

## FILTHY RAGS FOR ROBES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

### I. [Isaiah 64:6-9](#) [Romans 3:19-27](#) [Isaiah 61:10](#)

A. In Melbourne, Australia last week, Actor, Russell Crowe and girlfriend, Britney Theriot, were turned away from Mr. Miyagi's Fusion restaurant. Why? They didn't meet the high end establishment's dress code. Apparently they'd come from playing tennis. The restaurant owner said the couple came wearing "*slobby gym gear.*" While the actors weren't recognized by staff, it evidently wouldn't have mattered as the restaurant seeks to hold everyone to the same standards in terms of appropriate attire.

B. So have you ever shown up somewhere where you were underdressed for the occasion or the establishment? When I was dating Janet, I once pranked her by showing up at her apartment wearing a red crushed velvet suit jacket, a leftover from my junior prom. You should've seen her face! Our date went on, but without the jacket. So did you know that Heaven has a spiritual dress code for entry? Let's see what it is...

C. Isaiah is considered Israel's most renowned prophet. His name means, "*Yahweh is salvation.*" He prophesied between 739-681 BC to the Ten Tribes of Israel, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and even to nations outside of God's people. God used him to point out their sin as well as declare the consequences of their sin. This included their eventual exiles and even the eventual restoration of Judah. Strikingly, many of Isaiah's prophecies pointed to the Messiah, Christ Jesus, the Suffering Servant, the Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of man.

D. [Isaiah 64:6-9](#) (NLT) points to the sin-predicament of God's people back then but also to the predicament of sin to all people everywhere, including us: *6 We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. (The NIV Study Bible notes about the filthy rags: "The cloth a woman uses during her period, a time when she is [ceremonially] unclean.") Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind. 7 Yet no one calls on Your name or pleads with You for mercy. Therefore, You have turned away from us and turned us over to our sins. (cf Rom 1) 8 And yet, O LORD, You are our Father. We are the clay, and You are the potter. We all are formed by Your hand. 9 Don't be so angry with us, LORD. Please don't remember our sins forever. Look at us, we pray, and see that we are all Your people. (My translation: We are unworthy sinners before You God--please help us! How does He do that? On to Rom. 3...)*

E. [Romans 3:20-27](#) (AMP) is familiar ground for us. From the Amplified we read:

1) **V20-21: 20** *For no person will be justified [freed of guilt and declared righteous] in His sight by [trying to do] the works of the Law. For through the Law we become conscious of sin [and the recognition of sin directs us toward repentance, but provides no remedy for sin]. 21 But now the righteousness of God has been clearly revealed [independently and completely] apart from the Law, though it is [actually] confirmed by the Law and the [words and writings of the] Prophets. (So what is **righteousness**? Some like defining it as a "**right relationship**" with God. And in some contexts that's true. But predominantly righteousness is "**right standing**" with God. You cannot have a **right relationship** with God without **right standing**. We're about to see that **right standing** with God cannot be earned nor is it ever deserved.)*

**2) V22-23: 22** *This righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ for all those [Jew or Gentile] who believe [and trust in Him and acknowledge Him as God's Son]. There is no distinction, 23 since all have sinned and continually fall short of the glory of God, (Isaiah 64:6a again: "We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags.")*

**3) V24-27: 24** *and are being justified [declared free of the guilt of sin, made acceptable to God, and granted eternal life] as a **gift** by His [precious, undeserved] grace, through the redemption [the payment for our sin] which is [provided] in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God displayed publicly [before the eyes of the world] as a [life-giving] sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation (propitiation) by His blood [to be received] through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness [which demands punishment for sin], because in His forbearance [His deliberate restraint] He passed over the sins previously committed [before Jesus' crucifixion]. 26 It was to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus [and rely confidently on Him as Savior]. 27 Then what becomes of [our] boasting? It is excluded [entirely ruled out, banished]. On what principle? On [the principle of good] works? No, but on the principle of faith.*

