

**In Great Earnest
on the Wrong
Road**



IN GREAT EARNEST ON THE WRONG ROAD



TWO officers (one of them personally known to the writer) stood talking earnestly together one day in the public street at S—. Both their wives had been ill, and as they stood they were congratulating each other on the satisfactory progress toward the complete recovery of their beloved ones. One of them, Major H—, said with much feeling, "If Mrs. H— had died I really think I should have gone mad!"

They had not stood there long when a servant from Major H—'s house came in great haste down the street looking for her master. When she reached him he could not fail to see by her countenance that there was something serious the matter, especially when she said, "Will you please, sir,

come home at once? Mistress is very ill!"

Instantly he guessed the worst.

"Is she dead?"

"Oh, please, sir, don't wait, come at once!"

"Is she *dead*?"

"Yes, sir, she is." And the crushing truth was all out.

Frantically he rushed home and found it, alas! all too true.

What a stunning blow! She on whom his affections had doted so fondly, so summarily summoned away. Only a few minutes before he had promised not to be long from her side. Nor was he; but, alas! he returned too late to hear her voice again on earth.

Where had she gone?

Ah, that was the question!

Oh, to heaven, of course! At least, such was *his* thought. But at this time he was himself only a godless, worldly man, and had no idea of what true fitness for heaven consisted in.

My only chance of seeing her again is to go to heaven myself, he thought, and accordingly he set himself to work at once to secure an entrance there. He had previously been the very life of gay, fashionable circles, but he would give up all this kind of thing now and prepare himself for heaven. His own sister, herself converted afterwards, told the writer that she thought the way he so thoroughly "cut them" all was "quite cruel of him."

After a time he began to consider that he was making pretty satisfactory progress in the right direction, and determined to speak to others about what he now regarded as the all important matter. But what could he *say*? And that settled, with whom could he have a bit of religious talk?

There was a young soldier in the barracks, his own groom, who was, he considered, leading a good life. With him therefore, he thought, he might venture to have a little talk about "going to heaven."

His servant listened for some time to what he had to say, and then very quietly and respectfully said something to this effect, "I am going to heaven, sir, but we are not both going the same way."

"What do you mean?"

"The only way I know of reaching heaven is through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you seem to be trying to get there through your own."

Upon this the good officer quite lost his self-possession, and saying quite angrily, "*You mind your horses and let me mind my soul,*" he walked away. But, thank God, not to rest; he *could* not rest. What did this fellow mean by talking to him in that way, he thought. If I am not on the right way to heaven, who is?

It now occurred to him to go to some clergyman and tell him of the audacity of his servant in speaking to him as he had. It so happened in the mercy of God that he made choice of one who was himself taught of God, and had

found refuge in Christ. This godly pastor thoughtfully listened to all he had to say, and then remarked, "It seems to me, Major H——, that the young soldier is right, and you are wrong. God has only one way of taking us to heaven, and that is through the precious blood of Christ."

In self-despair he said, "What *must* I do, then?"

"You must come to Christ; He will receive you. He has promised, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'" John 6 : 37.

This was enough. He hastened home, and casting himself before God rested all his hope of blessing on the merits of Christ.

How truly he could now say—

"I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad."

He had discovered what everyone of Adam's race must one day discover, namely, that *sincerity*, however much

fired with religious earnestness, is not of itself sufficient to secure a title for glory. *He* discovered it in time to get his mistake corrected and his soul blessed.

But something more followed. An open confession of the precious saving name of Jesus must now be made, and he felt it right that the faithful servant who had been used of God to open his eyes should be one of the first to listen to his confession. Accordingly he went down to the barracks, and not only thanked him for his faithfulness, but with loving, brotherly gratitude, actually embraced his servant.

Now there may be as little question about my reader's earnestness as there was of this officer's ; but, mark it well, *sincerity is not enough*. Take that fact to heart at once. There is no question at all as to your finding out your mistake some day ; the only question is, *When?* It has been well said that *hell is the truth discovered too late !*

Sincerity for the future can no more

atone for the sins of the past than the calm weather of to-day can repair the effects of the storm of yesterday. A whole century of calm could not repair the havoc of one single hour of storm. Nor could a whole lifetime of sincerity and good behaviour by any possibility atone for one single sin of the past.

“ Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
Nought for sin could ere atone
But THY BLOOD, and Thine alone.

Put your AMEN to this, and be thankful that you are still on earth to do it.

GEO. C.

**“The blood of Jesus Christ God’s
Son cleanseth us from all sin.”**

1 John 1 : 7.

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