

# Thoughts on *The Calvary Road* by Carol Berubee

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## *The Calvary Road* by Roy Hession

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### **Background**

*The Calvary Road* is a fairly short book that can be read in just a couple of hours. The ideas that it promotes, however, span centuries. The main teaching of *The Calvary Road* is that the Christian must empty himself of self, which includes all known sin. It is through the confession of sin and repentance that the Christian can remain in fellowship with God and live a victorious life. This teaching may seem Biblical to most Christians because this is the predominant teaching in Pentecostalism as well as among some Reformed and Calvinist believers.

Hession's theology, as taught in *The Calvary Road*, was largely borrowed from the Keswick (pronounced KEH-zihk) teachings of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. To understand the Keswick teachings, it would be helpful to go back in history a bit.

A very quick and general tour through Christian history reveals that the modern Pentecostal movement has its roots in Pelagius (as do other "brands" of Christianity). This is not to say that "Calvinism" is dead, but it is clear that the Pelagian/Arminian/Wesleyan/Holiness theology has dominated. Semi-Pelagian and Arminian theology made up the undercurrent of the Keswick movement, though even some "Calvinists" participated. The American Holiness movement of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century was completely semi-Pelagian/Arminian/Wesleyan.

Arminius believed that the man once given over to Christ could lose salvation due to sin and must continually strive to maintain holiness to avoid loss of salvation. God's grace is applied only in the sense that He restores the sinner after the sinner confesses and repents. In Wesleyanism, the American Holiness movement, and Keswick, there is a teaching known as the "second blessing." Wesley adopted what his friend, John Fletcher, called "the baptism of the Spirit" as basically synonymous with the second blessing. In general, the second blessing doctrine says that though a person is saved, he will need a separate baptism of the Spirit in order to grow and "experience" true Christian living.

Wesley and Fletcher taught that the Christian cannot be victorious in achieving "Christian perfection" until, and unless, he receives the second blessing. Wesley taught that the Christian is justified upon first receiving the Lord, but is not sanctified until he receives the second blessing. He believed that the Christian can attain a certain

“perfection” on earth by continually confessing and repenting of all known sin. He admitted that no one could ever be free from all sin since some sin would remain unknown to the believer. Nevertheless, Wesley’s ideas were adopted in America and, from his theology, the Holiness movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century emerged. Calvinism was on the decline and Charles Finney’s ministry took Arminianism to its extreme.

The rationalism of the Enlightenment was in full force, paving the way for the teachings of Wesley and, later, Finney. Finney was more extreme in regard to justification and sanctification than was Wesley. Finney believed that the Christian has no assurance of salvation because, in his view, the believer loses salvation every time he sins. Out of the American Holiness movement, of which Finney was a part, the Pentecostal movement sprang up in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

At the same time, something else was taking place in England. In the lake region community of Keswick, some local teachers were promoting their own brand of Holiness movement. The first meeting took place in 1875. By the time Hession arrived, it had been flourishing for decades. Apart from his association with Keswick, Hession says that he was searching for a renewal of the power of the Spirit in his life when he heard the testimonies of some missionaries who had come to England from Rwanda. He was struck by the testimonies and realized that he was lacking something. That was 1947. In 1950, he published *The Calvary Road*, a collection of articles he had written over the course of those few intervening years.

Hession’s theology stems largely from the Holiness and Keswick movements, and, therefore, he teaches that the Christian must empty himself of self before he can be filled with the Spirit (the second blessing). Hession taught that the Christian who sins must “reapply the blood of Christ” to be restored to fellowship with God. It was also out of Keswick in England, and the Holiness movement in America, from which emerged the modern idea of a second blessing as a means to a “deeper,” or “victorious,” life; therefore, Hession views the emptying of self as the path to the deeper, or victorious, life.

