



**OUR STANDING:**  
**The Ground of It.**

(NEW EDITION.)



C. E. STUART.



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# OUR STANDING:

## The Ground of It.



“THE wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. i. 18.) Such is the definite language of God’s book, the declaration of the Holy Ghost through the Apostle of the Gentiles. For this concerns both Gentiles and Jews. All ungodliness takes in Gentiles, Unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, though this refers primarily to Jews, will be found to embrace also such as are Christians merely in profession, Truth, then, there is, and the truth has been revealed, and it may be held professedly without the power of it being known, without obedience to it being rendered.

God’s wrath will certainly be poured out, and that at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will “be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking

vengeance on them that know not God, and on them who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes. i. 7, 8). Here, again, two classes of men are described; the one—those who know not God; the other—those who obey not the gospel. The responsibility of having the gospel and not obeying it is no light one.

Further, the very day when this will begin to come to pass is fixed in the counsels of God. For "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). Judgment, then, will come; the day is fixed, the Judge selected, and the classes who will be overtaken by that judgment are the ungodly, and the unrighteous; those who know not God, and those who obey not the gospel, etc. All mankind will not be involved in the awful outpouring of divine wrath. But who can, who will escape it?

A solemn consideration. A question, too, now not raised for the first time in the history of our race. Centuries before the introduction

of Christianity such questions were asked by men writing under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Asaph asked, in Ps. lxxvi. 7, "Who may stand in Thy sight, when once Thou art angry?" Nahum, in a subsequent age, similarly expressed himself (i. 6). "Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him." And Malachi (iii. 2), the latest Old Testament writer, asks, in the same pointed way: "Who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap." What will become of the person in whom nothing will then be found of a work of divine grace? What must the everlasting condition of such an one be? The *everlasting* condition, we have to say, for man has an immortal soul, and the body, though it enters into death, will be raised from it. Resurrection will be known by *all* who die (1 Cor. xv. 21). What, then, will be the everlasting portion of those finally impenitent? God has decided that, and He has also revealed it. The lake of fire for ever

and ever (Rev. xx. 10-15; Matt. xxv. 41-46; Mark ix. 47, 48) with the devil and his angels will be their lot. Having listened to, and having shown themselves to be of the devil (1 John iii. 8), they will have to spend eternity with him. There is but the choice of eternity with God and with Christ, or eternity with the devil. And that must be decided now, in the time of this mortal life.

Who, then, can stand when He appeareth? Are we left to ask that question in despair, without any light being cast upon the subject? It is here that divine revelation comes in, and speaks with certainty because it speaks with authority. It tells us who will *not* stand in that day. It intimates, likewise, who will.

And, first, of the former. "The ungodly (or, the wicked) shall *not* stand in the judgment" (Ps. i. 5). Again, "The foolish (or, the arrogant) shall not stand in Thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing (*i.e.*, lies): the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man" (Ps. v. 5, 6). For such, it is hopeless to think that they shall be able to stand before God. And if self-deceived for a time, a

day will come when conscience will be heard witnessing of the person's nakedness, and, therefore, unfitness to be in the divine presence. Bodily nakedness, Adam felt, unfitted him to meet God. Spiritual nakedness unfits the responsible, guilty creature to meet God.

But the Psalmist has more to tell us on this solemn subject: "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Ps. cxxx. 3). Who, indeed? For Solomon of old had said, "There is no man that sinneth not" (1 Kings viii. 46). And the verdict of God on man in the days of that monarch's father, reiterated too, after the cross, states that "there is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one" (Ps. xiv. 3; Rom. iii. 12). Who, then, can stand before the holy Lord God? The *ungodly* cannot. The *foolish* cannot. The workers of *iniquity* cannot. *Liars* cannot. *Deceitful people* cannot. And no one of Adam's race, if it depended on himself, ever could. For here again the Psalmist speaks: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Psalm cxliii. 2).

Where, then, and what is the resource for

any who have sinned? The prophet Nahum has taught us, that the sure refuge in the display of God's power in the storm, the flood, or the earthquake, is God Himself (i. 7). So, in harmony with that, the only provision for the guilty to stand in the divine presence must, it is manifest, come from God Himself. Now, for that, as the Psalmist again teaches, both forgiveness of sins and justification are needed. "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" was the question asked. "But there is forgiveness with Thee," it is immediately added, intimating, in the plainest way, the need of such grace for any of us to stand before God. So, too, of justification. The language of the Psalmist in Ps. cxliii. 2. tells us it is needed, and announces, that the guilty one cannot, by his own works, procure it.

