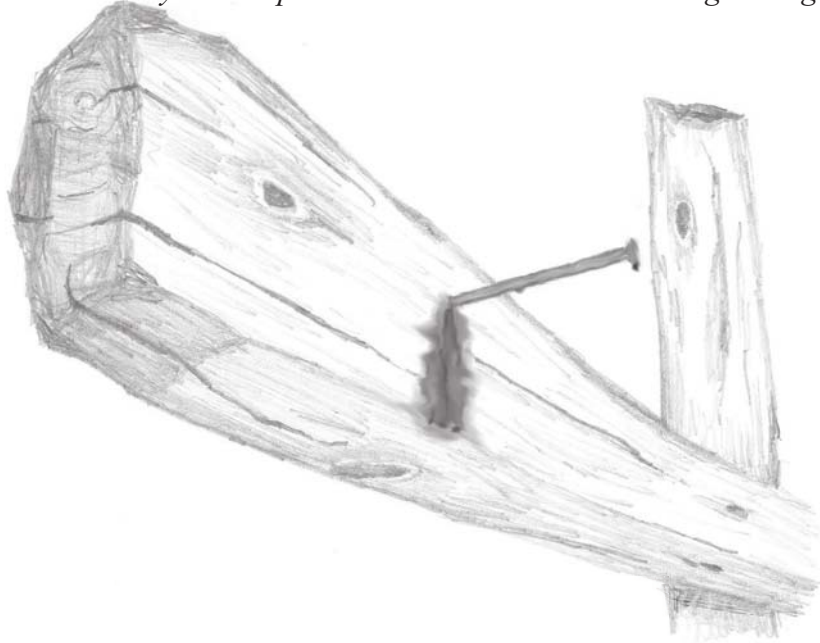


# Did Jesus Do It All On the Cross?

*An early Anabaptist tract about Christ “doing enough”*



## Introduction

In the previous issue, we printed the tract on “have to” vs. “want to” obedience. The following tract was usually bound in the same Anabaptist books with the other one, and since the writing style is so similar, it is assumed both are by the same author. Michael Sattler, who probably penned the Schleithem Confession, is suspected to have written them, but they are unsigned, probably due to persecution to anyone whose name appeared as author of an Anabaptist tract.

The topic of this tract, as the previous one, is obedience. But this time the author does not deal with what kind of obedience we render, but rather if obedience is even necessary. The context is the Protestant Reformation, and the common—but mistaken—view held by some Protestants that “Jesus did it all on the cross; we only have to accept His perfect obedience to be saved.” This tract argues that Christ’s work is *not* finished until Christ has brought the believer to the cross with Him, and Christ is reigning in the heart of the believer. After all, a crucified Christ living in the heart of an uncrucified believer is an impossibility!

This version is a slightly more “free” translation than the more “scholarly” translations that others have made of the tract, but the original German text was consulted to keep it faithful to the author’s designs. Since the Scripture quotations are from an early German Bible (most likely the “Froschauer Bibel,” the tract was probably written before Luther had finished his translation)—or even just paraphrased by the author—the wording will be a bit different than what we are used to in our KJV. And, since the Froschauer Bibel did not have verse numbering, only the chapters are given in the references. The paragraph divisions, subtitles, footnotes, italics, and bold letters have been added to aid in readability and comprehension.

Keep in mind what the author is trying to bring forth: It takes more than “accepting what Christ did on the cross” to be saved. We must also take up our cross and put self to death. Only when self is on the cross and Christ is reigning as Lord over our entire being is His work finished.

## Christ, the mercy seat

Paul says to the Romans in the third chapter, that they are all sinners and come short of the glory which God should have from them. However, without deserving it, they shall be made righteous by His grace, by means of the releasing which Christ accomplished. This is He whom God has foreshown to be a mercy seat, through faith in His blood. He did all this to demonstrate the righteousness which in God’s eyes has value, in that He forgave the sins which happened formerly under the divine patience.

He says; “From which also you are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” John the Baptist says in John 1, “Look, that is God’s Lamb, who takes upon himself the sin of the world.” John says in 1 John 2, “And He is the reconciliation for our sins.” Peter says in I Peter 2, “Who offered Himself for our sin on the tree, that we might be without sin.” As the prophet also speaks, in Isaiah 53, “We are made well through His stripes.”

