

BEDWELL GLOBAL MINISTRIES

Expository Sermon

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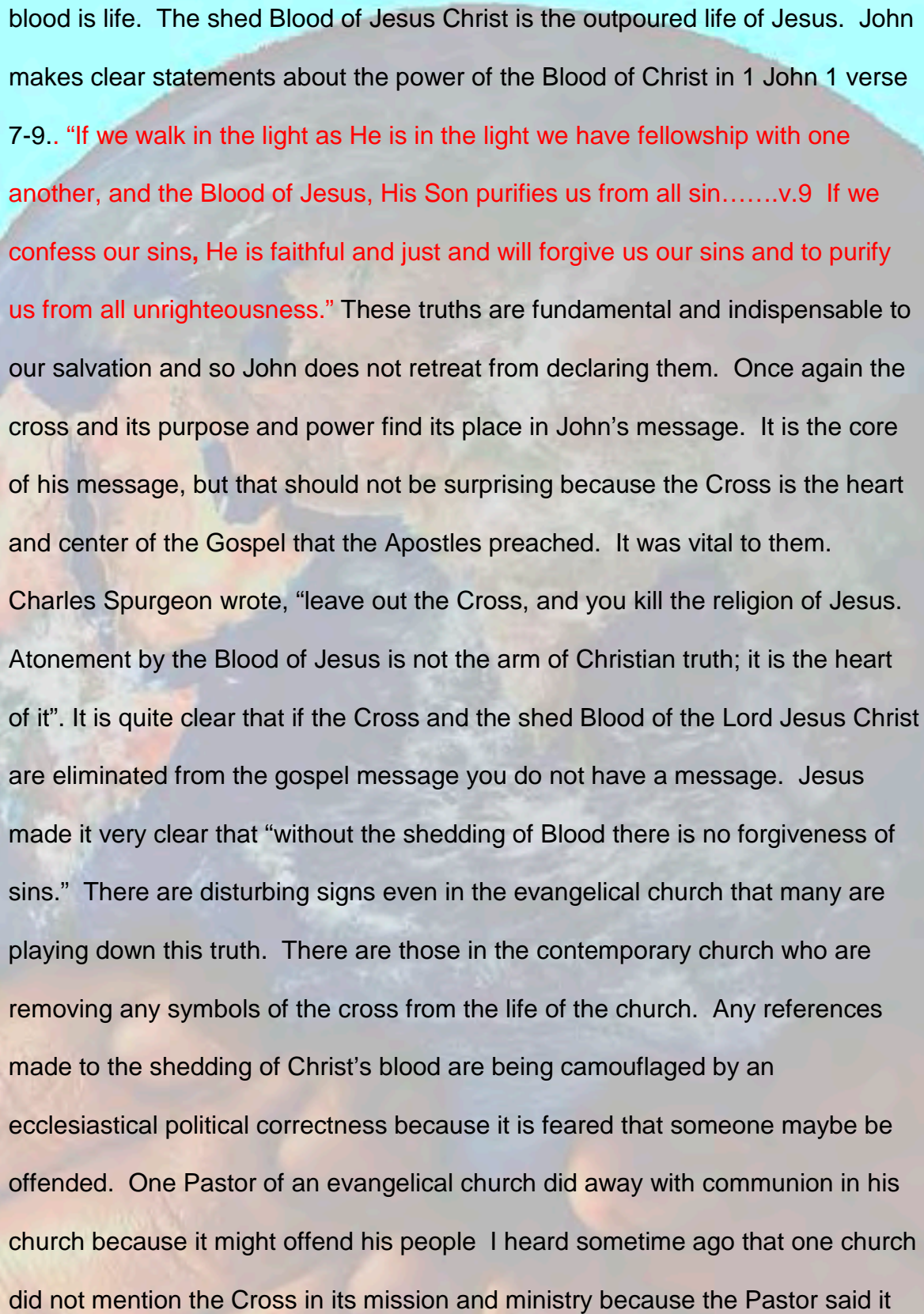
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WITHOUT THE CROSS - WHAT REMAINS?

Scripture Reading – 1 John 1:1-9.

Introduction

We are in the midst of the Lenten season a time in which we should turn our faces towards Calvary and meditate on the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the season to deliberately focus on the purpose, power and place of the Cross in our personal lives. To do this we ask the question “**Without the Cross – What remains?**” The writer to the Hebrews tells us Jesus who is holy and blameless and pure sacrificed for the sins of the people when He offered Himself on the Cross. “By this sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” Hebrews 10:14. **The scriptures clearly state that** without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Again the writer to the Hebrews asks in chapter 9: 14 “How much more, will the blood of Christ, through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death....” The foundation of this message is capsuled in the words of John in his First Epistle (1 John 1:1-9). He makes quite clear how vital and indispensable the shed blood of Jesus is to us. Blood is used as a figure of speech for the



blood is life. The shed Blood of Jesus Christ is the outpoured life of Jesus. John makes clear statements about the power of the Blood of Christ in 1 John 1 verse 7-9.. “If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus, His Son purifies us from all sin.....v.9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and to purify us from all unrighteousness.” These truths are fundamental and indispensable to our salvation and so John does not retreat from declaring them. Once again the cross and its purpose and power find its place in John’s message. It is the core of his message, but that should not be surprising because the Cross is the heart and center of the Gospel that the Apostles preached. It was vital to them.

Charles Spurgeon wrote, “leave out the Cross, and you kill the religion of Jesus. Atonement by the Blood of Jesus is not the arm of Christian truth; it is the heart of it”. It is quite clear that if the Cross and the shed Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ are eliminated from the gospel message you do not have a message. Jesus made it very clear that “without the shedding of Blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” There are disturbing signs even in the evangelical church that many are playing down this truth. There are those in the contemporary church who are removing any symbols of the cross from the life of the church. Any references made to the shedding of Christ’s blood are being camouflaged by an ecclesiastical political correctness because it is feared that someone maybe be offended. One Pastor of an evangelical church did away with communion in his church because it might offend his people I heard sometime ago that one church did not mention the Cross in its mission and ministry because the Pastor said it

was **not marketable in that culture**. Since when is the church called to make the Gospel marketable by compromise. It is commissioned to declare a message that is redemptive. There is no redemption from sin without the crucifixion of Jesus.

The question at this point is. **“what is more important? The salvation of the individual or not offending the individual?”** Has God commissioned us to **preach salvation without the Cross. Has He called us to please and appease the world? Paul Himself talks about the offence of the Cross, but that did not deter him from preaching it.** In fact, he said that he gloried in the Cross. And so at what point did God change the message of the Gospel by hiding the cross, and at what point did He send the church into the world to please and appease it by making its message inoffensive and more palatable.

The church has not been called to be popular. It has been commissioned to be redemptive. It is called to proclaim redeeming truth without apology for is the “power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes.” The message of John is clear and is still relevant today. If there was no shedding of the Blood of Christ there would be no forgiveness, no cleansing and no hope of eternal life. This is where we begin. It is important that we do so.

Oswald Chambers maintained that, **“All heaven is interested in the Cross of Christ. All hell is terribly afraid of it, while man is the only being who more or less ignore its meaning.”** The issue of the Cross must be settled and declared in its complete truth. **“It must be, because if it is not, what remains?”**

The scripture firmly tells us that if we do not accept the sacrifice of Christ there

