

Our complete ruin as sinners was expressed by Isaiah when he wrote, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Isaiah wrote, the "whole" head, the "whole" heart – that is, no part of our being has escaped the devastating effects of sin. What we love, what we treasure, how we assess things; our ambitions, thoughts, opinions, self-images, all this and more have been hijacked, misdirected, warped, and tainted by sin in our nature. Telling us that these sin-wounds have not been clothed, bandaged, or medicated, Isaiah stresses

old warehouse to which I had gone alone to read at my leisure this little book." It was the middle of the 19th century. That 17-year-old boy would eventually become the young man who would carry the gospel into the interior of China. Over the course of 51 years of missionary service in that land, James brought the Word of life to innumerable Chinese and blazed a trail that was followed by hundreds of other missionaries. But it all started with three glorious, life-changing words: "It is finished."

the Biblical truth that there is NOTHING we can do to save ourselves from our sins.

Reading that gospel tract, Hudson Taylor realized the monumental truth of **Christ's completed redemption** on the cross – that His death has made salvation possible for every sinner. He died so that "the world through Him might be saved." There is NOTHING that we are called on to do to pay for sin. The *whole* work was finished by the great Redeemer at Calvary. A sinner does not complete the work by trusting Christ; rather, by trusting Christ, the sinner enters into the good of what the Savior accomplished when He cried, "It is finished!" If you are not saved, you would benefit immeasurably by asking the same question a young James Hudson Taylor asked so many years ago. "If the whole work was finished and the whole debt paid, what is there left for me to do?"

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Years later, he described his thoughts on that memorable day, "Why does the author use this expression? Why not say the atoning or propitiatory work of Christ? Immediately the words 'It is finished' suggested themselves to my mind. What was finished? And I at once replied, 'A full and perfect atonement and satisfaction for sin: the debt was paid by the Substitute; Christ died for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' Then came the further thought, 'If the whole work was finished and the whole debt paid, what is there left for me to do?' And with this dawned the joyful conviction, as light was flashed into my soul by the Holy Spirit, that there was nothing in the world to be done but to fall down on one's knees and, accepting this Savior and His salvation, praise Him forevermore. Thus, while my mother was praising God on her knees in her chamber, I was praising Him in the

Hour after hour she pleaded, until at length she could pray no longer, but was constrained to praise God for that which His Spirit taught her had already been accomplished, the conversion of her only son. While this was happening, James, miles away, was struck by a phrase in the tract he was reading: "The finished work of Christ."

## The Conversion of James Hudson Taylor *Missionary to China*

James settled into a comfortable chair and looked over the tract in his hand. He had wandered into his father's library, searching for something to read to while away the time. None of the books had attracted him, but looking through a basket of pamphlets, he had come across a gospel tract. He began to read it, thinking, "There will be a story at the commencement and a sermon or moral at the close. I will take the former and leave the latter for those who like it."

Meanwhile, 70 miles away, his mother had risen from the dinner table in the home where she was visiting. Deeply concerned for her teenaged boy, she went to her room and turned the key in the door, resolving not to leave the spot until her prayers were answered.

