

There are many evils in the world—evils physical, moral, domestic, social, and political—but the great source and centre of all human evil is SIN: *sin* in its malignant principle; *sin* in its envenomed essence; *sin* in its tyrannical power; *sin* in its soul-damning guilt; *sin* in its blighting consequences.

Who may portray the darkness of sin—the *discord* of sin—the *bondage* of sin—the *impurity* of sin—the *power* of sin—the horrors of sin?

*Sin is the mortal disease of the human soul.*

All the human race confesses the disease. All systems of Philosophy and Morals, ancient and modern, recognize the dire evil.

Now, Christianity comes professedly to *cure this disease*—and comes for no other purpose. It then becomes a question of supreme importance whether the remedy is adequate to the emergency. What is the extent of this salvation? How far does Christ propose to save men in this world? We answer:

1. He does not propose to save us from trials and tribulations, but to give grace to brave and bear all serenely. He concedes and confesses that "*in the world ye shall have tribulation,*" but promises, "*in Me ye shall have peace.*"

2. He does not propose to save us from temptation, but to save us *in* temptation, and with the temptation make "a way of escape."

3. He does not propose to save us from errors of intellect, or mistakes of judgment, or wanderings of mind—but to save us from errors of the heart, and wanderings of the will.

4. He does not propose to give us grace by which we *cannot* sin, but grace by which we *need not* sin. If the words of John's Epistle be thought to suggest an *impeccable* state, "He cannot commit sin because he is born of God," it must be remembered that the word "cannot" is a *moral cannot*. The word is used here as by Luther when before the hostile assembly of Catholic priests, Bishops, and Princes, he dared to do right, and said, "*I cannot do otherwise.*" The same sense of the word was used by the boy George Washington when he said, "*I cannot tell a lie,*" The word is used in the same sense when we say of some magnanimous man, "*he cannot do a mean thing.*" By this use of "can-

not," we mean that the person is *averse* to doing a certain thing, it is against the current of his nature—he is not *inclined* or *disposed* to do it. This sense of "cannot" is common and unmistakable. In this sense, then, the holy man "cannot commit sin;" he is averse to it; his whole soul abhors and dreads sin. But still *he may sin*, by permitting himself to contemplate sin unguardedly, or by approaching sin too near, so as to be blinded or fascinated by it. A person says very consistently, "I *cannot* look directly over the brink of Table-rock at Niagara." And yet he may, in an unguarded moment, approach so near the brink as to *fall over!* Thus while Christ does not give us grace by which we absolutely *cannot* sin, He gave us grace by which we *need not* sin, and such "a heart in every thought renewed," that we shall have the greatest *horror* of sin, and consequently the greatest *safeguard* against sin.

5. Christ does not promise to save us from our ignorance of many things in nature and the Bible, but to so illuminate our minds that we need not and shall not "abide in darkness" respecting our personal salvation.

6. Christ does not promise such maturity that there can be no further growth, but such *purity* of soul as is the necessary condition of normal growth *toward* maturity.

Maturity of soul is distant as the end of immortality, *purity* is a possible and promised state of the believer here on earth.

The miraculous atonement washes "*whiter than snow.*" The blood of the atonement "*cleanseth from all unrighteousness.*" These terms are absolute.

If the question be still pressed—what is the extent of the promised salvation! we answer *affirmatively*:

1. This salvation meets and matches the *guilt* of sin by *pardon* or *justification*, free, full, absolute, and eternal.

2. This salvation meets and masters the moral death of sin in the soul, by *regeneration*, radical, miraculous, divine.

3. This salvation meets and destroys the envenomed *essence* of sin in the heart by *Sanctification* entire and spotless.

4. This salvation meets and nullifies the penal *consequences* of sin by closing the gates of punishment, and opening the