### **CLC Publications**

CLC Publications is the publishing arm of CLC Ministries. CLC Publications is dedicated to promoting the “Deeper Life” theology. Their authors include:

- Charles Finney, who did not believe that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross atoned for anyone’s sin but His own
- Watchman Nee, who was taught the Keswick concept of a second blessing; who believed in a “partial rapture;” who admired the mystic writings of Jesse Penn-Lewis and Madame Guyon; and who believed that God’s written Word is not real unless it is spoken aloud
- Norman Grubb, a Keswick attendee whose Worldwide Evangelization Crusade formally aligned with CLC in 1941; who later studied William James and subsequently doubted the existence of God, but would later say (concerning his attempt to regain faith): “...I have to make a deliberate choice, a leap into the dark;” and who wrote the forward to Hession’s *The Calvary Road*

## **The Deeper Life of Keswick**

The definition of a word can make all the difference. While some of the concepts from Keswick seem to be Biblical, we need to be careful that we are parsing the real meaning of these concepts. For example, to go “deeper” into the Word, or the faith, is a good thing if we are comparing “deep” with “shallow,” where shallow is a truncated understanding of the Gospel. “Deep” becomes problematic when it takes on a Gnostic element in which those who are in the deep end of the pool have acquired some special knowledge that is not readily available to all Christians.

While some have criticized the “Deeper Life” movement as unbiblical simply because it promotes a “deeper” relationship with God (something the critics always attribute to “Christian Gnosticism”), the real problem lies in the *mechanisms* whereby a Christian is said to be able to attain to a deeper faith, or relationship with God. In other words, we do not have a problem with the desire for a deeper knowledge of God or a deeper understanding of His Word (leading to a deeper life in Christ); rather, we object to the *avenues* into which the Keswick teachings steer us in an attempt to attain to this deeper Christianity.

Let’s look at Hession’s own words from *The Calvary Road*:

### Preface to the 1973 edition:

In Dr. Hession’s preface, he says that, through revival, believers are coming to experience “...the power of the blood of Jesus to cleanse *fully* from sin...” (emphasis added). As will be seen, this is the primary focus of *The Calvary Road*. Hession, like his Holiness and Keswick colleagues, has been teaching that the blood of Christ only covers sin insofar as the believer confesses all known sin. The implication is that any unconfessed sin in the Christian is not covered by the sacrifice of Christ.

Hession recounts a “dry” period in his life from which he said he discovered what he “had to do to be revived and filled with the Spirit.” He asserts that the believer must come to a “crisis” in his life, whereby he finally realizes that he must be “filled with the Spirit.” This is the equivalent of the “second blessing” taught by Wesley, Fletcher, the American Holiness movement, and Keswick. These teachers all believe that the new Christian receives a first baptism of the Spirit upon justification, but cannot mature in the Lord or operate in the power of the Spirit until he receives the second blessing, or “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Hession, however, must believe that the Christian may need a third baptism since he does admit that he once had preached in the power of the Spirit (due to a second blessing) but then lost that power.

We would point to the Scriptures to refute this teaching. We are not aware of anyone in the New Testament (NT) for whom this “second blessing” was the result of a “crisis.” It is true that the Christian must continually yield to the Spirit if he wants to remain filled by the Spirit, but there is no prerequisite crisis. While the Christian may grow in faith as the result of crises, crises are not always necessary for the Christian to grow because the primary means for a deeper knowledge and understanding of God is through His Word. We would also assert that there is “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5), which is the Christian’s baptism by the Spirit into the Body of Christ upon justification. We are baptized by the Spirit only once, though we must yield to Him to be continually filled (Ephesians 5:18, where “be filled” is “keep being kept filled by”).

Continuing in the preface to *The Calvary Road*, Hession reiterates his main theme: The Christian must continually confess all known sin if he is to maintain his salvation because the blood of Christ covers only those sins that have been confessed. In keeping with his Keswick background, Hession believes that the Christian must empty himself of self. While we agree that the Christian must be taught about the self (the old man), we disagree that we are to “empty” the self, but are, rather, to “reckon the old man as crucified and ourselves as dead to sin” (Romans 6:1-14).

One other note in regard to the preface of the *The Calvary Road* is that Hession references Psalm 102:13 and Nehemiah 2:13 in relation to Christian revival and his vision for the Church. Hession has taken these Scriptures out of context as they relate to Israel, not the Church. Hession continues to use verses out of context throughout the book; however, it should also be noted that he makes reference to very few Scriptures. In fact, he fails to give Scriptural proof to support his major points of teaching.

### Chapter 1: Brokenness

Hession correctly states, “If...we are to come into right relationship with Him, the first thing we must learn is that our wills must be broken to His will.” We agree that no one can be saved unless he confesses that he is wrong and God is right; however, we know that, at this point, the new Christian may have very little understanding of what it means to be a Christian, and may not be cognizant of all the layers of sin in his life. He has confessed that he is a sinner and that Christ is Lord and Savior, the one who died for his sins, which is “brokenness” and repentance.