**F. Ask most people how to get to heaven and what do they say? Let your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds. Yet one bad deed qualifies us as a sinner. Sinners don't have *right standing* with God. Those of us without *right standing* are not admitted to heaven, no matter how hard we try. But that's just the bad news. Do you want to hear the GOOD NEWS? God the Son, from eternity past, came to earth. His name is Jesus the Christ. He lived the absolute perfect, sin-free life! He is also known as *The Righteous One*. He has always maintained *right standing* with God the Father. And yet He took our sin upon Himself and died a horrible death on a cross to pay the penalty for our sin. In turn, by faith, which He also gifts to us, His record of *right standing* before God is imputed to us. And His *right standing* makes us *rightly related* to God the Father and this forevermore! (2 Cor 5:21 - *My sin for His righteousness!*) The Bread & Cup remind us!**

**G. So are you planning on getting into heaven with your record or with His? If your attire is filthy rags, you'll be turned away. But listen to Isaiah 61:10 (NLT) and make it your own profession before heaven and earth: *10 I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For He has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels. (Filthy rags or a robe of righteousness, what'll it be?!)***

**H. The ancient folktale of *Cinderella* has countless versions spanning many continents and cultures. But the version we know best is about an orphaned girl mistreated by her evil stepmother and wicked stepsisters. Meanwhile, a King, seeking a bride for his son, announces a ball where all the eligible bachelorettes of the land are invited. Cinderella, however, is forbidden to go, locked in her room, hopelessly dejected. But alas, her Fairy Godmother appears, gives Cinderella a fairy dust makeover, turns a pumpkin into a carriage, mice into horses, etc. But Cinderella is warned the magic runs out at midnight and everything changes back to what it was, including her beautiful gown. She goes. And at the ball, the Prince spurns all the princess wannabes, including the wicked stepsisters, but he's enthralled with Cinderella's elegance and beauty, and the two dance the night away. But then the clock strikes midnight and Cinderella knows she**

must flee the castle as the magic runs out and she'll soon find her beautiful attire turned back into a peasant girl's rags. And so it happens. Everything changes back. That is, except, one glass slipper. And with that glass slipper the Prince rides hither to and yon throughout the land, trying it on the feet of all the single gals until he rediscovers the girl of his dreams, Cinderella. The slipper fits, the Prince finds his Bride, and everyone lives happily ever after.

**I. But know this: the truth of the Gospel is far better than any fairy tale! When Christ Jesus robes you in His righteousness, it's NOT magic! It's the love of God, manifested in the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, cleansing you from sin, making you His own! The filthy rags of your own righteousness are replaced by the righteousness of Christ! And this is irreversible! There is no midnight! The love & power of God that saves you is the same love & power that keeps you! Even forevermore! Isaiah 61:10 (NLT) one more time: "I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For He has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels. And yes, the Bread & Cup remind us!**

\* Pray & Officiate Communion...

\* Benediction Song: My Dad loved an old simple chorus that went like this:

*The windows of heaven are open, the blessings are falling tonight;  
There's joy, joy, joy in my heart, since Jesus made everything right.  
I gave Him my old tattered garment, He gave me a robe of pure white;  
Now I'm feasting on manna from heaven, and that's why I'm happy tonight.*

## [Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

### [Isaiah 64:6-9 \(NLT\)](#)

**6** We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind. **7** Yet no one calls on Your name or pleads with You for mercy. Therefore, You have turned away from us and turned us over to our sins. **8** And yet, O LORD, You are our Father. We are the clay, and You are the potter. We all are formed by Your hand. **9** Don't be so angry with us, LORD. Please don't remember our sins forever. Look at us, we pray, and see that we are all Your people.

### [Romans 3:20-27 \(AMP\)](#)

**20** For no person will be justified [freed of guilt and declared righteous] in His sight by [trying to do] the works of the Law. For through the Law we become conscious of sin [and the recognition of sin directs us toward repentance, but provides no remedy for sin]. **21** But now the righteousness of God has been clearly revealed [independently and completely] apart from the Law, though it is [actually] confirmed by the Law and the [words and writings of the] Prophets. **22** This righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ for all those [Jew or Gentile] who believe [and trust in Him and acknowledge Him as God's Son]. There is no distinction, **23** since all have sinned and

continually fall short of the glory of God, **24** and are being justified [declared free of the guilt of sin, made acceptable to God, and granted eternal life] as a gift by His [precious, undeserved] grace, through the redemption [the payment for our sin] which is [provided] in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God displayed publicly [before the eyes of the world] as a [life-giving] sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation (propitiation) by His blood [to be received] through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness [which demands punishment for sin], because in His forbearance [His deliberate restraint] He passed over the sins previously committed [before Jesus' crucifixion]. **26** It was to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus [and rely confidently on Him as Savior]. **27** Then what becomes of [our] boasting? It is excluded [entirely ruled out, banished]. On what principle? On [the principle of good] works? No, but on the principle of faith.

