

**“IS IT WELL WITH
THEE?”**

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“Is it well with Thee?”

(NOTES OF A GOSPEL ADDRESS.)

“Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.” (2 Kings iv. 26.)

SUCH was the question put by Elisha to a distressed, yet trustful woman bereft of her only child. We would repeat the question; we would put it to ourselves, put it to *you*, to each one of you, “Is it well with thee?” The question is one of five words—five short, simple, searching words, and we want to connect it with five great facts. First and

foremost, Is it well with thee as to
 THE GOD WHO LOVES THEE?

The love of God is not an abstract doctrine, but a very concrete fact. It is the basic truth of Christianity, and of the revelation of Himself in the Son of His love. The great demonstration of God's love was given at Calvary. But God's love was not exhausted there. Calvary opened the sluices for that love to flow down, but its exhaustless source was, and still is, in the great heart of God. Have you thought for even five minutes on the great fact that God loves you—*still* loves you? If God did not still love you, would you be here to-night? I trow not! It is God's love that has drawn you to this meeting to hear once again how much He loves you! Paul calls it "*great love*" (Eph. ii. 4), and it is great because it never impoverishes

itself. The apostle speaks of “God’s great love wherewith he loved us.” Can you make it personal and say with Paul, “The Son of God who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*”? Will you not accept God’s love and all that love gives, accept it believingly, feelingly, thankfully?

Away down in the back slums of a great city there lived a mite of a girl—motherless, friendless, and often penniless. Her only relative was a drunken father, who sadly ill-used her, so much so that the neighbours often advised the child to leave him. One night he came home—late as usual—and for some reason brutally ill-used poor little Mary, and then collapsed into a drunken stupor. In the morning when he opened his eyes and saw the marks of his own violence on his little daughter’s body, compunction smote him, conscience stung him, and he

cried aloud, "Oh, Mary, why don't you leave your wretched father?"

Ah, Mary's lips could only frame one sweet reply, "Because I love you, father."

Simple reason! just the reason why God does not leave *you*. He loves you. You are breathing the atmosphere of God's love, listening to the voice of God's love, within reach of the great everlasting arms of God's love. God loves you, and if you are ever lost, your sin will be that you have trodden down God's love—trodden that love under your feet. Shall it be?

But again let us inquire, Is it well with thee as to

THE SAVIOUR WHO DIED FOR THEE?

God hates your sins as surely as He loves you. Look at that distracted mother. She has lost her little boy.

After hours of weary search he is found, but all ragged and defiled. Now, she loves him as he is, begrimed and vile, but she does not love his rags ; she gets rid of them as soon as she can. So it is in the gospel. The father loved the prodigal in his rags, otherwise he would not have run and fallen on his neck and kissed him, clothed him, feasted him. What love ! He loved him as the prodigal.

Once I was on a ferry boat going down the lovely Parramatta river which empties itself into Sydney Harbour. Coming directly opposite that stately pile known as the Walker Hospital, the princely gift of a public benefactor, the skipper of the steamer turned and waving his hand exclaimed, “There’s a gift for you ! ”

“But,” said I, spontaneously, “I know a greater ! ”

A greater! How they all stared. Then quickly the old tale was told again. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

Alas, they shewed they did not appreciate it! They could praise a gift of £250,000, but a gift that 250,000 worlds could never purchase they saw no value in.

But I point to the cross and cry, "There's a gift for you!" Do you know its worth? Have you accepted Jesus—God's great love gift? If not it will go ill, and not well, with you in the end, for there can never be a second Saviour to atone for the guilt of rejecting the one and only Saviour.

And now let me ask further, Is it well with thee as to

THE PROFESSION THAT CLINGS TO
THEE?

I am not addressing heathens,

but those who, more or less, profess the Christian religion. Well, what about your profession? Religious professor, let me ask if divine life has been breathed into your soul? If not, bear with me in saying that your profession is as dead as your boots, and, like them, will wear out. Your boots wear out, don't they? Why? Because the soles have no life in them. But see those street arabs; the soles of their naked feet never wear out, but rather get thicker by constant use. Ah, there is life in them, that is the secret! Have you life? Are there living movements in your soul towards God, longing desires, upward looks, secret exercises? Can it be that in spite of your fair exterior you are but “a whited sepulchre”? The Jews white-washed their sepulchres once a year; false religious professors gener-

ally do it once a week ! Away with all religious whitewash which only makes fair the outward man. What about our souls ? Have they life, or are they a charnel-house of corruption ? It is sad indeed to be Christians in name and profession only—to be outwardly "*beautiful*," as the Lord put it, but yet to be inwardly "full of dead men's bones." (Matt. xxiii. 27.)

