

THE
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E X H I B I T I O N.

“COME AND SEE.”

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THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

DEAR READER,

You have, I doubt not, heard of the Great Exhibition, which is to take place in London, during the summer of this year. A large crystal palace has been erected, at the expense of many thousands of pounds, in which it is intended to display the varied results of human genius, human skill, human industry, collected from every quarter of the globe. This crystal palace will, in all probability, be visited by all the crowned heads of Europe, together with men of rank, genius, and fashion, from almost every country in the known world.

Then again, the catalogue of the things to be displayed in this palace will, I am told, occupy about 5000 pages. This will give you some idea of the magnitude and splendour of this exhibition. In fact, it may be rightly named, "THE GREAT EXHIBITION." Whether we think of the design and extent of this crystal palace, the number of things to be displayed in it, or the wealth and splendour of those who are likely to visit it, we must pronounce it to be the most magnificent display of human intellect and genius that has ever been attempted. It will, indeed, be a GREAT EXHIBITION; but, my reader, it will be, in every sense of the word, MAN'S EXHIBITION. It will be man's greatness, man's skill, man's industry, man's glory. Kings and princes, nobles and great men, men of learning and intellect, will all assemble within that vast and splendid palace, for the express purpose of beholding and admiring the work of men's hands. Do you say—and a very proper object it is: what more suited object can man contemplate than the fruit of that genius with which God has endowed him? Well, we

shall not now discuss this ; I would only observe, that man is presented in the word of God as a ruined and guilty sinner ; man, as such, has ruined himself ; he has departed from the blessed God, and sold himself to the devil, the great enemy of God. This being so, I ask you, how far is man warranted in making a display of himself ? Is it comely for him to lift up his head in pride and pomp ? Is he justified in thus exulting in the works of his own hands ? If man is verily guilty before God—yea, all the world guilty—how should he carry himself in the view of that God against whom he has sinned, and who knows the real character and amount of his guilt ? I leave these questions to be answered by the conscience of my reader, and shall now proceed to treat of another “**GREAT EXHIBITION**,” totally different from that of which we have been speaking.

A great exhibition has already taken place—so great, so wonderful, so stupendous, that not only men, but angels and devils beheld with deepest interest. The nature, object, and result of this exhibition were totally different from that which is to take place in London. The latter, as we have seen, is *man's* exhibition ; the former, was *God's* exhibition : in the one, man is to shew forth, and glory in, the operations of *his* hands ; in the other, God has shewn forth His wisdom, love and mercy, in providing salvation for a ruined and guilty race.

Do you ask me, “Where did this exhibition take place ?” Not in Hyde Park, London, but on MOUNT CALVARY, OUTSIDE the city of Jerusalem ; not in a crystal palace, but ON THE CROSS. Yes, dear reader, whoever you may happen to be, high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, illustrious or despised, I call your undivided attention to this really “**GREAT EXHIBITION**.” If I could gain the eye or the ear of the crowned head, or of the ragged beggar, I would direct him to this exhibition. I would invite him to behold, on yonder cross, One expiring, whom heaven from above, hell from beneath, and earth from its centre, owned as the Son of God. I would ask him, does not this glorious exhibition of God's grace to a lost world, cast into the shade every exhibition of human art and wisdom ? Truly it does. But what was the object of this exhibition ? Let the Lord Jesus Christ

Himself reply : “ *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” (John iii. 16.) This was the object of God’s exhibition. He desired to convince man of His love—His full, perfect, everlasting love to that creature that had doubted His word—broken His law—despised His mercies.

Now, my reader must believe in this love of God, if ever he would be happy and holy. To know and believe the love of God, is the only means of filling up every void in the poor wretched heart. To know and believe that God is for me, notwithstanding all my black and vile transgressions, is the only means of setting the guilty conscience at rest. The crystal palace, with all its rich, varied, and splendid contents, could not fill the heart. All the wealth, honour, learning and beauty which shall there be displayed, if it could be concentrated in one individual, would not fill up the aching void which every unpardoned sinner must feel, at some time or other. No ; nothing but the Gospel of the grace of God, which assures the sinner that God is his friend—that He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.—that He has blotted out the black catalogue of his sins in the precious blood of Christ—nothing but the knowledge of this can satisfy the heart, set the conscience at rest, and purify the affections.

All this truth is set forth in “ *the great exhibition*” on the cross, where the sinner may behold the Lamb of God, pouring forth His precious blood, thereby making a full and perfect atonement for sin, in order that the blessed God might be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly.

Does my reader inquire how he is to know and have the comfortable assurance of this great truth ? RESURRECTION is God’s proof of the finished work of the Son. The apostle tells us in the 1st chapter of Hebrews, that when the Son had by Himself purged our sins, He “ *sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.*” Observe, “ *sat down.*” This expression is full of comfort. It proves how entirely the Lord Jesus finished the work which He came to do. In the 10th chapter, we read, “ *and every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away*

sins : but this man, (*i.e.*, the Son of God,) after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, *sat down* on the right hand of God." Here, the expression "*sat down*," teaches us the same great truth, *viz.*, that the work of redemption was entirely finished. A faithful servant will never think of sitting down until all his work is done. Now, the priest in the temple of old could never sit down, simply because his work was never done, the conscience of the worshipper was never purged, never free from the uneasy sense of sin. But when the Lamb of God had done His great work, when God's exhibition had taken place, then the Son took His seat on high, triumphant over the power of Satan, sin, and death ; and the Holy Ghost was sent down, from the risen and glorified Jesus, on the day of Pentecost, to announce to man the glad tidings, the peace-giving message, that a fountain was opened for sin and uncleanness, in which the vilest sinner might wash and be clean.

But it may be, dear reader, that your mind is excited and almost feverish at the thought of the Great Exhibition which is to take place in London. You read and hear of the vast dimensions of the crystal palace, its galleries, its staircases, its long array of tables ; you hear of ships pouring in from America, from India, from Egypt, from Greece, and from almost every port on the continent of Europe, laden with treasures of skill and art ; you hear of the 50,000 troops which are to be quartered in and about London ; of kings and emperors, with their splendid trains, about to add brilliancy to the scene ; of the untold wealth which will pour into London on this occasion ; of all these things you are daily hearing and reading, and your mind is filled with intense desire to be there. Well, pause for a moment, while I lay before you, out of the Book of God, another Great Exhibition which is to take place when the crystal palace shall have crumbled into dust, and the cold hand of death have dimmed all its pomp and glory. "And I beheld, when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood ; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And

the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together: and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, *fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?*" (Rev. vi. 12—17.) Again, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 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 (*i.e.*, the grave) 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 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. 11—15.)

Here, then, we have another "GREAT EXHIBITION;" an exhibition, not of grace, as on Mount Calvary, but of the solemn judgment of Almighty God, and of the wrath of the Lamb. The time is rapidly approaching when God will enter into judgment with all those who have rejected His grace and mercy — when the meek and gentle Lamb shall leave His present seat of mercy and grace, the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, and come "with the shout of the archangel, and the trump of God," to summon to His bar a guilty world. "Every eye shall see him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Yes, my reader, "every eye shall see" the crucified One! every eye which shall this year gaze upon the wondrous contents of the crystal palace, shall soon gaze upon the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Solemn, most solemn inquiry! Who may abide the day of His

coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? Where will the crystal palace be in that day, with all its wealth and pomp? "Alas! alas! that great city that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For IN ONE HOUR so great riches is come to nought."

