



Articles and Sermons :: THE CROSS OF CHRIST, THE GLORY OF THE CHRISTIAN by David Harsha, 1856

THE CROSS OF CHRIST, THE GLORY OF THE CHRISTIAN by David Harsha, 1856 - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/9/2

THE CROSS OF CHRIST, THE GLORY OF THE CHRISTIAN

"As for me, God forbid that I should boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world died long ago, and the world's interest in me is also long dead." Galatians 6:14

"Well may I glory in his cross, While he prepares my crown."

What wonders are manifested in the Cross of Christ! What fountains of joy does it uncover for the thirsty sinner! What oceans of divine grace does it reveal to the aspiring saint! What glories does it unfold to the ransomed believer! It is the power of God, and the wisdom of God, and the salvation of the soul. How it displays the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to poor, perishing sinners! O boundless grace, that pitied us when lost! and that rescued us from everlasting burnings! The cross of Christ manifests the free, sovereign, matchless love of God to a lost world.

"How free the love, how rich the grace,
A pardoning God bestows;
To Adam's vile, apostate race,
In boundless streams it flows.
What joy arises in the heart
When Jesus' cross appears
Salvation to my soul impart,
Subdue my guilty fears.
Blessed Savior, speak the healing word,
Bid all my sorrows cease;
Oh, be my Great Atoning Lord,
My Righteousness and Peace."

What joys flow from the Savior's cross! It is the sight of that cross, which enables the sinner to read his title clear to a glorious immortality. The cross of Christ is full of rich, heavenly blessing. The pardon of sin, the justification of our persons, the sanctification of our natures, eternal life, immortal glory, the endless enjoyment of a triune God in heaven, are some of the blessings which it contains.

O my soul, pant after these blessings so fully treasured up in the cross of Christ, and so freely offered to dying sinners. Reader, come to the cross, and these blessings will descend on your head. You will then taste of the fountains of bliss in Immanuel's land, and bathe in the rivers of pleasures which eternally flow through the realms of glory.

"O the sweet wonders of that cross,
Where Christ my Savior loved and died,
Her noblest life my spirit draws,
From his dear wounds and bleeding side."

Here we have the infinitely tender love, the immensely free, rich grace of the bleeding, dying Immanuel. What a sweet topic for contemplation! What a noble theme for the Christian to boast in! Well might the great Apostle of the Gentiles exclaim, "As for me, God forbid that I should boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world died long ago, and the world's interest in me is also long dead."

In the Scriptures the cross of Christ is used in three different senses.

1. It denotes the timber to which our Lord was nailed, and on which he expired. "He endured the cross, despising the shame." "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "The punishment of the cross was a Roman invention. It was made use of only in the case of slaves, notorious malefactors. The cross was made of two beams of wood crossing each other. It was laid on the ground and the criminal stretched upon it. A nail was driven through each hand, and one nail through both the feet. It was then lifted upright, and let fall into a hole, where it was wedged in. The crucified man was then left to die, hanging by his hands and feet. This was the death to which Jesus stooped. O how

amazing was that condescension of God's own Son, which brought him from a glorious throne to a suffering Cross! Amazing condescension indeed! O, how brightly did that wonderful love of the blessed Savior blaze on Calvary, when he so cheerfully endured the death of the cross there for us sinners."

2. It denotes the way of salvation through Christ and him crucified. "I know very well how foolish the message of the cross sounds to those who are on the road to destruction. But we who are being saved recognize this message as the very power of God. So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended, and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense. But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the mighty power of God and the wonderful wisdom of God."

3. It is used to denote the sufferings endured in following a crucified Savior. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." It was in the Atonement of Jesus made on the cross that the Apostle gloried. This furnishes the ground of the Christian's triumph. This endears the cross to his soul. This makes the sufferings of Calvary appear so glorious in his eye. It was the glorious, finished work of a crucified Redeemer on the ignominious cross, that drew from the Apostle's lips, this exulting language: "God forbid that I should boast save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." By the cross of Christ, is here meant the whole of that sublime scheme of redemption executed on Calvary, by the death of the Son of God.

To Paul this was all absorbing topic- his chosen favorite theme. On this adamant foundation, he built his hopes for eternity. This was the blessed source of all his joy— the sublime cause of all his boasting. He gloried in nothing else. At all times, and in every place he visited, Paul gloried in Christ and him crucified. Among Jews and Greeks, Barbarians and Scythians, the learned and the illiterate, this was his delightful theme; in this he exulted. From the top of Mars Hill, he waved the banner of the cross over the proud city of Athens. Nothing could cool the fervor of Paul's attachment to the cross of Christ.

