

# STEPS TO CHRIST

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BY  
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**FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY,**  
CHICAGO: 148 & 150 MADISON STREET.  
NEW YORK: 30 UNION SQUARE; EAST.  
*Publishers of Evangelical Literature.*  
**1892**

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## FAITH AND ACCEPTANCE

As your conscience has been quickened by the Holy Spirit, you have seen something of the evil of sin, of its power, its guilt, its woe; and you look upon it with abhorrence. You feel that sin has separated you from God, that you are in bondage to the power of evil. The more you struggle to escape, the more you realize your helplessness. Your motives are impure; your heart is unclean. You see that your life has been filled with selfishness and sin. You long to be forgiven, to be cleansed, to be set free. Harmony with God, likeness to him - what can you do to obtain it?

It is peace that you need - Heaven's forgiveness and peace and love in the soul. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own effort, to secure it. But God offers it to you as a gift, "without money and without price." **Isaiah 55:1**. It is yours, if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it. The Lord says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." **Isaiah 1:18**. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." **Ezekiel 36:26**.

You have confessed your sins, and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to him, and ask that he will wash away your sins, and give you a new heart. Then believe that he does this *because he has promised*. This is the lesson which Jesus taught while he was on earth, that the gift which God promises us, we must believe we do receive, and it is ours. Jesus healed the people of their diseases when they had faith in his power; he helped them in the things which they could see, thus inspiring them with confidence in him concerning things which they could not see,--leading them to believe in his power to forgive sins. This he plainly stated in the healing of the man sick with palsy: "*That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,* (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." **Matthew 9:6**. So also John the evangelist says, speaking of the miracles of Christ, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." **John 20:31**.

From the simple Bible account of how Jesus healed the sick we may learn something about how to believe in him for the forgiveness of sins. Let us turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda. The poor sufferer was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Yet Jesus bade him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." **John 5:8**. The sick man might have said, "Lord, if thou wilt make me whole, I will obey thy word." But no, he believed Christ's word, believed that he was made whole, and he made the effort at once; he *willed* to walk, and he did walk. He acted on the word of Christ, and God gave the power. He was made whole.

In like manner you are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins, you cannot change your heart, and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You *believe* that promise. You confess your sins, and give yourself to God. You *will* to serve him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill his word to

you. If you believe the promise - believe that you are forgiven and cleansed, - God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It *is* so if you believe it.

Do not wait to *feel* that you are made whole, but say, "I believe it; it *is* so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised."

Jesus says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." **Mark 11:24**. There is a condition to this promise,--that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us his children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we *have* received them. It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." **Romans 8:1**.

Henceforth you are not your own; you are bought with a price. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." **1 Peter 1:18, 19**. Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are as a child born into the family of God, and he loves you as he loves his Son.

Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from him, but day by day say, "I am Christ's; I have given myself to him;" and ask him to give you his Spirit, and keep you by his grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing him, that you become his child, so you are to live in him. The apostle says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." **Colossians 2:6**.

Some seem to feel that they must be on probation, and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed, before they can claim his blessing. But they may claim the blessing of God even now. They must have his grace, the Spirit of Christ, to help their infirmities, or they cannot resist evil. Jesus loves to have us come to him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at his feet in penitence. It is his glory to encircle us in the arms of his love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity.

Here is where thousands fail: they do not believe that Jesus pardons them personally, individually. They do not take God at his word. It is the privilege of all who comply with the conditions, to know for themselves that pardon is freely extended for every sin. Put away the suspicion that God's promises are not meant for you. They are for every repentant transgressor. Strength and grace have been provided through Christ to be brought by ministering angels to every believing soul. None are so sinful that they can not find strength, purity, and righteousness in Jesus, who died for them. He is waiting to strip them of their garments stained and polluted with sin, and to put upon them the white robes of righteousness; he bids them live, and not die.

God does not deal with us as finite men deal with one another. His thoughts are thoughts of mercy, love, and tenderest compassion. He says, "Let the wicked forsake his

way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." **Isaiah 55:7; 44:22.**

"I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." **Ezekiel 18:32.** Satan is ready to steal away the blessed assurances of God. He desires to take every glimmer of hope and every ray of light from the soul; but you must not permit him to do this. Do not give ear to the tempter, but say, "Jesus has died that I might live. He loves me, and wills not that I should perish. I have a compassionate Heavenly Father; and although I have abused his love, though the blessings he has given me have been squandered, I will arise, and go to my Father, and say, 'I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.'" The parable tells you how the wanderer will be received: "*When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*" **Luke 15:18-20.**

But even this parable, tender and touching as it is, comes short of expressing the infinite compassion of the Heavenly Father. The Lord declares by his prophet, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; *therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*" **Jeremiah 31:3.** While the sinner is yet far from the Father's house, wasting his substance in a strange country, the Father's heart is yearning over him; and every longing awakened in the soul to return to God, is but the tender pleading of his Spirit, wooing, entreating, drawing the wanderer to his Father's heart of love.

With the rich promises of the Bible before you, can you give place to doubt? Can you believe that when the poor sinner longs to return, longs to forsake his sins, the Lord sternly withholds him from coming to his feet in repentance? Away with such thoughts! Nothing can hurt your own soul more than to entertain such a conception of our Heavenly Father. He hates sin, but he loves the sinner, and he gave Himself, in the person of Christ, that all who would, might be saved, and have eternal blessedness in the kingdom of glory. What stronger or more tender language could have been employed than he has chosen in which to express his love toward us? He declares, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee." **Isaiah 49:15.**

Look up, you that are doubting and trembling; for Jesus lives to make intercession for us. Thank God for the gift of his dear Son, and pray that he may not have died for you in vain. The Spirit invites you to-day. Come with your whole heart to Jesus, and you may claim his blessing.

As you read the promises, remember they are the expression of unutterable love and pity. The great heart of Infinite Love is drawn toward the sinner with boundless compassion. "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." **Ephesians 1:7.** Yes, only believe that God is your helper. He wants to restore his moral image in man. As you draw near to him with confession and repentance, he will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness.