

**OPINIONS  
OR FACTS**

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It is of very little consequence that a criminal, under sentence of death, does not believe in what he is pleased to call the "doctrine of capital punishment," since every breath he draws, in disclaiming against it, only brings him so much the nearer to the hour of execution. He might as well say, No king, no law, or else a king without power to enforce his own laws. And it is of quite as little consequence that a dying mortal should say, No resurrection for me. No resurrection to judgment. He might as well say (and sometimes he is even bold enough to do it), There is no God, and therefore no accountability to Him. But the reality of His existence and man's accountability to Him depend no more on man's *opinion* than the existence of the sun in the heavens depends on the opinion of a committee of blind philosophers. Facts are facts, and if even the blind can't see the sun they are made

to feel his power. "There is nothing hid from the heat thereof." And the facts of God's existence and of man's responsibility to Him do not wait on man's reasoning mind. His *conscience* is made to feel it, even though his lips may try to deny it. Sooner or later man's responsibility to God will assuredly have to be faced by every man living. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God," Rom. 14 : 11, 12.

## A Daring Challenge

A certain Hanoverian countess, was a noted unbeliever, and especially opposed to the truth of the resurrection, as indeed every unbeliever might well be, especially if his opposition could alter it.

This lady died when about thirty years of age. Before her death she gave orders that her grave should be covered with a solid slab of granite ; that around it should be placed square blocks of stone, and the corners should be fastened

to each other and to the granite slab by heavy iron clamps.

Upon the covering this inscription was placed :—

**“ This Burial-Place, purchased to all Eternity, must never be opened.”**

All that human power could do to prevent any change in that grave was done. But a little birch tree seed sprouted, and the root found its way between the side stone and the upper slab and grew there. Slowly but steadily it forced its way until the iron clamps were torn asunder, the granite lid was raised, and it is now resting upon the trunk of the birch tree, which is large and flourishing.

This unbelieving Hanoverian countess would fain have defied God's power to raise the dead ; and indeed, as we have seen, she took great pains to leave the record of her defiance for the public inspection of posterity. But in the Creator's hands one tender little sprouting seed was enough to make her folly manifest to all observers. The writer has in his possession a photograph of this very grave, with its iron clamps

torn out of their places, the stone slabs burst asunder and gaping wide, as though opening their mouths to cry shame on folly as impudent as it was impotent.

Here is a voice, and a very loud one too, for those who know not the Scriptures nor the power of God.

Two things are outside the will and power of man—the retaining of his natural life on earth when death comes upon him, and the ability to hold his body in death when God's resurrection power is put forth.

*"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."* Or as it has been more simply translated, "It is not because a man is in abundance that his life is in his possession," Luke 12 : 15.

*"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit ; neither hath he power in the day of death : and there is no discharge in that war ; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it,"* Eccles. 8 : 8.

Man will be quite as impotent in resisting the power of God in resurrection as he was in evading the hand of death.

*“ All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment,”* John 5 : 28, 29.

There was one Man here, but only one, who had the power of life and death in His own hands—Jesus the Son of God. He alone could say of His life, “ No one taketh it from me ; I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again,” John 10 : 18.

Who else can use language like this ? Who, among the mightiest of earth’s monarchs, can dispute God’s right to say to him, “ This night thy soul shall be required of thee ” ? Luke 12 : 20. And when once the decree has gone forth, who can reverse the sentence ?

Now if this is true in connection with *death*, it is certainly not less so in connection with *resurrection*.

A sad story is related in the North of England of a man who, for a wager, openly defied God to fight him! On the spot selected for the dreadful challenge all passed off in quietness, as far as to any appearance of God's interference in the matter. But on the road home that day a small insect settled upon him, stung his forehead near his eye, poisoned his blood and caused his death!

Blessed be God, the true believer need not be disconcerted either about death or resurrection. Though once they were the source of his gravest fears, they are now the very foundation of all his hopes. Do you say, How is this? Jesus has died and risen again—Jesus the sinner's Surety; Jesus the sinner's Friend. As another has said, Jesus, the Son of God, has been into the domain of death as an Invader, and come out as Conqueror. To His servant John He said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death," Rev. 1:18.

But *why* did Jesus die? Death was sin's penalty, and that penalty must be

righteously met. God's holiness demanded it. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. 5:12. Jesus died. But death could not hold the Prince of Life. If divine love took Him into it, divine power took Him out of it. He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," Rom. 4:25.

With this mighty Conqueror the reader has to do. Be wise in time. Repent of your sins. Seek His face. Still His invitation is, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," Isa. 45:22. **GOD HAS SPOKEN.** *You have to do with facts.* Face them at once.

**GEO. CUTTING**

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