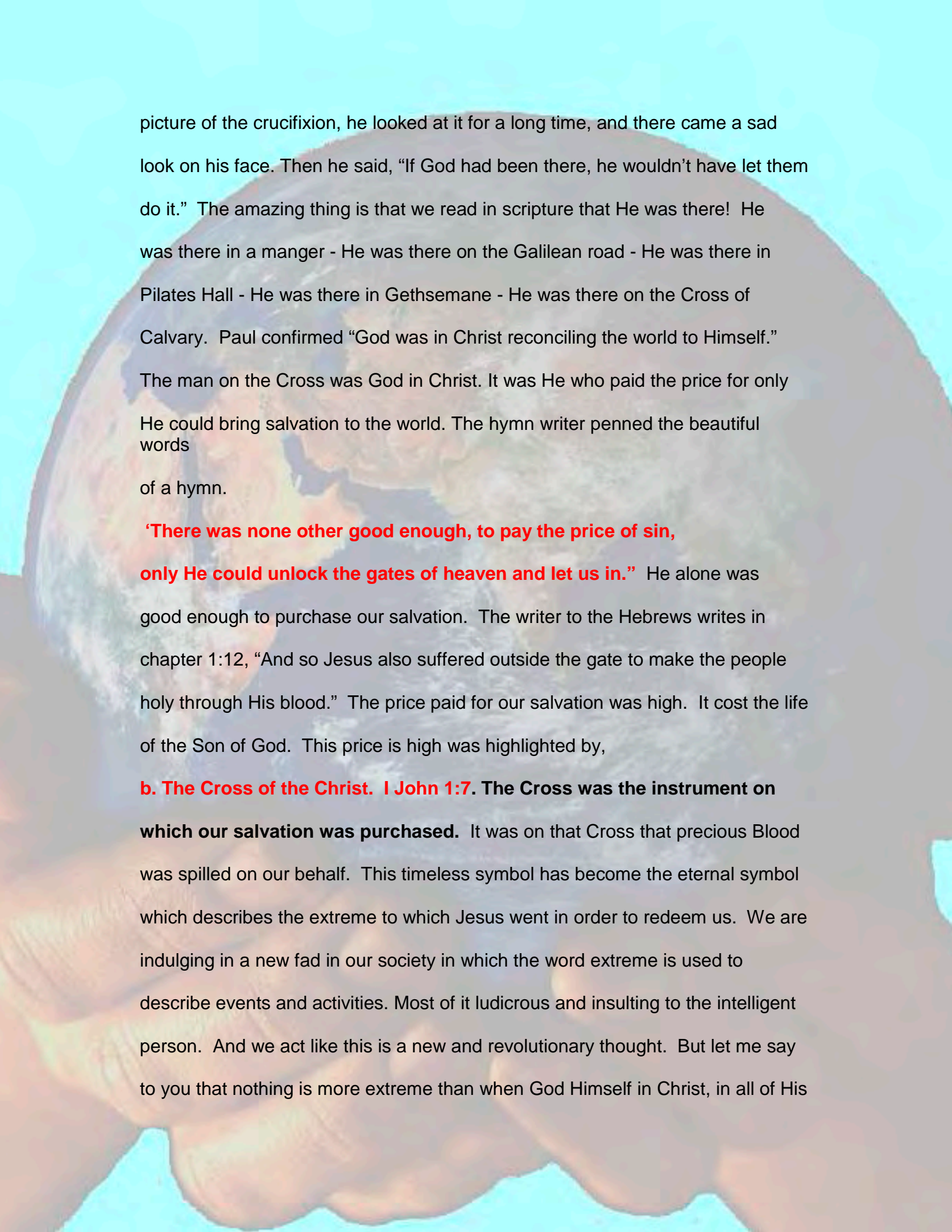
remains no more sacrifice for sin. The Cross is the ultimate and only provision for our salvation. With this in mind let us look at what John says about the Cross in these verses. John cuts through baggage of non-committal and underlines,

1. THE PRICE OF THE SHED BLOOD OF JESUS. 1John 1:7.

His words make this clear, "...the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin." You cannot discuss the shedding of blood without recognizing that in the shedding of blood a high price is paid. In this context it speaks of the amazing truth that Jesus, the Son of God made the supreme sacrifice for our redemption. Paul tells us that we are bought with a price. That price was death on the Cross. It was not a cash transaction. We are purchased with the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The price was high because of who died on that Cross. This price was paid by,

a. The Christ of the Cross. 1 John 1:7. This shed blood is "...the blood of Jesus God's Son..". This sacrifice was no ordinary sacrifice. Verse 7, states that this sacrifice is sacrifice of God's Son. This offering was no beast of the field taken from the flocks of a local Jewish farmer. Jesus did not offer a sacrifice as was the custom of the priests of the Jewish tradition. He offered Himself as the sacrifice. This man Christ Jesus was designated as the Lamb of God who died to take away the sin of the world. Wesley wrote "He left His Father's throne above and bled for Adam's helpless race". He who knew no sin became sin for you and me. It was only a perfect sacrifice that could provide a perfect salvation. This is God's plan. He is involved in it.