### **Isaiah 61:10 (NLT)**

**10** I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For He has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels.

### **Bonus Goodies**

**Clothed in Righteousness - R.C. Sproul (Ligonier Ministries)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORpaBvKcNZk>

**Hearts Strangely Warmed at Asbury - Fred Sanders & Joe Henderson (TGC)**

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/hearts-strangely-warmed-asbury/>

**Greg Laurie on The JESUS Revolution & Working With Kelsey Grammer - Eric Metaxas**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=571XcRIqr9A>

**Rosario Butterfield & Ken Smith - An Unlikely Friendship and a Beautiful Conversion**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipmlG\\_L9dvo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipmlG_L9dvo)

### **More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras**

#### **Philippians 3:7-11 (ESV)**

**7** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith-- **10** that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in his death, **11** that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

#### **Romans 1:16-17 (NIV)**

**16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. **17** For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed--a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

#### **James 2:10-11 (ESV)**

**10** For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. **11** For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

#### **Luke 18:9-14 (NIV)**

**9** To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: **10** "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' **13** "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' **14** "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

#### **Matthew 22:1-14 (NIV)**

**1** Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: **2** "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. **3** He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. **4** "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' **5** "But they paid no attention and went off--one to his field, another to his business. **6** The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. **7** The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. **8** "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. **9** So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' **10** So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. **11** "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. **12** He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless. **13** "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' **14** "For many are invited, but few are chosen."

#### **Luke 22:14-23 (ESV)**

**14** And when the hour came, He reclined at table, and the apostles with Him. **15** And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. **16** For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." **17** And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He said, "Take this, and divide it among

yourselves. **18** For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” **19** And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.” **20** And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. **21** But behold, the hand of him who betrays Me is with Me on the table. **22** For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” **23** And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

#### **Quote by Charles Spurgeon**

"The greatest enemy to human souls is the self-righteous spirit which makes men look to themselves for salvation."

#### **Quote by Ralph Erskine**

"Legal obedience hath the evil of blasphemy in it. It reproaches the righteousness of Christ, as if it were not sufficient, as if His atonement were not perfect, as if His satisfaction were not full, as if His obedience were not perfect, unless it be patched up with the rags of man's own righteousness."

#### **Quote by C.S. Lewis**

"Prostitutes are in no danger of finding their present life so satisfactory that they cannot turn to God: the proud, the avaricious, the self-righteous, are in that danger."

#### **Quote by Jonathan Edwards**

"The deceitfulness of the heart of man appears in no one thing so much as this of spiritual pride and self-righteousness. The subtlety of Satan appears in its height, in his managing persons with respect to this sin. And perhaps one reason may be that here he has most experience; he knows the way of its coming in; he is acquainted with the secret springs of it: it was his own sin. Experience gives vast advantage in leading souls, either in good or evil."

- Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections*.

#### **Quote by Tim Keller**

"We tend to draw conservative, buttoned-down, moralistic people. The licentious and liberated or the broken and marginal avoid church. That can only mean one thing. If the preaching of our ministers and the practice of our parishioners do not have the same effect on people that Jesus had, then we must not be declaring the same message that Jesus did."

- Tim Keller, *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith*, p.p. 15-16.

#### **Quote by Charles Spurgeon**

"The more unworthy you feel yourself to be, the more evidence have you that nothing but unspeakable love could have led the Lord Jesus to save such a soul as yours. The more demerit you feel, the clearer is the display of the abounding love of God in having chosen you, and called you, and made you an heir of bliss."