When we agree with God that we are sinners and He is the only Savior, when we confess that He is Lord and that God has raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9), “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We are clean and there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ (Romans 8:1). We receive the Holy Spirit when God saves us; He dwells in us, not because we continue to confess all known sin, but because of His grace made sure to us through the work of Christ on the cross (Romans 8:9-10).

We are given the Spirit by grace and we must then continue to walk in that grace (Colossians 2:6-7). We are not saved by self-effort and we are not sanctified by self-effort. It is all of grace. We walk in newness of life because we were crucified and resurrected with Christ (Romans 6:4). Just how the Christian is to walk in newness of life is the question that Hession and the Keswick teachers try to answer. Hession says that we cannot walk in newness of life unless we are continually confessing and repenting of all known sin, which is his definition of “brokenness.”

To the contrary, Paul says, “For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin... For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all... Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:5-11). Paul does not state that we are to walk in brokenness, continually confessing and repenting, but to “reckon” ourselves dead to sin because the old man has been crucified.

Hession goes on to say that “self” gets in the way of continued brokenness. Hession and the Keswick teachers say that we maintain brokenness by emptying ourselves of self which is achieved through continual confession and repentance. We agree that “self” is the problem, but we disagree with Hession that we are to empty ourselves of self through confession or otherwise. Again, we have seen that the old man (the old “self”) was crucified with Christ and the solution to the power of sin is to reckon ourselves dead to sin because the old man has been crucified. Continual confession and repentance puts all the focus on the old man, the one Paul tells us has been crucified.

The flesh (nearly synonymous with the old man, the Adamic nature, and the self) cannot be repaired, though it remains with us until the Rapture or our death, whichever comes first. Hession, however, teaches that we are to empty ourselves of self rather than recognize that the old nature has been crucified and we are free from the power of indwelling sin. We assert that the old man is still there and cannot be emptied; rather, we revel in the victory of the Holy Spirit over the flesh. We do not fight the flesh, nor empty ourselves of self; instead, we walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-23), which we can do because Christ has delivered us from this body of death (Romans 8:25). Christ has already won the victory and we now recognize that though the old man remains with us, he is powerless both in light of having been crucified and due to the presence of the Spirit. Our part in all of this is not to fight the flesh, or try to empty the self through continual “brokenness;” rather, we are to take God at His word and walk in the Spirit.

#### Chapter 2: Cups Running Over

Hession commences this chapter by saying that brokenness is only the beginning, and that we must be “filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit.” He even asks the question, “If we were asked this moment if we were filled with the Holy Spirit, how many of us would dare to answer, ‘yes’?” What is implied here is that it is virtually impossible for a Christian to live a spirit-filled life, or even dwell in temporary Spirit-filled seasons of life.

Hession agrees with the Keswick and Holiness teachers who assert that the Christian receives the Spirit upon justification but then must receive a subsequent “filling of the Holy Spirit” or “baptism of the Spirit” for sanctification. We would agree that the Christian is called to “keep being kept filled by the Spirit,” and that, in such a condition, Christian growth occurs; however, we cannot agree that a “second blessing” is to be expected at some time following justification. It is the normal Christian life to be filled by the Spirit at the time of conversion and to continue to yield to the Spirit that a continual filling may occur; but that, by grieving or quenching the Spirit, the Christian is no longer yielded to Him, resulting in a loss of effectual power for Christian living until such time that the Christian once again yields to the Spirit. As such, the Christian once again yielding to the Spirit is not receiving a “second blessing” or “second baptism of the Spirit;” rather, he is walking in a continuum in which there are times of being yielded and filled, and other times of losing the power of the Spirit needed for Christian growth and effectual ministry.

In Hession’s teaching, we learn that the Christian who would continue to be filled by the Spirit must “present [his] empty, broken self and let Him fill and keep filled.” We would agree that the Christian must continue to yield to the Spirit, but we assert that this is not accomplished by “presenting an empty, broken self” through confession and repentance. A careful study of Paul’s epistles, which are written to the Church, reveals that our baptism into the Body of Christ is the one baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:5); therefore, we are not looking for a second baptism. Indeed, it seems that Hession is

confusing the baptism of the Spirit (into the Body) with the filling of the Spirit. As was noted, it would be normal for the Christian to receive the filling of the Spirit at the time of the baptism of the Spirit into the Body at conversion. Going forward, the Christian who remains yielded to the Spirit will be continually filled by the Spirit.