A boy was turning the pages in a book of religious art. When he came to the



picture of the crucifixion, he looked at it for a long time, and there came a sad look on his face. Then he said, "If God had been there, he wouldn't have let them do it." The amazing thing is that we read in scripture that He was there! He was there in a manger - He was there on the Galilean road - He was there in Pilates Hall - He was there in Gethsemane - He was there on the Cross of Calvary. Paul confirmed "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

The man on the Cross was God in Christ. It was He who paid the price for only He could bring salvation to the world. The hymn writer penned the beautiful words

of a hymn.

'There was none other good enough, to pay the price of sin, only He could unlock the gates of heaven and let us in.' He alone was good enough to purchase our salvation. The writer to the Hebrews writes in chapter 1:12, "And so Jesus also suffered outside the gate to make the people holy through His blood." The price paid for our salvation was high. It cost the life of the Son of God. This price is high was highlighted by,

b. The Cross of the Christ. I John 1:7. The Cross was the instrument on which our salvation was purchased. It was on that Cross that precious Blood was spilled on our behalf. This timeless symbol has become the eternal symbol which describes the extreme to which Jesus went in order to redeem us. We are indulging in a new fad in our society in which the word extreme is used to describe events and activities. Most of it ludicrous and insulting to the intelligent person. And we act like this is a new and revolutionary thought. But let me say to you that nothing is more extreme than when God Himself in Christ, in all of His

sinlessness, purity and holiness allowed Himself to be taken by the hands of a wicked humanity who shamelessly crucified Him on a Cross. It was on that Cross that Jesus shed His precious Blood. The price paid for salvation is the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The second truth that comes through clearly is that there is