"The sacred flame that was kindled on his way to Damascus," says the eloquent Gardiner Spring, "burned brighter and brighter, through darkness, through trial, through the floods and through the flames, until it rose pure from the scaffold where he received the martyr's crown, and from where his spirit ascended to receive the crown that fades not away."

O that every reader would imbibe the spirit of Paul, and boast only in the cross of Christ! The cross of Christ is the Christian's boast. In every age this has been his song. Every true believer glories in Christ and him crucified. A ray of heavenly light from the cross beams on his soul, filling it with joy unspeakable and full of glory; enabling him to sing in the ways of the Lord and boast in the rock of his salvation. He sees the moral grandeur of the cross; its attractiveness; its dazzling glory. He is thus led to place all his hopes in the cross of the Man of Calvary, and to glory, before an ungodly world, in that atonement made by the blood of Jesus.

All his hopes of eternal felicity in heaven, spring from the cross of Christ. No wonder then, that he should extol that Savior who died to save him, and celebrate that wondrous work which procures for him endless bliss.

'Tis Jesus died to save,
'Tis Jesus lives to bless;
On high he dwells- the sinner's friend,
The Lord, our righteousness.
Then, Oh my soul, rejoice,
Extol your Savior's name;
Make mention of his dying love,
And celebrate his fame.
He claims your heart, your love;
He claims you for his own;
Oh cast yourself in willing bonds
Before his heavenly throne.

It is through a saving interest in the cross of Christ, that the Christian is enabled to reach the peaceful shores of a happy eternity. Well may he be enraptured with such a theme; well may he boast in such a cross! Not one blessing flows to him but what comes from the cross of Jesus. How innumerable, how invaluable then are the blessings which proceed from the cross of Christ! Time cannot unfold them. Eternity will roll away, in telling their numbers, and in revealing their preciousness. In heaven, we will clearly see how much we owe to the cross of Christ. There, we shall rejoice through a blessed eternity in contemplating the wonders of the cross— in meditating on redemption's glorious work.

O my soul, boast in the cross of Christ now. Rejoice in the finished work of the Lord Jesus. "He that glories, let him boast in the Lord." Let him boast in a crucified Savior- in his atoning blood- in his perfect righteousness- in his vicarious death and joyful resurrection- in his triumphant ascension to glory- in his continual intercession at God's right hand for sinners. Let the Christian boast in that cross which has opened for him the gates of heaven, and which will seat him amid the ambrosial bowers of paradise, where he shall be perpetually fanned with the cool, balmy breezes of Immanuel's land, and enjoy sweet eternal communion with God and the Lamb.

Blessed cross that crowns the sinner with such bliss! Who would not boast in such a theme? Let me exhort the followers of the Lamb to boast in the cross of Christ. Let them boast in Christ and him crucified. "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall boast." "Let all those that put their trust in you rejoice; let them ever shout for joy; let those also who love your name be joyful in you." "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds."

Oh! how often has the cross inspired the Christian with bright heavenly hopes, fired his soul with a foretaste of celestial bliss, and caused his heart to shout for joy amid the sufferings of mortality. There is nothing so animating to the Christian as a sight of Calvary. How despicable does the world appear in his view, when he obtains a glimpse of that cross on which his Savior died! Everything else loses its luster when, by the eye of faith, the cross of Christ is seen. Have you seen the glory of the cross of a crucified Jesus? Have you come within sight of Calvary and seen the blood streaming from Immanuel's veins to wash away your sins, and save your soul? Are you delighted with this way of salvation? Does the cross of Christ fill you with joy? Have you seen its attractions? Then boast in it.

Amid all the varied scenes of life- in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in life and death, the cross of Christ is the Christian's boast. Sooner would the children of God lay down their lives than cease to boast in this blessed theme. And they have done so, in thousands of instances. For their attachment to the cross, "they loved not their lives unto death." How those noble martyrs whose souls ascended to glory amid billows of flame and smoke, loved the cross! How they gloried in it. From the dreadful flames of persecution, many a shout was heard on high, "God forbid that I should boast, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In the bloody days of suffering and death, the martyr's dying song at the burning stake has been, "Welcome the cross of Christ! Welcome the cross of Christ! Welcome life everlasting." Thus sweetly sung the dying Saunders, as he kissed the stake at which he was bound. Let the cross of Christ also be your boast. Rejoice in Jesus, your Savior. "Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!" Let Christ and his glorious work for the salvation of sinners, be your song in the house of your pilgrimage; and when earth, with all its fascinating pleasures shall have passed away like a dream, you will rejoice in God, in your Savior, through the rolling ages of a blessed eternity. Standing on "the crystal sea of glass" before the eternal throne of heaven, you will raise a never-ending song of praise to Him who sits upon the throne; whose blood redeemed you to God, and in whose cross you gloried on earth.