My reader, if, when the crystal palace shall have been filled with its most illustrious visitors, and man lifted, as it were, to the very highest pinnacle of intellectual greatness, the trump of the archangel were suddenly to be heard with its shrill blast, which shall penetrate the deepest caverns of the ocean, and make itself heard at earth's very centre, if the whole vault of heaven were to be seen lighted up with the radiant hosts of saints and angels thronging, in ardent devotion, round the once despised, but now triumphant, Jesus, what, think you, would be the sensation which would pass through the long galleries of that crystal palace? Would the Lord Jesus be a welcome guest? Would He get, or take, the highest place at the Great Exhibition? You know He would not. His presence would be a sad interruption to the whole scene. The announcement of His coming would strike more terror into the hearts of men than that caused by the awful hand-writing on the wall of the impious Belshazzar's palace.

But He will come, and the question for my reader to put to his own heart is, "shall I be able to stand?" Yes, this is the question. Am I prepared to meet the Son of God? What can prepare a soul to meet that dreadful crisis? Not prayers, not alms, not tears, sighs, nor mortifications, not saints, nor angels, not priests, nor churches, not rites, nor ceremonies. There is but ONE thing, in the whole universe, that can make you meet or fit to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Do you ask, What is that? Oh! if your eyes were but opened to see the precipice on which you stand, down which a moment may dash you for ever, how eagerly would you ask the question and hearken to the reply. However, I shall tell you, once more, of this ONE thing which alone can render you fit to stand in the presence of Him whose eye shall read the deepest secrets of every heart. "THE BLOOD OF JESUS CLEANSETH FROM ALL SIN." Washed in this blood, my

reader can meet the strictest scrutiny of heaven, earth, or hell. Washed in this blood, no speck or stain of sin remains on the conscience—no accusation of Satan, or of conscience can stand for a moment. Jesus has met all the penalty of sin in His own blessed person on the cross; He has drunk the cup of wrath to the very dregs, in order that the believing soul might take from the hand of redeeming love the cup of salvation. The one offering of Jesus Christ can alone free the conscience from every troubled thought about sins: God sees in that offering a full and perfect atonement for sin; and all who believe in its efficacy are justified from *all* things; they are seen by God as free from sin, and as fully accepted as is the Lord Jesus Himself. Amazing truth! Blessed, consolatory assurance! To one cleansed by the blood of Christ judgment has no terrors; death no sting; the grave no victory. *Jesus has borne all*, and in doing so, has only done the will, and fulfilled the counsel of the God of love. God loved the world, and gave His Son; Christ loved the world, and gave Himself; the Holy Ghost loved the world, and came down from heaven to tell of Satan vanquished—death destroyed—sin put away—justice satisfied—wrath passed away—atonement fully made. This is the Gospel—this is the precious message of God. The Gospel points the sinner to “*the great exhibition*” on Mount Calvary, as the only preparation for “*the great exhibition*” of the white throne. The Gospel tells the sinner that God is for him, yes, *for* him against every one and every thing that could be against him; and “if God be for us, who can be against us?”

I would only, in conclusion, ask my reader to contrast, for a moment, the exhibition of man with the exhibition of God. Let him contrast the vanity of the one with the reality of the other,—the unholy excitement of the one, with the heavenly calmness of the other; the gross corruption of the one, with the purity of the other; above all, let him contrast the *end* of the one, with the *end* of the other; and then I ask him, which does he prefer? Which will he have,—the present gilded glory of the world, with an eternity of unspeakable misery; or the present repose of heart in the cross of Jesus, with an eternity of unspeakable joy and blessedness? This is,

indeed, a momentous question, and should be answered *now*, for "now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." Do not, my dear reader, put this question aside. Do not allow the bustle and excitement of a world which is rapidly passing onward to hopeless ruin, to hinder you from quietly, solemnly, and calmly putting this question to your conscience. You must soon decide. The time will soon come when the unalterable judgment of God will put a line of distinction between the saved and the lost. The great "gulf" will soon spread its dis-severing waters between Abraham's bosom and the tormenting flame of hell,—between Lazarus and Dives,—between those who have believed Moses and the prophets, and those who have not. Then, alas! all will be over for ever with the lost soul, so far as any gleam of hope is concerned. The door will be shut—the lot cast—the destiny fixed. The decree will then go forth: "He that is holy, let him be holy still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still."