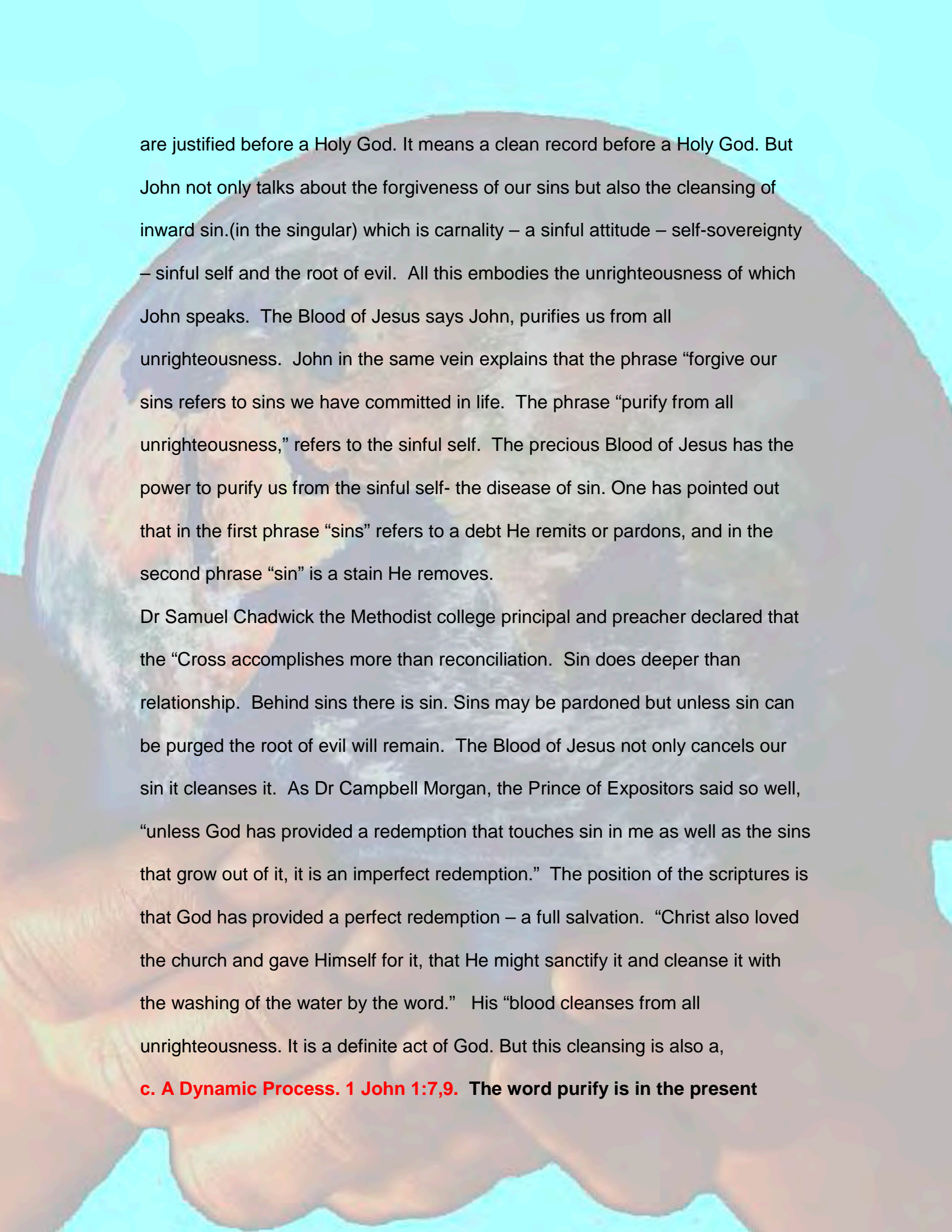
2. POWER IN THE SHED BLOOD OF JESUS. 1John 1:6-9.

John's highlights this clear truth. "The Blood of Jesus God's Son purifies us from all sin." There is nothing clearer than John's pronouncement. He says that in the power of the shed Blood of Jesus there is cleansing from All sin. Now if we do not accept this truth the question arises which sin is it that Blood of Jesus cannot cleanse? This is not a selective cleansing, it is a complete cleansing. It is from all sin that there is cleansing, and John repeats this in verse 8 as though to dispel any doubt that we might have in our minds that this purification is less than complete. This cleansing from sin is first

a. A Definite Cleansing. 1 John 1:7. "....the Blood of Jesus, God's Son, He purifies us from all sin." John is definite about this cleansing. He is not arguing about the possibility of heart cleansing. He states it as a non-debatable truth of scripture. It begins in an instantaneous act of God's grace whereby He purges our hearts from sin. And John says that if we walk in the light, in a complete obedience God, the Blood of Jesus continues to cleanse us from sin. This cleansing does not come by growth into it. Growth does not eliminate sin from the soul. That would make growth the purifier and it is the Blood of Jesus which does that. The farmer does not allow the growth of his crops to eliminate

the weeds in his fields. He knows that they will seriously damage the crops or even destroy them. He does his best to remove them radically. Cleansing is radical act. It is a definite act. But not only is this cleansing a definite act it is also,

b. A Delivering Act. 1 John 1:7-9. The operative words are in v.7 The blood of Jesus, “purifies us from all sin.” And in v.9 “...forgive us our sins and to purify us from unrighteousness.” John makes an interesting distinction between sins and sin. John Phillips points out that we should note the difference between “SIN” in verse 8 and “SINS in verse 9. You may recall offerings of the Levitical Law were divided into two kinds – the sin offerings (made up of the so-called sin offering itself and its companion the trespass offering) and the sweet savor offerings (the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering). But we are concerned with the sin offering which was related to sin; and the trespass offering related to sins. The sin offering dealt with who a person is-a sinner; the trespass offering deals with what a person does- he sins. The sin offering dealt with the root- sin; the trespass offering dealt with the fruit-sins. Both offerings were necessary, the sin offering and the trespass offering were linked together. We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners – just as an apple tree is not an apple tree because it bears apples; it bears apples because it is an apple tree. We do what we do because we are what we are. But in the New Covenant there is a new offering which deals with both sins and sin. And this is the Blood of Christ. This forgiveness deals with our sins and means a clean record before a Holy God. It means that we have been acquitted of the guilt of the past and we