Hession describes the “filling of the Spirit” as water in a cup. He says, “As [Jesus] passes by, He looks into our cup, and if it is clean, He fills it to overflowing with the Water of Life.” We have two questions in regard to this statement.

First, if Hession is referring to the unbeliever having to have a clean cup as requisite to being filled by the Spirit at conversion, then no one can be saved. All are in sin (Romans 3:23), all are spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1-5), no one seeks God (Romans 3:10-11), and all are at enmity with God and unable to please Him (Romans 8:6-8). Indeed, if the unbeliever could clean his own cup, Christ died in vain.

Second, Hession speaks of “cleansing our cups” as “remov[ing] the filth of the flesh” by emptying ourselves of self. Assuming he is speaking of the sanctification of the Christian, he is still in error. We cannot remove the filth of the flesh. Again, the road to victory is in reckoning ourselves dead to sin because the old man was crucified with Christ. We do not gain the victory, or have a deeper life, by trying to eradicate the flesh. The old man has been crucified; the new man was created in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), and in righteousness and holiness of truth (Ephesians 4:24). The way forward is through the new man, the new nature that was created in the image of God. The new nature is incomplete, needing to grow, but it is not sinful, having been created in righteousness and holiness of truth. When we sin, it is the old man that has gained the upper hand because we have not been yielded to the Spirit (Romans 7:17). The way forward is not to dwell on the old man, trying to clean the cup and empty self of self, but to yield to the Spirit working through the new man. We are to “put on Christ” (Romans 13:14), which has the sense of putting on a garment. Notice that Paul never teaches that we must continually confess all known sin but, rather, we are to keep putting on Christ even as we did when we were first saved (Galatians 3:27).

Hession says, “The Lord Jesus does not fill dirty cups.” By implication, then, no unbeliever can be saved if he must clean his own cup (remove the filth of the flesh), and the believer cannot be sanctified if he does not keep his cup cleaned. To Hession’s credit, he does say that it is the work of Jesus to clean the cup (though we would quibble with that statement, recognizing that it is the Spirit who sanctifies); however, he says that the believer who sins needs to be cleansed once again by the blood of Christ. Wesley lamented that he could never have assurance of salvation because he could not know if he had confessed all sin. Likewise, in Hession’s teaching, dirty cups are not covered by the blood of Christ. We would ask that if Jesus cleanses the dirty cups of *unbelievers* by grace (resulting in salvation), why can He not clean the dirty cups of *believers* by that same grace?

But, more to the point, if cleansing the cup is removing the filth of the flesh, then no Christian can be sanctified because God does not remove the filth of the flesh; rather, we are to believe the truth that the old man was crucified. The filth of the flesh remains with us until we receive our new bodies. Hession and the Keswick adherents have completely missed Romans 6 truth.

### Chapter 3: The Way of Fellowship

In this chapter, Hession correctly points out that when we are brought into right relationship with God, we are also brought into right relationship with fellow believers. But then Hession interprets Christian fellowship in 1 John 1:7 as making confession of sin to each other, so that just as we must continually confess sin to God for maintenance of fellowship with Him, we must do the same with fellow believers.

Hession reasons that the “light” of 1 John 1 is the revealing of sins and the “darkness” is the hiding of sins. From this interpretation, he teaches that believers cannot be in the light unless they are confessing sin to each other. However, Hession has missed the impetus for John’s writing in this epistle, which is Gnosticism. Had Hession begun with the proper understanding of the writer’s message, he may not have come to the conclusions he did.

The Gnostics believed that Jesus came, died on a cross, and was resurrected; however, they were not true believers because they did not believe in a bodily resurrection. The Gnostics in the group were not in the light because they did not believe that Jesus came in the flesh (God incarnate), nor did they believe He was in the flesh as the ascended one in heaven. Because of this doctrinal error, these people were not in the light; they were not in true fellowship with God or believers. Gnostics also believed that there was no such thing as sin because the evil and temporary body is not intrinsically linked with the eternal soul; therefore, the spiritual health of the person is not incumbent upon what the body does. The message of 1 John 1 is that one must believe that he is a sinner and that Christ came in the flesh to put away sin (1 John 1:8-10). Without these beliefs, no one is in the light. This passage does not teach that Christians must confess to each other all known sins.