## **Spiritual Fruit vs Self-Righteous Works**

by Melissa Kruger / The Gospel Coalition / September 22, 2015

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/melissa-kruger/spiritual-fruit-vs-self-righteous-works-2/>

Picture with me for a moment two trees in the distance. Both are heavy laden with apples. The natural assumption is that you've come upon two apple trees.

However, once you arrive at the base of the trees, you notice that they differ in one very important way. On the first tree, apples hang naturally from the stem, just as you'd expect. The second tree causes you to look again in bewilderment.

All of the apples on this tree have been tied onto it.

Painstakingly, someone spent hours attempting to make this tree appear to be an apple tree. Close inspection reveals the reality that the fruit was not born from the inward sap of the tree, but from the outward labors of someone seeking to create an illusion.

We can all spot the futility of such labor in an apple orchard (knowing full well that hanging apples on a tree does not an apple tree make). However, I have a feeling this might be how many of us go about our attempts to bear fruit in our spiritual lives.

[Galatians 5:22-23](#) tells us, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."*

These graces show forth the beauty of the Spirit's work in the life of a believer. The sap of the Spirit produces fruit in the life of a Christian. Yet, each of us will find ourselves in situations where we feel unloving, impatient, unkind, or lacking in joy or self-control (all of which may have occurred on this morning's drive to the office).

Faced with our own barren tree, we often attempt to achieve in our own strength what is not growing in our hearts. We determine that we will act lovingly to that unlovable person, be kind to that annoying relative, or faithfully serve in that ministry (while grumbling to ourselves about it). We will work harder, be more disciplined, and pick ourselves up by our proverbial bootstraps and get on with it.

Now, let me clarify. Hard work, discipline, and diligent labors are good things. Even Paul said, *"I worked harder than any of them"* ([1 Cor 15:10](#)). But then, lest he be misunderstood, he rightly added, *"though it is not I, but the grace of God that was with me."* It is the work of God's grace, through the power of the Spirit, that fuels our obedience.

Thus, the question before us as we ponder spiritual fruit is: How can I discern the difference between keeping in step with the Spirit's work in my life and laboring in my own strengths and abilities?

### **Righteousness with Strings Attached**

Just like the tied-on fruit tree, when I am working out of my own strength the false fruit comes with strings attached. Two strings of self-righteousness appear, making it clear to any close observer that these are not Spirit-born fruit. The first string is judgment and the second string is despair.

When I've labored in my own strength and find myself somewhat successful in my efforts, the most common overflow is that of judgment. Observing another struggling to do what I've attained, it's tempting to sit high on my perch and think to myself, "Well if she just did this or that, then it would go much better for her." Thankfully, the Lord has faithfully nudged me off my perch more times than I can count. Falling face forward in the dust has a way of dismantling pride and self-righteousness. Judgment is an ugly string, exposing the illusion of fruit on our tree.

In contrast, when I've labored in my own abilities and come up short or missed the mark in some way, a second string appears. It's the string of despair. How can it be that I'm such a horrible person? I'm a failure of a Christian. What use am I for the kingdom? Everyone is better than me. These are not the thoughts of a humble soul, but a self-righteous one. Should I be surprised at my own inabilities or weaknesses? My false belief that I'm not really that bad is shocked by my complete inability to change apart from the Spirit's work. Despair is simply the other side of judgment in the currency of self-righteousness.

### **Spirit-Born Fruit**

In contrast, how can we spot the fruit that is born of the Spirit's work in our lives? Like a painter, the Master puts a signature on His creation:

*The work of the Spirit always overflows in worship.*

When we find ourselves living lives of obedience, showing forth joy and patience, kindness and love, our hearts abound with thanksgiving. We rejoice, not in our own righteousness, but in the work of the Spirit within us.

There is no judgment for others because we recognize all our works are simply a gift born within us. We do not look down on others who are struggling; we just keep inviting them to Jesus. With a heart of worship, we say to all: Come behold the King! I was lost, but now I'm found. I was blind, but now I see. The scar of prideful judgment does not mar the glow of a worshiping countenance.