Such statements, I say, and others like them, the scribes<sup>1</sup> interpret as if a person could be saved through Christ, whether he does the works of faith or whether he doesn’t do the works of faith. If it didn’t matter whether a person did any works, why then should Paul say in Romans 2 that God will give to everyone *according to his works*? He clearly says that eternal life shall be given to those who strive after glory, praise, and immortality, with perseverance in good

<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to the Protestants, as will be more clearly shown later in the tract.

works. But to those who are quarrelsome and are not obedient to the truth, but are obedient to the evil, there will come disfavor, wrath, tribulation, and anxiety, yes, upon all the souls of men who do evil.

## Some verses about doing good works

Listen to what Paul, Peter, and John are saying in the following verses:

- Romans 2: Not those who hear the Law are righteous, but those who **do** the Law.
- Romans 3: He does not make void the law through faith; rather he establishes it.
- Romans 8: There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, that God did and sent His Son in the form of sinful flesh and through sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness which the Law demands might be fulfilled in us who now walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ... If you live after the flesh, you shall die.
- Galatians 5: In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a **faith which works** by love.
- 1 Corinthians 13: If I had all faith so that I could remove mountains but have not charity,<sup>2</sup> I am nothing.
- Ephesians 5: For ye know that no whoremonger nor impure person nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words.
- Ephesians 6: For you know that everyone will receive from the Lord that good which he hath **done**.
- 2 Corinthians 5: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive according to that which he hath **done** with his body, whether it be good or evil.
- Peter says in 1 Peter 1: And since ye call upon the Father, who without regarding the person, judges according to each man's **work**, so pass the time of your pilgrimage with fear.
- 2 Peter 1: And therefore offer, with highest diligence, through your faith, virtue; through virtue, knowledge; through knowledge, moderation; through moderation, patience; through patience, godliness; through godliness, brotherly love; through brotherly love, common love. For if such virtues abound in

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you, you shall neither be lazy nor idle in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he who lacks these things is blind and doth grope.

- John says in 1 John 1: If we should say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we would lie and do not the truth.
- 1 John 2: Hereby know we that we do know Him if we keep His commandment. Whoever says that he knows Him, but does not **keep His commandment**, is a liar. Whoever says he is in the light, but hates his brother, is in darkness.
- 1 John 3: Children, let no one deceive you. Whoever **practices righteousness** is righteous, just like He is righteous. But whoever practices sin is of the devil.

He who is born of God sins no more, because His seed remains in him, and he is not able to sin, because he is born of God.

Now let's look at what Christ says:

- Matthew 4: Improve yourselves<sup>3</sup>, for the kingdom of heaven is come near. He said to Peter and to others: Follow me.
- Matthew 5: Let your light shine for men that they may see your good works and praise your Father in heaven. You ought not to think that I am come to do away with the Law and the Prophets. I did not come to do away with them, but to fulfill them.
- Matthew 7: Therefore whoever hears my discourse and practices it, I will compare him to a prudent man who built his house upon a rock. And then a pelting rain fell and floods came and the winds blew and beat upon the house, but yet it did not fall, because it was founded upon a rock. And whoever hears my word and does not **practice** it is like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.
- Matthew 10: Whoever confesses me before men, I will confess him before my Father in heaven. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

## What Jesus said about discipleship

Consider now what He says of the good seed which falls into the good earth:

- Matthew 16, Mark 8, Luke 9: If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross upon himself and follow me. For whoever wishes to preserve his life shall lose it, but whoever

<sup>2</sup> Note that the difference between love and charity is that charity is love in action! If my love is not active (doing good), I am nothing!

<sup>3</sup> A literal translation of the Froschauer Bibel, for "repent ye" (besserend euch).

# What is the “cross of Christ”?

The cross of Christ is a figurative speech, borrowed from the outward tree, or wooden cross, on which Christ submitted to the will of God, in permitting Him to suffer death at the hands of evil men. The cross mystical is that divine grace and power which crosses the carnal wills of men, and gives a contradiction to their corrupt affections, and that constantly opposes itself to the inordinate and fleshly appetite of their minds, and so may be justly termed the instrument of man’s wholly dying to the world, and being made conformable to the will of God.

—Taken from “No Cross, No Crown,” by William Penn

(The following picture helps to illustrate the point: Whenever our will “crosses” God’s will, we have a situation in which we need to put our will to death.)



Only after our will is killed can God take His will and use it to guide us to heaven!

loses his life for my sake will find it.

- Matthew 16: For it shall come to pass that the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father, with His angels and then will He repay each one according to his works.
- In Luke 10, Christ tells the scribe that he should love God with his whole heart and his neighbor as himself; thus would he live.
- Luke 13: Strive that ye may enter through the narrow door.
- Luke 14: If anyone come to me and hate not his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and also his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.
- John 13: I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. A new commandment give I unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you. So shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love among yourselves.

