

A
LETTER
ADDRESSED TO A WOMAN
IN PRISON.
BY SAMUEL ETLES PIERCE

MADAM,

June 12th, 1795.

AS one who by real and blessed experience knows there is redemption for sinners in the most precious blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, having myself tasted that the Lord is gracious; I feel for you, and most heartily lament the most tremendous and awful circumstances which you are brought into by reason of sin. Alas, alas! you have been left by the Lord to the inward corruption of your own heart; and as thus left, you have done that which cannot be undone. No, not to eternity!

It may be truly said, that sin is the greatest of all evils: yea, the only evil in earth or hell. There is nothing but evil in it. Nor can it produce any thing but evil: present—future—and everlasting. Your present situation and confinement, your future trial, when you have nothing to expect but a most just sentence of condemnation to be pronounced on you, to suffer death for your crime is all

the consequence of sin.

Far be it from me to insult you in your present state. God forbid. I am indeed a sinner; exceeding sinful; yea, equally as sinful by nature as you are. And though I am no fornicator, adulterer, nor murderer, as to the outward act, yet I am a transgressor of God's most holy and righteous law, and I am by nature a child of wrath, even as others. On account of the infinite pollution and total corruption of my whole nature, and every faculty thereof, and the sinfulness of every member, part, and faculty of body and soul, I deserve God's wrath and damnation as justly, and really, as any sinner out of hell. Such as are numbered with the dead and damned, are not more justly condemned to suffer the vengeance *of* eternal fire, than I do, in my own person, for the sinfulness of my nature, thoughts, words, and actions, deserve the same. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ; he came into our world to save Signers. He saveth such as believe in Him from the wrath to come.

I am fully convinced there is no difference amongst mankind sinners, but what is made by the free, rich, and sovereign grace of God. *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and by the deeds of the law can no flesh living be justified.* All the world is become guilty before God, and the Lord God *hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

Permit me, by putting on the bowels of Jesus Christ, and as truly desirous to express the same towards you, having most heartily requested the Lord to bestow his own blessing thereon, to set before you the Lord Jesus Christ—the most precious—almighty—all-sufficient Saviour, in the eternal dignity of his person—in his infinite love—in his everlasting mercy—in his free—boundless—bottomless grace—in his divine righteousness—and efficacious blood-shedding sacrifice and death—as able to save you from all your sins, guilt, and pollution; as all-sufficient to cleanse you from every spot and stain of defilement; to deliver you from the curse of the law, which you have broken, and to admit you into heaven, there to live and shine for ever and ever, as a monument of his mercy.

May God the Holy Ghost enable me so to write to you concerning the inestimably precious Lord Jesus, of his mediatorial person—grace—and salvation; and may he so engage your mind and thoughts in reading the same, as to bring you to believe on Him *to the saving of the soul*. The Saviour of sinners is God and man; he is perfect God and perfect man—God and man, in the person of one Christ. He is one of the persons in the uncreated and incomprehensible Godhead. *I, (saith he,) even I am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour.*

He, as coequal—coeternal—and coessential with the

Father and the Holy Ghost, in the Godhead, engaged before all worlds, upon the foresight of the fall, to come into our world by the assumption of our nature, to save his people from their sins. He was accordingly revealed as the Saviour. *To Him give all the Prophets witness;* they ever since the world, began, bore testimony concerning Him, that he was one in the self-existing essence; possessing all the essential perfections of the divine nature, all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him, and this essentially, and by necessary and self-existence. They testified of Him, that he is the essential and only begotten Son of God, who would for us, and for our salvation, come down from heaven, become incarnate, and be made man, that he might fulfil all righteousness, and die the death due to sin, and become the author of eternal salvation.

Thus as the holy and immaculate Lamb of God, who was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, they bore testimony of Him, expressly declaring, *that through his name, whosoever believeth on Him should receive remission of sins.* In the fullness of time, the Son of God became incarnate, God in our nature—God with us, that in our nature he might as God-man express his love, and manifest his mercy to the uttermost.

His love is eternal—everlasting—unspeakable—transcendent love. Out of love he lived for sinners. He

bore the sins of many in his own body on the tree. He was made sin and a curse. He died for the ungodly. O that the Lord the Spirit may give you a real, spiritual sight and sense of the love of Christ, to such poor, guilty, sinful, polluted ones, as it may be you feel yourself to be.

O that the Holy Ghost may give you to know and believe that Christ died for, and hath given himself for sinners, and that he hath, doth, and will go on to save, from sin, satan, death, and damnation, some sinners, whose hearts, lives, and transgressions, have been entirely like your own.

Your sins are no bar to Jesus, nor should they be any bar to hinder you from looking unto and coming with all your guilt and crimes to Him, because he hath said, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.*

What love did he manifest in his incarnation and life! He took our nature, that he might be made sin for us. The prophet saith, *all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath, laid on. Him the iniquity of us all.*

He was made sin for us, as the Lord caused all our iniquity to meet on Him, and as the Lord imputed them unto, and laid them on Him. Jesus gave himself for our sins, to be the sacrifice for them, to have the guilt and pollution of them transferred from us to Him, and he was

to wash us clean from them, and he has done it in his own most precious blood, he bore the punishment due to sin. His sorrows, sufferings, agony, and soul-travail, exceeded all the damned can possibly feel in hell to eternity.