Someone may turn to James 5:15-16 as proof that we are to confess all known sins to one another. However, we may just as easily conclude that the confession in this passage is not so broad in scope but is limited to sins against the person to whom one should confess. For example, there is no command here that you should confess to others that you stole something when you were ten years old, or that you had a lustful thought last week. Rather, we are to go to the brother against whom we have sinned and make confession. To make more of this passage than is here indicated would result in believers doing nothing but confessing all known sin to each other to the exclusion of enjoying any other aspect of fellowship.

Nevertheless, in continuing on in Hession’s chapter, we should examine the implication of his teaching. He says, “Everything that the light of God shows up as sin we can confess and carry it to the Fountain of Blood and it is gone, gone from God’s sight and gone from our hearts.” This raises the question: If the Christian does not confess all known sin before he dies, will he go to heaven? The implication of Hession’s teaching is that the unconfessed sin, not being cleansed by the blood, renders the soul unclean, out of fellowship with God, in the darkness, and therefore, not fit for heaven.

### Chapter 4: The Highway of Holiness

Hession explains that this chapter is a summary, of sorts, of what he has been teaching so far; however, he wishes to now present his theology in “picture form.” He begins his picture by going to the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah 35, which describes the

“highway of holiness.” The context of Isaiah 35 is the future Millennial Kingdom on earth, so here we see believers enjoying salvation under the reign of Christ.

Hession says, “The Highway is narrow and uphill,” yet this wording is not found in the passage. He may be alluding to the Lord saying that there are two ways: the broad and the narrow, the narrow leading to life (Matthew 7:13-14), where “narrow” means that most people are not entering into eternal life, and where “difficult” means that the one who would enter in at the narrow gate must take up his cross. This does not mean that the Christian life is one of a continual work of confession of sin and of cleansing dirty cups, as Hession asserts, but that the Christian life is one of being persecuted by the world, and of suffering hardships as did the Lord and His disciples; indeed, this is what it means to “count the cost.”

Although Hession begins by saying that the Highway is “narrow and uphill,” yet, he confesses that, “It is not beyond any of us to walk it...” In saying this, he is referencing verse 8: “Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray.” The passage states that “the unclean shall not pass over it...[and] the redeemed walk there...” These are the redeemed in the Millennial Kingdom; though they are merely human, as fools compared to their King, they are secure in Christ. Hession admits, in quoting the verse, that whoever walks the road “shall not go astray.” Those who are saved are saved forever.

Hession, however, in referencing, “The unclean shall not pass over it,” says, “This includes not only the sinner who does not know Christ as his Saviour, but the Christian who does and yet is walking in unconfessed and uncleansed sin.” First, Hession correctly says the redeemed walk the road and cannot go astray, but then says, in contradiction, that the Christian with unconfessed sin is unclean, the same as the sinner, and cannot walk the road. If the one walking the road “cannot go astray,” how is it possible that he could have unconfessed sin, making him unclean, resulting in removal from the road?

Hession continues on with his word picture, telling us that there is a door that he calls the “Door of the Broken Ones.” If anyone is to be allowed to enter the Highway, he must first go through the Door. His allusion to Christ being the Door is well taken (John 10:7), but Hession insists that entrance through the Door requires complete and total brokenness, such that the one seeking entrance must “[be] nothing.” This is equivalent to Hession’s process of emptying oneself. Again, we would ask where we find this teaching in the NT epistles. Rather, we assert that the unbeliever cannot “be nothing,” but must first be regenerated by the Holy Spirit so that he can see his sin and repent.

In Acts 2, after the receiving of the Holy Spirit, the disciples are seen and heard by many Jews and Proselytes, some of whom ask what they must do in light of Peter’s message. Peter says, “Repent and be baptized...” From the context, it is clear that they were to repent of their complicity in crucifying the Messiah; yet, we do not see here a process of emptying oneself of self by confessing all known sins. Later, in Acts 16, the Philippian jailer asks Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved. He is told to believe on Jesus Christ; that is, to believe that He died for sins as the Son of God and was raised from the dead. Again, there is no requirement of confessing all known sin in a process of emptying oneself of self.