## Do we have to actually follow Jesus?

Further, as Christ therefore has suffered for us (He did not have anywhere he could lay His head, Matthew 8) must we never—because of our faith in Him—renounce our sup-

posed possessions and our own selves and suffer for His sake? If not, why did Jesus say the following to His disciples:

- Matthew 19 (to the young man who asked him how he might be saved): If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.
- It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.
- Luke 5 to Peter and Andrew (as was said above), “Follow me”? And to Matthew, “Follow Me”?

Did not Zacchaeus say in Luke 19, after he came to know the poor Jesus and had received Him, “Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone I will restore fourfold”?

If we did not need to renounce our possessions and self, it would then be the case that Christ had lied when He says in Matthew 6, “You cannot serve God and mammon.” And that which Luke writes in Acts 2 about the upright Christian church which was once at Jerusalem would not be true: “But those who believed were together and had all things common.” Yes, the article of the Christian faith which says “A communion of the saints” would also be untrue.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> A reference to the “Apostles’ Creed.” But the German word “gemeinschaft” is used, which the author probably intended in the sense of “community” or “sharing.”

Tell me, why then does Jesus say in Mark 8, “Whoever wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take his cross upon himself and follow me?” And, “whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it.” Why does He say in Matthew 5, “Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,” and “blessed are ye when men revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you for my sake”?

Consider also Matthew 10 and John 15: “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord.” “It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.” John 16: “They will put you in the ban.” “The time cometh that whoever kills you will think that he is doing God a service therein. Verily, verily, I say to you, You shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.” Does not Peter also say in 1 Peter 2, “For you were called to this: because Christ also suffered for us, and left us an example, that you should **follow** His footsteps.

## Suffering with Jesus

Yea indeed, if Christ therefore did enough by his sufferings which He suffered at Jerusalem, and nothing was left uncompleted of His suffering, why then does Paul say the following:

- Colossians 1: Now I rejoice in my suffering which I bear for you and fill up in my body that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ?”
- 2 Corinthians 1: But as we have tribulation or comfort, it works out for your good.
- Philippians 2: And if I be offered as an offering and service to God for your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.

In the same way, did not Christ chiefly establish the Lord’s Supper for this reason, namely, that they had to suffer just like Christ their Head did, and by means of death enter into glory; yes, that their death should not be theirs, but the Lord’s; and that they like their Head should be awakened from the dead? And what about the dear apostles and prophets, yes, even Christ Himself, and likewise the dear friends of God who suffer much at this time and who have testified for so many years—if the members of Christ must not suffer like their Head did?

Does Peter not say in 1 Peter 5, “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He might exalt you at the right time? Cast upon Him all your care, because He cares for you. Be sober, watch, for your adversary, the slanderer, goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whether he can devour someone; whom resist, fortified by faith, since ye know that throughout your brotherhood which is in the world the same suffering is accomplished.”

## Works of the law, or good works?

And for this reason, when Paul says in Romans 3 that those who are made righteous through Christ are made righteous without deserving it or without the works of the Law, he does not mean that a man can be saved without the works of faith (since Christ and the apostles demand such), but without those works which are done outside of faith and the love of God—such as circumcision and similar deeds, which the Jews did that they might become righteous.

Therefore, whenever Paul and Christ apply the term *righteous-making* [justifying] to works, they do not mean those works which originate in men; but those which originate in God and Christ, *through whose strength the man performs them*. These works are not performed by the man

**O**h, this shows to every one’s experience how hard it is to be a true disciple of Jesus! The way is narrow indeed; and the gate very strait, where not a word—no, not a thought—must slip the watch, or escape judgment. Such circumspection, such caution, such patience, such constancy, such holy fear and trembling. This gives an easy interpretation to that hard saying, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Those who are captivated with fleshly desires and affections—for they cannot bear the cross—and those who cannot endure the cross will never have the crown. To reign, it is necessary first to suffer!

... O come! let us follow Him, the most unwearied, the most victorious Captain of our salvation: to whom all the great Alexanders and mighty Caesars of the world are less than the poorest soldier of their camps could be to them. True, they were all great princes of their kind, and conquerors too, but on very differing principles. For Christ made Himself of no reputation to save mankind; but these plentifully ruined people so they could enlarge theirs.