We must turn then to the Gospel. Old Testament teaching points out, it is true, what is needed: but it cannot announce that the need has been met. New Testament teaching alone reveals the ground on which such needful blessings can be provided. That ground is the blood of Christ. By the blood



of a sacrifice forgiveness could at times be declared, as the typical teaching of the Old Testament portrayed. But, who was the Lamb by whose blood full forgiveness of sins and justification could be provided, awaited the dawning of New Testament revelation to make plain. In no uncertain language is that delivered. Do we ask about forgiveness? "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. i. 7), clears away at once all misconception. Do we ask about justification? "Being justified freely, by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24), is the answer God has provided. For all believers on the Lord Jesus Christ are justified by His blood (Rom. v. 9). Hence redemption, redemption by blood, is required for any one of Adam's race to stand before God, and in this term, redemption, are included both forgiveness of sins and justification.

Distinct, of course, are these two favours, yet closely connected. Both flow from the blood of Christ. Both are shared in by faith. Both are needful for us in order to stand before God against whom we have sinned.

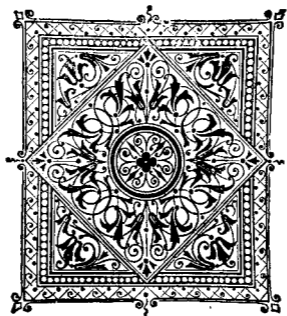
An unfallen creature, it is evident, would need neither of them. A sinner needs both. Hence the gospel comes in, and preaches forgiveness (Acts xiii. 38), and teaches about justification likewise (Rom. iii., iv., v.) For, whilst the former assures the believer of exemption from everlasting punishment, the latter assures him that he can lift up his head with all holy boldness in the divine presence, having an enduring title to be there—a title resting on that precious blood. So, as soon as the teaching about justification has been set forth, the thought of our *standing* is presented—standing before God (Rom. v. 2), which could not be true unless we were justified by blood, and could not consciously be known unless we were justified by faith. Justification rests on the value of the precious blood. Our sharing in it depends on our believing on Him who raised up His Son from the dead (Rom. iv. 24). Justified meritoriously by the blood, we are justified instrumentally by faith. For God can do, and do in righteousness, what no one else in the universe could accomplish, viz., justify, and that openly, an ungodly creature.

Full, perfect, enduring is that justification. We who believe are justified, and it is God who does it. Can it be called in question? No, never! "It is God," joyously writes the Apostle, "who justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. viii. 33, 34). So perfect is this grace—present grace, too, that the Apostle boldly asks, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (viii. 33). Have they not sinned? Oh! yes. But God will not listen to any charge against them. He has justified them. He has spoken. The matter is settled, and blessing is ours, a prospect is ours, a joy is ours, which otherwise we never could have had. For we have peace with God. We can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We can joy in the consciousness of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us. And lastly, we can joy in God. For He is for us and who can be against us (Rom. v. 1-11; viii. 31).

Our standing is founded on that which never can be shaken—the value in God's eyes of the blood of Christ. Independent it must be of our deserts, for God justifies ungodly

ones. Nor does it vary with the irregularities of the Christian's walk. It rests on the blood of Christ, never to be shed again; blood of priceless value in God's eyes; the blood of His Son, who in obedience and love to His Father, laid down His life on the Cross. It is as a rock, then, on which we stand; a rock which winds and waves can never shake, and of which no unbelieving thoughts of ours, nor wretched feelings within, can diminish its stability; a rock which will defy the biting tooth of time to crumble it to pieces. We stand on the ground before God of that precious blood, by which He has been infinitely and everlastingly glorified, and He wants us to know it.

The question asked by Asaph, Nahum, and Malachi, respectively, is answered satisfactorily and clearly by the Gospel. The Spirit, who inspired them to ask it, inspired the Apostle Paul to answer it. God answers the question, which men of God, speaking by the Spirit of old, propounded. On what less authority than God's answer could any one happily rest? With no less security than this revelation are any asked to be satisfied.



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