In a similar way, when faced with our failures, the Spirit prevents us from despairing thoughts and inward focus. Instead, we repent and turn again to Christ in worship. Rather than become paralyzed by our sin, we behold the work of Jesus in new ways. We mourn our sin, and we rejoice all the more in our Savior. All our failures are absorbed in His sacrifice. With confidence, we boldly approach the throne of grace, finding mercy and grace to help us in our time of need.

This type of fruit is only born by abiding in Jesus ([John 15:4-5](#)). There's no need to spend our labors tending on fruit. What we yearn for, He freely gives. As the Master Gardner tends our branch, we overflow in worship and bear the beauty of our Creator:

*"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in My God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."* – [Isaiah 61:10](#)

### **The Puddle of Their Own Merit!**

William Secker - Circa 1660

Many have passed the rocks of gross sins—who have suffered shipwreck upon the sands of self-righteousness.

It was the saying of one, that he "would swim through a sea of brimstone—if he might but arrive safely at heaven." Ah, how would natural men soar to heaven—upon the pinions of their own merit! The sunbeams of Divine justice—will soon melt such weak and wax wings!

He who has no better righteousness than what is of his own providing, shall meet with no higher happiness than what is of his own deserving. "They disregarded the righteousness from God—and attempted to establish their own righteousness." They are determined to sail in their own ship—though they sink in the ocean!

We are so far from paying the utmost farthing, that at our utmost—we have not even a farthing to pay! That man will be a miserable spectacle of vanity—who stands upon the lame feet of his own ability!

Duties are but dry pits, though ever so meticulously wrought—until Christ fills them. Reader, I would neither have you be idle in duties—nor make an idol of duties.

What are duties without Christ—but like a fine cabinet without a jewel—or a golden cup without a cordial? The most diligent saint—has been the most self-distrusting saint, "that I may gain Christ and be found in him—not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith." If you are found in your own righteousness, you will be lost by your own righteousness. That garment which was worn to shreds on Adam's

back—will never make a complete covering for you.

Duties may be good crutches to go upon—but they are bad Christs to lean upon. It is the greatest disparagement that professors can offer to Christ—to put their services in the scale with His sufferings. The beggarly rags of the first Adam—must never be put on with the princely robe of the second Adam!

Man is a creature too much inclined to warm himself by the sparks of his own fire—though he lies down in eternal flames for kindling them! Though Noah's dove made use of her wings—yet she found no rest, but in the ark. Duties can never have too much of our diligence—or too little of our confidence. A believer does not perform good works to live—but he lives to perform good works.

He shall have hell as his debt—who will not take heaven as a gift. "We boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in the flesh." A true Christian stands at as great distance from trusting in the best of his services—as in the worst of his sins! He knows that the greatest part of his holiness—will not make the least part of his justifying righteousness. He has unreservedly subscribed to that sentiment, "that when we have done all—we are only unprofitable servants."

When we have kept all the commandments, there is one commandment above all to be kept; that is, "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags!" In most of our works—we are abominable sinners; and in the best of our works—we are unprofitable servants. "O Sovereign Lord, I will proclaim Your righteousness, Yours alone!" You see, beloved, the righteousness of Christ is to be magnified—when the righteousness of a Christian is not to be mentioned.

It is hard for us to be "nothing in ourselves" amidst all our works; and to be "all things in Christ," amidst all our weakness. To undertake every duty—and yet to overlook every duty—is a lesson which none can learn, but Christ's scholars.

Our obedience, at best, is like good wine—which relishes of a bad cask. The 'Law of God' will not accept ninety-nine for a hundred. It will not accept the coin of our obedience, either short in quantity—or base in quality. The duty it exacts—is as impossible to be performed in this our fallen state; as the penalty it inflicts—is intolerable to be endured in our eternal state!

We do not sail to glory in the salt sea of our own tears—but in the red sea of the Redeemer's blood! The Cross of Christ—is the only key of paradise! We owe the life of our souls—to the death of our Savior. It was His going into the fiery furnace—which keeps us from going into the devouring flames! Man lives—by death: his natural life is preserved by the death of the creature; and his spiritual life is gained by the death of the Redeemer.

Those who carry their vessel of hope to the puddle of their own merit—will never draw the water of comfort, from the fountain of God's mercy!