Then, too, the saints will have *their* "*Great Exhibition*"—the exhibition of glory,—not in a crystal palace, but in a city of gold—the New Jerusalem where Jesus shall reign supreme, and receive the homage of every ransomed spirit in heaven and on earth. The object of this Great Exhibition will be to display, throughout eternity, the kindness, the grace, the mercy, the wisdom, the power, the majesty, the greatness, the holiness, of the blessed God—the immortal and eternal King. Angels shall visit that Great Exhibition, they shall behold and wonder; kings shall bring their honour and glory to it, and the nations of the saved shall walk in the light of it. This will, indeed, be a *Great Exhibition*—an exhibition where God, and not man, will be adored—an exhibition where the wondrous works of God shall be displayed throughout the everlasting ages,—not the puny works of man for a few short weeks,—an exhibition the light and glory of which shall never be eclipsed; not one which glares and flickers for a moment, and then goes out in the darkness and gloom of disappointment. The throne of God and the Lamb shall impart stability to this Great exhibition, and the river of life, clear as crystal, shall bear, through a restored creation, the everlasting refreshings of God's redeeming love.

Oh ! my reader, what will it be to be there ? If it be so elevating to hear of these things by the hearing of the ear, what will the reality be ? Would you not desire to be there ? I am sure you would. Well, then, COME ; Jesus invites you. His own encouraging word is, "*who-soever* will, let him come !" You cannot exclude yourself from the terms of this precious invitation, inasmuch as it says, "*whosoever will ;*" and, in another place, "without money and without price." Many a one would be willing, yea, most anxious, to visit the crystal palace this summer, but they will not be able because of poverty ; but Jesus invites the poor and the needy, the ruined and the wretched, the guilty and the miserable, He invites them to come *just as they are*, and offers them a full, free, and perfect remission of sins, in virtue of His one offering of Himself once for all.

Hence, if you reject this invitation, you sin against the purest grace of God. If any demand were made upon you, or any conditions proposed ; if you were called upon to produce something in the way of a title to the blessings of the gospel, you might, with some appearance of reason, hesitate, though even then you would have a right to answer God's requirements. But when the blessed God invites you to come and receive forgiveness of sins, and a glorious inheritance, simply upon the ground of what Christ has done for you, you cannot refuse without being guilty of the grievous sin of rejecting God's grace, and destroying your immortal soul.

Come, then, my dear friend, do come, and find peace in Jesus, before the storm of divine judgment bursts upon this guilty world. Be not deceived by the cry of "peace, peace," for, be assured of it, there is no solid, no divine peace. Men speak of growing peace and prosperity, and the Great Exhibition in London will, no doubt, be held up as an unanswerable proof of man's advancement. No doubt man is advancing ; but whither ? Yes, *whither* ? That is the question. Is he advancing along his self-devised path of glory, or along that path by which Jesus leads his blood-purchased flock to glory and immortality ? I leave the conscience of my reader to answer, only reminding him of what the word of God teaches us on this subject. Hear what St. Paul says, "For yourselves know

perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." This is but one of the numerous passages which might be adduced to prove that this age will not issue in universal peace and prosperity, but in universal apostacy on the part of man, and unexampled judgments poured forth from the cup of God's righteous wrath.

Oh! that the Gospel of God's grace to poor sinners may go forth in mighty power, and draw many souls to Jesus, in this day of man's rising greatness. May the cross, in all its atoning efficacy, be the Great Exhibition held up to the view of perishing sinners, that many may yet escape the solemn judgment of the white throne, and the wrath of the Lamb, and be made heirs of that glory which is speedily to be revealed.

C. H. M.

March, 1851.

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