They dominated others, but were unable to conquer themselves. Christ conquered self, which is what always defeated them. This merited Him, therefore, to be the most excellent Prince and Conqueror. Besides, they advanced their empire by rapine and blood; but He by suffering and persuasion. He prevailed, never by compulsion; but they always did so by force. Misery and slavery followed all their victories; His brought greater freedom and happiness to those He overcame. In all they did, they fought to please themselves; in all He did, he aimed to please His Father, who is God of gods, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

It is this most perfect pattern of self-denial we must follow, if ever we will come to glory. To accomplish this, let us consider self-denial in its true distinction and extent.

—Taken from “No Cross, No Crown,” by William Penn



as if he received something originating from himself, but because God wishes so to give the man works that are truly *His* works, and not just the man's own works.

And why is there a mercy seat, except as a means for God to reveal His will? Why should God make known His will, if He did not wish that a person do it? Yes, how could God be satisfied with anyone who neither wishes to hear the will of God coming from His mercy seat, or who having heard and knowing about it, wishes to hold it only with words and not deeds? Would not such a person take away the honor from the mercy seat, the very mercy seat that was given to him for his own good?

Yes, man gives his own word and says that he heard it from the mercy seat. Yes, he curses and persecutes everyone who refuses to believe him. Will such boasting not lead to his damnation? Did Paul in 1 Corinthians 1, where he calls Christ the righteousness and wisdom of the believers, mean the outward Christ without the inward, and not much more the inward with the outward?<sup>5</sup> Namely, since Jesus is the Word of the Father, He makes known to us the true obedience, which is the only thing that satisfies the Father.

I will mention that Paul at this place is not speaking of Pharisees or scribes (as if they were the righteousness of Christ), but of those who like Paul and others receive Him in truth **and remain** His disciples, living in accordance with what faith eliminates and demands from their life.

But what about those who boast so proudly of Christ? They allege that Paul wrote of them, when in fact they are the biggest persecutors of Christ and of Paul.

## Who can claim the promises?

When John the Baptist says in John 1, "Christ is the Lamb which takes upon Himself the sin of the world," he wishes to be understood that this applies only as far as the world surrenders to Him in faith. That is why he says also in John 3, "Whoever believes in the Son has everlasting life; whoever does not believe in the Son shall not see life." In the same way also when John says in 1 John 2, "He is our reconciliation," he wishes to be understood that this applies only to those who so recognize Him. For although He is truly a reconciliation for the whole world, that does no one any good, except those who recognize and receive Him through faith. It goes without saying that those who receive Him keep His commandments. But he who does not keep the commandments, and yet boasts of Christ as being

<sup>5</sup> In other words, some were looking at what Christ worked when He was in His flesh (the "outward Christ"), but refusing to acknowledge that Christ still wanted to work inwardly ... in their heart!

his reconciliation, is a liar. Such a person has never known Christ—just like John testifies.

And do we think that when Peter says in 1 Peter 2, "Who offered Himself for our sins in His body on the tree, that we might be without sin," that he meant that Christ so offered Himself that through Him men are exempted from the curse, whether they believe on Him or not, whether they put off the sinful or not, whether they have a change of mind through Him or not, as the Holy-Deed-Doers<sup>6</sup> and scribes<sup>7</sup> think?

That is so far out!

Why then would he say in 1 Peter 1, "Whom having not seen you love, in whom you also believe although you do not see Him ... and whereas you call on the Father who, without regarding the person, **judges according to every man's work**, conduct your life in the time of your pilgrimage in fear"?

Now those who are without faith, who have not ceased from sin, those sinning even worse than before,<sup>8</sup> yes those with just as unwilling and ugly a disposition toward God and their neighbor as they had before—how can such people appropriate the words of Peter for themselves, since Peter did not write to them, but to Christians?

## How Christ will finish His work

How is it now that Christ did not do enough for our sins? Answer: Christ will do enough—not only for ours alone, but for the sins of the whole world—insofar as they believe on Him **and follow Him** according to the demands of faith, as was already said above. Yes, just like He *was* "doing enough" as the Head of his community, He *still does* no less for His members day by day, so that He *continues* to "do enough" for those who are His. In the same way that He has done from the beginning, He *will continue to do* until His return.

Therefore, when one speaks about being made righteous through Christ, he must also speak of faith: repentance is not separated from works, yea, not separated from love, which is the anointing. For only such an anointed faith as one receives from the resurrection from the dead is true Christian faith. This anointed faith is the only kind that is counted for righteousness. (Romans 4)

<sup>6</sup> A reference to the Catholic system: those who trust in their non-biblical ceremonial works, rather than by faith doing the good works that Christ has called us to.

<sup>7</sup> A reference to the Protestants: those who threw out both ceremonial works *and* good works.