are justified before a Holy God. It means a clean record before a Holy God. But John not only talks about the forgiveness of our sins but also the cleansing of inward sin.(in the singular) which is carnality – a sinful attitude – self-sovereignty – sinful self and the root of evil. All this embodies the unrighteousness of which John speaks. The Blood of Jesus says John, purifies us from all unrighteousness. John in the same vein explains that the phrase “forgive our sins refers to sins we have committed in life. The phrase “purify from all unrighteousness,” refers to the sinful self. The precious Blood of Jesus has the power to purify us from the sinful self- the disease of sin. One has pointed out that in the first phrase “sins” refers to a debt He remits or pardons, and in the second phrase “sin” is a stain He removes.

Dr Samuel Chadwick the Methodist college principal and preacher declared that the “Cross accomplishes more than reconciliation. Sin does deeper than relationship. Behind sins there is sin. Sins may be pardoned but unless sin can be purged the root of evil will remain. The Blood of Jesus not only cancels our sin it cleanses it. As Dr Campbell Morgan, the Prince of Expositors said so well, “unless God has provided a redemption that touches sin in me as well as the sins that grow out of it, it is an imperfect redemption.” The position of the scriptures is that God has provided a perfect redemption – a full salvation. “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word.” His “blood cleanses from all unrighteousness. It is a definite act of God. But this cleansing is also a,

c. A Dynamic Process. 1 John 1:7,9. The word purify is in the present

tense, which mean that the cleansing which had begun in a definite act is a continuing process. It means that the Blood of Jesus goes on cleansing. But it is conditioned on obedience to the light that God gives us. If we walk in the light the Blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing us. It is a continuing process as we walk in the light and are constantly obedient to God. Heart purity is NOT a static stagnant experience. It is not an experience whereby we are cleansed once and for all without a continuing need for dependence on God and the shed Blood of Jesus. We will always be dependent on the continuing cleansing power of the Blood of Jesus. This cleansing is a dynamic process

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE SHED BLOOD OF JESUS. 1 John 1:5-9

There are four statements which focus on what pre-requisites give rise to the purpose of Jesus shedding His precious blood. Why was it necessary for Jesus to shed His blood? Jesus died to reconcile sinful man to a holy God. The purpose of the shed blood of Jesus was to bring men and women into the presence of God. This was only accomplished through the atoning death of Jesus. This reasons that this was necessary are outlined in verses 1 John 1:5-9. They have to do with who God is and what is expected in our relationship with Him.

They are outlined in verses 5-9.

i. God is Light; in Him is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:5.

ii. If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in darkness, we lie, and do not live by the truth. 1 John 1:6.

iii. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, have fellowship one with

