

THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

AND

THE BLESSINGS FOUND THERE

BY

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Previously published in London, 1864
by James Nisbet & Co.

This edition completely re-typeset by
Tentmaker Publications.

Preface

THE 'foot of the Cross' is a sacred "household word" in the family of God—rich in the Divine truths and precious in the Christian experience it is employed to express. Adopting this familiar but emphatic phrase, the author has sought in these pages to expound and illustrate, in a few instances, its tender and solemn significance. He has aimed to shew how all vital, saving truth centres in, and all sanctifying and comforting blessing springs from, the CROSS OF CHRIST. The discussion of this comprehensive and sublime theme, in the present instance, is limited and faulty—as the most elaborate and finished human exposition of such a theme must necessarily be. It is but here and there he has plucked a cluster of fruit bending from this Tree of Life, or has gathered a flower, blooming in beauty and breathing in fragrance, beneath its hallowed shade. Still, if his imperfect labour shall have attracted some truth-perplexed mind, some sin-burdened conscience, some sorrow-stricken heart, some hope-despairing soul to the 'foot of the cross,' there to experience the precious blessing sought, he will not regret having presented to the Church of God even this partial and imperfect discussion of a theme which the combined intellect of heaven could not fully unfold, nor the study and contemplation of eternity utterly exhaust—THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Reader! study these pages with fervent prayer to the Holy Spirit that He, through this dim medium, might unveil to you, in some degree, the glory of Christ's FINISHED WORK, guide your trembling steps to the foot of the cross, give you simple faith in the Crucified, and thus bring you into a state of PERFECT PEACE WITH GOD through Christ.

“‘Tis finish’d—but what mortal dare
In that triumph hope to share?
Saviour, to Thy cross I flee;
Say, ‘Tis finish’d,’ *and for me.*

“Then will I sing, The cross! the cross!
And count all other gain but loss;
I’ll sing the cross, and to Thy tree
Cling evermore, bless’d Calvary!

To the benediction of the TRIUNE JEHOVAH this little volume is
prayerfully commended.

BATH, *February* 1864.

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Chapter I

Nearness to the Cross

“There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.”

—JOHN XIX. 25.

IT was a mournful yet an unspeakably precious and enviable spot around which now clustered these holy watchers! They had been to our Lord as ministering spirits in many an hour of weariness and want. With true feminine delicacy, they had followed Him, silently and meekly, in the distance, approaching His person but to receive from Him a blessing or to bestow upon Him a charity. Their love was not ostentatious and resonant, nor were their attentions officious and wearying. Gentle, yet softening, as the dew—silent, yet cheering as the sunbeam, they hovered around His lone and dreary path, shedding upon it the lustre and the soothing of their holy sympathy, and in seasons of sinking want and exhausting toil, “ministering to Him of their substance.” And now that His disciples, pledged and sworn to a friendship and fealty unto death, had, in the dark hour of His woe, one by one all forsaken Him, these holy women drew near and took their position as sentinels at the cross, watching the descending sun of His life as amid suffering, darkness, and blood, it set in death. But a deeper love and a higher life than nature owns had brought them here. Christ had wrought wonders of grace for these women. They were lost, and He had found them; sinners, and He had saved them. Their sins He was now bearing, their curse He was now exhausting, their penalty of suffering He was now enduring. For them were these agonies, this soul-sorrow, this blood-shedding, and this death. And

now that He was afflicted of God, tortured of man, deserted by friends, insulted by foes, lo! amid the darkness and the earthquake, the insults and the imprecations, "there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." Honoured women! envied spot! But how suggestive in its spiritual instruction is this scene! To its study let us devoutly turn.

Although eighteen hundred years have elapsed since that scene occurred, the believer in Jesus still spiritually lives it over. The cross of Christ is still the central object of attraction to the Church of God. Around it in faith and love a countless throng daily, hourly gather of Christ-believing, Christ-loving souls, finding cleansing in its blood, extracting joy from its sorrow, deriving life from its death, and beholding the brightness of glory blended with the darkness of shame.

But, is this the true spiritual position and posture of *every* believer in Jesus? Are all the professed disciples of the Saviour seeking and cultivating the religion that is drawn only from, and is cherished only by, close communion with the cross of Christ? Are we walking with God in a sense of pardoned sin, of personal acceptance, of filial communion, of holy obedience, of unreserved consecration beneath the cross? Do we delight to be here? Do we resort thither that grace might be replenished, that the fruits of the Spirit might be nourished, that backslidings might be healed, that the conscience might be cleansed? Is the cross of Jesus our confessional, our laver, our crucifixion, and our boast? These are searching, solemn questions! Persuaded, as we are, that the foot of the cross is the nearest spot to Heaven, that Heaven's choicest blessings are found only there; that, beneath its warm sunshine the holy fruit of the Spirit ripens, and that under its sacred shade the sweetest repose is found; that, never is the believing soul so near to God, in such intimate fellowship with Christ, more really under the direct teaching of the Holy Ghost, as when *there*, we would fain employ every scriptural argument and put forth every persuasive motive to allure the reader to this hallowed spot, assured that, once he finds himself in believing, loving adoration at the foot of Christ's cross, he has found himself at the focus of all divine glory, and at the confluence of all spiritual blessing. A few words of explanation in the outset.

The foot of the cross!—what mean we by the words? *Literally*, the cross was an ancient instrument of torture among the Romans, to which