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# The Gypsy's Creed.

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## The Gypsy's Creed.

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**W**E lately met with an old gypsy in the west of England, whose case interested us not a little. For forty-five years he had never entered any place of religious instruction. He was, however, induced by a friend to come under the sound of the gospel; and, on the very first occasion, his soul was arrested. He continued to attend regularly, and divine light shone in gradually upon his soul. After attending for some weeks on the preaching, he was speaking to a Christian friend, and telling him, in his own simple style, his spiritual experience. "Sir," said he, "the first thing I learned was, that I had never done a right thing in all my life; the next thing I learnt was, that I could not do a right thing, my nature was that bad; and then, sir, I learnt that Christ had done all, and met all."

Now these are what we may call "three good things to learn." And if the reader has not already learned them, we would earnestly entreat him to apply his heart to them now. Let us briefly glance at these three points of Christian knowledge; they lie at the very foundation of true Christianity.

I. And first, then, our poor old friend discovered that he had never done a right thing all his days. This is a serious discovery for a soul to make. It marks an interesting epoch in the history of a soul when the eyes are first opened and thrown back upon the entire career, from the earliest moment, and the whole thing is found to have been one tissue of sin from beginning to end, every page of the volume blotted from margin to margin. This, we repeat, is very serious. It marks the earliest stage of spiritual conviction, and is intensely interesting to all who watch for souls, and take an interest in the precious

mysteries of God's new creation.

II. But there is more than this. Our old friend not only learned that his acts—all his acts, the acts of his whole life—had been bad, but also that his *nature* was bad; and not only bad, but utterly unmendable. This is a grand point to get hold of. It is an essential element in all true repentance. It will invariably be found that whenever the Spirit of God works in convicting power in the soul of the sinner He produces the sense of *sin in the nature*, as well as of *sins in the life*. It is well to learn this thoroughly at the first. Many souls, when first converted, are more occupied with the forgiveness of their sins than with the judgment of their sinful nature. They see that the blood of Christ has cancelled the sins of their life; but they do not see that the death of Christ has condemned sin in their nature. Hence it is that when the early bloom of their joy passes away,

and they begin to feel the workings of indwelling sin, they are cast down, and almost driven to despair. They begin to think that they never were converted at all, and are in great danger of making shipwreck.

It is of all importance, therefore, for the reader to give attention to the second point learned by our dear old friend in the west. He will have to learn not only that the acts of his life have been all bad, but that his nature is incurable. No doubt people differ as to their acts and their ways, but the nature is the same. A crab-tree is a crab-tree, whether it bear but one crab in ten years, or ten thousand crab in one year. Nothing but a crab-tree could produce even a solitary crab; and hence the nature of the tree is as clearly proved by one crab as by ten thousand. And further, we may say that all the art of man, all his cultivation, all his digging and pruning, cannot change the nature of a crab-tree;

there must be a new nature, a new life, ere any acceptable fruit can be produced. "Ye must be born again."

III. But this leads us to look at what our old friend learned as the third point, namely, that Christ had done all and met all. Precious fact! Blessed knowledge for every convicted soul! The Lord Jesus Christ—all praise to His precious name!—has met the sins of my life, and the sin of my nature. He has cancelled the former, and condemned the latter. My sinful acts are all forgiven, and my sinful nature is judged. The former are washed away from my conscience, the latter is for ever set aside from God's presence. It is one thing to know the forgiveness of *sins*, and another to know the condemnation of *sin*.

We read, at the opening of Romans viii., that God "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." It

does not speak of the forgiveness of sin. This could not be. Sins are forgiven, the sinner is pardoned; but sin is condemned—an immensely important distinction for every earnest soul. The reign of sin is ended for ever as to the believer, and the reign of grace is begun. The knowledge of this is peace, and liberty, victory, and strength to the Christian.

This glorious doctrine is unfolded in the sixth chapter of Romans, a chapter which we earnestly recommend to the young disciple. In it he will notice the interesting fact that the Apostle is not speaking of sins, but of sin. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that *the body of sin* might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve *sin*. For he that is dead is freed from sin . . . . For in that he died, he died unto *sin* once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise

reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto *sin*, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not *sin* therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto *sin*: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For *sin* shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace."

This is a most precious emancipating truth for the soul. It forms the true basis of victory over indwelling sin. To know that the dominion of sin is broken by the Cross, and that grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, is the divine secret of all progress in personal holiness.

C. H. M.