Behold the Lamb of God, when he stood up to suffer *the just for the unjust*. Having substituted himself in the law, place, room, and stead of sinners, and being covered with, and enwrapped about with all their sinfulness, guilt, and pollution, the wrath, sorrow, shame, and curse belonging to them, fell on Him. *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with his stripes we are healed.* His most precious blood cleanseth from all sin; it cleanseth the soul from every spot and stain of defilement; and those who are washed therein, are in the sight of God as pure and undefiled as though they never had sinned.

Jesus, agreeable to his engagements with the Father in the everlasting covenant, *hath appeared once in the end of the world, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.* He hath completed the work of salvation, by putting away our sins by the sacrifice of himself, and by treading on the old Serpent called the devil. By destroying death, and opening a way into the

holiest of all for such sinners as you and I are, by his own blood.

The heart of Jesus is love, the bowels of Jesus are full of mercy; his compassions fail not; he is upon his throne as full of love and mercy as when he hung upon the cross. He accounts it a part of his highest glory, though in the heaven of heavens, to heal every wound—to cleanse every stain—to forgive every sin—and save to the uttermost the sinner that comes to Him. *For he is exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins.*

What love must Jesus have for sinners, when to save them, he left his Father's bosom; he laid aside his glory, left the heaven of heavens. *He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* What must his love be, who bore our sins, and carried our sorrows; whose soul was heavy unto death; who sweat great drops of blood; whose whole soul was bruised with the weight and fullness of divine wrath, for he suffered what was tantamount to the sorrows of hell; whose soul was bruised, and his body suffered also in every part; his body was scourged by merciless soldiers; his head was crowned with thorns; his hands and arms were stretched on the cross; and his hands and feet bored through with pins of iron to the accursed tree; who hung for six long hours naked on the cross, despised of men,

and forsaken of God. *Made a curse for us!* O the immensity of his love! what must his bowels of pity and compassion be, who at the very instant, and whilst they were nailing Him to the cross, prayed on the behalf of his crucifiers—*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

What must his mercy be, who looked with everlasting kindness on a poor criminal who was crucified with Him, who had the hellish impudence to curse Him to his face! Yet on him Jesus pronounced an eternal pardon, and said to him, *verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

Do you think this Jesus, who is *God over all, blessed for ever, amen*, is not able to save you in himself, with an everlasting salvation? Do you think he is not able to heal every wound which sin hath made in your soul? to wash you from every stain? to pardon all your sins? and pronounce an everlasting pardon on you?

The truth of the matter is, God hath revealed Christ in the everlasting gospel, in the greatness and perfection of his free, full, complete, and everlasting salvation. He calls you to look off yourself, and from your sins to Christ Jesus; to take sanctuary in his wounds and blood. Say what you will of and against yourself, yet there is salvation *in Jesus Christ*, And if the Lord is pleased by his Holy Spirit to enable you to believe in the

righteousness and blood of the slaughtered Lamb, and to receive the Father's testimony concerning it, that it *cleanseth from all sin*, you will then find Christ is your salvation, your righteousness, and advocate in the Court of heaven.

Have you sinned most tremendously? to the very uttermost? The apostle says, *Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make, intercession for them*. And who can tell the uttermost of Christ's power and ability to save?

The blood of Christ is more efficacious to heal, than sin is effectual to wound the soul.

There is greater virtue in Christ's blood to cleanse from sin, than there is filth in sin to defile.

If you are in your own view more vile and sinful than ever sinner yet beside you was, it is only for Christ to look on you, to shine within you, and you would then be blessed indeed: you would then find his presence turn your hell into heaven.

As it cannot be expected you will be long in a time-state, I would therefore most earnestly request you to consider what I have laid before you. There is no escaping damnation, but by flying to Jesus. None ever came to Jesus, and were rejected. His heart, his arms are open to receive and embrace all who come unto Him.

Tremendous as your guilt is, if you apply to Jesus, you will find Christ almighty to save. Never did a poor sinner come to Him, crying out, *Lord save, or I perish*, that went to hell.

Christ Jesus is all love, mercy, grace, and salvation. He saith, I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.

The blood of Christ is a fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness. And your sin and uncleanness, felt and experienced by the teachings of the Holy Spirit, fits you for it. May he be pleased to make known its virtue to you. If the eternal Spirit is pleased to enlighten your mind with the knowledge of Christ, and open your heart to receive Him, and enable you to believe in the everlasting perfection of the righteousness and sacrifice of Immanuel, and rest your whole confidence and hope before the Lord for salvation, thereon, you will then find everlasting life *in Christ*.

May the Lord save you from every false hope. May he give you to feel your need of Christ. May he bring you to a real closure with Him, that you may know that you have redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins, and of all your crimes.

Remember, *dying out of Christ* will be found to be

everlasting damnation. Dying in Christ is life and salvation; you must be found in Jesus, clothed in his righteousness, washed in his blood, and quickened by his Spirit, or you cannot enter heaven. May the most blessed Spirit of God, give you such an inward spiritual perception of the dignity, virtue, worth, and efficacy of Christ's most precious blood, as all-sufficient to cleanse you from all your sins. And may he enable you to depart this life, bearing your testimony for Christ.

Praying the Lord Jesus to shew you the same mercy, and to shine on you, just as he did, in the same wonderful manner as on *the dying thief*,

I subscribe myself,

Your Friend,

S. E. P.

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