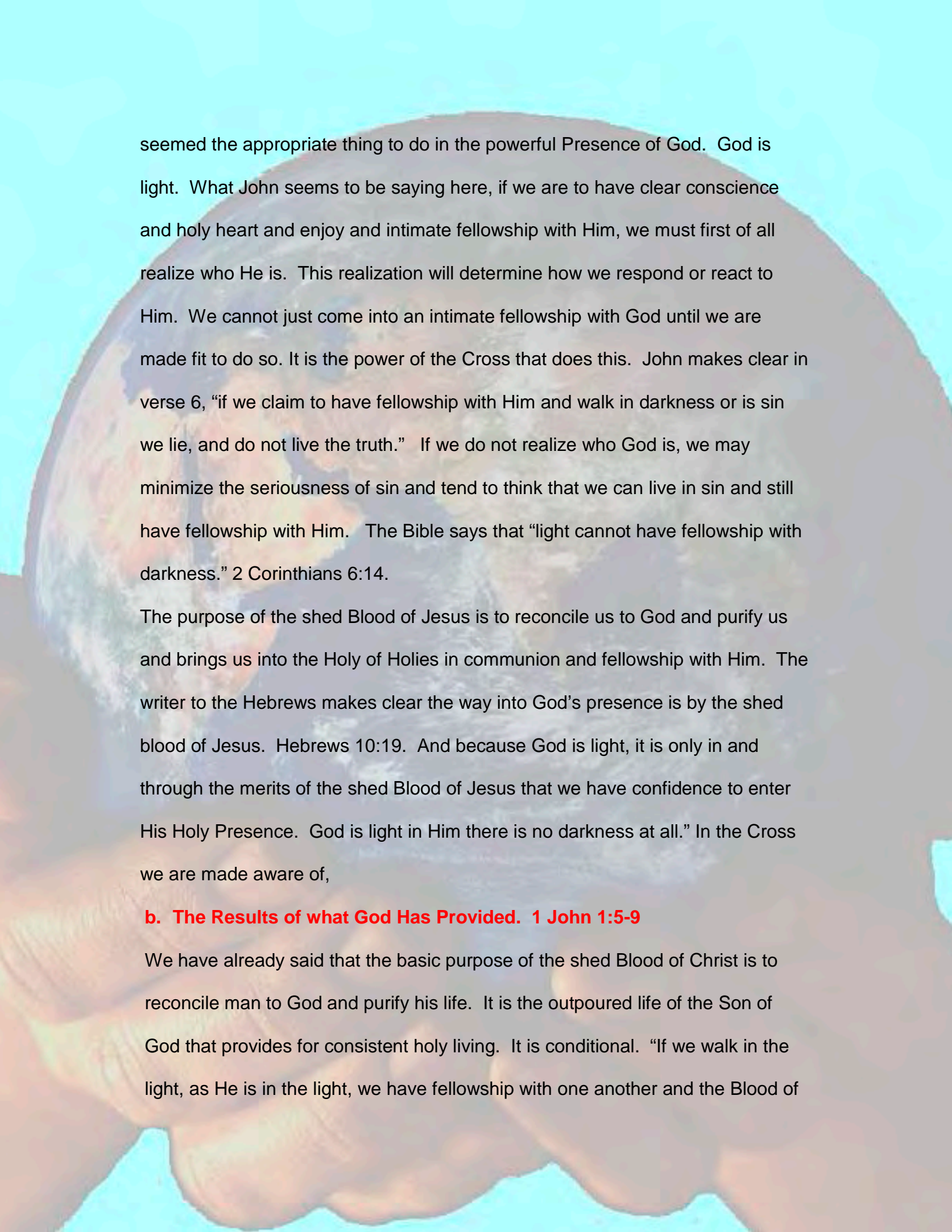
another. 1 John 1:7

iv. “The Blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son, purifies us from all sin. Summed up in these four truths are the reason and the purpose of the Cross.. God provided a way whereby men and women are brought into fellowship with a holy God who is Light and in whom there is no darkness at all. It is the purpose of the cross to do this. Note that John brings to us the awareness and,

a. The Realization of who God Is. 1 John 1:5. John writes in v. 5. This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is Light, in Him there is no darkness at all.” The important truth here is contained in those words, **“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.”** There is nothing that more aptly expresses who God is - than He is light. It speaks of His perfect purity, his awesome holiness, his glorious majesty. His holiness is his glory. There is nothing in human language that can perfectly describe the essence of His nature. John brings this truth forward in order to impress upon us the essential nature of the God with whom we have to do. He is a holy God and to have a relationship with Him we need the cleansing of His Blood. John brings us to the realization of who God is.