Hession goes on, "As we bend to crawl through [the Door], the blood cleanses from all sin." It is good to hear him say that the blood cleanses from all sin, and we may think that he understands the Gospel; however, he goes on to say, "...[M]aybe you have known [Jesus] for years, but...you are defiled by sin, the sins of pride, envy, resentment, impurity, etc." Once again, then, Hession asserts that the blood of Christ is of no value unless it is applied "piecemeal" as the sinner confesses his sins one by one. According to Hession, even though you may know Jesus, you are not cleansed by the blood because you are yet defiled by sin until you confess.

The solution to being outside the efficacy of the cleansing blood, explains Hession, is to "give them all [all your sins] to Him who bore them on the cross. He will whisper to you again what He once said on the cross, 'It is finished,' and your heart will be cleansed whiter than snow." The question we ask is, if He bore all your sins on the cross but you are still defiled by them, did He truly purge them when He saved you (Hebrews 1:3). Hession's teaching is the same semi-Pelagian error of Roman Catholicism, Arminianism, the American Holiness movement, and many Keswick teachers. Romanism teaches that Christ is still on the cross, being crucified over again at the Mass, having to continually bear our sins as we continually confess.

Hession then contradicts himself when he says that as we walk the Highway, we can look back and see that the cross is empty and Jesus is walking the Highway with us. Despite this aspect of his word picture (the empty cross), Hession keeps Jesus on the cross just as the Romanists do. Indeed, elsewhere in the book, and on many occasions, Hession says that we must continually go back to the cross to apply the blood. Nevermind that Paul says Christ was raised for our justification (Romans 4:25); it is the risen and ascended Christ who has borne all the sins of His people, whose resurrection has defeated death, and whose sacrifice has been accepted by the Father.

Continuing on in the word picture, Hession imagines: Jesus is carrying a "pitcher with the Water of Life. He...asks us to hold out our hearts... He looks inside...and where He sees we have allowed His blood to cleanse them, He fills them with the Water of Life." Hession reiterates that the believer slips off or wanders off the Highway, and whatever the reason, he can look back to the Highway and see Jesus waiting to cleanse his dirty cup. In this picture, the Water of Life is the Holy Spirit and the object is to be filled to overflowing with the Spirit. This overflowing life is the definition of "victorious living." We agree that we are to live a victorious life and that we can do so. The difference between Hession's ideas about sanctification and ours is the *process* by which one can live a victorious life. We assert that although a believer still sins, he does not "fall off the Highway" so that he is no longer under the cleansing blood. The believer is on the narrow path and always will be. We assert that the Christian has all of the Spirit and should desire that the Spirit has all of the Christian. The filling of the Spirit comes as the Christian yields to the Spirit, not by emptying self of self through the confession of all known sins and "allow[ing] His blood to cleanse [the heart]."

As the chapter continues, it becomes clearer why Hession clings to such a view of justification and sanctification. He explains that other people walk the Highway with us and that sometimes they will irritate us. Our reaction is sinful. Others may sin against us, but we are to have a godly reaction; anything else is sin. Hession says, "God is love;" that is, love for others, and the moment we fail in love towards another, we put ourselves out of fellowship with God – for God loves him even if we don't." Hession believes that the Christian who has not sinned is loved by God and, therefore, the one who has

sinned is out of fellowship with God. We would ask Hession what mechanism is employed to restore fellowship.

God demonstrated His love at the cross by the shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sins. If the blood does not cleanse even though it was provided by God's love, then the sinner is doomed. In Hession's theology, the one who does not sin is loved and receives the benefit of the shed blood, but the one who sins is loved less, apparently, because he now has to work his way back to the Highway with his dirty cup and ask for the cleansing blood. Never mind that God saves the ungodly (Romans 4:5, 5:6) and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). In other words, we are *justified* by grace through faith and we are *sanctified* the same way. God's love and grace extend to the Christian who sins as well as the one who does not.

#### Chapter 5: The Dove and the Lamb

In this chapter, Hession writes about the submissive and humble nature of God as demonstrated in the Son and the Holy Spirit. Hession acknowledges that the Holy Spirit is a "he," but he refers to the dove as feminine. So, we read of the dove that "she" alighted on Christ at His baptism. This choice by Hession to use feminine pronouns makes the chapter somewhat difficult to read. Nevertheless, Hession is correct that Christ came in submission to the Father and in humility. What we find odd is that Hession would say the same concerning the Holy Spirit because we do not find this in Scripture. While it is true that the Spirit was sent by the Son and the Father, we cannot conclude that this is submission and humility in the sense that we can apply those words to Christ in His incarnation.