But we must ask further, Is it well with thee as to

THE MOMENT THAT FLIES FROM THEE ?

Your day of grace is embraced in one little word, "*Now* is the accepted time." I have no authority from God to offer you salvation a moment hence. Our time is now. God never gives two moments together. The present one is mine, is yours, but we do not know if we will have another.

“Before next Sunday some of you may be gone,” said the preacher.

“Oh,” thought a man to himself, “I’ll take note of who is here, and next week I’ll find out if any one now present has died.”

“But,” whispered a voice within, “you, yourself may be gone.”

“Oh, no,” murmured he, “feel this muscle, I’m good for half a century yet.”

But that night he breathed his last.

Be wise then. “*Carpe diem,*” seize your opportunity while you have it—it is wrapt up in that little monosyllable, “*Now.*”

I read the other day of a labourer, troubled about his soul, who came home from his daily work and took his little boy upon his knee. The child took his father’s watch from his pocket, and holding it to his ear, he said, “It says tick, tick,

dada ! How many ticks does it say a day, dada ? ”

“Oh, I don't know, child.”

“How many ticks have I lived, dada ? ”

“A lot—ever so many.”

“How many ticks have you lived ? ”

“Oh, talk of something else,” said the father, ill at ease, “thousands I suppose.”

“How many more ticks will you live, dada ? ”

The man was staggered. The question went home to his soul as a message from God. He took his dinner in silence, and then tried to read the newspaper. The child was put to bed, and his wife went out, and he was left alone. All was silent, except the clock. “*Tick, tick, TICK*—how many more ticks will you live ? ” it seemed to say. “Bother the thing,” said he. But

it went on—tick, tick, tick. At last he rose and stopped it. Ashamed of his weakness he went out. Then, under the guidance of God, he found himself passing a mission hall, where a gospel meeting was starting.

He thought he would go in. Strange to say, as he entered, the preacher gave out the hymn :

“ Swift the moments fly away,
First the hour, and then the day ;
Next the weeks, the months, the years,
Steal away and disappear.”

That night he was converted !

Friend, how many more ticks will you live ? Be wise, be sober, be vigilant. Do not trifle away the fleeting moments of mercy's waning day. The arrow that is to lay thee low may already be on the bow. The years of thy life are quickly hurrying thee on to thine eternal destiny. The coming judgments can even now be seen flashing and darkening

thy sky. Arouse thee. Seek shelter,
Delay not.

Yet again, let us ask, Is it well
with thee as to

THE ETERNITY THAT AWAITS THEE?

There are no moments in eternity—no time there. Eternity has no clock. The seasons come not, nor go, there. What solemn words are those at the very close of the Bible—words spoken in *eternity*. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy let him be filthy still." Who is it that speaks? Listen—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." 'Tis the Son of God Himself, the Great Judge of all, who first pronounces the fixed state of the lost, and then sets His seal on it by declaring the unchanging continuity of His Person and essential Being.

Dear unsaved hearer, bestir thyself. Sin is hardening thee more than thou dost suspect. O man, we warn thee not to trifle with God, or He may leave thee—yes, He *may* leave thee, and thou mayest become “past feeling.” (Eph. iv. 18, 19.) And then what words can describe such a sad state? The sinner who is thus carries about “a heart of stone,” unimpressionable, unsusceptible, and a conscience “harder than the nether millstone,” till ere long the final sentence of the Great Judge falls upon his affrighted ear, and the deep judgment knell tolls forth its solemn funeral wail over a lost soul.

Once more we ask, in love and in deepest concern, “Is it well with thee?” Can you reply with the Shunamite, “*It is well.*” The Shunamite woman had an only son dead in her house, yet she could reply

in the confidence of faith, "It is well."

So with those of us who are true believers, we can answer in full view of the past, present, and future—"It is well." The past all answered, the present all settled, the future all assured. "*It is well.*"

S. J. B. CARTER.

