



**“The books were
opened.”**

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“The books were opened.”

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened, which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it : and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of

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fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire:" (Rev. xx. 12-15.)

TERRIBLE vision, seen in perspective—plain, prophetic, panoramic. Oh! for eyes to view it, intelligence to weigh it, conscience to heed it, heart to feel it, lips to explain it.

"*The* books were opened." *The*! Did no others then exist? Not one. Of all the million books made since the dawn of literature, those only survived.

"The *books* were opened."

Books! What books? The books which contained the records of all the sins of all the unforgiven sinners who have died, from Cain down to the last rebel among men.

“The books *were* opened.” *Were!* When was that? When the heavens and the earth had fled away. When the centuries of time had ceased to revolve. When the great sea and death and hades had delivered up their captive dead.

“The books *were opened.*” *Opened!* Yes, opened. No longer sealed. No longer stowed away

in the archives of God. No longer kept from the view of those whose histories were engraven therein. The books were *opened*—OPENED—OPENED !

FRIEND, HOW WILL YOU SHAPE in that judgment? Have you accepted Christ as the answer and the answerer of your sins? If so, the Great White Throne has no terrors for you; you will never stand before it. (John v. 24.) But if you are a Christ rejecter—what then?

What about your sins? What about even those of a year? Can you remember them, locate

them, tabulate them, estimate them—their number, their place, their guilt, their doom? You cannot *now*, but you will *then*. The cells of memory are the graves where your past life sleeps, but judgment is its awakening. Startling awakening; everything will come out, everything will see the light, everything will be made public.

People shrink now from a public scandal. Rather than be thus involved they will buy off the accuser; yea, even submit to blackmail that implicating evidence may be suppressed. But

every heart, every life must ere long be turned inside out till, emptied like a sack, everything from top to bottom is poured forth. "God will render to every man according to his deeds," says Paul, "in that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

LOOK AT THAT MAN

on a sick bed ! His end is near. Others are not aware of it, but he feels it, having an inward premonition that death is at the door.

Hush ! He is speaking feebly—

making some excuse to the nurse—asking her to withdraw for a few minutes. And out she goes.

What is he trying to do? Look! Eagerly he is stretching out a thin hand to his desk, and now he touches a secret spring, and a drawer flies open. With a furtive glance around, he snatches a document thence, and looking at it with apprehension and shame, he mutters to himself, “It shall never be known.” Then pulling himself together and gathering up his remaining strength, he throws it toward the burning coals.

But his feeble aim is faulty. The incriminating paper falls short of its mark. There it lies on the hearth.

A look of dismay and terror passes over his countenance, and slowly—painfully he drags himself out of bed toward the fire. But his fast-ebbing strength is well-nigh gone ; for see ! just as he reaches the grate, and stoops, he reels, and, with a gasp and a groan, he sinks in a state of collapse.

His fall brings assistance ; and lo ! he is found on the floor, with a last look of agony on his

face, and the fatal document, containing the dark evidence of his life's guilty secret, still clutched in his dead hand,

“SOME MEN'S SINS,”

says the apostle, “are open beforehand going before to judgment ; and some men they follow after.” But every unconfessed, unforgiven sin must sooner or later be manifested. No fire can burn it ; no earth can hide it ; no dews can cleanse it ; no suns can wither it ; no distance can remove it ; no amendment can alter it ; no sophistry can excuse it. “Thou hast set our

iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance." (Psa. xc. 8.) All have been recorded, all are remembered, all shall be disclosed at the judgment of the last day. What long-forgotten, what hidden and terrible abominations shall the Great White Throne declare ! What tales of lust, cruelty, wrong and human turpitude will there be told out ! What awful revelations shall then be made known concerning the past lives of "the dead, small and great !"

Man, woman ; youth, maiden ; boy, girl : What about your

sins? Are you indifferent and adding to their score? Terrible work. You are treasuring up “wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”

Or, full of concern, are you trying to get quit of your sins, and to compensate your Maker for having committed them? Impossible task! “Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God.” (Jer. ii. 22.)

“WHAT MUST I DO?”

cries the convicted sinner.

"Use your brains and the brains of others, too, and find out," says the philosopher.

"Take the sacrament, follow the rubric, confess to the priest, obey the dogmas of the church," says the ritualist.

"Turn over a new leaf, make a fresh start, give up your sins," says the moralist.

But the gospel says : You cannot undo your past by anything you can do ; but look to the cross and see what God has done for you. There the Saviour charged Himself with sin's heavy debt, and without composition,

without compromise, He satisfied in full the claims of divine righteousness. Look, believe, confess, and you will know that God for Christ's sake has put your sins

OUT OF SIGHT (Isa. xxxviii. 17)

OUT OF REACH (Micah vii. 19)

OUT OF MIND (Heb. x. 17).

Out of sight! Yes, under the blood, the one only effectual sin-covering; as it is written: “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is *covered*.” (Psa. xxxii. 1.)

Out of reach! Yes, carried down by the great Sin-bearer into the depths of the “many waters”

of death and judgment which flowed over His spotless soul, whence He arose without them (Psa. xviii. 15-20), whence *they* can never rise !

Out of mind ! Yes, gone—"blotted out as a thick cloud" from God's remembrance ; forgotten as well as forgiven ; banished once and for all, by Omnipotent love and righteousness into eternal oblivion.

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