In much of the contemporary church we indulge in the frivolous, fluff and the superficial because we have become desensitized to His Holiness. The more we minimize the holiness of God the more we minimize the sin of man. It is the holiness of God which makes us aware of sin and brings conviction the heart.

In a recent out pouring of the Holy Spirit in Asbury college the holiness of God was so intense, that the young people took their shoes from off their feet. It



seemed the appropriate thing to do in the powerful Presence of God. God is light. What John seems to be saying here, if we are to have clear conscience and holy heart and enjoy and intimate fellowship with Him, we must first of all realize who He is. This realization will determine how we respond or react to Him. We cannot just come into an intimate fellowship with God until we are made fit to do so. It is the power of the Cross that does this. John makes clear in verse 6, “if we claim to have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness or is sin we lie, and do not live the truth.” If we do not realize who God is, we may minimize the seriousness of sin and tend to think that we can live in sin and still have fellowship with Him. The Bible says that “light cannot have fellowship with darkness.” 2 Corinthians 6:14.

The purpose of the shed Blood of Jesus is to reconcile us to God and purify us and brings us into the Holy of Holies in communion and fellowship with Him. The writer to the Hebrews makes clear the way into God’s presence is by the shed blood of Jesus. Hebrews 10:19. And because God is light, it is only in and through the merits of the shed Blood of Jesus that we have confidence to enter His Holy Presence. God is light in Him there is no darkness at all.” In the Cross we are made aware of,

b. The Results of what God Has Provided. 1 John 1:5-9

We have already said that the basic purpose of the shed Blood of Christ is to reconcile man to God and purify his life. It is the outpoured life of the Son of God that provides for consistent holy living. It is conditional. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the Blood of

Jesus, His Son purifies us from all sin.” What is clear here is that a continuing obedience to the light guarantees a constant cleansing. The purpose of the Cross reveals vital aspects of holy living, the first of which is summed up in one single phrase,

i. Communion with God. 1 John 1:6-7. Christian fellowship has two aspects to it. **The first is fellowship with God.** The claim to enjoy fellowship with Him is conditioned on walking in the light. We cannot make this claim if we walk in darkness. The scriptures declare that we have confidence towards God if our consciences condemn us not. If we regard sin in our hearts we cannot have communion with God. It is the Blood of Jesus cleansing sin that will lead us into fellowship with God. **The second aspect to this fellowship is fellowship with each other.** Again this is rooted in the shed Blood of Jesus, and conditioned on walking in the light. John is concerned that someone might imagine that he or she can have fellowship with God and be out of fellowship with fellow believers. John makes clear that this is a spiritual impossibility in his second chapter of this letter verse 9-11. **“Anyone, he writes, who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in darkness, whoever loves his brother lives in the light and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in darkness he does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded him.”** When a child of God is out of fellowship with another child of God, he or she has moved out of the light, cannot have fellowship with God and be out of fellowship with you brother.” The **second aspect is,**

ii. Continuing with God. I John 1:6-7. The word walk indicates progress and development. It is a dynamic walk. The Christian who walks in the light is confident of his direction. He is certain of his standing with God. This is the ingredient that makes for developing a dynamic walk with God. It is growth in the grace of holiness. The word walk that John uses in these verses is synonymous with the word life or living. The exhortation is to live in the light. In the King James Version the word walk is used extensively. We are encouraged to “walk in the fear of the Lord.” “To walk in the steps of faith.” Romans 4:12. Walk in truth. 3 John 3:4. “Walk honestly.” 1 Thessalonians 4:12. “Walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4. “walk in love.” Ephesians 5; 2. It means to walk as Jesus walked and in 1 John 2:6 John writes, “Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus walked.” In other words we are to walk in the light. David Breese said the “strong sons of God are not perfected by childish pursuits. The New Testament writers urge us to grow in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In our walk with God we are never too old to grow. When we are cleansed from sin we are to grow in holiness and Christlikeness till one day as the scriptures say “we measure to the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Conclusion

The question still faces us. “Without the Cross – what remains. The answer is clear. Nothing remains. And without the power of the Cross in your life there is no salvation.