Blessed Jesus! enable each reader to boast in your cross. Give us all hearts of faith to receive and rest upon you. May we realize your preciousness. May your death be our life; your cross, our boast. Refresh our souls with the provisions of the cross. Crown our heads with its blessings. Lead us through the "green pastures" and "still waters" of divine grace, and when our pilgrimage on earth is ended, when life's short tale is told, bring us to that blessed home in the world of glory, which is the purchase of your cross.

"Behold me at the bleeding cross;
Wash out, dear Lord, each guilty stain,
Oh, may I count the world but loss
Your love my great, my richest gain."

For the numberless benefits and blessings, he derives from the cross of a loving Savior, the Christian has great reason to boast in it. It is "the tree of life" to the believing soul. Its fruit is spiritual and divine. Those who taste it, never hunger, never thirst, never die. The blessings which hang clustering on this tree of life are innumerable. Eternity alone can unfold them. Here we taste but drops from the fountainhead above; there we shall forever drink of the water of life in the paradise of God. In heaven we shall enjoy all the blessings of the cross of Jesus; and there we shall eternally boast in it. A few of these rich blessings we now select—

1. THE PARDON OF SIN. This is one of the blessings of the cross. The pardon of all our sins, original and actual, was obtained by the death of Christ. "Through this man (though a crucified Savior) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." There is no remission of sins but through the cross of Christ. This expiates our guilt, and sets us free. Here God, in his unbounded love, removes our transgressions from us, as far as the east is from the west. Here he speaks in merciful

tones to the sinner. This is his comfortable language through the cross of Jesus: "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can remove it. I can make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you as white as wool."

Through the blood of the cross, pardon flows to a rebel world. O to have a saving interest in that cross which confers such an invaluable blessing upon our sinful race! Well may redeemed sinners boast in salvation by Jesus. "O my soul, my guilty soul, what are all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them, compared with this ineffable blessing!"

2. The cross of Christ PROCURES OUR JUSTIFICATION, RECONCILES US TO GOD, AND CLOTHES US WITH THE ROBES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. The cross of Christ justifies the ungodly. The sinner is accepted in the beloved. "By him all who believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses." The cross of Christ procures our peace with God. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." He has made "peace through the blood of his cross." Through the cross of Jesus we enjoy the favor of a gracious God, which is better than life.

By the cross of Christ, the world is reconciled to God. No wonder then that the atoning sacrifice of a crucified Savior, should be all our boast. No wonder that we should "rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." The cross of Christ invests the sinner with a robe of purity, the spotless righteousness of Immanuel. All the redeemed in glory have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. In heaven all are beautified with the wedding garment. The righteousness of a crucified Jesus covers all.

"That righteousness," says the pious Doddridge, "to which, on believing on him, you will be entitled, shall not only break those chains by which sin is, as it were, dragging you at its chariot wheels with a furious pace, to eternal ruin, but it shall clothe you with the robes of salvation; shall fix you on a throne of glory, where you shall live and reign forever among the princes of heaven; shall reign in immortal beauty and joy; without one remaining scar of divine displeasure upon you; without any single mark by which it could be known that you had ever been obnoxious to wrath and a curse, except it be an anthem of praise to "the Lamb that was slain, and has washed you from your sins in his own blood." Well may we boast in the cross on account of its righteousness.

3. The cross of Christ DELIVERS US FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD. "As for me, God forbid that I should boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world died long ago, and the world's interest in me is also long dead."

"A sight of Jesus on the cross,
Makes all this world appear as dross."