<sup>8</sup> The author is probably making a comparison between the moral level of the masses when still under Roman Catholicism, and the even lower morality that occurred after the Protestant Reformation in some places.

## Dead works

Again, one must not promote the class of works of the Holy-Deed-Doers<sup>9</sup>—Law-like works—but must preach works that spring from faith; that is, a turning back from ceremonial works, possessions, and yourself through faith in Christ the Crucified. It is not like a man could do this of himself, but he is enabled to do it through the strength of faith, so that a person's good works do not have their origin in man, but in God. This is because the will and the ability to turn back to God do not originate from man, but they are gifts of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Truly happy then is the man who keeps on the middle path and does not yield to the Holy-Deed-Doers, who promise salvation or the forgiveness of sins through works that are done without faith—that is, through merely having done something. They thus veer to the left, preaching dead works; paying no attention to faith and not wishing to see or hear of a faith which is sufficient unto salvation. All their works are like tiny wild plums, that is, ceremonies devoid of faith.

## Dead faith

Nor should a man on the other hand yield to the scribes,<sup>10</sup> who although they have renounced works, yet veer to the right and under the name of “gospel” teach a faith without works, taking the poor and obedient Christ (who had nowhere to lay His head (Luke 9), and without either the murmuring complaints or the defense of men, said, (Luke 22) “Nevertheless, Father, not my will but Thine be done.” for their “finished work.” But ... they do not wish to hear what He says:

- Luke 9: Come, follow me.
- Luke 14: Whoever does not renounce all that he possesses cannot be my disciple.
- Mark 8: Whoever wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take his cross upon himself, and follow me.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> A reference to the Catholics who tried to become upright people by means of nonbiblical works, such as kneeling on sharp stones, making pilgrimages, saying repetitious prayers, etc., in the same spirit as the OT Jews often performed circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, dietary regulations, and similar ceremonial deeds. While kissing the feet of a statue of Mary has nothing to do with becoming holy, these deluded folks esteemed such works as a way to holiness. Hence the name “Holy-Deed-Doers.”

<sup>10</sup> The Protestants.

<sup>11</sup> In hymn #7 of the *Ausbund*, Sattler wrote, “When Christ had gathered together a small host, He said that each one should take up his cross daily and follow Him with patience.”

Yes, the Father must also be a “fanatic” to them when He says, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, **hear Him.**” They make of Christ, when He was in a human body, what the pope has made of the saints, namely a golden calf like the Jews of old. In other words, they confess Christ as David's Son, and yet they deny Him—yes, call Him a “fanatic”—because God's Word and Son *were sent into the world to tell to man the obedience or righteousness of His Father*; not only in words, but also with works. He did so that all who believe in Him might not perish in their death, but be delivered from death.

All their preaching and fruit are like prickly thistles; they have much to say regarding faith, and yet know neither what Christ nor faith are. They reject works without faith in order that they may embellish faith without works. They wish to obey God only with the soul—and not also with the body—in order that they may escape persecution. They think that faith is a useless and empty mirage.<sup>12</sup> For

this reason they are able to say that infants have faith, even though works of faith are not seen in them, even after these same infants are grown up. (If infants had faith, the work of faith and of the Holy Spirit would then be cursing, because of the bad language when they are just learning to talk.<sup>13</sup>)

## Come out of her, my people!<sup>14</sup>

The Holy-Deed-Doers say, “Lo, here is Christ!” The scribes cry, “Lo, here is Christ!” Therefore, happy is he who departs from Babylon, that is, who neither believes the Holy-Deed-Doers nor the scribes, but submits with fear to the discipline of Christ, because the heavenly voice (Revelation 18, Isaiah 52, 2 Corinthians 6) cries out and says, “Come out of her, my people, so that you do not become partakers of her sins, that you do not receive of her plagues, for her sins have resounded unto heaven.” ~

*In future issues of The Heartbeat of the Remnant, we hope to more fully develop this topic, with articles on the place of suffering in the believer, and the three baptisms (fire, water, and blood) ...*

<sup>12</sup> In other words, faith has no substance or reality to it; they count faith as some dreamy state that is concocted up in the mind.

<sup>13</sup> Hymn #42 of the *Ausbund* records that “The children in the lanes swear by the blood of Christ.” Such irreverent talk by baptized children is probably what the author is referring to.

<sup>14</sup> A few preceding paragraphs from the original have been dropped here, dealing with figurative speculations concerning Catholicism being the first beast of Revelation 13, and Protestantism being the second. Those paragraphs do not directly affect the teaching of the tract on the topic of Christ finishing His work in us.

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