know Him. Chastening seasons are teaching seasons; suffering times are Christ-endearing times; trying dispensations are purifying processes in the experience of the godly. The whirlwind that swept over you has but cleared your sky and made it all the brighter, but deepened your roots and made them all the firmer. Earth may have lost a tie, but heaven has gained an attraction.

The creature has left a blank, but Christ has come and filled it. Setback has made you poor, but the treasures of divine love have enriched you. In the Lord Jesus you have more than found the loved one you have lost; and if in the world you have encountered tribulation, in Him you have found peace. O sweet sorrow! O sacred grief, that enthrones and enshrines my Savior more pre-eminently and deeply in my soul! There is a supremacy in the feeling of Christ's preciousness to the believer, which is worthy of a remark.

Christ has the pre-eminence in the affections of the regenerate! "Whom have I in heaven but you? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside you." Listen to His own words, asserting His claim to a single and supreme affection: "Whoever loves father or mother, brother or sister, wife or children, more than Me, is not worthy of Me." There are natural ties of affection- the parental, the marital, the filial. There are ties, too, of human love and friendship, linking heart to heart; but not one word does He who inspired those

affections, who formed those ties, breathe, denying their existence or forbidding their exercise.

No, the religion He came to inculcate distinctly recognizes these human relations, and seeks to strengthen and intensify by purifying, elevating, and immortalizing them. But mark the emphatic word employed by Christ- "MORE than Me! " All these affections are to have full play and exercise, but ever to be maintained in profound subordination to Himself, and to be so sanctified and employed as to become auxiliaries and aids to the higher and purer affection of supreme attachment to the Savior!

In a word, Christ should become more supreme and precious to our hearts by all the sweet, sacred relations and affections of life. We should enjoy the creature in Him, and glorify Him in the creature. Christ is not only supremely, but He is increasingly precious to the believer. It must be so, since a closer intimacy with a perfect being increases our knowledge of His perfection, and, in the same ratio, our admiration and love. The further the believer advances in the divine life, the more he must necessarily become acquainted with Christ; for his spiritual progress is the measure of his growing knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

We can only really advance in grace, truth, and holiness, as we have close relations with Jesus, constant transactions with the Savior. Christ is our life; and our growth in spiritual life is Christ increasing within us. It is as utterly impossible to cherish a holy desire, to conceive a heavenly thought, to perform a good action, to conquer a single infirmity, or to baffle a solitary temptation, apart from a direct communication with Christ; as for the lungs to expand without air, or light to exist without the Sun.

Oh, yes! Christ is increasingly precious to the believer. The absence from His beatific presence- distance from His blest abode- the vicissitudes of life- the fluctuations of time- the advance of infirmities- the increase of anxieties and cares- and the formation of new friendships, do not render the Savior less precious to the believing soul. Other objects often lose their attraction, their desire to interest, or their power to charm us, by the lapse of years; but JESUS is that glorious object who grows more precious to the heart in time, as His capacity unfolds of making us supremely happy; and in eternity will become increasingly the object of our love, and the theme of our song, and the source of our bliss, as growing ages unveil His loveliness, His glory, and His grace!

Beloved reader, is Jesus increasingly precious to your soul? Each day's history, each day's trial, each day's sin, each day's need, should endear the Savior to your heart, because in each and all of those circumstances you should have direct and close dealings, daily and personal transactions, with Christ! You cannot cultivate an intimacy with Christ and not be enamored of His beauty, charmed with His graciousness, and absorbed with His love! Be cautioned against an eclipse of the Savior!

Let no object come between your heart and Christ! Do not be presumptuous when in high spiritual frames, nor be depressed when in low ones. Do not let your conscious shortcomings, failures, and stumblings estrange your affections from Jesus. Nor allow pride or carelessness to insinuate itself, if the Lord confers upon you some especial favor or proof of His regard. The foot is more apt to slide in the smooth than in the rough path; and it is more difficult to carry with a steady hand the brimmed than the empty cup.