The Christian looks beyond this dying world to his eternal home in glory. The cross of Jesus enables him to soar on high, and leave the world behind him. He looks forward to the glory that is to be revealed in him. He sets his affections on things above. Oh, keep gazing on a crucified Savior, and the world will lose its charms. "Be of good cheer," says Christ, "I have overcome the world." We also shall overcome it, through his cross. It is a sight of the cross of Christ that weans the affections from sublunary objects, and centers them on heavenly and divine things. In this wicked world, the Christian thirsts for God, and pants to reach the mansions of glory. The language of his heart in this wilderness is thus beautifully expressed by the poet—

"I thirst, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share;
Your wounds Immanuel, all forbid,
That I should seek my pleasure here.
It was the sight of your dear cross,
First weaned my soul from earthly things,
And taught me to esteem as dross,
The mirth of fools, and pomp of kings.
I want that grace that springs from you,
That quickens all things where it flows;
And made a wretched thorn, like me,
Bloom as the myrtle, or the rose.
Dear fountain of delight unknown!
No longer sink below the brim;
But overflow, and pour me down

A living, and life-giving stream!"

4. Another blessing of the cross of Christ is the VICTORY OVER DEATH AND THE GLOOMY GRAVE. Death is the last enemy that the Christian has to encounter. But the cross of Christ crowns him with complete victory. It disarms death of its sting, and the grave of its terrors. When the swellings of Jordan roll over the believer's soul, the cross of Christ sustains him. When amid the gloom and darkness of death, a celestial beam from the cross of Christ often shines to guide the Christian pilgrim through the "valley and shadow of death," and to cheer his drooping soul with a prospect of the glories of the heavenly Canaan. The believer is then enabled to exclaim, "Even when I walk through the dark valley of death, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me."

It is the cross of Christ that puts this song in the believer's lips. It is Jesus, the sinner's Friend, that smoothes the passage to the tomb- to the realms of everlasting day. Precious, crucified Savior!

"Jesus can make a dying bed,
Feel soft as downy pillows are.
While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there."

The cross of Christ enables the dying Christian to come off the stage of mortal conflict, shouting with Payson, "Victory, victory! Peace, peace!" or with Simpson, "O death! where is your sting? What are you? I am not afraid of you. You are a vanquished enemy through the blood of the cross!" The cross of Christ converts the 'king of terrors' into a messenger of peace. Now it is gain for the believer to die. When the Christian closes his eyes in death, it is only "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." The cross of Christ enables the believer to finish his Christian warfare with this triumphant song, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

"Jesus, the vision of your face,
Has overpowering charms;
Scarce shall I feel death's cold embrace,
If Christ be in my arms."

5. The cross of Christ OPENS THE PORTALS OF GLORY FOR OUR RECEPTION. It admits its into the presence of God and crowns us with unutterable bliss. There is no way to heaven but through the cross of Christ. When the Cross of Christ was erected on earth, the gates of paradise were opened above. This leads the sinner to glory. The precious blood of Jesus that was poured out upon the cross, is the only procuring cause of heavenly felicity. Jesus died to make us happy- eternally happy. This is the blessed consummation of all his sufferings and death. This was the reason why he groaned in Gethsemane; why he bled and died on Calvary. It was to make you shine eternally in mansions of glory. This is the grand design of the preaching of the cross. It points sinners to a glorious immortality. This is one of its ineffable blessings. Salvation is by the blessed cross of Christ.

What tongue can express the felicity of the redeemed before the throne of God! What heart can conceive the unspeakable bliss that the ransomed sinner shall enjoy, to all eternity, through the cross of Christ! "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." "In your presence," cries the Psalmist, "is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures for evermore." How different is earth from heaven!

"Here griefs, and cares, and pains,
And fears, distress us sore.
But there eternal pleasure reigns,
And we shall weep no more."

In heaven, the redeemed shall have fullness of joy. What inexpressible joy must fill their souls when they shall see the King of Heaven in his beauty, when Jesus shall dwell among them forever and ever! Then shall they be ever, ever with the Lord. "I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, 'Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever.'"

Eternal felicity crowns all the inhabitants of heaven. Eternal glory shines around all the mansions of the blessed. The celestial city is illuminated by the glory of God and the Lamb. Of the glory of that heavenly city, in which the saints are to

spend ceaseless ages, the following lively description, founded on the word of God, is furnished by the immortal Bunyan— "Now just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises with. There were also of those who had wings; and they answered one another without intermission, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord. And after that, they shut up the gates; which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them."

Those happy souls, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and who are on this account presented faultless before the throne of God, shall "serve him day and night in his Temple. And he who sits on the throne will live among them and shelter them. They will never again be hungry or thirsty, and they will be fully protected from the scorching noontime heat. For the Lamb who stands in front of the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to the springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe away all their tears." Who would not glory in the cross of Christ, when it confers so many rich, eternal blessings upon a sinful world!