Hession wants to push this idea that the Spirit comes in humility because he wants to prove that "the heart of Deity is humility." Thus, Hession makes much of the dove and the lamb as symbols of humility. Hession reasons that if "the heart of Deity is humility," then the dove cannot continue to rest on those who are not humble. Hession says, "How impossible that He should rest upon us while self is unbroken!... [T]he Holy Spirit will only come upon us and remain upon us as we are willing to be as the Lamb on each point on which He will convict us." Once again, then, we must infer that the Christian who sins has lost the Spirit, for the dove cannot remain on the unbroken and unclean sinner. While we agree that the Christian can grieve the Spirit and quench the Spirit, nowhere in the NT epistles do we read that the Spirit departs from the Christian. Hession may mean that the Christian in sin is no longer continually "being kept filled" by the Spirit, to which we would agree; however, he does not make a case for this but, rather, argues that the Spirit leaves.

The Scriptures teach, however, that the Christian is indwelt by the Spirit and sealed by the Spirit (Romans 8:9-11, [Colossians 1:27]; Ephesians 1:13-14). When the Christian is immoral, the Spirit remains but is grieved (Ephesians 4:30); and when the Christian fails to be diligent in worship through rejoicing, praying, thanking God, and receiving His written Word, the Spirit remains but is quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Hession says, "the sign of the Spirit's presence and fullness will be peace. This is indeed to be the test of our walk all the way along... If the Dove ceases to sing in our hearts at any time, if our peace is broken, then it can only be because of sin." Hession goes on to say that our sin forces the dove to "fly away." When the dove flies away, peace leaves

our hearts, and this is how we know that we have lost fellowship with God because of sin.

We know that the Christian has peace *with* God because he is justified, reconciled to God (Romans 5:1); yet, we do not always have the peace *of* God. We would agree with Hession that when we sin, we experience a loss of peace and close fellowship with God. However, we must argue that the diminishing of the peace of God is not due to the Spirit “flying away.” In fact, we would assert precisely the opposite. When we either grieve or quench the Spirit, He remains, and that loss of peace is the result of the conviction of the indwelling Spirit. He has not flown away; indeed, He is at work in us to bring us back to a state of peace and full fellowship with the Father.

The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth; the Spirit is the one who wars against the flesh. If sin forces the Spirit to fly away, who will clean our dirty cups and put us back on the Highway? As we have seen throughout these first five chapters of Hession’s book, the onus is always on the sinner to work his way into God’s love and the cleansing blood. In the Highway analogy, Hession says that when the believer sins, he falls off the Highway. In the Dove teaching, when the believer sins, the Spirit flies away. If the Spirit is gone, who leads the sinner back to the Highway? Not Jesus. He is on the Highway with the Water of Life waiting for the sinner to come back and hold out his dirty cup, which the sinner must do in his own strength because the Spirit has flown away.

### **Conclusions**

We have briefly analyzed the first five chapters of *The Calvary Road*. The final five chapters continue on in the same theology and we will, therefore, bring this analysis to a close.

The Keswick and American Holiness movements, of which Hession was a part, insist that sanctification progresses as the believer empties the self of self through confession of sins; to the contrary, Paul explains that we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin and believe God that the old man was crucified. As a result of the Keswick and Holiness teachings, Hession came to believe that a Christian can only be filled by the Spirit if he is in continual confession of all known sins; however, Paul teaches that the Spirit is grieved when sin is committed, or quenched when the believer fails to acknowledge God in all things, not when we fail to confess all known sins. Hession teaches that the Spirit leaves when sins are committed and remain unconfessed, but Paul teaches that the Spirit never leaves the Christian.

Hession rightly emphasizes the cross, but he does not seem to understand that the Christian was at the cross with Christ, dying and rising to newness of life. Hession teaches that the blood has to be reapplied each time the believer sins, but Paul teaches that all of the sins of all who would believe were forgiven at the cross, and now, we walk in accordance with our new nature in the power of the Spirit, and we are at rest because we are set in the heavenlies with the risen and ascended Christ.