Walk humbly with God in all circumstances, especially after seasons of peculiar nearness to Him in your soul. Forget your spiritual attire, and your ornaments, and think of and love only Him who clothed you so beautifully and who adorned you so magnificently. Do not toy with your graces, but look to Him who gave them. Let all your thoughts, affections, and admiration be concentrated in that precious Savior, who took all your sins, deformity, and sorrow upon Himself, and who transferred all His righteousness, beauty, and blessing upon you!

Oh, let your heart and Christ's heart be one heart! Receive as precious everything that flows from the government of Jesus. A precious Christ can give you nothing but what is precious. Welcome the rebuke- it may be humiliating; welcome the trial- it may be painful; welcome the lesson- it may be difficult; welcome the cup- it may be bitter; welcome everything that comes from Christ in your individual history. Everything is costly, salutary, and precious that Jesus sends. The rude tones of Joseph's voice, when he spoke to his brethren, were as much the echoes of his concealed affection, as the softest, gentlest accents that breathed from his lips.

The most severe disciplinary dispensations in the government of Christ are as much the fruit of His eternal, redeeming love, as was the tenderest and most touching expression of that love uttered from the cross. All is precious, wise, and salutary in the dealings of Christ. His teachings, His woundings, His withholdings, His withdrawals, His slayings, His changed countenance, His altered tones,- when, in a word, His uplifted hand lands heavily upon us, smiting us seven times, even then, oh, how precious should Christ be to the believing soul!

Then it is we learn by experience what a balsam exudes from His pierced heart for the very wound His own hand inflicted! What a covert from the stormy wind, and what a hiding-place is He from the fierce tempest which His own providence created! What a succouring, appropriate to our sorrow, springs from the very hand that winged the dart which pierced us through and through! Oh, precious Christ! so divine, so all-sufficient, so indescribably precious, may we not welcome with thankfulness and receive with submission all that You do send- the mingled ingredients of bitter and sweet, the blended tints of light and shade, of all the wise, righteous, and salutary dispensations of Your wise, loving, and ever watchful providence?

But there is approaching a period-ah, how it speeds! -which will be the most solemn and severe, yet the sweetest and truest test of the sustaining, soothing power of Christ's preciousness in the experience of His saints- the last sickness and the closing scene of life. Imagine that moment to have arrived! All of earth's attraction ceases, all of creature-succor fails. Everything is failing- heart and strength failing- mental power failing- medical skill failing- human affection and sympathy failing; the film of death is on the eye, and the invisible realities of the spirit-world are unveiling to the mental view.

Bending over you, the loved one who has accompanied you to the shore of the cold river, asks a sign. You are too weak to conceive a thought, too low to breathe a word, too absorbed to bestow a responsive glance. You cannot now assert your faith in an elaborate creed, and you have no profound experience, or ecstatic emotions, or heavenly visions to describe. One brief, but all-emphatic, all-expressive sentence embodies the amount of all that you now know, and believe, and feel; it is the profession of your faith, the sum of your experience, the ground of your hope- "Christ Is Precious to My Soul!"

Enough! The dying Christian can give, and the inquiring friend can wish no more. Dearest Savior, be close to me in that solemn moment! Tread the valley by my side, pillow my languid head upon Your bosom, speak these words of heart-cheer to my struggling, panting, departing soul, "Fear not, I Am with you" -then, it will be happiness for me to die, -death will have no venom- the grave no gloom- eternity no dread; and, from the measured experience of Your preciousness on earth, I shall pass in triumph through the shadowy portal into the full sunshine and perfect realization and eternal enjoyment of all that faith believed, and love desired, and hope expected, of Your full-orbed glory and preciousness in heaven. "In your presence is fulness of joy; and at your right hand there are pleasures for evermore!"

"Precious Jesus! O how lovely are You to my longing heart.

Never, never let me grieve You, never from You let me depart.

Precious Jesus! all in all to me You art."

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