In short, all the blessings that are bestowed upon the Christian in his pilgrimage through the wilderness, until he comes to the heavenly Canaan, and all the felicity he enjoys in that world of glory, flow directly from the cross of Christ. From the cross of Christ, he derives ample provision by the way, and when he reaches the mansions of glory, he eats of the fruit of the "tree of life" in the midst of the paradise of God. Here,

"Jesus the bread of life is given,
To be our daily food;
We drink a wondrous stream from heaven,
'Tis water, wine and blood.
Lord, tis enough, I ask no more,
These blessings are divine;
I envy not the worldling's store,
If Christ and heaven are mine."

Blessed cross of a crucified Savior, that brings such glory to God, and such peace and good-will to man!

In conclusion, let me exhort you to boast in the cross of Christ, through life and all its vicissitudes; and when you stand on the verge of the grave, when you feel the chilly embrace of the last enemy; yes, when death shall strike its darts at your vitals, adhering to the banner of the cross, you will be enabled boldly and triumphantly to exclaim, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?"

When you arise to immortality amid the chaos of a crumbling world, while others, in despair, are calling upon the mountains and the rocks to fall on them and hide them from Him that sits on the throne, then, dear believer in Jesus, you will glory in the cross of Christ. As you enter on the saint's everlasting rest, you will triumph in the cross of Jesus; and as you sail on the vast unbounded ocean of eternal blessedness, this shall ever be the unchanging language of your enraptured soul, "As for me, God forbid that I should boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world died long ago, and the world's interest in me is also long dead."
Galatians 6:14

CONCLUSION.

SOLEMN APPEAL TO THE READER

Dear reader, allow the writer, before he lays aside his pen, perhaps never to resume it, to beseech you to be reconciled to God- to embrace Christ and Him crucified, as your only hope. You have a precious immortal soul to be saved or lost; a soul, the value of which exceeds in amount all the wealth of the globe, yes of thousands of worlds.

The redemption of the soul is precious. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The soul is destined to live through eternity in the bright realms of eternal glory, or in the dismal regions of eternal misery and despair. O did you ever seriously think of that solemn word, Eternity! Eternity! Forever! Forever! Think of it now. "But who can measure eternity? Compared with whose everlasting lines, myriads of years are infinitely less than atoms floating in the midday sun! All thought is lost in its immensity, and swallowed up in its fathomless abyss."

Eternity is yours- is mine. You shall shortly enter upon an eternity of boundless bliss or unspeakable misery. The

trumpet of God shall soon summon a sleeping world to judgment. The eternal destinies of all men shall soon be irrecoverably fixed. The righteous shall be welcomed to the kingdom of heaven, where they shall shine as the sun forever and ever! But Oh! how my soul trembles to think of the awful doom that shall be pronounced upon the wicked, on those who have rejected a crucified Savior, "Depart from me, you cursed ones, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Did you ever ask. that dreadful question, "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Of the inhabitants of the pit it is said, that "their worm does not die", and there "the fire is not quenched." But, blessed be God, there is a way; the only way to escape the wrath to come. This way is through Christ and him crucified. "God has not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Then flee to Christ, and you shall be saved with an everlasting salvation.

You have a loving Savior. In him compassions flow. Rest in his love; rely on his atonement, and glory in his cross. Our parting advice to you is, to take refuge in Christ and him Crucified; and when the last awful storm arise shall arise to crush an ungodly world, it will on waft you into the harbor of eternal glory. To the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we commend you. In his hands we leave you.

May God grant that both reader and writer may meet that world of glory, where there is no more sin, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor death; and where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Blessed with a saving interest in Christ and him crucified, and cheered with the hope of a glorious immortality, we will approach our graves in peace; "Like one that draws the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams," and at that solemn period, the resurrection of a sleeping world, we shall arise in a glorious immortal form, free from all corroding disease or painful death, and surrounded with the ineffable glories of the Deity, we shall engage in the sublime raptures of celestial bliss, bathe in that pure river of the water of life that flows through the paradise of God, and drink of those perennial streams which issue from the fountain of life; while eternal ages roll away.

"In cheerful hope my soul relies,
Blessed Savior, on your dying love,
Until I reach the blissful skies,
And strike the golden harps above."

(http://www.gracegems.org/Books2/Harsha_Christ.htm) A Chapter from this book - Christ, and him crucified